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Animation and Affirmative Aging in Ignacio Ferreras's *Arrugas*

Este artículo entra en el debate actual sobre la representación de la vejez en Arrugas *de Ignacio Ferreras (España, 2011). Mi acercamiento tiene un doble enfoque: mientras que la crítica se ha prestado poca atención a la animación, examino cómo esta contribuye a una visión cinemática de la vejez y, al mismo tiempo, pretendo liberarla de los análisis predominantes y binarios sobre la vejez (envejecimiento positivo/envejecimiento como deterioro). Apoyándome en teorías sobre animación y envejecimiento, este análisis subraya que la visión de la vejez en* Arrugas *es algo más compleja; noción central de la teoría de envejecimiento afirmativo de Linn Sandberg.*

Palabras clave: *animación,* Arrugas*, envejecimiento, Ignacio Ferreras, España*

This paper enters the ongoing debate on the portrayal of old age in Ignacio Ferreras's animated feature Arrugas *(Spain, 2011). My approach to a new understanding of Ferreras's film is two-fold: first, I engage with the often-overlooked animation to ask how it too contributes to the cinematic vision of later life; second, I aim to liberate* Arrugas *from the predominant binary discourses of successful aging/aging-as-decline often employed to understand the film. Drawing on theories of animation and aging, I highlight how* Arrugas *reflects later life as more complex, a notion central to Linn Sandberg's theory of affirmative old age.*

Keywords: *aging theory, animation studies,* Arrugas*, Ignacio Ferreras, Spain*

In "The Animation Manifesto; or, What's Animation Ever Done for Us?" Paul Wells laments the fact that, when an animated film is finally celebrated, any critical attention is largely directed towards the film's narrative or content, and rarely towards its animated form. Heading Wells's list of recent animated films that suffer this fate is *Arrugas* (2011) by Spanish director Ignacio Ferreras, the filmic adaptation of the homonymous comic by Paco Roca, winner of the *Premio Nacional del Cómic* in 2008.[1] *Arrugas* tells the story of Emilio, a retired bank manager who, in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, faces the transition into an old-age home that serves as

the unlikely setting of the film. Ferreras's feature-length 2D animated adaptation was lauded, as Paul Wells notes, for "its welcome engagement with old age" while the fact that it is through animation that this story is told remains overlooked ("Manifesto" 95).

As I will argue, without an eye towards the film's animated aesthetic, one cannot fully perceive the ways in which *Arrugas* engages with the subject of old age. This is important as most current critical understandings of the representation of old age in Ferreras's film – along with understandings of old age as reflected in countless other popular films in Western cinema more broadly – appear to problematically perpetuate the dichotomous positive-negative conceptualizations of later life that have, until recently, predominated social gerontology. One side of this debate promotes the deep-seated discourse of decline, placing emphasis on the aging body as non-productive, increasingly inactive and dependent. However, social theorists during the second half of the twentieth century, growing concerned with the negative and stereotypical images of later life reinforced by the decline discourse, sought to counteract such a negative conceptualization of aging by introducing a more positive discourse into Western social gerontology, aptly referred to as successful aging.

Successful aging is alternatively associated with an individual's activity, productivity and autonomy – all of which, as gerontologist Linn Sandberg notes, are three neo-liberal imperatives of capitalist subjectivity (13). While the term "successful aging" has been prevalently employed on American soil, "active aging" has, over the last two decades, discursively emerged within Europe as the foremost policy response to the challenges of population aging. Although these are the most prevalent terms used to encapsulate "aging well" and are often wrongly used synonymously, as Liam Foster and Alan Walker note, they are inherently different and neither is without criticism. Like successful aging, active aging promotes "a narrow economic or productivist perspective that prioritizes the extension of working life," although it is made more holistic by a second policy framework which is characterized by well-being and a life course-oriented conceptualization of later life (Foster and Walker 84).

Theories of active aging and successful aging converge, however, in the fact that they have subsequently evolved discursively into policymaking, societal and individual action and even consumerist culture (Sandberg 13; Foster and Walker 84). The Spanish context is no exception to this trend. The 2006 *Ley de Dependencia* was established to heighten awareness of the autonomy of citizens living dependently, either due to physical or cognitive disability and/or old age, through the development of public and private services aimed at protecting their autonomy. Later, and on a broader scale,

the European Commission named 2012 the *European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations,* introducing programs centered on active, healthy and productive aging with the hopes of instilling in an aging European population a desire to age, as the narrative goes, more actively.

Given the timing of *Arrugas*'*s* cinematic release with these theorizations on aging, as well as with the laws and institutional practices reflecting them, it is no wonder that the Spanish film has often been read either loosely or strictly in terms of the dichotomous decline-success/active discourses. *Arrugas* has, on the one hand, been categorized as a film that proffers a negative and even nihilistic vision of later life characterized by pathology and dependency (Pinazo Hernandis 105), and by identity loss and lack, as a time in which "[e]l único proyecto vital consiste en esperar a la muerte" (Mercadé 144). Ferreras's film has also been specifically read through the lens of active aging to conclude that, for the elderly protagonists, physical activity is "una opción inviable y, por tanto, altamente frustrante," although the portrayal of this issue is thought to be "50% cómica y dramática" (Núñez Domínguez 24). Conversely, the animated feature has been said to maintain and even grow the "espíritu optimista" that Roca himself aimed to create in his comic (Rumí 146), and has similarly been interpreted as reflecting old age as a time of new beginnings, hailed as "un himno" to friendship during the most precarious phases of the human condition (Aguirre 62), and an artistic reminder that life is meaningful at any stage when it unfolds within a collective social framework (Fraser, "Senescence" 33).

However, with the exception of Benjamin Fraser's skillful analysis of how the cinematography, together with formal properties specific to animation, visually echoes "the unique subjectivity of the person with dementia, thus validating the reality of their experience and their feelings" ("Senescence" 22), current scholarship does not engage much – or at times even at all – with the meaning-making potential of *Arrugas* animated form. Reaction to, rather than interaction with, the animated aesthetic ranges from viewing it an ironic and curious choice (Aguirre 61-62), to a question of palatability: For medical professional and film critic Antonio Blanco Mercadé, "la tragedia que cuenta *Arrugas* posiblemente se puede digerir mejor que si se hubiese realizado en imagen real" (145). Beyond ambiguity, bewilderment and denial regarding animation's communicative power in *Arrugas*, however, lies yet another extreme: Sonia Gil Rumí, in a singular study of the adaptation of *Arrugas* from comic to film, asserts that "no puede ni debe hablarse de visualizaciones, puesto que la fidelidad de la animación fílmica con respecto a la del cómic es máxima" (146). Whereas Rumí's study addresses the effect that the comic's visual narration has on the representation of senescence and senility, the author appears to either deny

any storytelling capacity to film's visual narration, or assume that it functions just the same as that of the comics medium. Rumí's implied conflation, and perhaps subordination, of animation with the comics medium is problematic but not unsurprising. As Wells finds it necessary to argue in the conclusion of his manifesto, animation is in fact *the inclusive art* which holds the "capacity to embrace all of the other arts within its production process" ("Animation Manifesto" 99).

