

CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S *FIGHT CLUB* UNDER A DIFFERENT LENS: PRESSURES ON THE MALE BODY IN COMMUNITY AND THE QUESTION OF MASCULINITY

Carmen Fuentes Fuentes, Universidad de Granada

E-mail: carmen.fuentes.st@gmail.com

Abstract: The present paper aims to analyse Chuck Palahniuk's first novel *Fight Club* (1996) from a different viewpoint, i.e., the communitarian theories perspective. In order to enrich this study, this field will be interconnected with gender studies, specifically on men's studies and the field of masculinities. The novel describes the formation of the symbolically saturated community of "fight club" whose members are obsessed with an absent paternal figure, including the protagonist. However, his existential crisis will be solved thanks to his encounter with Marla Singer. In that encounter Tyler Durden will have a fundamental role to play: he will act as a catalyst figure, filtering all the saturated symbolisms that limit the main character's essentialist masculine identity. As a result, the protagonist will be able to meet the main female protagonist, Marla Singer, in an inorganic encounter, where they will be able to expose each other's individualities in a meaningful way.

Keywords: Organic community, inorganic community, death, masculinity, male body.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la novela de Chuck Palahniuk *El Club de la Lucha* (1996) desde un punto de vista diferente, el de las teorías comunitarias. Para enriquecer dicho estudio, este campo se combinará con los estudios de género, específicamente en los estudios de masculinidades. La novela describe la formación de una comunidad simbólicamente saturada, la del "club de la lucha", cuyos miembros están obsesionados con una figura paterna ausente, incluido el protagonista. Sin embargo, su crisis existencial se resolverá gracias a su encuentro con Marla Singer, en el que Tyler Durden tendrá un papel fundamental: actuará como figura catalizadora, filtrando los simbolismos saturados que limitan la identidad esencialista del personaje principal. Como resultado, el protagonista podrá conectar con el personaje femenino principal, Marla Singer, de forma inorgánica, donde serán capaces de mostrar su individualidad de forma significativa.

Palabras clave: Comunidad orgánica, comunidad inorgánica, muerte, masculinidad, cuerpo masculino.

1 INTRODUCTION

When asked about the actual many-fold effects that *Fight Club* has had in its varied readers, Chuck Palahniuk answered: "Wow. Bummer. I can't control that, you know?"

(Robinson, 2002). Indeed, Palahniuk's first and most well-known work has been both applauded and seen with contempt. It is reasonable to think that due to the controversy and discrepancies his works have brought about, they have not received the "critical attention" of which his novels are worthy (Mendieta, 2005: 394). Mercer Schuchardt (2015), however, uses the contradictions found in *Fight Club* as its strongest point. Its variability of opposing attitudes and interpretations shows American contemporary society at its "most naked" state. It is confusing and conflicting, a piece of material which can be analysed from virtually any angle.

Precisely for such freedom of possible inquiry, this article aims at viewing *Fight Club* from yet a different perspective; a reinvention of American masculinity through the encounter of the main male character and Marla Singer, in this case, the absolute heroine of the story. Such an encounter will take place, as it will be discussed, through the disruption of the organic, symbolically saturated community represented by fight club and later Project Mayhem. Such rupture will take place through the inorganic, de-mystified encounter between these two characters, with Tyler Burden having a fundamental role to play in both composites.

2 COMMUNITARIAN THEORIES

2.1 A Definition of *Community*

"Nothing seems more appropriate today than thinking community; nothing more necessary, demanded, and heralded by a situation that joins in a unique epochal knot the failure of all communisms with the misery of new individualisms". These words, which come from Roberto Esposito in his work *Communitas* (2010: 1) may summarize the nature of the debate which surrounds now such trite and yet so powerful concept. At the core of the discussion, different experts have expressed their concern as regards how this term has actually changed and how its archaic nature still governs its meaning. For these reasons, these experts have attempted to find out the reasons behind this idea and its collapse and, at the same time, to enclose a different, more flexible alternative. The final result is the depiction of two different communities: one first type, known as *organic* or *operative community*, and a second one, the *inorganic* or *inoperative community*.

The organic community is the most common model and it is characterized by its archaism and its deeply religious nucleus. According to Bataille, organicism has as its root a feeling of *incompleteness*, which encourages the individual to reach a feeling of completeness through a process known as *immanence* (Blanchot, 1998: 17). This fusion provokes the loss of the individual "I" to the communitarian "We" (Etzioni, 1996: 157). Significantly, *death* is at the core of organicism, which acquires a mystic meaning; it is death what ultimately unites all members of the community (Blanchot, 1988: 9). Having death as the nucleus of this ensemble represents a great predicament. It essentially means that death, or the end of the individual who forms community, constitutes its basis. The contradiction is evident for Blanchot: if community can only happen through the death of its members, this fact only leads to "the impossibility of its own immanence" (Blanchot 1988: 10-11). Moreover, organicism is also defined by its religious symbolic saturation.

The Christian community is a clear example of an organic community, having God at the summit of the pyramid, with other equally important characters such as the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ. God is an invisible figure, which transcends human knowledge, and whose actions are “unavowable” (Derrida, 1996: 67). A new contradiction, embodied by the figure of God, is found: immanence cannot happen through an invisible, empty space (or *paternal vacuum* according to Nancy and Clift (2013: 121-122)), because “[n]ihilism and community mutually exclude each other” (Esposito, 2010: 135-137).

An organic composite is also obsessed with its delimitations, with who belongs to the community and who does not. As analysed by Esposito in *Comunidad y Violencia*, organicism takes immanence to an extreme, and attempts to reject anything coming from outside its symbolic borders. Esposito continues saying that immunity disables community and may radicalize it, and poses as an example Nazi Germany. Such obsession, Esposito claims, comes from fear towards the “other”, of being attacked and unprotected: the possibility of both being a potential victimizer or the victim. As a result, Esposito concludes, immunity leads to chaos: being equal is taken as a threat, which means that organic fusion is also a synonym of “terror”. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 in the United States illustrate how the line that separates friend from enemy is not as clear cut as it would seem (2009: 1-6).

The second type of community, the *inorganic community*, is seen as a much better alternative by theorists. In the previous case, death was taken as a mystifying nucleus; here, however, death is confronted in a demystified way, devoid of any (religious) symbolism. This means that instead of *communion* or *immanence*, inorganicism offers *communication*, which can only be achieved when the members of the community recognize each others' alterity. Such recognition is produced through a process known as *clinamen*, or “an inclination or an inclining from one towards the other” (Hillis Miller, 2011: 6-23; Nancy, 1991: 3). Derrida proposes the same idea: “*We must give up trying to know those whom we are linked by something essential*; by this I mean, we must greet them in the relation with the unknown in which they greet us, as well, in our *distance*” (1993: 386, my italics). Under such circumstances, the individual “I” regains its focal position in the individual's identity. Finally, God and its symbolism loses its saturated meaning.

