

*Kevin Foster*

## Disappearing Acts: Remembering the Victims of the Dirty War



On 3 April 1982, the day after news broke that Argentine forces had seized the Falkland Islands, MPs were recalled to parliament for an Emergency Debate on the crisis—the first Saturday sitting of the House of Commons since Suez. Shame, humiliation and rage were the characteristic emotions of the day as speaker after speaker rose to condemn the political, diplomatic and intelligence failures that had led to the current state of affairs, to lambast the perfidiousness of the enemy and to lament the plight of the Falkland Islanders.

The Falkland Islands and their 1800 occupants were, before the events of April 1982, largely unknown to the vast majority of the British public. As such it was vital that the significance of the islands and their people should be made clear to everybody. The closer the links between the islanders and the British, the more the Falklands could be made to look and sound like Jersey, the Isle of Wight or the Hebrides, and their people more like familiar figures from *The Archers* the more they could be made to matter to the public.<sup>1</sup> Hence the repeated insistence on the ties of blood which bound the Falklanders to the British. The islanders, it was constantly emphasized, may have been geographically distant from the homeland, but in the Prime Minister's words, they were 'British in stock and tradition, and they wish to remain British in allegiance' (Morgan, 1982: 5). However, this consciousness-raising campaign was not, as Sue Townsend implies, an unqualified success. When Adrian Mole broke the news to his father, George, that Argentina had invaded the Falklands: 'He shot out of bed because he thought the Falklands lay off the coast of Scotland, When I pointed out that they were eight thousand miles away he got back in to bed and pulled the covers over his head' (Townsend, 1982: 186). Exactly where the islands were was also a matter of some mystery. Adrian's own efforts to locate them on a map of the world proved fruitless. Eventually, he ruefully recalls: 'My mother found them: they were hidden under a crumb of fruitcake' (Townsend, 1984: 13). Their unimportance to most Britons, Townsend neatly implies, is evident in their obscurity.

The parliamentarians' ready identification of the islands with Britain was, then, a predictable political response to the situation, a vital means of raising public consciousness about the islands and dragooning public support for the mission to reclaim them. Attacks on Argentina's military regime provided another handy means of garnering support for the Task Force and its mission. All those braided Ruritanian generals backslapping one another on their belle-epoque balconies while the shirtless masses chanted 'Ar-gen-tina!' furnished a near hysterical parliament with a pretext for easy abuse and a tailor-made lexicon of invective.<sup>2</sup> Most notable in this regard was the Shadow Secretary of Defence John Silkin's memorable description of General Galtieri as 'this present bargain-basement Mussolini', along with sundry other references to 'Galtieri and his bunch of hangmen', tin-pot fascist dictator, the jack-boot of tyranny, and the like (Morgan, 1982: 19, 64). Yet Argentina's military dictatorship was not only an easy but also a useful target. Resistance to its despotic practices implied moral parallels between the struggle for the Falklands and Britain's last great battle against totalitarianism in the Second World War. As John Silkin observed during the debate:

I share the concerns expressed by many right hon. and hon. Members that what has taken place is the aggression of a Fascist dictatorship and a Fascist junta whose latest leader, General Galtieri, is probably the worst of the bunch of its leaders—a man who wears upon his chest the medals that he won in repressing his own people. When he says to us that he will respect the rights and property and, above all, the lives and freedom of our people, we have a right to wonder whether that is true in view of what he does to his own people (Morgan, 1982: 17).

While Silkin's condemnation of Galtieri and his regime is to be expected and is done by the numbers here, what is considerably more surprising, if unintended, is his identification of the islanders with the victims of Argentina's political repression and the implicit paralleling of their quest for liberation with the struggle for democratic freedoms and human rights in Argentina. By dint of Argentina's seizure of the islands the Falklanders had, in the words of Patrick Cormack, the Conservative member for Staffordshire South East, been 'incarcerated in an Argentine gaol' and so become the regime's latest political detainees, (Morgan, 1982: 13). For any too slow or too timid to pick up on the implied parallels the Leader of the Opposition, Michael Foot, explicitly identified the 'suffering' of the islanders with the plight of Argentina's political prisoners:

Any guarantee from this invading force is utterly worthless—as worthless as any of the guarantees that are given by this same Argentine junta to its own people.