While the art of animation remains overlooked in *Arrugas*, the reading of content over form has not been the case for the critical attention afforded to the comic version, which commonly argues that the formal elements communicate the subjective experience of Emilio's Alzheimer's.[2] This should come as little surprise, as the onslaught of analyses appear in the midst of the rise of the "Graphic Medicine" movement, a term coined in 2012 by physician and comics artist Ian Williams to "denote the role that comics can play in the study and delivery of healthcare" ('Why Graphic Medicine?").[3] More important still, these studies also appear during a growing wave of "interest in disability criticism – and in the historical investigation of disability – in the fields of modern and contemporary Hispanic studies" (Juárez-Almendros 154), and, more broadly, they likewise emerge within a second wave of disabilities criticism that seeks to investigate the (in)visibility of cognitive disabilities in cultural representations, whereas portrayals of physical disabilities have long received the limelight of scholarly attention (Fraser, *Cognitive Disability* xi). The narrow investigative focus should be even less surprising for the fact that Alzheimer's can be said to play a more central role in Roca's version of *Arrugas* for many reasons, chief among these the fact that the comic explicitly engages the reader in a medical discourse on Alzheimer's (Roca 56-8), while this discussion is omitted in a similar scene within the film and Emilio's diagnosis ultimately remains implicit.[4]

What the disparity in the attention afforded to form in analyses of the film and comic reveals, perhaps, is the current state of comics studies compared to that of animation studies. While comics studies has recently "arrived" as a full-fledged discipline, one that no longer feels the need to justify itself (Aldama 1), the exact opposite appears to be the case for animation studies, as evidenced by Wells's manifesto, which holds as its final declaration point that "[a]nimation should be more recognised for its achievements, impact and continuing significance in the contemporary world" ("Animation Manifesto" 96). It is largely for this reason that, in entering the debate on the picture of later life that Ferreras's film offers, the present paper both acknowledges and engages head-on with the animated

form of the Goya award-winning film, recipient of both Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Animated Film (2012).

The present study aims to liberate *Arrugas* from these deep-seated and narrowly conceptualized discourses on aging by arguing that Ferreras's cinematic adaptation instead highlights the lived experiences of later life as more complex; a notion that is central to Sandberg's more recent theorization of *affirmative old age*. Challenging binary understandings of aging as either decline or success, proponents of the affirmative old age discourse theorize the aging body "in terms of difference but without understanding it as a body marked by decline, lack, or negation" (Sandberg 12). This alternative conceptualization of aging and later life is not rooted in positivism or in happiness, nor does it essentialize the aging body in terms of lack or decline. Instead, affirmative old age recognizes that, likewise with aging come pain and vulnerability, as well as experiences of cognitive difference. These realities are not to be viewed as negative, but rather as something different than the discourse of successful aging. Most importantly, affirmative aging evades one of the central criticisms of the successful aging discourse, challenging the age hierarchy and ageism that are incidentally furthered by a discourse of successful aging that retains youth and the characteristics of youth as desirable. This problematic discourse, in Sandberg's view, would better suit the term "successful non-ageing or agelessness" (13).

Raquel Medina, who has traced these various debates surrounding old age, aging, and ageism in her contributing chapter to *Representaciones artísticas y sociales del envejecimiento* (2018), has made the call for cultural studies to "abrirse al análisis de la representación de envejecimiento y de la edad desde perspectivas *no binarias y más interseccionales* que den cuenta de la diversidad del envejecimiento y de todas sus experiencias" (37; emphasis added). The effort to revisit the subject of old age in *Arrugas* can be seen as a direct response to this call, and likewise to Wells's animation manifesto. The scope of this study is thus twofold and interdisciplinary: on the one hand, it dialogues with the prevalent discourses on aging and old age in order to highlight a more nuanced conceptualization of growing old that is reflected in Ferreras's film. On the other hand, it aims to further animation scholarship by asking how the narrative and formal aspects of *Arrugas* together paint a picture of old age that is neither wholly positive nor negative, but is rather more affirmative in nature.

I begin with an examination of how the negative and stereotypical vision of later life that characterizes the opening scenes is largely and purposefully constructed through the animated *mise-en-scène*. I argue that this is achieved due to the fact that, as Charles Forceville notes, being an

aesthetic that is entirely made rather than resulting from registering a pro-filmic reality, animated visuals are "to an unusually large extent under the control of the creator" (254). I then argue that this initial setting of scene and tone is established in order to subsequently disrupt rather than disseminate a narrative of decline, considering, as Wells earlier argued, that animation permits the filmmaker "to be more expressive and thus more subversive" (*Understanding Animation* 6). As I aim to show, *Arrugas* does not offer a static vision of later life, but rather a shifting vision that introduces stereotypical and pejorative notions of old age such as decline, non-productivity and passivity on an individual level, and social and urban marginalization on a collective level, strictly as a launch pad for projecting onto the Spanish imagination – and that of Western society more broadly – a more affirmative vision of aging that is characterized by inclusivity, intergenerationality and interdependence, and one in which experiences of pain and vulnerability and cognitive difference are still registered. As I further aim to show, the value of *Arrugas* – and its greatest success – is that the work of disrupting aged-based ideologies falls into the hands of the elderly characters, which can be seen to resist both the stigmatization as well as the spaces conceived for them in their old age. Specifically, I highlight how *Arrugas* implicitly dialogues with a Lefebvrian model of the production of space to illustrate how the marginalized elderly characters produce a more livable space from their home, and likewise produce a more habitable vision of the space of old age.