2.2 The Body in Community

Another concept which will be important to take into account, not only when discussing community but also later when discussing masculinit(ies), is that of “the body”. Nancy has analysed extensively “the body” and the ideology behind it. For him, “[b]odies are places of existence, and nothing exists without a place”, and the communion that happens in organicism “takes place, in its principle and its ends, at the heart of the mystical body of Christ” (2008: 15; 1991: 10). In Christianity, the body of Christ and His death can only be understood as a symbolic sacrifice, a *gift* from God to save the community of the newly created Christianity: a *gift of death* (Derrida, 1996: 12, 81). At the same time, in the Bible God is described as, not only male, but as a paternal figure who epitomizes a punishing character. Such is the importance of this statement that Nancy stresses the fact that “the body of God was the body of man himself” (2008: 61).

As a result, in Western ideology, God is a limiting, *male* figure who determines what belongs to reality, what the “true community” is, a reality that governs organicism which is first and foremost filtered by imposed symbolic meanings dictated by a *masculine* persona. This is further reinforced by Kant, who explains that the organic community is essentially a *fraternity*: where “men [are] brothers under one universal father, who wills the happiness of all” (cf. Derrida, 1993: 381).

Here stands a conclusion which merits careful discussion. It seems natural to assume that in the organic community a clear, sexual hierarchy is imposed with the body as its basis, in which the penis becomes the *symbolic phallus*, traditionally taken as a symbol of power (Butler, 1990, 1993). In such conundrum, Julia Kristeva provides an interesting view. She makes a distinction between the *Symbolic* and the *Semiotic*. The first “shapes a hierarchy immune to challenge”, in which maleness is taken as the norm and women are “the negative of men, the lack against which masculine identity differentiates itself” (cf. Butler, 2006: 13, 107-108). Thus, the *symbolic* takes maleness as its emblem, whereas femaleness, its counterpart, belongs to the *semiotic*, “that which ‘precedes’ the symbolic law”; at the same time, “[t]he mother’s body [is] what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations” (Ibid.: 15). This demonstrates that in the organic community symbolic saturation is also applied to the body, and this saturation favours a sexual hierarchy which places men in a position of power in contrast to women. In this sense, sex is also symbolically signified through gender, because “‘persons’ only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility” (Butler, 2006: 22). In a nutshell, this means that for men to be related to power and control, they must act in a masculine way, whereas women ought to act femininely.

In this sense, the body is signified and full of pre-imposed meanings in the *symbolic*, whereas the *semiotic* sees the body taken as *barren* of meaning and symbolism. The *semiotic* could then represent an “outside” to the *symbolic* which governs organicism. It is safe, therefore, to equate the paternal symbolic to the organic community, and the semiotic to the inorganic or inoperative one. Interestingly, this could mean as well that women, or rather, female bodies, have better chances to break with organicism. As previously explained, the organic community finds its basis in fraternity, or the relationship between men. This could mean that men are more vulnerable to the symbolic saturation which takes place in the operative community; women, on the opposite side, are already taken as “the other” sex, and therefore are not entirely engulfed by its symbolisms. They may possess a greater potential to disrupt the male dominated organic community by breaking the previously mentioned gender-based symbolic saturation and cater for an encounter between the members of the community through communication regardless their sexual or gender identities.

Taking into account what has been stated above, for the experts, inorganicism presents a solution for such inflexible meaning of the body in community. As explained previously, the inorganic community avoids symbolisms, and as a result, the body in this community does not go through the process of symbolic filtering found in the previous composite: the body is only taken as flesh and bones (Nancy, 2008: 8). At the same time, if God as the male governing figure and main example and origin of masculine identity is erased, (gender and sexual) identity in itself becomes more open and flexible.

3 MEN'S STUDIES

3.1 The Field

In *Gendering Men: Theorizing Masculinities in American Culture and Literature* (2006), J. M. Armengol explains that Men's Studies emerged as a field in the 60s and 70s in the United States. At the core of this movement was the suspicion that some men began to have as regards the patriarchal system and the heteronormativity given in this social scenario (cf. Domínguez Ruiz, 2015: 16). Adams and Savram mention two important waves which took place in this new movement focused on men and masculinities: the first "was avowedly profeminist and dedicated to personal and institutional change", and preoccupied with men's controversial role inside a system which was now avowedly patriarchal and under great scrutiny thanks to the feminist movement (2002: 5); however, the 80s saw a second, much different wave which "sought to highlight, not so much the cost to men of patriarchy, but the centrality of male power to dominant ways of being a man" (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001: 15). The idea behind this second wave was to revive the idea of "real men", their "innate, masculine power", which had faded under the shadow of feminism (Adams and Savram, 2002: 5). Consequently, the idea that today "masculinity" is in crisis has become popular and it is common to see such word in works by Horrocks (1994) or Connell (2005). The latter has also analysed extensively the concept of "hegemonic masculinity", which had gained momentum with other experts like Kessler (1982). Hegemonic masculinity is described as "the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832). Sharon Bird goes further, and contemplates that *masculine homosocieties* help maintain the values heralded by hegemonic masculinities, "[based on] homosocial interaction, among heterosexual men (...) associated with identities that fit hegemonic ideals while suppressing meanings associated with nonhegemonic masculinity identities" (1996: 121). These homosocieties can be said to be *imagined (male) communities*, a concept coined by Benedict Anderson (1991).

It is here perhaps where the point of convergence between men's studies and communitarian theories is more readily visible: as Bird (1996) concludes, these communities facilitate the projection of traditionally-regarded masculine practices which can be said to imitate the aforementioned Derrida's *fraternity* in community, that is: an organic community dominated by symbolisms which can, and *must*, only be projected by the male psyche. In Palahniuk's novel, "fight club" can be said to represent a clear example of the nostalgia surrounding the aforementioned second wave which will attempt to recover the idea of "real men".

