

# UCLan Research Centre on Migration, Diaspora and Exile Seminar Series 2022-2023

## “Mercè Rodoreda in exile: Female Catalan identity through the ironic lens of horror and fantasy”, by Dr Alicia Moreno (Edge Hill University and MIDEX)



Image: Dr Alicia Moreno

Mercè Rodoreda was a female Catalan author who spent thirty years in exile following the Spanish civil war. Like other Catalan male writers in exile, Rodoreda sometimes resorted to fantasy, in Todorov's words (1973), as a means for exploration of complex identities, whilst irony became a psychological device to detach herself from the trauma inflicted by nostalgia and loss of home. Research into her writings has, however, overlooked the relevance of verbal irony in her narratives, and studies of irony have not fully developed a theory of gendered irony in literature. This paper interprets Rodoreda's writings through the ironic lens that distorts her experiences through fantasy intertwining with horror resulting from her traumatic experiences of the Spanish Civil War and later on WWII, her peripheral condition as a refugee uprooted from her homeland, a Catalan author in times of censorship, a divorcee in an

unconventional relationship with a married man in exile, a mother who had abandoned her son, and lastly, a woman resisting a patriarchal society. Her short narratives are a testimony of her struggling (multi)peripheral and marginal status as a Catalan woman who ironically challenged the dominant discourse of the Other during her exile. Adopting a multidisciplinary approach within discourse analysis, literary feminist criticism and psychosociology, this paper analyses “La Salamandra” [the Salamander] within the collection of stories *La meva Cristina and altres contes* [My Cristina and Other Stories]. The findings show that Rodoreda's ironic short narratives are imbued with a gendered mind style that stems from the intersection of the author's personal experiences within the sociocultural and historical context of her exile. Hence, I argue that Rodoreda's irony hinges upon the author's gendered narrative representation.

**Alicia Moreno Giménez** is a Foreign Language Coordinator and language tutor at Edge Hill University and a Distance Learning Tutor for the MA in Translation at the University of Birmingham. She holds a PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University (2007) and an MA in Advanced Translation Studies from the University of Salford (1999) and graduated in English Language and Literature with German from the University of Barcelona in 1996. Her research centres on translation studies, verbal irony and exilic literature in Catalan and Spanish. She has delivered and published papers on the ironic short stories of Pere Calders. She is the author of the monograph *The Translation of Irony: Examining its Translatability into Narratives*, published by Peter Lang in 2022.

**Friday 24 February 13.00-14.00**

[Online Link](#)



Attendance is free

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