By adhering to the above objectives, this paper ultimately acknowledges that the way a story is told is an inextricable part of that story. The fact that *Arrugas* is animated no doubt directly relates to the story's roots in comics form. This consideration begs the question as to why Roca would consider constructing a story about the visibility and vision of old age through an iconic art form that potentially masks and dehumanizes its protagonists. The answer has everything to do with being seen; it is about the visibility of the elderly in literary and artistic spaces where such demographics have long been marginalized, excluded or even outright erased. As Roca narrates in his metacomic *Emotional World Tour*, one of the compelling forces behind the decision to create a comic with elderly subjects as protagonists arose during his previous work as an advertising illustrator, when a client asked him to remove an elderly couple from a crowd because they were "antiestéticos" (*Emotional* 22). Through Ferreras's animated film, the elderly subject gains visibility in broader artistic spaces. Echoing the issue of erasure and aesthetics of the aged body, an abrupt cut-to-black occurs mid-way through the screenplay as the voice of one

character poetically ponders whether senior citizens are seen as nothing more than "un saco de pellejos" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 01:01:06).

Drawn and subsequently animated in Roca's characteristic clear-line and realistic style, the story opens with Emilio's transition into the retirement facility, where he is given the purported *gran tour* by his roommate Miguel, a lively and sharp-witted Argentine who is just as quick to swindle a bit of cash from the less coherent residents as he is to hand out unsolicited tips for survival in their new surroundings. While an unlikely bond develops between business-like Emilio and his opportunistic roommate, their companionship is threatened when Emilio's Alzheimer's progresses and Miguel fears he will see his friend disappear to the assisted living floor where, as he assures Emilio, "no hay nada lindo de ver" (00:16:03).

Arrugas tells of Emilio and Miguel's friendship, as well as their often comedic attempts to thwart the care staff from detecting Emilio's progressing Alzheimer's, yet interwoven into the narrative are the life stories of other residents. The film juxtaposes the difference that marks their present lives against their more vibrant pasts, the latter portrayed through the narrative's frequent use of flashback and a brighter colour palette. The slow-paced action unfolds around the monotonous day-to-day lives of the residents who possess qualities that can be said to be characteristic of later life, as well as their own unique daily struggles: Antonia continues to love and care for her husband, Ernesto, during his late-stage Alzheimer's; Doña Sol wanders the familiar yet unrecognizable halls daily in search of a telephone to call her children; Doña Carmina's dementia-induced paranoia leaves her fearful of being alone; the dignified Señora Rosario spends her days gazing out her bedroom window, nostalgically re-imagining the view as the European countryside taken in from her window seat aboard the Orient Express *en route* to Istanbul; the absent-minded Martín struggles to both keep and keep hidden a string of furry companions.

Ferreras's decision to bring Roca's tale of old age to the big screen is a timely one, as the 2011 cinematic release coincides with a marked growth in population of senior citizens in Spain. Matthew J. Marr, in his seminal study, *The Politics of Age and Disability in Contemporary Spanish Film* (2013), refers to this as "the rise of senescence in contemporary Spain" (68). Relying on statistical reports, Marr outlines this context by highlighting unprecedented shifts in national age demographics starting in the 1990s, a time when Spain's senior population doubled in size from what it had been at the mid-century mark. This phenomenon, coupled with a historically low fertility rate in younger generations resulted in demographic projections that by the year 2020 nearly one-third of all Spaniards would be senior citizens; a

marked jump from the one-in-five rate during the 1990s. Reports from 2020 indicate that Spain's sixty-five-and-over population is in fact only 19.1% (9,057,193citizens), slightly lower even than the late-twentieth-century one-in-five rate. The one-third rate, according to this same report, should actually be achieved in 2068 when Spain's senior citizens will total 29.4% of the population, approximately 14 million inhabitants of the projected population, the result of a steady aging process following a sharp increase in the 30s and 40s when Spain's baby boomers (born between the years 1958 and 1977) will enter this demographic bracket (Pérez Díaz et al. 5). These numbers offer a slight correction to long-term projections from two years prior, which predicted that by the year 2066, this statistic would surpass the one-third mark with a projected 34.6% of the population expected to be over the age of sixty-five (Abellán García et al. 7). And although these projections vary slightly, they all point to the same conclusion that, as Pérez Díaz et al. write in the 2020 report, "[l]a pirámide de población de España continúa su proceso de envejecimiento (5).

It is little surprise then that Spanish cinema has become a vehicle for reflecting (on) Spain's aging population. The same year of *Arrugas*'*s* cinematic release, spectators witnessed an aging of the Spanish cinema screen with productions such as Alberto Moráis's *Las olas* and Oliva Acosta's documentary *Las constituyentes* alongside a number of Spanish co-productions that likewise place old age on center stage.[5] This boom to which *Arrugas* now belongs was preceded by a few films that, as early as the 1990s as Marr aims to show, already presented a more complex picture of elderly subjectivities.[6] Ferreras's animated feature stands out amongst this group of films spanning three decades that becomes, in the words of Pamela Gravagne, a "critical site of struggle" over the meanings we give to aging and old age (10). Animation becomes a highly efficient tool for "holding up" a mirror to society as it allows for – and painstakingly requires –every detail within the frame to be put into place by the production team. Unlike live-action cinematography, nothing within the animated *mise-en-scène* can be seen as (co)incidental, unplanned or uncontrolled. As Forceville notes, "[p]erhaps more than in live-action photography or film, in animation (as in comics) we are encouraged to find each single element meaningful" (254).

Following Forceville, a careful reading of the formal and narrative elements in *Arrugas*'*s* opening scenes unveils the way in which Ferreras consciously inscribes onto the film-mirror ageist attitudes and perceptions. Within the first ten minutes of the 89-minute film, the Spanish director plays on myriad old-age stereotypes with a blend of seriousness and humor, although the latter should be seen as an early indication that the film aims to problematize rather than perpetuate a strictly negative vision of growing

old. Ferreras forcefully introduces the spectator to the film's aging and cognitively-disabled subject, as well as to the subjects of aging and cognitive disability, through the narrative technique of a cold open. That is, prior even to the rolling of the opening credits, the Spanish filmmaker thrusts the spectator directly into the narrative through an initial, somber scene that introduces the aging body in terms of loss, decline and non-productivity. Perhaps not ironically, the spectator finds themselves gaining their bearings within this rather disorientating viewing experience that the cold open entails, while they witness Emilio momentarily lose his own bearings as his mind slips into a vivid past and out of his present reality.