We can hardly forget that thousands of innocent people fighting for their political rights in Argentine [sic] are in prison and have been tortured and debased. We cannot forget that fact when our friends and fellow citizens in the Falkland Islands are suffering as they are at this moment (Morgan, 1982: 8).

‘Suffering as they are?’ ‘Hardly forget?’ In his urgency to press the case of the Task Force and the liberation of the Falklanders Michael Foot is overwhelmed by his own rhetoric and he overlooks some important historical facts about Britain’s responses to Argentina’s domestic repression.

While Amnesty International published a series of damning reports on the junta’s abuse of human rights, the OAS condemned the gross violations of human rights, and both the Swedish and the French Governments vigorously took up the cases of their citizens who fell foul of the authorities, successive British governments, a Labour administration up to 1979, in which Michael Foot served as a minister, and thereafter a Conservative ministry were conspicuous by their silence.<sup>3</sup> It took the invasion of the Falkland Islands in April 1982 to convert Argentina’s political repression into a pressing matter of domestic British politics. Only now that they couldn’t ignore it any longer could they, in Michael Foot’s words, hardly forget it. That the repression in Argentina and its tens of thousands of victims should finally have caught the attention of the House of Commons was laudable, if late. However, that the victims of the generals’ excesses should be invoked there merely as emblems of the political liberties now lost to the Falkland Islanders is richly ironic.

This subordination of Argentina and its people to the domestic interests of the British (and the Americans) reflects something more (and more disturbing) than pure political expediency. It enshrines a set of discursive practices that have their origins in deep-seated western epistemologies of Latin America. Surveying an extensive array of literature from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, J.H Elliott observes that the discovery of the New World confronted the Old with a range of intellectual and epistemological challenges which the Old World was, in the main, loathe to take up:

...it is difficult not to be impressed by the strange lacunae and the resounding silences in many places where references to the New World could reasonably be expected...

The reluctance of cosmographers or social philosophers to incorporate into their work the new information made available to them by the discovery of America provides an example of the wider problem arising from the revelation of the New World to the old. Whether it is a question of the geography of America, its flora and fauna, or the nature of its inhabitants, the same kind of pattern seems constantly to recur in the European response. It is as if, at a certain point, the mental shutters came down; as if, with so much to see and absorb and understand, the effort suddenly becomes too much for them, and Europeans retreat to the half-light of their traditional mental world.

There is nothing very novel about the form of this sixteenth century response. Medieval Europe had found it supremely difficult to comprehend and come to terms with the phenomenon of Islam... Nor is this a matter for surprise for the attempt of one society to comprehend another inevitably forces it to reappraise itself. . . . This process is bound to be an agonizing one, involving the jettisoning of many traditional preconceptions and inherited ideas. It is hardly surprising, then, if sixteenth-century Europeans either ignored the challenge or balked at the attempt. There was, after all, an easier way out, neatly epitomized in 1528 by the Spanish humanist, Hernán Pérez de Oliva, when he wrote that Columbus set out on his second voyage "to unite the world and give to those strange lands the form of our own". (Elliott, 1970: 13-15)

Elliott's image of sixteenth century Europeans dazzled by the prodigality of the New World, retreating to 'the half light of their traditional mental world' provides a key image for the processes determining the English-speaking west's contemporary cultural relations with Latin America. Yet how can one explain the persistence of this perennial ignorance; how is it that where Latin America is concerned the mental shutters remain locked and bolted in the English-speaking west and we are happy to stumble around in the half-light of incomprehension and prejudice? The British, as Alan Knight, Professor of the History of Latin America at the University of Oxford, observes, have a long and venerable 'tradition of denigrating Latin America and its inhabitants' (Knight, 1994: 3). And though the pomp and panoply of empire may have gone the attitudes that characterised and sustained it have turned out to be unexpectedly enduring. How

so? *Ornamentalism* (2001), David Cannadine's recent study of 'how the British saw their empire', offers a useful (if unintended) adjunct to Elliott's analysis and an explanation of why the depressing stereotypes identified by Knight persist.