3.2 Fatherhood

In *Fight Club*, Palahniuk seems to locate the origin of his male characters' crisis in a father figure (as will be explained below). For this reason, an account of the father figure in the American context should be given. Experts seem to find modern fatherhood problematic

to define, probably because of the great change that has suffered these last decades. The first author that could be mentioned to itemise this conception is Hearn, who begins by saying that the father figure has been “historically and culturally highly variable” (1992: 80). Fatherhood has changed at the same pace as “the competing discourses on masculinity” (Pelegrí in Caribí and Armengol, 2014: 116), which means that the father figure has always been essential when discussing masculine identities.

When discussing the so called masculine crisis, *father absence*¹ seems to be one of its strongest pillars. Indeed, modern fatherhood shows greater involvement of fathers in the family and childcare, although actually it seems that this shift as regards fathers' role has not been as poignant as it is said to be, and father absence is still a problem (Segal, 2007: 29-30). Father absence is problematic for several reasons, but for the scope of this article these will be limited to the field of psychoanalysis. According to Freud, male children gain independence from their mothers and begin entering the outside world through the father figure. As reported by this author, every boy experiences the *Oedipus complex*, whereby he starts to experience desire for his mother. It is this desire towards the mother that prevents boys from identifying with her, and instead begin to do so with the father, whom they see as a rival. In addition, the *castration anxiety* (which means the boy's fear of punishment by his father due to his improper desire towards his mother figure) helps the boy begin to desire other women, thus guaranteeing the boy's heterosexuality and the development of his masculine persona by mirroring his father figure (Connell, 2005; Butler, 1990, 1993). Taking this into account, the obsession found in general in the literature behind the father figure and men's development as masculine-gendered beings becomes obvious. After all, still following Freud, the father is the first to evaluate his son's masculine psyche, without which, again according to Freud, the boy would not be able to evolve appropriately as a man (Kimmel in Kaufman and Brod, 1994: 130).

Father absence, and specially the importance which has been given, is highly troublesome for many authors. For Chodorow, father absence “create[s] difficulties for the development of a sense of masculinity in boys” (1978: 106). For Segal and Horrocks, it boosts in men a sense of insecurity which favours abusive and violent behaviour to hide such insecurity (2007: 29; 1994: 80). Without losing sight of the obstacles explained above, the main enigma could be summarized as such: boys learn to be masculine through the very absence of masculinity, through a fantasy, through a relationship with a father mostly characterized by *not being there*, staying at the same time in direct contrast with that of the mother figure, which traditionally *is* present and is characterized by “oneness and inseparability” (Kaufman in Kaufman and Brod, 1994: 150; Hearn, 1992: 157).²

The absent father figure and the paternal vacuum represented by the God figure aforementioned by Nancy and Clift can be clearly connected. As de Beauvoir claims, in capitalist social milieu such as the United States the father figure represents “transience, he is God” (cf. in Segal, 2007: 24). What can be concluded in this section is that the traditional, American family is, in this sense, not only that institution from which men find their source of masculinity, but also an organic community at a minor scale.

1 According to Hearn and Horrocks, capitalism favoured a conception of a father figure whose authority would be more absent and more symbolic, but indeed not minor (1987: 13; 1994: 80).

2 The mother-son relationship is also worthy of analysis, but it would go beyond the scope of this paper.

3.3 The Male Body and Violence

Bordo states that the body is “a powerful symbolic force, a surface on which the central rules, hierarchies, and even metaphysical commitments of culture are inscribed and thus reinforced through the concrete language of the body” (1993: 2362), and as already mentioned above in Butler’s words, bodies entre meaning in the *symbolic* and the organic community by being signified through gender, taking genitalia as the locus of such meaning.

A patriarchal system is based on “the rule of the father”, as many experts explain, and it is the father’s body, a male body, which primarily projects an example of masculinity to his offspring. As mentioned earlier, masculinity’s main source is genitalia, the penis, which is symbolically filtered as the *phallus*, synonym of power (Butler, 1993, 2006). It is however necessary to add that these accounts, together with Freud’s theories, have been labelled as sexist and, most importantly, faulty. Firstly, Lacan’s view on the power of the phallus can be seen as too restricted, since he omits many other variables, such as class or sexual orientation (Segal, 2007: 76). In addition, many others like MacInnes and more recently Judith Halberstam have argued that, if the phallus and its power are symbolic, there is no reason why women cannot hold this power: “the phallus presupposes itself” (MacInnes, 1998: 83). Moreover, it has been argued that some feminists should not take the connection penis-phallus-power for granted (Ibid: 177, 181).

In any case, it cannot be denied that men in general seem to believe that masculinity “almost always proceed[s] from men’s bodies” (Connell, 2005: 45). Despite male genitalia and its symbolically filtered power through the phallus, the male body’s role is essential (Dyer in Segal, 2007: 75), and represents the most salient projector of masculinity. Connell, however, intervenes again, and concludes that even in those terms, that masculinity rooted on the body is also a fantasy (2005: 45, 47-48).

Such obsession with the body as main projector of masculinity is highly controversial. Dyer claims that such responsibility on the body, looking tough and acting macho for masculinity to be maintained, provokes “hysterically phallic” men, a continuous proving and interminable anxiety in a man to constantly demonstrate he is, indeed, a man (in Segal, 2007: 75). At the same time, by placing the main body as the main source of (masculine) identity, men are said to have been denied the chance to explore their feelings and emotions; this is not the case, however, with women: “women have been closer to the earth, closer to feelings, closer to life and death” (Horrocks, 1994: 105, 122, 158).

After this overview of the male body and the pressures it suffers to successfully express an appropriate masculine ideal, there is one asset which has always belonged to traditional masculinity: manhood is also commonly related to violence (Kimmel in Bro and Kaufman, 1994: 132). Violent behaviour among men is many times seen as something natural, inherent to the male psyche (Horrocks, 1994: 125), although experts like MacInnes (1998) and Kaufman (1987) explain that biology cannot justify such a blight on society. Authors like Katz offer that the problem is not violence per se, but the fact that it has been taken as essential for masculine performance (2010: 1). In fact, Katz goes further, and expounds that in a culturally consumerist society, such as the American one, white male violence is institutionalized and utilized as a tool to express virility through toughness and aggressive

behaviour (2010: 261-263). Violence is now a product, a “purchasable commodity” one can access with capital (Katz 2010: 264).

It is also important to explore the relationship between the family and the boy's intake of violence as part of his masculine identity. The father-son relationship fulfils an important role for experts like Horrocks. It prevents the boy from staying in a state of “primitive masculinity” which prevents the mutual destruction of both the son and the mother. However, because of the father absenteeism mentioned above, aggressiveness is encouraged in the boy's behaviour as a response of him feeling hurt and abused (1994: 79-80). As Winnicott suggests, “when there is an antisocial tendency, there has been a true deprivation” (cf. Horrocks, 1994: 31).