The scene, which faithfully recreates the opening pages of Roca's comic, depicts a moment of Alzheimer's-related disorientation for the long-retired bank manager. When it comes to the filmic version, Ferreras's cold open has been appropriately read as a means of immediately introducing the viewer to Emilio's declining mental state through the combined work of the film's narrative and formal elements. In the back-and-forth shots, from what Fraser calls "semi-subjective cinematic sequences" (Emilio's subjectivity) to "objective cinematic sequences" (his son and daughter-in-law's reality), animation, as Fraser notes, essentially does the work of *repainting* Emilio's reality "through the logic of a memory that no longer fully grasps the present" ("Senescence" 29). Here, Ferreras skillfully juxtaposes Emilio's aged body and deteriorating memory with that of his professional and productive younger self.

Initially, we see a youthful, well-dressed Emilio at his desk in the midst of reviewing loan papers pertaining to two visibly disconcerted clients. As the male client approaches, Emilio glances down at his desk only to see that the paperwork he has been analyzing has morphed into a bowl of soup on a dinner tray. A subsequent shot captures Emilio lifting his gaze from his dinner to now perceive the frustrated man for who he really is: his son Xoán. This moment of clarity is depicted cinematically as the portrayal of Emilio's delusion ends with a perceptible blink of his eyes. Featured now on screen is a much-aged Emilio, no longer seated in his office chair, but rather propped up in bed, contemplating the dinner and cocktail of pills laid out before him.

However, beyond conflating the aging body with memory loss, a closer reading of *Arrugas's* cold open reveals the depiction of an accumulation of losses for Emilio's character. For one, the juxtaposition of past with present bodies presents the notion of the elderly – especially the old *and* disabled – as no longer of social and economic value. As Txetxu Aguado and María Pilar Rodríguez point out, following the productive discourse old age "no vendría a ser otra cosa que desposeimiento de las virtudes materiales, intelectuales, físicas y morales que alguna vez nos definieron. En este modelo cuantitativo,

el grado de envejecimiento se medirá por la mayor o menor cantidad de carencias que se vayan acumulando" (10).

The scene also dialogues with the model of unproductivity inherent to the decline discourse. The younger Emilio's ability to accumulate assets, not to mention manage the assets of his clients, can be read as an indication of his former value to the "productive" sector of society. For the elderly Emilio, it seems, productivity and social activity have transformed into non-productivity and passivity, and likewise infirmity. In fact, Emilio's current lack of social inclusion is accentuated further by the tension in the scene revolving around Xoán's pressing social plans, for which he is once again running late due to Emilio's episode of disorientation. As Xoán voices his frustration to his wife, Emilio becomes equally frustrated, violently swiping his dinner tray from his lap as he firmly states, "ya os podéis ir. Ya he terminado" (00:02:08). A final close-up of the shattered bowl of soup on the ground metaphorically depicts the breaking point experienced by Xoán and his wife, which leads to their decision to transfer Emilio into a care facility. Moreover, the broken glass and spilled contents also become poignantly symbolic of the decline discourse's understanding of the aging body as "a frail, leaky, and unbounded body" (Sandberg 14).

In this way, the liminal feature of the cold open depicts a liminal moment in Emilio's life: a time between what was and what's next, which, for his character, is the transition into the old-age home. In other words, it reveals Emilio's impending transition from the "Third Age" (independent retirement) to a time that has come to be called the "Fourth Age" (characterized by a lack of autonomy and individuality, decrepitude and death), in which, as Medina notes, these (even) older people are stripped of their cultural and social capital and displaced to old-age homes or relegated to a recluse space in the family household (29-30).[7] While the juxtaposition of past and present in the cold open highlights the "stripping" of Emilio's cultural and social capital, the opening credits and the scenes that immediately follow play with the notion highlighted by Medina of one's transition to the Fourth Age.

The fact that the credits roll across a cloud-filled sky as a melancholic tune plays alludes to, on the one hand, Emilio's clouded thinking, and, on the other hand, to the fact that he is traversing the boundary between this life – *tierra firma* – and the next. As the camera finishes panning downwards, the residence appears in the background, although the building is quickly cut off from view as a solid iron gate in the foreground slowly edges closed once Xoán's car has entered the grounds. It is at this moment that the film's title appears over the gate in large font. The action of the closing gate together with the casting of the word *arrugas* onto the corrugated surface doubly implies that Emilio's identity – as well as that of the other residents – is

eclipsed by old age, just as it similarly evokes a social phenomenon highlighted by Medina: the propensity to hide or conceal signs of aging on the (social) body (29).

The notion that aging bodies might be viewed as the "wrinkles" on the societal fabric is echoed in an equally compelling shot later in the film. The fence that surrounds the grounds of the senior living residence is also aptly drawn as corrugated (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:59:45). After a rather discouraging medical examination for Emilio is interrupted by Miguel's quick thinking with a pulled fire alarm, a long shot captures the evacuated pair from behind, as they sit on a bench taking in what should be the view. Yet the closely situated fence blocks any view, and likewise anyone from viewing them. To the spectator, the grooved fence panels become a mirror reflection of the elderly pair. Likewise, the position of the fence on the perimeter of the grounds makes this structure emblematic of the "often rigid binaries that separate youth from [old] age" (Gravagne 9).

Figure 1. "Arrugas"

Through a reading of these opening (and later) scenes, one can understand where Ferreras's authorial vision departs from that of Roca, and why readings of the film tend to focus on the "space" of old age whereas those of the graphic narrative, as mentioned, hone in on the comic's more central issue of Alzheimer's. While *Arrugas* is remarkably faithful in its filmic adaptation, the Spanish director's signature on this creative production lies in an emphasis on the setting through visually altering existing structures – for instance, creating an impermeable, wrinkled fence and gate rather than

adopting the transparent, ornate gate featured in the comic – and incorporating additional spaces, such as a swimming pool, that are not present in the setting of the comic but become symbolic in the film's vision of later life, as will be discussed.

It is likewise through construction of space that the Spanish animator subsequently challenges stigmatizations of the elderly, along with their societal (in)visibility and marginalization. The majority of the film plays out in a series of cuts between close-ups and mid-range shots, much in the same way the reader of Roca's comic views the action within each panel. However, a handful of panoramic shots within the cinematic version place even greater emphasis on the relationship between the characters and their surroundings, and, on a broader scale, the relationship between the residents of the old-age home and society at large. A rarely used panoramic shot mid-film emphasizes this by revealing the location of the old-age home to be at the outskirts of the city (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:40:20). The extreme long shot captures this isolation by foregrounding the close proximity of the residence to a range of Galician mountains, in what appears to be an industrial zone populated by heavy machinery and factory-like buildings. The construction of the peripheral location evokes Marr's concept of "removal": how, due the social burden of aging, the younger demographics of the contemporary West consigns its elderly subject to "out-of-the-way" old-age homes and retirement communities (Marr 57-58).

