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Tomorrow? Manipulation of Time and Memory in the Works of  
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<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3880-6555>, (ed.) (Re)Collecting the  
Past: History and Collective Memory in Latin American Literature.  
Oxford, Peter Lang, pp. 37-57

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past and present narratives makes the primary narratives unbelievable. It is possible that the relationship between the man and Susana has never happened and the man fantasized the whole primary text. Although there are indications that Susana really exists (the man talks to her), and the two are indeed a couple, the continuous forgetting and remembering along with questioning of the past and present actions re-writes the original storyline. As a result, the scene where the man is waiting for Susana, and the last paragraph of the story are the only parts of the original narrative left in the story. 'A veces pienso que te estoy inventando, que eres como los fantasmas [...]'<sup>17</sup> is the direct reference to the woman being predominantly a textual construct created by the man narrator/editor. However, two questions in the future timeline indicate that the man and woman narrators/editors share the responsibility for creating a believable narrative: 'Seremos ricos, famosos, gente de éxito. ¿Acaso no tenemos esa oportunidad?' and 'Susana, ¿así nos tenemos que amar?'<sup>18</sup> The man narrator is asking the woman's input in the creation of the future timeline. This is the only time when the man narrator's questions are left without an answer presumably for the woman narrator to fill in the blanks. For the majority of the past timeline, the man leads the narrative and (re)creates the woman, but in the present and future timelines the woman shares the responsibility for the creation of the text.

The future timeline contains the only instance of the pronoun 'nos' in reference to forgetting: 'Amarnos durante dos semanas todos los días y luego olvidarnos, olvidarnos como se olvida una cita poco importante. Olvidar-nos.'<sup>19</sup> This paragraph indicates predictability of the plot and points to both protagonists being textual constructs – both are forgotten, or written out of this storyline. It also interferes with the 'idyllic' version of the man's and woman's future by offering the possibility of forgetting the present.

17 'Sometimes I think I'm inventing you, that you are like ghosts [...]' (García Saldaña 2003: 99).

18 'We will be rich, famous, successful. Don't we have this opportunity?', 'Susana, is this how we should love?' (García Saldaña, 100).

19 'To be in love every day for two weeks and then forget each other, forget like you forget an unimportant date. For-get each-oth-er' (García Saldaña, 100).

This, juxtaposed by 'hablando del futuro, imaginándolo, inventándolo',<sup>20</sup> indicates the contrived nature of this potential outcome of the relationship, terminating it and the protagonists in the present storyline.

In the next paragraph the inevitability of forgetting is reinforced: 'Nos alejaremos. Vendrá el olvido como los meses. [...] Iremos olvidando',<sup>21</sup> so the process of forgetting is seen as an inevitable outcome of this storyline. Once the narrator realises this, the past framework of this narrative changes to accommodate a newfound perception of the relationship being doomed. The quotation '¿Fuimos felices? No, Susana, no lo fuimos'<sup>22</sup> is the only instance of the relationship being seen as anything but happy. Editing the past timeline to accommodate a possible future changes the narrator into the editor, whose responsibility is to reconcile multiple past timelines with the single future. However, the only future timeline in the story has little logical connection to the present or past timelines, and its clichéd outcome – the couple breaks up because they grow apart – does not accommodate complexity of the man's perception of the woman. It is possible that the future tense section is one of possible outcomes of the relationship. If so, the act of forgetting is the act of re-writing the text, presuming the re-creation of both protagonists. The conflict between the idyllic present and the futile nature of the relationship results in the erasing of the present (forgetting) without replacing it with an alternative storyline with the same protagonists, replacing them with nameless characters and assigning these the original protagonists' traits, such as language.

Taking into consideration Gusdorf's analysis of the manipulation of meaning, we can conclude that in 'En noches como ésta', a continuous re-writing of the storyline leads to the re-creation of the protagonists to such an extent that the changes in the protagonists' character are determined by and inform the nature of the re-created memory. In the context of string theory, these changes represent versions of the main text. There

20 'Talking about the future, imagining it, inventing it' (García Saldaña, 100).

21 'We will become distant. Forgetting will come like months [...] We will continue forgetting' (García Saldaña, 100).

22 'Were we happy? No, Susana, we were not' (García Saldaña, 101).