Male violence takes in many forms and victimizes many subjects, but in this paper only violence perpetuated from men to other men will be considered. Kaufman argues that male violence against other men is fundamental when discussing masculinity and how men relate to each other, acting specially aggressive when feeling socially powerless (1987: 1, 9-10). Horrocks believes that because men are seen as naturally violent, they may be expected to be able to endure violence in the same way they cause it to others (1994: 134). Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* represents a good example of this type of violence. Men have been obliged to reject a part of themselves which also belongs to them: their emotions, their internal self. Violence is a tool of repression for men whenever something which does not belong to the masculine realm arises (Kaufman, 1987: 12). At the same time, when ignoring this part of their psyche, men provoke their own distancing from their bodies: they learn to see their bodies as a mere object or tool to express manliness (Horrocks, 1994: 12). It seems clear then that, in this sense, as Connell warns: “the male sex role may be dangerous to your health” (2005: 51). It seems to lead to men's self destruction. The aforementioned ideas can lead to the following conclusion: only in death are men comfortable with showing emotions like love or tenderness. In death, men are allowed to feel weak, because in male psychology love is related to pain (Horrocks, 1994: 112, 150-151). Fulfilling the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, men repress their emotions and avoid showing them to others.

Now that the theoretical framework has been outlined, the following sections will focus on *Fight Club* as an organic ensemble represented in the very community of “fight club” and as an inorganic composite, which will allow the connection between the main male and female characters through the figure of Tyler Durden, fundamental, as it will be explained, for such encounter.

4. ORGANIC COMMUNITIES IN *FIGHT CLUB*

The social milieu in *Fight Club* represents what could be the present-day modern community set in America, with a strong nationalism that homogenizes its inhabitants under a single label: American people. As discussed above, total communion means loss of identity, the We-ness ontology described by Etzioni (1996). In this framework, with the main character taken as a sample, this communal “We” seems to be achieved through material possessions, as in the following examples: “We all have the same Johanneshov armchair in the Strinnee green stripe pattern (...). We all have the same Rislampa/Har paper lamps made from wire and environmentally friendly unbleached paper” (43). The final result is that, as the protagonist

reflects, “the things you used to own, now they own you” (44), so that in the novel the members are dispossessed of the control of their identities in favour of the ruling capitalist system.

At the same time, the protagonist's namelessness could be connected to the actual, alienating individualism of the American society in which the novel is set. As Hillis Miller claims: “the United States is not and never was a ‘homeland’, in the sense the word implies” (2011: 11). Many examples of this can be seen in the novel: “*Single-serving* butter”, “*single-use* toothbrush”, “a miniature *do-it-yourself* Chicken Cordon Bleu hobby kit” (28, my italics). He lives alone in a condominium, and no friend or love relationships are described until Marla's and Tyler's appearance, this being a product of his imagination. The novel seems then to represent faithfully American society today, because as Levinson claims: “close friendship with a man or woman is rarely experienced by American men” (cf. Clare, 2001: página). Moreover, names are part of a given culture and have great importance in society, especially in the Catholic Church, where name-giving is part of the very important act of baptism (Deluzain, 1996). However, it can be discussed that in this mechanical social milieu, those religious values have withered, and now a name is only another feature of that social mechanism and artificiality. Thus, the main character might not be giving his name because these only made sense in the religious, organic-based community that he will seek in fight club; although, as will be argued in the next section, it could also be a way of escaping the symbolic portrayed in the organic communities and be open to enter the semiotic, that is, the inorganicism that will be discussed later.

The main character embodies the tension between these two ideas of community: the organic values in which this American society is based, and the individualism that has resulted from the failure of this idea of communion. His feeling of incompleteness provokes in him anxiety, which at the same time diverts to insomnia. His obvious inclination towards a death drive (further discussed in the section dealing with inorganic communities) will take him to find a solution to this spiritual crisis by confronting real death.

He will attend groups of cancer in order to find solace in the suffering of others, including the one called “Remaining Men Together”, a group of men with testicle cancer, where he meets Bob. The latter was a bodybuilder who, due to his ambition to reach a hyper-masculine ideal, ends up growing breasts and having his testicles removed as a result of consuming steroids. It is in this group of deficient male bodies where the main character finds completeness through his own incompleteness as a man: a “community for those who have no community” in Blanchot's words (1988: 24). However, it is in this male only community where Marla makes her first appearance, which disrupts the protagonist's comfort: “With [Marla] watching, I'm a liar. She's a fake. She's the liar. (...) Marla's lie reflects my lie, and all I can see are lies. In the middle of all their truth” (23). Here, for being a woman, Marla is considered a “tourist” (24), someone who is not welcomed, and the main character needs to find a new solution for his insomnia, where Marla cannot intrude.³

3 Although the analysis of “Remaining Men Together” would go beyond the scope of this paper, it is an interesting example of another organic community, due to the fact that its members try to confront death in a mystified way through meditation, trying to distance themselves from their bodies and the pain that accompanies them. It is also interesting from a gender studies perspective because it shows a composite made of men who do not fulfil the phantasmatic gender identification regulated by hegemonic masculinity (Butler, 1993: 61): a community which emerges from a lack

4.1 The God/Father Obsession

Fight club and Tyler Durden are born thanks to the appearance of Marla Singer: "I know all of this: the gun, the anarchy, the explosion is really about Marla Singer" (14). But to better understand the community of fight club there needs to be first an explanation of its origins. One fundamental aspect is not revealed until later chapters when one of its members states the following:

If you're male and you're Christian and living in America, your father is your model for God. And if you never know your father, if your father bails out or dies or is never at home, what do you believe about God? (...) What you end up doing (...) is you spend your life searching for a father and God. (141)

Nancy states that the community always "plays back to itself through its institutions" (1991: 9), being the family one of them. This reflects perfectly what earlier sections have outlined: God is a fundamental source of masculine identity and the paternal vacuum is a reality that describes the generation of men that forms fight club. Its members are therefore driven by a nostalgia regarding a community where God, and the father by definition, is considered the most powerful figure in the family, extending his power to the social framework. This means that these men accept as primordial the phallogocentric scheme that comes together with such an archaic system taking God as its premise. Consequently, two things can be presumed: on the one hand, there is an obsession surrounding God as the nucleus of community for the American man in the novel, which is needed to be part of that Christian-based American milieu; on the other hand, it discloses the *paternal vacuum* previously theorized. This absence embodied in the father figure is common to all the members of fight club, including the main character:

Me, I knew my dad for about six years, but I don't remember anything. My dad, he starts a new family in a new town about every six years. This isn't so much like a family as it's like he sets up a franchise. *What you see at fight club is a generation of men raised by women.* (50, my italics)

It is then revealed that the protagonist's source of anxiety was precisely this obsessive search of a father/God figure, this being the necessary model of true masculine identity. It can be then understood that the fight club community will be born from an absence, just like any other organic community: from emptiness. Their lack of a masculine model makes those men unfit to be identified as men in the phallogocentric system inspired by the father figure. Consequently, the protagonist could not belong to any community because his identity as a man was *incomplete*. This incompleteness is shared by all the members of fight club, and is the main character's fixation: "May I never be complete. May I never be content. May I never be perfect" (46). Tyler Durden, fight club's genesis, will be taken as a model for the masculinity lost in the paternal void:

I love everything about Tyler Durden, his courage and his smarts. His nerve. Tyler is funny and charming and forceful and independent, and men look up to him and expect him to change their world. Tyler is capable and free, and I am not. (174)

It is clear that, from the protagonist's perspective, Tyler is seen through a mystical filter, and the fact that men look up to him with such expectations means that he is regarded in a God-like way.

4.2 The Body as Projection of Masculinity

Such communal setting is equal to the concept of Fraternity theorized by Derrida, where a communal ensemble of men or brotherhood occurs under one "universal father", this being portrayed by Tyler (1993: 381). In the previous extract, however, it can be seen that the protagonist is jealous of Durden. Resuming Freud's conception of the *Oedipus complex*, the admiration and at the same time rejection towards the father, or in this case Tyler, is fundamental for adult sexuality to be developed into heterosexual desire (Connell, 2005: 9), another feature of the concept of masculinity heralded in the religious paradigm. If this is the case, Tyler is fulfilling the task of helping the men at fight club to develop their sexual identity as men.

The exaggerated violent activities in which members are involved can be easily justified in terms of the hegemonic masculinity explained above and how limited men's options are to enter in contact with their bodies. From this perspective, if these men do not perform in a masculine way and are by contrast passive, they are placed in the feminine spectrum, losing the maleness they want to achieve. Desired masculinity is grounded on sex, and Butler argues that "sexuality is an historically specific organization of power, discourse, bodies, and affectivity" (2006: 125), and the *phallus*⁴ is taken symbolically to coordinate such organization. This indicates a clear process of *signification* of the body as a symbol of identity and power. However, for the phallic figure to eject power, there needs to be a disempowered element lacking such power: the feminine. This will be the role of Marla Singer in this organic community. She is possessed by Tyler Durden through sexual intercourse, and this bodily experience has a double effect: since she is never granted total access, first, she sets the borders between fight club and the mechanical assemblage of the "outside" American society, establishing a clear inside and outside; secondly, it enables Tyler to develop a fully empowered masculinity that can subdue and establish a clear difference between masculinity and femininity through sexual power.⁵ As stated in the novel, "[w]ithout Marla, Tyler would have nothing" (14), although this is also true to explain Tyler's function in the inorganic communities.

As a result the sexualized body is turned into the medium for this masculine performance to take place, but not only in the sexual field. The very rules of fight club, created by the main character and Durden, have the body as its focal element: the members cannot talk about fight club outside fight club, there are only two men in one fight, there is one fight at a time, they cannot wear shoes or shirts, there is no time limit, and if it is the member's first time at fight club, he has to fight (50). Leaving aside the first for now, these rules are taken as law in this community, and they pose the body as the locus for this masculinity

4 In the novel, the references to phallic images are many, another sign of the obsession with masculine identity limited by sex.

5 This relationship will be further problematized in the inorganic community when I explain the triad formed by Tyler, the protagonist, and Marla.

to be performed: they are fighting bodies in motion, with half naked torsos hitting each other, bruised, wounded, bleeding; a war like image of the body. What happens is that all the members participate in the pain inflicted in each other's bodies, creating a fusion with the body at its core. The abuse that they inflict in each other's bodies may have two aims: first, as the father figure was absent from any member's family, it can be argued that fight club members lack the *castration anxiety* stage argued by Freud. Hence, when these men are hitting each other in a fight, this might be enclosing a hidden meaning. They are the ones punishing themselves physically, in which case the body is now *signified* through violence with a mystified filter: first, to create an illusion of castration anxiety that should have been given by the father; and secondly, to feel closer to that punishing father that was not there to do the punishment himself. As one of the members says, also from Tyler's teachings: "Only if we are caught and punished can we be saved" (141), which connects with an organic religious imagery. It is also yet another example of the violence that men may inflict on other men, as developed in earlier sections.

On these grounds, fight club proposes a way to feel complete despite the void left by their fathers: "Maybe we didn't need a father to complete ourselves" (54). Their completeness is however reached through self-destruction. They do not try to distance themselves from their bodies to forget some sort of pain, as in the groups of cancer. Instead, they confront it in a direct way, to the point of provoking it themselves through Tyler's kiss,⁶ another sign of self-punishment. In this way they *re-work* the meaning of the body into something else, objecting the body from the outside for it to be reconstructed. Also, as the symbol is something invented by Tyler, it shows the notion of the body itself as the locus that has been endowed with seemingly *invented* meanings in society (Nancy, 2008: 9, 29), revealing the outside community as an invention. As a result, this usage of the body does not aim to rupture this community's organicism, because the purpose behind such an act marks visibly the men of fight club as part of the community in a symbolic act, much similar to Christian baptism.⁷

Consequently, fight club rejects pre-established American symbols and substitutes them by others, equally constructed. For that, they destroy the body that has been taken as a medium to project the values accepted in the America represented in the novel through self-inflicted violence. In short, what we find in fight club is, in Blanchot's words: "the mere parody of a sacrifice [of the signified body] set up not to destroy a certain oppressive order but to carry destruction into another set of oppression" (14): "As long as you are at fight club (...) [y]ou're not your job. You're not your family, and you're not who you tell yourself" (143).

4.3 Radicalism: From "I" to "We"

As it could be expected, radicalism ensues. It materializes in Project Mayhem, which is formed by the members of fight club and its objective is to wreak havoc by means of

6 In chapters 8 and 9, Tyler provokes a chemical burn on the back of the main character's hand with his saliva, marking it in the shape of a kiss.