This ideology constructed by means of the animated *mise-en-scène* is further construed through the dialogue in the scene depicting Emilio's transition into the home. Xoán's parting comment to his father, that "vas a estar muy bien aquí con otros abuelitos como tú" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:05:22), highlights the mode of thinking that the senior citizens need to collectively be extracted to a place in which only they live. Likewise, Xoán's assurance that his father will be with "others like [him]" is ultimately indicative, as Asier Leoz Aizpuru notes, of the condescending tone termed "elderspeak" as well as affirming the elderly's status as Other (76). Further emphasizing this, a second long shot soon after reveals the location of Emilio's former home to be in stark contrast to that of the geriatric residence (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:21:18). A wide-angled shot from the exterior camera depicts the building's façade, revealing that Emilio's former home is located on a main street, one that very much resembles Madrid's Gran Vía or Calle de la Princesa for its location directly above the trendy retailer Zara and a mobile phone business. What appears to be a subtle advertising campaign drawn into the film is actually a way of revealing the dominant ideology that this space is reserved for a younger clientele, valuable "resources" to a market-centric city. As a closer shot depicts Xoán placing a sign that reads "se vende" in the apartment window, this scene, in the words of Sandberg,

"posits old age and the ageing body as the Other in relation to youth and midlife (that which is desirable and sought after)" (18).

While the cold open, credits sequence and opening scene reflect a narrative of decline through a somber tone, the mood lightens when Miguel treats his new roommate to a tour of the residence. Miguel's tour not only hits on the key spaces within the residence, but also on additional old-age stereotypes. However, just as quickly as the film introduces these stereotypes through Miguel's tour, it also begins to undermine them through his sarcastic descriptions and commentary. The main living space, a glass-walled area officially called *La sala mirador*, we are told, reflects dynamics of (in)visibility. Any outward view is obstructed by the closely-situated fence, and the space is not-so-affectionately referred to by the residents, as Miguel explains, as "La pecera," a moniker that evokes feelings of both spectacle and entrapment.

Other spaces in the residence reveal tensions of (in)activity, (non)productivity, and of social and economic value(lessness) for the aging body. Arriving at the gym, Emilio frets over not having brought his track suit. Miguel explains, however, "no te preocupes. Lo que vas a hacer aquí no requiere un chandal" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:11:55). A similar assurance is repeated at the end of the tour when the duo can be seen contemplating the swimming pool through the locked glass doors, and Miguel reiterates that such facilities are only here "para impresionar a los clientes… los que pagan las facturas. Tus hijos, el gobierno. Ellos son los clientes de la residencia, ni tú ni yo" (00:12:03). Miguel's statement at the end of the tour is a further indication that the elderly are no longer seen as a social and economic resource, even when it comes to the purchase and occupation of their new home.

However, the tour stop that deserves a momentary pause to unpack is the brief portrayal of the entertainment room, where all of the above tensions are combinedly reiterated in a more nuanced and compelling way. The wildlife documentary being screened for the row of sleeping bodies, despite that fact that seemingly no one enjoys these programs as Emilio expresses of himself, is the only viewing option, because, as Miguel explains, "otra cosa no ponen" (00:11:30). Beyond distaste, the program also evokes the notion of disaccord. Like the fence figured above, the TV screen perpetually broadcasting active wildlife becomes for the viewer a mirror-view of the residents that sit facing the screen. Only, in this case it works as a contrasting mirror by continually casting images of lifecycle and reproduction on to the listless aging body and, during the long moment the duo pauses to ponder the television set, this is communicated through a rather extreme case as the background narration describes a female spider in the act of sexual cannibalism. In contrast to the voracious body on the

television screen, the elderly residents are portrayed on the big screen as passive, non-(re)productive and sterile, reflecting the predominant discourse on later-life sexuality which views the aging body in terms of decline and increasing asexuality (Sandberg 13).

The detail of the documentary channel can also be seen as a contrasting image to the animated feature itself. Until recently, comics, just like animation, were assumed to be a youthful pastime, and, as Judith Kriger notes of animated films especially, as "entertaining diversions from the sometimes harsh realities of life" (61). The fact that Emilio's story unfolds in a classic, almost adventure-like style comic and film is not only a subversion of the notion that animation is children's entertainment, but also a subversion of the thought that, in reality, entertainment and adventure should be outside the realm of the elderly. Ultimately, Ferreras's film brings the "sometimes harsh realities" of later life into animation, and likewise comedy and entertainment into the realm of old age. This subversive nod to genre-age perceptions is a second early indication that reflecting stigmatizations of old age is not to done to disseminate, but rather to disrupt.

While Miguel's tour of the residence serves to poke fun at how society views old age, it ultimately draws attention to the disparity in the way the space was initially conceived (reflecting these dominant ideologies), and how it is perceived by its inhabitants. The explicit screening of tensions between conceived and perceived spaces throughout the film is read here as an implicit dialoguing with a Lefebvrian model of the production of social space.[8] The aforementioned pair of extreme long shots undoubtedly suggests that Emilio has moved from one distinctly conceived space to another; the conceived space being, as Henri Lefebvre asserts, the dominant space within any given society (34). That is, it is a place in which the practices of social and political power are exercised and it is within these spaces that those who exist are manipulated by them (222).

However, as Lefebvre reminds us, marginalized groups can create their own spaces within the official, ideological, and dominated spaces of the city (26). Central to this process are the day-to-day dynamics of power and resistance, which begins with the human body and its corporeal ability to produce space, with the effect of winning back power. The fact that Ferreras's characters can be seen from early on to resist, react and ultimately produce space through their bodily engagements with the old-age home stands in complete contrast to the early portrayal of the aged body as passive, inactive and non-productive. Although, perhaps fittingly, resistance generated by the elderly bodies occurs slowly and often in subtle ways.

The residents' dialogue about their home can be seen as one form of spatial practice. The extent to which the elderly feel marginalized within their home is notable, for example, through the re-naming of their main living space as *La Pecera*. Beyond feelings of marginalization, certain spaces – such as the assisted living floor – are perceived with fear. The recurring image of an ominous stairway that divides the main living floor from the assisted living floor repeatedly materializes as a threshold that haunts the residents. As Emilio states after curiosity and a sobering realization of his progressing Alzheimer's leads him to scope out the second floor, "están todos allí abandonados, como si fuesen trastos rotos en un desván" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:50:02). Emilio's remark about "junk in the attic," evocative of what Simone de Beauvoir refers to as the "scrap heap" of senescence (263), again calls to mind a relationship between time and space for the viewer in which a correlation emerges not only between aging and one's place within society, but, more immediately, between aging further and one's place within their final home.