It is Cannadine's explicit aim in *Ornamentalism* to correct the approach of British and foreign scholars who had traditionally regarded British imperial history 'as if it were completely separate and distinct from the history of the British nation'. On the contrary, Cannadine contends, 'Britain was very much a part of the empire, just as the rest of the empire was very much part of Britain', the two comprising, an 'entire interactive system', one 'vast interconnected world' (Cannadine, 2001: xvii). Indeed the empire was, he argued, literally inconceivable in isolation from the metropolitan centre, in that the domestic environment furnished both a model and a means by which the broader populace might conceive of and so understand the empire. What this meant in practical terms for those Britons struggling to 'conceive of these diverse colonies and varied populations beyond the seas' was that they began 'with what they knew—or what they thought they knew—namely, the social structure of their own home country' (Cannadine, 2001: 3-4). Consequently, Cannadine affirms, the people's perception of the empire:

...was not exclusively (or even preponderantly) concerned with the creation of "otherness" on the presumption that the imperial periphery was different from, and inferior to, the imperial metropolis: it was at least as much (perhaps more?) concerned with what has recently been called the "construction of affinities" on the presumption that society on the periphery was the same as, or even on occasions superior to, society in the metropolis. Thus regarded, the British Empire was about the familiar and domestic, as well as the different and the exotic: indeed, it was in large part about the domestication of the exotic—the comprehending and the reordering of the foreign in parallel, analogous, equivalent, resemblant terms. (Cannadine, 2001: xix)

Accordingly, one of the central, if unforeseen, functions of the empire, Cannadine asserts, was its provision of a powerful and peculiarly effective 'mechanism for the export, projection and analogisation of domestic social structures and social perceptions' (Cannadine, 2001: 10).

In spite of the fact that no part of Latin America was ever a formal constituent of the British Empire (with the exception of Belize, British Guyana and, to stretch

a point, the Falkland Islands), it seems to me that Cannadine's arguments about British constructions of the empire can offer a useful basis for approaching its discursive relations with Latin America. Indeed, Britain's lack of an imperial presence in Latin America and the mechanism for self-projection that this afforded proved not a bar but a vital stimulus to the export of its domestic vision. If, as the social psychologist Frederick Bartlett points out, 'acts of perception are really acts of recall', then what the British saw in Latin America was crucially determined by what they remembered of or had read about equivalent prior experience and the preconceptions they fed (Bartlett, 1972: 14). The effort to order and understand new experiences, to absorb and evaluate unfamiliar states or situations involves a combination of what cognitive scientists term 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' processing. Bottom-up processing involves 'building up a composite meaning on the basis of our perception of its component parts'; top-down processing, as its name implies, draws on the 'expectations, assumptions and prior knowledge' of the interpreter (MacLachlan, 1994: 70). While regular contact between Britain and its colonies and a healthy traffic in goods and people served to demystify and even suburbanise many of the empire's exoticisms, to convert a raft of top-down assumptions into the embodied evidence of bottom-up observation, ongoing (and repeatedly professed) ignorance about Latin America necessitated a primary—and thereafter habitual—recourse to top-down processes, to prejudice and preconceptions, to the framework of assumptions and expectations they provided within which experience and observation might be ordered and explained. Put simply, where familiarity with the empire served to validate and entrench domestic analogy, continued ignorance of Latin America required it.

This, it should be noted, is not a uniquely British response. Consider the QANTAS advertisement from February 1999 publicising the Australian carrier's newly established direct connections to Buenos Aires: 'Let the airline you know show you the land you don't know...South America' (*The Age*, 1999: 9). The emphasis here is on how domestic forms can provide both emotional lagging and a conceptual framework within which the unknown and threatening might be understood and demystified. QANTAS won't only take you to South America, but as the copy and the photographs of the continent's significant sites demonstrate, they'll also transport your mental luggage, making sure that your expectations and assumptions about South America arrive and remain intact:

Discover the land of the Andes, the Amazon and the lost cities of the Incas and Aztec. Sprawling pampas, spectacular glaciers and haunting deserts.

This is South America.