7 An act that seems to subvert the authentic baptism that consists in name-giving.

terrorist attacks. Its rules are similar to those of fight club: there is secrecy, questions are forbidden, and they need to trust, or rather believe in Tyler completely. The purpose of Project Mayhem is the destruction of civilization (being mayhem a synonym for chaos), which means the destruction of the individualism in which the American community in the novel is trapped, and substitute it for another form of archaic organicism where the figure of God is re-established. For this, Tyler forms an army with those men that participated in fight club. The members are called “space monkeys”, and they all lose their names, once they are accepted in Project Mayhem. This is particularly interesting in contrast to the analysis of names in the previous section. By rejecting the names given in baptism, members of fight club and Project Mayhem are rejecting God’s law, because as stated in the novel “getting God’s [the father figure’s] attention for being bad was better than getting no attention at all” (141). By rejecting their names, they also achieve a stronger immanence than that of Christianity, for now there are not even names to establish any difference among them (they are also obliged to dress in the same way and have the same haircut). Tyler orders the “space monkeys” to do certain tasks, related to violence and vandalism, which sometimes involve “human sacrifices”,⁸ as he calls them. This is connected to the concept of *immunity* theorized by Esposito in his work “Comunidad y Violencia”. In order to expand his ideology and protect this masculine-based group, he needs to destroy the outside community. This shows the *self-enclosure* existing in fight club that leads to a destructive and chaotic break, which also points to its organicism: all subjects have now been completely lost in the communal “we”, they have been turned into “a copy of a copy of a copy” (21).

4.4 Fight Club’s Secret and Sacrifice

As explained above, the rules of both fight club and the resulting Project Mayhem, pay special attention to *secrecy*, another defining trait of the organic community. The *secret* is something fundamental for the community to gather the mysterious halo surrounding Tyler and make a work out of death through this mystic filter. Firstly, the secret enables Tyler to appear as a mysterious persona, who no one really knows completely. If Tyler works in secret, he is sharing another God-like feature, whose actions are not comprehensible to the human mind, as Derrida explains. The explanation of such secrecy revolving around Tyler is given in the latest chapters of the novel, unveiling fight club’s most important mystery: that Tyler Durden is actually the main character’s unconscious invention, the result of a multiple personality disorder which was probably provoked by his obsession with finding a masculine model to follow.

This splitting personality will be also discussed in the section dealing with the inorganic community, but it is also important to take the following into account: when the main character is narrating the story he already knows Tyler’s origins. So he is conscious of the communion existing between both because, when he explains a piece of knowledge, such as chemical reactions, he claims: “I know this because Tyler knows this” (12). This denotes the maximum level of fusion that can be achieved, precisely because both characters are

8 Many of the sacrifices performed entail the removal of the victim’s testicles. This shows again the importance of biological maleness for the members of fight club.

sharing the same body. Two things are also revealed thanks to this realisation: first, that total communion can only happen either through sacrifice, as it will be explored now or, as is the protagonist case, paranoia; second, as the leader and creator of such assemblage is an invention, the falsity of the community of fight club is also finally revealed.

As is the case in any organic ensemble, death will be dealt with in a mystified way. An example of its filtered mystification can be seen in Bob's decease. In Project Mayhem, the members are asked explicitly to give their lives for the cause. When Bob dies, all the members gather together to shout his name in a rather ritualistic way, claiming that: "Only in death do we have our own names since only in death are we no longer part of the effort. In death we become heroes" (178). Such conception of death denotes the ultimate step for this community to be completely organic.⁹ Death gives the members their individuality back, so that alterity seems to only be achieved when passing away. This is precisely the reason why Blanchot insists that there cannot be a work out of death and make it meaningful (Nancy, 1991: 31), because there can be no fusion if this is only achieved through the death experienced in others. It also proves Horrocks' (1994) point: that only in death are men allowed to show vulnerability and connect with themselves (in this case, by giving Bob his name back). Death is given a very particular meaning, which reminds of nationalistic movements, as death becomes part of Project Mayhem's cause. Death, put in that way, becomes, as Derrida explains, a gift, much like Christ's gift of death for humanity.

All in all, the communities of fight club and the resulting Project Mayhem are organic communities because they represent (maybe deliberately) an imitation of the Christian community. As it is only a copy, fight club's falsity is enhanced, connected with Bentham's idea of community being a fiction (Etzioni, 1996: 155-6), with Tyler as an imitator of a God/father persona, and the main character being comparable to Jesus Christ, especially regarding his sacrifice at the end of the novel. This however will be further discussed in the next section.

5 INORGANIC COMMUNITIES IN *FIGHT CLUB*

Fight club represents the most salient example of an organic community in Palahniuk's novel. However, as previously explained, fight club only represents another ideologically oppressive system which tries to dissolve American individualism, and fails to open up to new possibilities which allow him to express his identity in community without falling into symbolic saturation. However, Marla Singer will be the key for the protagonist to break with fight club's and Tyler's chaotic and obsessively saturated dogma.

5.1 Marla Singer: The Disruptive "Tourist"

Marla Singer is the only female protagonist of the novel. From her first appearance, she is described in a grotesque way: "Her eyes are brown. Her earlobes pucker around earring holes, no earrings. Her chapped lips are frosted with dead skin" (37-38). At the same time,

9 This is connected with Derrida's economy of sacrifice, where the more you give for the cause, the more you will receive later, which in the end entitles to "absolute loss", death (1996: 100-101).

the narrator tells us that Marla had “no sense of life because she had nothing to contrast it with” (38). In addition, she claims to have connections with dead people who want her dead themselves (62). She can be described, then, as death itself, and only by feeling the death in others, does she feel alive. On one occasion after she and Tyler have sexual intercourse, she claims that “she wanted to have Tyler’s abortion” (59). It can be discussed that in this occasion she is subverting the figure of the Virgin Mary, another fundamental figure in Christian symbolism, thus rejecting women’s traditional role regarding fertility and motherhood.

As a result, Nancy would argue that through death, embodied by Marla, community is revealing itself, and this revelation points out to the impossibility of immanence, thus explaining the protagonist’s outburst of “nostalgia for a more archaic community (...) deploring a loss of familiarity, fraternity and conviviality” (Nancy, 1991: 10). Nancy also states that community cannot operate on death, because the subject that forms it cannot say “I am dead”, even though community tries to mystify it through Christ’s body (Ibid.: 14-15). If Marla is described as a deathly character, community cannot operate on her, so she is presenting herself as a door open to leave organicism. In the novel, she even states that “our culture has made death something wrong” (103), precisely because, as Hillis Miller points out, “[d]eath tends to be covered over, suppressed, almost forgotten” (2011: 14). She and the main character become perfect for each other. The one driven towards a death drive; the other embodying and even embracing it. Finally, it is interesting to relate Marla’s deathly nature and the previously mentioned idea about men and death pointed out by Horrocks (1994): only when approaching or suffering death, men feel ready for openness and love. In representing death, Marla is yet again becoming the perfect opportunity for the main character to escape the numbing individualism and saturated organicism which does not allow him to be in contact with his true self.