In short, the residents' remarks about their home become minor rebellions against it. However, it is through internalized expressions – i.e., how the characters engage imaginatively with their surroundings, a phenomenon made visible to the viewer due to animation's ability to *repaint* realities, to build on Fraser's notion – that the seeds of resistance are truly planted in the film. Central to Lefebvre's conception of representational, or lived spaces, is the notion that the imagination seeks to change and appropriate dominated spaces. In a handful of scenes depicting the residents reimagining their surroundings, the animation works to show the creative transformation of space by making symbolic use of its objects. Notably, Señora Rosario's private quarters are re-imagined as a passenger car on the Orient Express. The ordinary chair next to the window becomes a plush bench, the window itself part of the train car, and likewise the view from the window is re-imagined as the scenery *en route* to Istanbul. It is tempting, as has often been done, to attribute this subjective rendering to an episode of dementia. However, the fact that Señora Rosario's character never receives this official diagnosis, coupled with the fact that she behaves this way methodically, indicates that it could be an act of will – not disorientation – as a means of appropriating her living space. What is perhaps a non-conventional reading of this scene in fact echoes Roca's commentary of the same scene from the comic, re-created in a pair of panels of *Emotional World Tour*: "[e]n definitiva, *Arrugas* habla de las personas mayores. Y de la fantasía como vía de escape a una realidad que ya no les gusta" (29-30).

Miguel can also be said to use his imagination to escape, or at the very least to appropriate, the space of the old-age home. The Argentine's outward

antics and sarcasm ("aquí sólo hay dormir, comer y cagar") reveal that he inwardly imagines himself differently than the others: healthier, more lucid and younger than his fellow residents. However, the way in which he manipulates the other residents to hand over their money and medications is revealed to be more than a form of self-entertainment during a sobering moment at the half-way mark of the film when Emilio discovers his roommate's stash (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:42:10). It becomes clear that Miguel is imagining a means of escape, one that involves taking his own life if necessary. As the camera pans the stacks of bills and bag of pills that together constitute Miguel's stockpile, the fact that the shot cuts to a brief close-up of the colorful capsules foreshadows which of the two means of escape Miguel will later come to contemplate in a moment of despair after Emilio has been transferred to the assisted living floor. Like Señora Rosario, Miguel too perceives the old-age home as a place that necessitates escape, either temporarily through the imagination, or through more permanent and drastic measures.

Yet rather than resigning themselves to their new reality or succumbing to it, the residents begin to concretely and overtly resist, and ultimately produce, a more habitable space. What begins as a resistance of the mind, either verbalized outwardly or expressed inwardly through the imagination, becomes a fully embodied, collective resistance which grows as solidarity and friendships grow between the seniors. Miguel, together with the other residents, conspires to outwit the doctor who is scheduled to facilitate one of Emilio's exams. In a series of school-yard pranks involving chewing gum in door locks, answers inscribed onto Emilio's arm and a pulled fire alarm, the residents manage to change the location of Emilio's medical exam from the private quarters of the doctor's office to a more neutral and easily manipulated space, and, subsequently, to put a quick end to the proceedings when things are not going well for Emilio, whose Alzheimer's has perceptibly progressed. Among other things, this comedic scene of collective resistance dialogues with the fact that, as Lefebvre assures, while the dominant groups produce the social space, they do not always control it (38).

Resistance also manifests through the breaking of rules. The solitary Martín defies the no-pets rule, much thanks to Miguel who continually supplies him with a string of puppies. Dolores challenges the notion of the second floor as a feared and undesirable living space when she decides of her own accord to relocate there in order to remain near Modesto. For his part, Miguel occasionally permits himself a cigarette at the perimeter of the grounds. During one of these allowances, a disconcerted Emilio, having just ventured to the assisted living floor, enters the scene. Miguel's rather sobering assurance that Emilio should not fool himself from acknowledging

the fate that awaits them all causes his friend to turn his back and walk away. When moments later Miguel spies Emilio entering the pool area, he fears that his friend is in a dangerously disoriented state. However, Emilio's plunge into the water – in a pose that reveals his past as a skilled swimmer – is not an act of senile confusion, but rather a cathartic reclamation of his life, and of his current living space along with it.

Initially, the shaky-cam effect appears to work toward creating suspense as Miguel, still fearing the worst, races to the pool to rescue his friend. However, the eventual steadying of the shot as Emilio swims contentedly in the water, as well as the seamless changing of the suspenseful music into a more melodic tune, relays the tranquility experienced by Emilio as he expertly glides through the waters. Still uncomprehending of Emilio's act, and now waist-deep in the waters himself, Miguel implores his friend to get out of the pool, to which Emilio authoritatively responds, "[N]o me toques. ¡Déjame! ¡Estoy harto de tantas tonterías! No estoy muerto … Pues, parece que dentro de un año ya no sepa quién soy, pero en este momento estoy vivo. Y esta es una piscina y quiero nadar, y nadar y punto. Se acabó. Y si no te gusta, te … ¡te jodes!" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:54:06). Emilio's rant from where he stands in the swimming pool is as much reclamation of his status as still fully alive as it is reclamation of the spaces in which he feels so.

While undoubtedly a powerful scene, the most notable act of resistance and spatial appropriation occurs in the film's climax scene: the great escape via convertible orchestrated by Miguel and Emilio, who are accompanied last minute by Antonia after she catches wind of the escapade (1:08:52-1:14:20). Here again a tone of adventure and humor is employed to portray the trio as they not only defy the rules, but also physically alter the boundaries of the residence when the chain-link fence is cut to facilitate their escape. The trio reclaims space beyond the limits of the residence by venturing animatedly out on the road in the getaway car paid for by Miguel. However, the mood soon turns to suspense, and the lively music and banter to silence, as Emilio becomes disoriented and veers the car violently off the road. The stillness of the camera coupled with the immobility of the escape vehicle that is angled into a ditch leaves the viewer to consider the worst for the three characters during the prolonged shot as a fade to black heightens this mood. The viewer is quickly and partially relieved, however, by a rapid cut to a close-up of Miguel's bruised face from where he sits in one of the residence's administrative offices. Further relief comes as the care aid reprimanding Miguel assures the elderly man that he is fortunate that this was not the end of any of their stories.