And if you're into discovering the brighter side of life—  
Bienvenido! Welcome to the vibrant rhythms of the Lambada,  
Samba, Rhumba and Mambo. After all this is also the land of  
the Carnival, Ipanema and Copacabana. (*The Age*, 1999: 9)

South America, from this advertisement, looks like an eerily depopulated waste, barely marked by the hand of man. Framed by its towering peaks and jungle torrents the land is reduced to its pure, elemental forms—ice, grass, sand; too cold, too hot or just too big. Where there are signs of human habitation the people are either dead or dancing—their cities 'lost' or entirely given over to the pleasures of the flesh.

What is most striking about this advertisement, then, is not its reductive representation of Latin America as a cavalcade of tits, tango and torrents, but the extent to which this vision draws on and reproduces Australian constructions of Australia. Efforts to sell Australia as a tourist destination to both foreign and domestic markets have, as Stephen Alomes notes, been framed around a familiar roll call of what he calls 'native exotica—flora, fauna and Aborigines'—and sport (Alomes, 1987: 175). This vision of Australia as a land of the physical, where nature still holds sway over culture's feeble efforts to leave its mark on the land, translates into the familiar brochure clichés—Uluru, Kata Tjuta, the Kimberleys, the Great Barrier Reef, rearing kangaroos, unnaturally alert koalas and painted aborigines. Turn the greens to brown, set the flesh on sand, turn the dancers into sportsmen clasped in the embrace of combat and what you have here is an image of Australia. What QANTAS is inviting us to discover, then, is not what we don't know about South America but what we already know about Australia.

Likewise, US fictional responses to the fate of the disappeared demonstrate a similar preoccupation with domestic interests. In *Imagining Argentina* (1987), Lawrence Thornton seeks to recreate the experience of the dirty war, to summon up, inhabit and thereby, literally, to re-member the lost bodies of the disappeared, to put together again that which has been broken, dispersed and dematerialised. Yet while the disappeared are the ostensible subject of Thornton's account he is interested in them as symbolic rather than as actual victims. That is to say they are of interest in so far as they are of use to the identification, analysis and resolution of the failings in Thornton's own society. The brutal polarisations of *el proceso* had once defined their dissent as an active threat to 'Western and Christian civilisation' and so sealed their fate as subversives. Now in Thornton's account, ironically, it is their semiological richness, their superabundance of meanings, lost / found, present / absent, good /

evil, heaven / hell, and the serviceability this affords them, the readiness with which they can be used to explore the dilemmas of the Old World, not the excesses of the New, which ensures the perpetuation of their banishment. They are recalled and re-membered only to be dispersed and disappeared again.

*Imagining Argentina* tells the story Carlos Rueda, a playwright at the National Children's Theatre whose journalist wife, Cecilia, is disappeared after writing articles critical of the military. The shock of Cecilia's abduction unlocks a hidden talent in Carlos, his gift as a medium. He is able to see the disappeared, what has happened to them, where they are now and where they are headed. After wrestling with his own grief, a chance encounter with the mothers of the disappeared demonstrating in the Plaza de Mayo, leads Carlos to the realisation that not only can he put his gift to the service of others, but that thereby he might also be able to rescue his lost wife. So begin the weekly séances conducted in the garden of his house. Here, stirred by the voices of those left-behind, Carlos renders a full and detailed account of their experiences and eventual fate. Martín Benn, the narrator, recalls Carlos's voice 'filling the garden with prisons, houses in the pampas, abandoned buildings near the port where people languished in cells, or screamed from torture' (Thornton, 1989: 46). Yet this is a somewhat unrepresentative summary of the substance of Carlos' visions. It implies the horror of abduction, torture and execution, but his narratives withhold these details in the main. Detail, in the sense of closely observed experiences, emotions and environments, is reserved for the portraits of survival, reconciliation and reunion, which predominate in the novel. Indeed, the very discourse of spiritualism asserts the stubborn corporeality of the disappeared, denying their dispersal and evanescence.<sup>4</sup>