In addition, Marla seems to share with the main character Kristeva’s death drive. Marla’s philosophy of life is that “she can die at any moment [but] the tragedy of her life is that she doesn’t” (108). Marla confronts death in a direct, realistic way, that can be translated into ecstasy, rather than fear. It also needs to be borne in mind that her decaying female body is closer to Kristeva’s semiotic and inorganicism. She is the best opportunity for the main character to step out of the radical fraternal union created in fight club and to achieve a better understanding of his own singularity.

Finally, Marla is called a tourist in the novel. That is, someone unwelcome in both the groups of cancer and in fight club. When it comes to the latter, Marla’s function could be seen as helping acknowledge Tyler’s masculinity and to set an “outside” of the fight club community, for the intention of such a group is the communion between males only, who did not have a father figure. But the Tyler/Marla relationship can also be problematized from the perspective of the inorganic community. Taking into account Derrida’s *of Hospitality* (2000) when Marla and Tyler have sexual relationships in the Paper Street house, Marla is acting as a guest, being Tyler the master who invites her in. It can be argued that the feminine is in this case granted access to this masculine environment. As Derrida proposes, the law of hospitality is transgressed when an unconditional welcome is offered (2000: 75-77). However, complete hospitality never occurs. Marla is only met sexually by Tyler, and her presence outside the purely sexual realm is only acknowledged by the main character, who meets her in many

occasions with hostility. If complete entrance is denied, she is not absorbed by the community, or rather, by Tyler, which means that her valuable alterity is not lost.

5.2 The Inorganic Triangle: “I Want Tyler. Tyler Wants Marla. Marla Wants Me”

The triad formed by these characters is of utter importance for the understanding of inorganic communities in *Fight Club*. Tyler's function will be of special importance. Firstly, at the end of the novel, Tyler's *raison d'être* is finally revealed: “I know why Tyler has occurred. Tyler loved Marla. From the first night I met her, Tyler or some part of me had needed a way to be with Marla” (198). If Tyler is a second personality created by the main character, this means that two different alterities are inhabiting the same body or space in Nancy's wording. If this is the case, it can be argued that both alterities own the same body, or rather, that it does not belong completely to any of them. As a result, this body has become a liminal space: a body that cannot be symbolically filtered in organicism, a body that cannot belong completely to the *symbolic*, and therefore has a greater potential to enter the semiotic and break with the rule of the father. Such potential is enhanced upon the realization that whenever the main character was referring to Tyler's body and actions, he was actually being able to “speak about his own body *ex corpore*”, experiencing his own body without going through “transubstantiation” or symbolic saturation (Nancy, 2008: 124, 128).

The most interesting aspect when it comes to Tyler's body is, however, the following. All the values which belong to hegemonic masculinity are concentrated in him and taken to the extreme. He embodies the “hysterically phallic” described by Segal and the concept of hysteria mentioned by Nancy: “a body saturated with significations” (2008: 23), in this case those that belong to obsessive hyper-masculinity. In other words, Tyler becomes a distiller of saturation, a catalyst which the main character can use to escape organicism and meet Marla in an inorganic encounter in which both escape gender significations and are able to communicate in a non-operative way.

Marla, then, makes also use of the “distillatory” power of Tyler. As mentioned previously, Marla is not given full access to the fight club community, nor is she granted full access to the protagonist's body because it does not belong to him completely. Marla only meets Tyler in a sexual way, whereas when she communicates with the main character, the very gender dichotomy¹⁰ which typically applies to women in organicism is eliminated: with the protagonist, Marla is neither a motherly figure, nor is she sexually objectified. Consequently, she leaves aside the saturated meanings that also accompany femininity in the symbolic and creates with the protagonist an inorganic ensemble.

Inorganicism is also made possible because at the end of the novel the main character decides to shoot himself and therefore kill both himself and Tyler. As a result, he saves Marla from Project Mayhem and eliminates the whole community of fight club. He manages to give Marla an unsaturated “gift of death” as opposed to the one epitomized by Jesus Christ's sacrifice: “If I want my life to have meaning for myself it must have meaning *for someone else*” (cf. Blanchot, *Unavowable*: 21-22). In addition, Tyler's saturated hyper-

10 According to Irigaray traditional gender bynarisms place women either in the sexual spectrum or as a motherly figure (cf. Morris, 1996: 139).

masculine practices disappear with them both, as the body which projected them becomes lifeless when the main character falls into a coma. In such state, death does not operate on him either, and inorganic communication still occurs between the protagonist and Marla through the letters he says to receive from her while he is "asleep".

6 CONCLUSIONS

Palahniuk makes his main character confront a terrifying but plausible concern: the idea that no one belongs anywhere in the American, individualistic social assemblage that he proposes in *Fight Club*, together with a masculine identity crisis that reaches its peak when he faces Marla Singer. The narrow understanding of the relationship between sexes that the organic community proposes, focused on fraternal union and the rejection of women, is what encourages the protagonist to create Tyler Durden, for if community is a fiction in Bentham's wording, only a fictive figure can fulfil such conception.

It is thanks to Palahniuk's grotesque and disruptive extremism as epitomized in Tyler Durden that new alternatives as regards (gender) identity and communication can happen between the main protagonists of the novel. Durden also strengthens the absurdity of the values of hegemonic masculinity and the senselessness of traditional communitarian symbolisms. At the same time, it attempts to demonstrate that only through real communication can true understanding take place.

REFERENCES

- ADAMS, R., AND SAVRAN, D. 2002. Eds. *The Masculinity Studies Reader*. Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- ANDERSON, B. 1983. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- ARMENGOL, J. M. 2006. *Gendering Men: Theorizing Masculinities in American Culture and Literature*. Diss. Universitat de Barcelona.
- ARMENGOL, J. M. AND CARIBÍ, A. 2009. Eds. *Debating Masculinity*. Harriman, Tennessee: Men's Studies Press.
- ARMENGOL, J. M. AND CARIBÍ, A. 2014. *Alternative Masculinities for a Changing World*. Ciudad: Palgrave Macmillan.
- BARON, R. A. AND BYRNE, D. 1988. *Psicología Social*. 8th Edition. Madrid: Prentice Hall.
- BIRD, S. R. 1996. "Welcome to the Men's Club. Homosexuality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity". *Gender and Society*. 10.2: 120-132.
- BLANCHOT, M. 1988. *The Unavowable Community*. Trans. Pierre Joris. Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press.
- BORDO, S. 1993. "The body and the Reproduction of Femininity". *Unbearable Weight. Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. California: The University of California Press. 23+62-2376.