Nevertheless, the accident takes a toll on Emilio's well-being and expedites his move to the assisted living floor. However, rather than use this

plot twist to segue back into a narrative of decline in the film's final scenes, the near-tragic event becomes a means of transitioning to an affirmative vision of old age. In the aftermath of the accident, old age is not, as one might expect, reflected strictly as a time of dependence, nor does it continue to be reflected as the attempted but failed independence that the characters sought during their clandestine adventure. Rather, within the concluding scenes of *Arrugas*, life's final years are shown as something different and more complex: as a time of interdependence amidst what Grenier, Lloyd and Phillipson call the "precarity" of late life; that is, recognizing "shared experiences of vulnerability" while responding with the understanding of "the provision of care as shared responsibility" (322-24).

Miguel overcomes his anguish and dedicates himself to bettering the daily existence of his peers, providing them with contraband gifts rather than robbing them of their limited possessions: a mobile phone for Doña Sol; a leash for Martín's latest puppy; menthol cigarettes for Señora Rosario; and a water pistol for the paranoid Carmina. The old man takes on the role, as Fraser following Hilda Lindemann notes, of "identity maintenance" for Emilio; a role which is often taken on by a family member of a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease and, consequently, identity loss. What can be added to Fraser's argument, however, is that Miguel takes on a similar role of identity maintenance for the other residents, as seen through his individual gifts and attentions. As Fraser himself notes, once again following Lindemann, our identities can be anchored not only in other people, but also in things: "[f]amiliar places and things, beloved objects, pets, cherished rituals, one's own bed or favorite shirt" (Fraser, "Senescence" 25). Through his gifts, Miguel not only helps the other residents to maintain their sense of self, but likewise benefits from finding purpose in his new role.

A less tangible case of interdependence arises when Señora Rosario asks Antonia if she would accompany her where she sits in her room, and likewise invites her into her fantasy of a journey aboard the Orient Express. As Antonia replies that "claro. A mí no me gusta viajar sola" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 1:21:42), a rapid cut places the camera outside of the train, momentarily capturing a youthful Antonia through the window until the Orient Express speeds forward along the tracks and exits the scene. Fraser aptly points out that "[t]he metaphor here of life as a train journey is certainly not lost on viewers" ("Senescence" 32). What the scene also reflects is that life is a journey made more meaningful within a collective framework, and that interdependence – not dependence – is central to aging well.

The recurring image of the symbolic train also features on the cover of the Spanish edition of Roca's comic. Yet it is the film's poster-turned-DVD cover that most immediately conveys life and old age as an interdependent

journey, and a more active one compared to the passivity implied by the passenger train. Pictured between Antonia, aided by her walking device, and Emilio, with his escaping memories trailing in the wind, stands a more lucid and able-bodied Miguel, who carries the conversation as the smiling trio strolls casually alongside one another (see Figure 2). The poster also provides a more nuanced vision of later life that accounts for physical and cognitive difference without casting these under the shadow of decline, and communicates that life continues to unfold step by step. Its visual image contrasts the title that hangs over the trio's heads, suggesting that the elderly are not to be seen as "wrinkles," but rather as full of textures.

Figure 2. *Arrugas* Poster

By the film's conclusion, this sense of interdependency extends itself to the second floor, undoing the dichotomy of lower/upper spaces through the action as well as the animation. In the penultimate scene, Miguel sits in a brightly lit dining room with Emilio seated to his right and a quadriplegic woman to his left who, we are earlier told, was paralyzed after the building

in which she lived collapsed, and, due to a presumed lack of family to care for her, has been staying in the residence and has earned from Miguel the nickname *la okupa* (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:49:46).[9] This depreciative nickname is replaced by a more playful one (*flaca*) near the film's end when Miguel, again exemplifying his new role, at once feeds the conversation and simultaneously assists his two companions with their meals. This brief series of interactions so clearly communicates that the once feared floor has transformed into an area which is no longer dichotomized by medic-patient care, but rather by shared vulnerabilities and mutual support, and the scene imagines a system of care "based on interdependence as part of the human condition" (Grenier, Lloyd and Phillipson 323).

This scene, like the film's cover, epitomizes interdependence, and likewise an affirmative vision of old age. When their companion chides Miguel that Emilio "ya no se entera de nada" (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 1:23:12), the Argentine jumps to his friend's defense, directly addressing Emilio himself, whom he affectionately calls by his nickname, "Rockefeller." The subtle smile that appears on Emilio's face at the mention of this name provides a final picture of cognitive difference in place of what could have strictly been cognitive decline, or even death, echoing Sandberg's assertion that, while the experience of dementia can be negative and distressful, it does not have to mean a complete loss of self, but rather, "the production of a different self, more reliant on embodied consciousness," still capable of "creative and affective expression" (Sandberg 34). Neither Ferreras nor Roca shy away from showing the precariousness – the instability and enhanced vulnerability – that can characterize later life and disability, yet the conclusion of the filmic version offers an apparent alternate understanding of care for "older people with dementia not because they are pitied or sick, but because they are valued, and because a clearer understanding of their experiences prevails" (Grenier, Lloyd, and Phillipson 328).

In this vein, it is significant that the bright skies featured through the window behind Emilio's head – a stark change from the beige tones that fill the panels of the comic – reveal that Ferreras challenges the notion of the "winter" of the elderly protagonists' lives. The conclusion of the film also broadens the space of old age in spatial terms. The final scene in the film and comic alike depicts Martín and his leashed fox terrier on an excursion within the city centre. However, while the panels of Roca's comic restrict the portrayal of space to the entrance and elevator of what is his nephew's apartment, Ferreras's film depicts Martín strolling about the city centre on an equally bright day without the same contextual information that leaves us to wonder if this is, in fact, his own place of residence. As the camera pans down the façade of the apartment building that Martín enters, the numerous inhabitants both old and young are pictured through their windowpanes.

The central building becomes a substitution for the secluded old-age home, and a microcosm of a society that is characterized by intergenerational solidarity. The many windows frame a picture of what society could look like were the borders between the marginal space of old age and the dominant space of youth erased, thus dialoguing with another Lefebvrian notion: the right to the city.[10] That is, that the elderly members of society not only have access to resources that the city has to offer (we see this in the seemingly casual detail that Martin exits a fresh produce store with a symbolic bag of groceries on his person before entering the apartment building), but that they also have a role in shaping city life (again, we are to read deeper into the food items as not only an expression of independence but also of self, given the now pervasive conceptual link between food – and, by extension, cooking – and identity).

