

Victoria L. Ketz

Madrid Transposed:

The Case of Millás' *Dos mujeres en Praga*

In 2002, Juan Jose Millás, one of Spain's most prolific contemporary writers, published *Dos mujeres en Praga*, which received the Premio Primavera de Novela. This novel marks a departure from Millás' usual treatment of Madrid's urban space. In *Dos mujeres en Praga*, Luz Acaso, the protagonist, decides that she must document her existence before she dies of cancer. To do so, she turns to three sterile alienated writers, and in the process Luz forms the "family" she never had when each assumes the role of her husband, son and daughter. This construct of a fictional world extends beyond her interpersonal relationship to her physical surroundings. All of the characters accept Luz's invalidation of their existence in Madrid when she recreates Prague in her apartment. The choice by the characters to mentally exile themselves to Prague corresponds to their inability to confront their reality and their desire to find acceptance and a sense of belonging.

The purpose of this presentation is multifold while focusing primarily on the recreation of the exiled space, the fictional Prague. First, the paper will study the aspects of their actual contemporary surroundings, Madrid, that are perceived as hostile and untenable. The characters' inability to function there lures them to participate in the fictional world created by Luz. Second, there will be a scrutiny of the method in which their exiled land is created, which is achieved through the manipulation of narrative structure, usage of multiple narrators, and the inclusion of metafictional elements. Finally, the paper will analyze how their fictional existence in "Prague" stimulates their literary production, as well as, their interpersonal connections.

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