There is little question that Carlos and Cecilia will eventually be re-united. Not only do the novel's various romance tropes tilt its trajectory firmly in the direction of a happy homecoming but, more importantly, the disappeared in this book demonstrate a dogged resistance to invisibility.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, not only do the disappeared keep turning up, either in person, or communicating through Carlos from the sanctuary they have achieved: but, from what we see or hear of them, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they have positively benefited from the experience of abduction, torture and disappearance. Consider Silvio Ayala, Carlos' colleague from the Children's Theatre. Cynical, self-interested, apolitical, sociable, cautious, he is picked up due to his association with Carlos and the theatre, tortured and eventually dropped out into the sea still half-alive. Though his only act of rebellion is to scrape a testament onto the concrete wall of his cell: 'I AM SILVIO AYALA, AN ARGENTINE. WE ARE LEGION', Carlos insists that Silvio's ordeal has transformed him into a hero of resistance, his disappearance denied by the tangible example of his valour: 'His courage remains alive', Carlos

affirms, 'and it will defeat them in the end' (Thornton, 1989: 142, 143). Moreover, through his experiences Silvio sheds his shallow preoccupations and attains a new depth of self-knowledge and spiritual contentment. As Carlos foresees it, though his body 'will float far out to sea... his spirit will be at rest in ways none of us who knew him would have supposed' (Thornton, 1989: 142). Thus, as Carlos remarks, the experience of imprisonment and torture 'split[s] the real person open' with 'remarkable' results: cynics find new faith, the young are matured, the meek are made strong and the restless find peace, (Thornton, 1989: 142). The lost, it would seem, are found by being lost. By retracing their steps, tracking their movements, locating and stubbornly resurrecting the victims of the dirty war in the service of romance, Thornton refuses to accept that the disappeared are just that, too often in this book they are the resurrected or reappeared. Thus are the disappeared denied and disappeared once more not, in this case, in the pursuit of moral and political hygiene, but, worse still, in the cause of narrative orthodoxy.

The dirty war and the human suffering it occasioned serve in *Imagining Argentina* as the context for a celebration of hope and survival, a crucible in which faith, loyalty and love are purified and polished to adamantine brightness. Cruelty, brutality, the endless anguish of *not* knowing, the very elements which distinguish this particular conflict are mere background here. Implied about others but never confronted, they are the *mise-en-scène* for a war in which everybody knows the worst or the best, in which one way or another everybody finds some kind of closure.

Why is this so? Well, put simply, this is not a novel about the dirty war, or even about Argentina. Events in Argentina may provide the ostensible focus for the book, but the history it offers is proleptic not retrospective, speculative not actual. What Thornton articulates in *Imagining Argentina* is the enactment of a personal and collective fantasy, a dream of healing and wholeness. While the origins of Argentina's sickness are plain, the remedies Thornton proposes are intended for another people and another nation. This is made clear through the narrator's account of his experiences in Vietnam. Posted to Saigon in 1965 after the death of his son (drowned in the River Plate) and the collapse of his marriage, Martín Benn is, very nearly, another casualty of Vietnam:

By the time I left Asia my mind was filled with indelible images... Back in Argentina I found that I could look at awful things and remain unmoved even after writing about them, when emotions have a habit of creeping in. I knew I was in trouble, and it was then that Cecilia and Carlos dove into that murky water and brought me up to a different world, restoring me by simply being who they were. (Thornton, 1989: 19)

Benn is quite clear about the basis of his salvation: it is not merely the solicitude that Carlos and Cecilia show to him but their readiness to take him into the family (Thornton, 1989: 19). Accordingly, for him, the particular horror of *el proceso* is not its attack on the cherished principles of a civilised society, the denial of freedom of speech or political pluralism, but its assault on the family. The reconstruction of Argentina, Benn argues, can only begin with the restoration of its shattered families: only when its lost children are returned can the nation be whole.