This final point is noteworthy as this characteristic of Ferreras's animated film definitively sets apart the cinematic adaptation of *Arrugas* from the earlier comic version, especially considering that the latter medium has recently become a tool to, as Dominic Davies notes, "help us (urbanists and other social scientists included) to rethink, and perhaps even rebuild, more socially and spatially just cities in the twenty-first century" (3). Ferreras's film – especially its concluding scene – demonstrates that animation is an apt tool for the same. In fact, and in conclusion, through the production of *Arrugas,* Ferreras similarly sketches an alternative space for animation in the landscape of contemporary film. Animated cinema has long been relegated to what Daniel Pitarch Fernández aptly recognizes as "un estante propio en las bibliotecas" and "un lugar propio, un espacio separado" (Pitarch 211). Nevertheless, the skillful portrayal of social issues, such as aging and disability, in films geared toward a new target audience of adults, together with emerging scholarship that, as Wells urges, aims to recognize animation's achievements, are working towards liberating the genre of animation from this physical and proverbial corner.

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NOTES

1 First published in France as "Rides" (Delcourt, 2007), a Spanish edition was released the same year by Spanish comics editorial Astiberri.

2 Javier Muñoz-Basols and Micaela Muñoz-Calvo, for example, have analyzed how the sensation of lived time is stylized for the reader through the chromatic gradation of the colour palette, and how close-ups of objects and

gestures relay the sensation of illness-related memory loss as well as the impact of Alzheimer's disease on the social and familiar context. Similarly, Felice Gambin highlights how the progression of Emilio's fading memory is communicated in the comic's concluding pages by the gradual fading of colour from panels, along with the fading away of image and text until all that remain are two significantly blank pages (177-79). Fraser, in chapter 5 of *Cognitive Disability Aesthetics* (2018), once again explores how the semi-subjective shot acts as a visual manifestation of Emilio's experience of the progression of Alzheimer's – this time, however, within the comic version – and likewise elaborates on how other formal properties of sequential art, such as panel layout and story pacing, are also employed to portray Emilio's subjective experience and emotional response to suffering from Alzheimer's. As a final example, Juan Manuel Díaz de Guereñu explores in general how the visual elements of the comic serve as a means for Roca to reinforce for the reader the emotional impact of the effects of Alzheimer's disease. However, Díaz de Guereñu conversely implores that Roca's particular drawing style, along with the use of color, not only present old age and the life of the residents in a kinder light, but also makes the comic more marketable to wider – and younger – audiences (Díaz de Guereñu 162-63).

3 Williams launched the *Graphic Medicine Website* in 2012, and, four years later, a Spanish-language sister site called *Medicina Gráfica* (https://medicinagrafica.com/) was created under the direction of cartoonist-physician Monica Lalanda.

4 Almost literally at the centre of Roca's 100-page comic, a conversation occurs between a suspecting Emilio and his doctor, "partidario de decir la verdad," which reveals that the old man is in fact in the early stages of Alzheimer's (56). What unfolds over the two pages that follow is a frank but distressing dialogue about what Alzheimer's is, and how it can affect people differently. In the filmic version, the medical discourse is removed, and Ferreras's doctor all but sidesteps the conversation ("no se preocupe usted por esas cosas, Emilio"). Although Emilio closes the brief exchange with the assurance that "me quedo tranquilo sabiendo que no pasa nada," the following scene lets the viewer in on the fact that Emilio was not in fact convinced by the condescending doctor, but rather is quite aware of the future that he faces, as indicated by his sober contemplation of the staircase leading up to the assisted living floor (Ferreras, *Arrugas* 00:48:21).

5 Notably, Clarissa Campolina and Helvécio Marins Jr.'s *Girimunho, Imaginado la vida* (Brazil-Spain), and Nicolás Gil Lavedra's *Verdades verdaderas, la vida de Estela* (Argentina-Spain).

6 See Chapters 3 and 4, which, respectively, explore senior-citizen marginalization in the context of early 1990s Spain through an analysis of

Santiago Aguilar and Luis Guridi's murder-infused, black comedy *Justino: Un asesino de la tercera edad* (1993), and female-led senescent seduction in Marcos Carnavale's Spanish-Argentine co-production *Elsa y Fred* (2005).

7 It should be noted, however, that scholars of old age and disabilities studies are recently working to shift the discussion from the "Fourth Age" as debility and decline, and similarly unhinge age- and stage-based assumptions. Amanda Grenier, Liz Lloyd and Chris Phillipson for example, have introduced the concept of "precarity" to social gerontology to reconsider late life experiences, especially those of "persons who occupy locations linked with dementia and disablement" (319). These authors do so in a bid to better "understand the structured and existential vulnerabilities experienced across the life-course and into late life" (321) by acknowledging that life is inherently "risky," meaning that experiences of insecurity, vulnerability and potential suffering are universal" and not just characteristic of what is wrongly assumed to be "failed" or "frailed" old age.

8 In *The Production of Space* (1991), French sociologist Henri Lefebvre makes the claim that space is a social product constructed by its users, and it is never a fixed product but rather a process. To elaborate on the process of how space is produced socially, Lefebvre offers the following three factors that form a conceptual triad: "spatial practice" (i.e., how space is *perceived* by its users), "representations of space" (i.e., how space was *conceived* for its users) and "representational spaces" (i.e., the lived space in which the users engage with and produce their environment) (37).

9 Ferreras makes a noteworthy change to the role of the character of *la okupa* in the filmic adaptation, rescuing the female character from a hostile and hopeless single appearance in the comic, in which she verbally accosts Emilio and Miguel during their venture to the second floor (Roca 61). By placing her character at the table alongside Miguel and Emilio in the brightly-lit final scene, Ferreras bestows upon *la okupa* a more redemptive and symbolic role, making the woman part of, in the words of Encarnación Juárez-Almendros, "a vision for a more integrated and active future for the disabled community" (159), one that goes beyond the film's focus on cognitive disability to also include those with physical disabilities, and one that recognizes both the structured and experienced risks of precarity "that are carried across the life course and into late life" (Grenier, Lloyd and Phillipson 323). This minor adaptation is especially notable in light of the fact that the film was released in the wake of the Spanish economic crisis which has left, as Juárez-Almendros continues, the disabled population "watching the collapse of past accomplishments with horror" (159).

10 First proposed by Lefebvre in his 1968 book, *Le Droit à la ville*.

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