- BROD, H. AND KAUFMAN, M. 1994. Eds. *Theorizing Masculinities*. London: Sage Publications.
- BUTLER, J. 2006. *Gender Trouble*. 2nd Edition. NY & London: Routledge Classics.
- BUTLER, J. 2011 (1993) *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. NY & London: Routledge. Kindle file.
- CAPUTO, J. D. 1997. "Community without Community". *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*. Ed. John D. Caputo. New York: Fordham UP.
- CARLSON, M. 1996. *Performance. A Critical Introduction*. NY & London: Routledge.
- CHODOROW, N. 1978. *The Reproduction of Mothering. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- CLARE, A. 2001. *On Men. Masculinity in Crisis*. London: Arrow Books. Kindle file.
- CONNELL, R. 2005 (1995). *Masculinities*. 2nd Edition. Oxford & Cambridge: Polity Press.
- CONNELL, R. AND MESSERSCHMIDT, J. W. 2005. "Hegemonic Masculinity. Rethinking the Concept". *Gender and Society* 19.6: 829-859.
- DELUZAIN, E. H. 1996. "Names and Personal Identity". *Behind the Name*. n p. Web. 18 April 2018. <http://www.behindthename.com/articles/3.php>.
- DERRIDA, J. 1993. "The Politics of Friendship". *American Imago*: 50: 3 Trans. Motzkin Gabriel & Michael Syrotinski. John Hopkins University Press. 353-391.
- DERRIDA, J. 1996 (1992). *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*. Trans. David Wills. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- DERRIDA, J. AND DUFOURMANTELLE, A. 2000. *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- DOMÍNGUEZ RUIZ, B. 2015. *Re-reading The Lord of the Rings: Masculinities in J.R.R. Tolkien's Novel and Peter Jackson's Film Adaptation*. Tesis doctoral. Granada: Universidad de Granada.
- ESPOSITO, R. "Comunidad y Violencia". Trans. Ricardo González. *Conference at Circulo de Bellas Artes de Madrid*. 27 March 2009. 18 April 2018 <http://abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/pensamientopolitico/ponencias/ponenciaesposito.pdf>.
- ESPOSITO, R. 2010. *Communitas. Origin and Destiny of Community*. Trans. Timothy Campbell. Stanford: Stanford UP.
- ETZIONI, A. May 1996. "A Moderate Communitarian Proposal". *Political Theory* 24.2: 155-171.
- FELLUGA, D. 2011. "Terms Used by Psychoanalysis". *Introductory guide to Critical Theory*. Purdue U. Web. 3 April 2018. <https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/psychterms.html>.
- GIRARD, R. 1997 (1972) *Violence and the Sacred*. Trans. Patrick Gregory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

- HALBERSTAM, J. 1998. *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- HEARN, J. 1992. *Men in the Public Eye. The construction and Deconstruction of Public Men and Public Patriarchies*. London: Routledge.
- HILLIS MILLER, J. 2005. "Unworked and Unavowable: Community in The Awkward Age". *Literature as Conduct: Speech Acts in Henry James*. New York: Fordham UP. 84-150.
- HILLIS MILLER, J. 2011. *The Conflagration of Community. Fiction before and after Auschwitz*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 3-35.
- HORROCKS, R. 1994. *Masculinity in Crisis. Myths, Fantasies and Realities*. London: the Macmillan Press LTD.
- JAMES, S. 2000. "Feminism in Philosophy of Mind: the Question of Personal Identity". *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*. Eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 29-48.
- KATZ, J. 2010. *Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity*. Ciudad: Sage Publications.
- KAUFMAN, M. 1987. *Beyond Patriarchy. Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- KESSLER, S. J., ASHENDEN D. J., CONNELL, R. W., AND DOWSETT, G. W. 1982. *Ockers and Disco-maniacs*. Sydney, Australia: Inner City Education Center.
- KRISTEVA, J. 1982. *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. León S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
- MACINNES, J. 1998. *The End of Masculinity. The Confusion of Sexual Genesis and Sexual Difference in Modern Society*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Mendieta, E. 2005. "Surviving American Culture. On Chuck Palahniuk". *Philosophy and Literature* 29.2: 394-408.
- MERCER SCHUCHARDT, R. 2008. *You Do Not Talk About Fight Club: I am Jack's Completely Unauthorized Essay Collection*. Dallas: Benbella Books, Inc.
- MORRIS, P. 1996 (1993). "Writing as a Woman: Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Ecriture Féminine". *Literature and Feminism*. Oxford: Blackwell. 113-13.
- NANCY, J. L. 1991. *The Inoperative Community*. Ed. Peter Connor. Trans. Peter Connor et al. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota. 1-42.
- NANCY, J. L. 2003. "The confronted community". *Postcolonial Studies* 6.1: 23-36.
- NANCY, J. L. 2008. *Corpus*. Trans. Richard A. Rand. New York: Fordham UP.
- NANCY, J. L. AND CLIFT, S. 2013. "Fraternity". *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*. 18.3: 119-123.
- O'BYRNE, A. 2013. "'Communitas' and the Problem of Women". *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*. 18.3: 125-138.
- PALAHNIUK, C. 2006 (1996). *Fight Club*. London: Vintage.

- ROBINSON, T. 2002. *Interview with Chuck Palahniuk*. AvClub. 20 April 2018. <https://www.avclub.com/chuck-palahniuk-1798208302>.
- SARTAIN, J. A. 2009. "Editor's Introduction". In *Sacred and Immoral: On the Writings of Chuck Palahniuk*. Ed. Jeffery A. Sartain. Newcastle upon Tyne, GBR: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. xv-xvii.
- SEGAL, L. 1993. "Changing Men. Masculinities in Context". *Theory and Society*. 22.5: 625-641.
- SEGAL, L. 2007. *Slow Motion. Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- TÖNNIES, F. 2001 (1883). Artículo. In *Community and Civil Society*. Ed. John Harris. Trans. Margaret Hollis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Páginas.
- WHITEHEAD, S. M. AND BARRETT, F. J. 2001. *The Masculinities Reader*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.