This is, of course, a familiar trope, yet it is familiar to us in the context and from the cultural production of North and not South America, in the numberless films and books that have centred on the men supposedly left behind in Vietnam, the POWs and MIAs. After a decade of embarrassed and often anguished denial about what had happened in Vietnam, the election of Ronald Reagan to the US Presidency in 1980 ushered in a new mood of aggressive nationalism, underpinned by a determinedly revisionist reading of the war in Vietnam. The PoWs and MIAs occupied a crucial role in this reading offering, as Louis Kern notes, 'a patriotic way of approaching a most unpopular war' (Kern, 191988: 44-5). Hollywood came to realise that the PoWs and MIAs afforded a unique opportunity to reclaim, in California, what had been so traumatically lost in South East Asia, that they could be used to provide the 'missing key to closure on [America's] understanding of the war' (Bowen, 1990: 228). The early-mid 1980s saw a raft of films in which returning to Vietnam to reclaim their lost men, the Americans were given the opportunity for a second go at the Vietnamese, the opportunity to finally win the war: *Uncommon Valour* (1983), *Missing in Action I II and III* (1984, 1985 and 1987), and, most famously, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985).<sup>6</sup> In defeating the Vietnamese and liberating their lost sons, America might not only reclaim its honour and rediscover its sense of pride, it could also right the wrongs of the past, heal the deep social wounds opened by the conflict and so make the nation whole again. As Kevin Bowen put it: 'these films seek to discover and redeem what has been "lost" in America's lost war' (Bowen, 1990: 231). Accordingly, their narrative logic requires and moves towards the dramatic discovery of the MIAs, embodied evidence that what was feared lost is now found and can be reclaimed. Hence, the archetypal narrative requires their location, embodiment and return. 'These films', according to Rick Berg, present America's 'cultural obsession with "returning"' (Berg, 1990: 62). And this is the ineluctable trajectory of Lawrence Thornton's novel, first published, in 1987, at the high watermark of Reaganite revisionism.

That *Imagining Argentina* is a determinedly American romance is evident in its insensitivity to, if not its complete ignorance of the political and cultural significance of the continued absence of the disappeared. In Argentina there is no abiding myth

that the disappeared are merely off-stage awaiting their cue to enter, let alone the fantastical belief that by their return they might heal the fractured nation. Andrew Graham-Yooll, a reporter on the *Buenos Aires Herald* who fled to Britain six months after the military coup rightly identifies fantasies of this kind as psychoses of denial. Indeed, the nation's most prominent human rights group, and those most directly effected by the disappearances, *La Asociación Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* insist that until the men responsible for the abduction, torture and killing of their children are brought to justice Argentina cannot begin to think about healing the wounds of the past and embarking on a new beginning. It is imperative, in this context, that the disappeared remain just that—absent. Their absence shadowing a haunting presence, an implacable indictment of the nation's failure to deliver justice to the victims or their families. As Hebe da Bonafini, President of *Las Madres* observed on a visit to Melbourne in July 2002: 'Until there is justice we will never accept that our children are dead. They are forever disappeared' (Bone, 2002: 11). The logic of any narrative on the dirty war cognisant of conditions in Argentina thus requires not a movement toward and the revelation of rediscovered presence, but an endless orbiting around a conspicuous and increasingly resonant vacancy. Dreaming of America all along, Lawrence Thornton's peculiarly Reaganite romance can never convincingly imagine Argentina.

## Notes

1. *The Archers* is a popular Radio serial set in the fictitious, archetypal English village of Ambridge which has played daily on the BBC for more than half a century.
2. Anthony Barnett referred to Parliament's 'collective inanity' at this time (Barnett, 1982: 19)
3. Amnesty International's reports included: *Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Argentina, 6-15 November 1976*; *Testimony of Secret Detention Camps in Argentina*; *The Disappeared of Argentina: History of Cases reported to Amnesty International, November 1975-December 1979*.
4. There were small, isolated gestures of defiance. Dr David Owen, Minister for Defence in the Callaghan Labour Government (1976-9) refused to meet Admiral Massera when he visited Britain in 1978, but as Simpson notes, Owen's gesture 'had no noticeable effect' on British policy towards Argentina (Simpson, 1985: 361-2).
5. For more on this see Mantel, 2001: 3; Gaskill, 2002: 47-58.
6. J.A. Cuddon offers the following definition of romance: 'Whatever else a romance may be (or have been) it is principally a form of entertainment. It may also be didactic but this is usually incidental... It is usually concerned with characters (and thus with events) who live in a courtly world somewhat remote from the everyday. This suggests elements of fantasy, improbability, extravagance and naivety. It also suggests elements of love, adventure, the marvellous and the "mythic". For the most part the term is used rather loosely to describe a narrative of heroic or spectacular achievements, of chivalry, of gallant love, of deeds of derring-do' (1992: 803).

7. The success of these films, according to Kern, lies in their ability to rehabilitate the Vietnam experience and to repackage it as a victory of sorts by establishing its links with the nation's frontier myth through the narrative of the captive / hunter. For more on this see Kern, 1988: 'In the jungles of Southeast Asia, American fighting men were the latest in a long line of macho heroes who incarnated the nation's archetypal self-image. In the popular mind that heroic line stretched unbroken back to our origins as a distinctive people, and found its classic expression in the figure of the Frontiersman / Indian Fighter. He lived amidst scenes of death and destruction, and was the agent of the advance of civilization through his mastery and exercise of the special skills of savage warfare, a war of extermination... To preserve civilization (i.e., the American way of life), the mythic Indian fighter becomes a living sacrifice, an embodiment of the collective popular will. He emerged as an ambivalent, paradoxical figure—a savage instrument of civilization' (39). See also Williams, 1990: 134).

### Works Cited

- Alomes, Stephen. "The British Press and Australia: Post-Imperial Fantasy and the Contemporary Media." *Meanjin* 46: 2 (1987): 173-183
- Amnesty International (1977) *Report of an Amnesty International Mission to Argentina, 6-15 November 1976* London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International (1980) *Testimony of Secret Detention Camps in Argentina* London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International (1980) *The Disappeared of Argentina: History of Cases reported to Amnesty International, November 1975-December 1979* London: Amnesty International.
- Aparicio, Frances R., and Susana Chávez Silverman, eds. *Tropicalizations: Transcultural Representations of Latinidad*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997.
- Barnett, Anthony. *Iron Britannia*. London: Allison and Busby, 1982.
- Bartlett, Frederick C. *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972.
- Berg, Rick (1990) 'Losing Vietnam: Covering the War in an Age of Technology'. *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*, Eds., Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Bone, Pamela (2002) 'Undying love gives birth to universal motherhood', *The Age*, 5 July.
- Bowen, Kevin (1990) "'Strange Hells': Hollywood in Search of America's Lost War". *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*, Eds., Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Cannadine, David. *Class in Britain*. London: Penguin, 1998.
- . *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire*. London: Allen Lane, 2001.
- CONADEP (1984) *Nunca Mas: Informe de la Comisión Nacional Sobre La Desaparición De Personas* Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires.
- Cuddon, J.A. (1992) *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Third Edition London: Penguin.
- Elliott, J. H. (1970) *The Old World and the New 1492-1650* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gaskill, Malcolm (2001) *Hellish Nell: Last of Britain's Witches* London: Fourth Estate.
- Graham-Yooll, Andrew (1982) *A Matter of Fear: Portrait of an Argentinian Exile* Westport: Lawrence Hill and Company.
- Kern, Louis J. (1988) 'MIAs, Myth and Macho Magic: Post-Apocalyptic Cinematic Visions of Vietnam'. *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Films of the Vietnam War*, Ed., William J. Searle, Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.
- Knight, Alan (1994) *Latin America: What Price the Past?* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mantel, Hilary (2001) 'The dead are all around us'. Review of *Hellish Nell: Last of Britain's Witches* by Malcolm Gaskill, *The London Review of Books* Vol. 23, No. 9.
- Morgan, Keith (Ed) (1982) *The Falklands Campaign: A Digest of Debates in the House of Commons 2 April to 15 June 1982* London: HMSO.
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1993.
- . *Orientalism*. London: Penguin, 1978.
- Simpson, John and Jana Bennett (1985) *The Disappeared: Voices from a Secret War* London: Robson Books.
- Thornton, Lawrence (1987) *Imagining Argentina* London: Arena.
- Townsend, Sue (1982) *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 3/4* London: Methuen.
- Townsend, Sue (1984) *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole* London: Methuen.
- Williams, Tony (1990) 'Missing in Action—The Vietnam Construction of the Movie Star', *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film*, Eds., Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

**KEVIN FOSTER** teaches at Monash University in Melbourne where he is an Associate Professor and Head of Communication and Media Studies. He has published widely on conflict and national identity, the literature of the Spanish Civil War, Anglo-Latin American cultural relations, and more. He is the author of *Fighting Fictions: War Narrative and National Identity* (London: Pluto, 1999), a study of the cultural politics of the Falklands War. He is currently completing a second book for Pluto on British-US literary constructions of Latin America in the 19th and 20th centuries, *Lost Worlds and the Imaginary Continent*.