m

m

**a journal of english
and american studies**

miscelánea

Rocío G. Davis
Universidad de Navarra

Celestino Deleyto Alcalá
Universidad de Zaragoza

Marc Delrez
University of Liège

Jorge Díaz Cintas
Imperial College, London

Isabel Durán Giménez-Rico
Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Maite Escudero Alías
Universidad de Zaragoza

Gibson Ferguson
University of Sheffield

Javier Fernández Polo
Universidad de Santiago de Compostela

Kathleen Firth
Universidad de Barcelona

María del Mar Gallego Duran
Universidad de Huelva

José Ángel García Landa
Universidad de Zaragoza

María Luisa García Lecumberri
Universidad del País Vasco

Luis Miguel García Mainar
Universidad de Zaragoza

Cristina Garrigós González
Universidad Nacional de Educación a
Distancia

Rosa González Casademont
Universidad de Barcelona

Constante González Groba
Universidad de Santiago de Compostela

Maurizio Gotti
University of Bergamo

Ignacio Guillén Galve
Universidad de Zaragoza

Christian Gutleben
University of Nice

Felicity Hand
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona

Luc Herman
University of Antwerp

María Dolores Herrero Granado
Universidad de Zaragoza

Ana María Hornero Corisco
Universidad de Zaragoza

Tamar Jeffers-McDonald
University of Kent

Deborah Jermyn
University of Roehampton

Jane Jordan
Kingston University, London

Rosa Lorés Sanz
Universidad de Zaragoza

Hilaria Loyo Gómez
Universidad de Zaragoza

Zenón Luis Martínez
Universidad de Huelva

María José Luzón Marco
Universidad de Zaragoza

Ana Manzanas Calvo
Universidad de Salamanca

Belén Martín Lucas
Universidad de Vigo

6

Paula Martín Salván
Universidad de Córdoba

M. Jesús Martínez Alfaro
Universidad de Zaragoza

Paul McDonald
University of Nottingham

Arsenio Jesús Moya Guijarro
Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha

Laura Muresan
Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest

Marita Nadal Blasco
Universidad de Zaragoza

Elena Oliete Aldea
Universidad de Zaragoza

Susana Onega Jaén
Universidad de Zaragoza

Beatriz Oria Gómez
Universidad de Zaragoza

Nieves Pascual Soler
Universidad Internacional de Valencia

Viorica Eleonora Patea Birk
Universidad de Salamanca

Beatriz Penas Ibáñez
Universidad de Zaragoza

Javier Pérez Guerra
Universidad de Vigo

Ramón Plo Alastrué
Universidad de Zaragoza

Juan Antonio Prieto Pablos
Universidad de Sevilla

Paula Rautionaho
University of Eastern Finland

Constanza del Río Álvaro
Universidad de Zaragoza

Miguel F. Ruiz Garrido
Universitat Jaume I

Manuela Ruiz Pardos
Universidad de Zaragoza

Dora Sales Salvador
Universitat Jaume I

Lena Steveker
University of Saarland

Juan Antonio Suárez Sánchez
Universidad de Murcia

Rubén Valdés Miyares
Universidad de Oviedo

Javier Valenzuela
Universidad de Murcia

Ignacio Vázquez Orta
Universidad de Zaragoza

Rafael Vélez Núñez
Universidad de Cádiz

Francisco Yus Ramos
Universidad de Alicante

table of contents

8

9

Articles

THE ENGLISH REACTION OBJECT CONSTRUCTION: A CASE OF SYNTACTIC CONSTRUCTIONAL CONTAMINATION

LA CONSTRUCCIÓN CON OBJETOS DE REACCIÓN: UN CASO DE CONTAMINACIÓN CONSTRUCCIONAL

TAMARA BOUSO
Universitat de les Illes Balears
tamara.bouso@uib.es

Abstract

This paper discusses a case of constructional contamination (Pijpops and Van de Velde 2016; Pijpops et al. 2018), a phenomenon which describes the relation between two *or more* constructions such that usage frequencies of one construction influence the patterns of variation in another (Hilpert and Flach 2022). Specifically, I investigate the influence of structures of the type *she gave a nod of intelligence* or *she nodded with satisfaction* on the variation in the object slot of the so-called English Reaction Object Construction (ROC; Levin 1993), as in *she nodded intelligence* and *she nodded satisfaction*. Using the *British Sentimental Novel Corpus* (Ruano San Segundo and Bouso 2019) and the method of distinctive collexeme analysis (Gries and Stefanowitsch 2004; Hilpert 2006, 2014), it is argued that early and frequent structures superficially similar to the ROC, like those just mentioned, *partly* explain the lexical diversity found in the object slot of the nineteenth-century ROC (Bouso 2020b). The results thus corroborate findings on the pervasiveness of constructional contamination in English syntax, confirm the claim put forward in Bouso (2021) that the ROC can be treated as an example of a multiple source construction, and provide evidence of the large-scale transitivisation process experienced by the English language since Old English times.

Resumen

Este artículo aborda un caso de contaminación construccional (Pijpops y Van de Velde 2016; Pijpops et al. 2018), un fenómeno que describe la relación entre dos *o más* construcciones en las que la frecuencia de uso de una de ellas ejerce una influencia en los patrones de variación de otra (Hilpert y Flach 2022). Más concretamente, se investiga el efecto de estructuras inglesas del tipo *she gave <u>a nod of intelligence</u>* o *she nodded <u>with satisfaction</u>* sobre la variación que muestra la posición del objeto en la denominada construcción con objetos de reacción inglesa (ROC, Levin 1993; e.g. *she nodded <u>intelligence</u>, she nodded <u>satisfaction</u>*). A través de un corpus de novelas sentimentales británicas (Ruano San Segundo y Bouso 2019) y varios análisis colostruccionales (Gries y Stefanowitsch 2004; Hilpert 2006, 2014), se argumenta que estructuras frecuentes superficialmente similares a la construcción con objetos de reacción explican *en gran medida* la diversidad léxica que manifiesta la ROC a lo largo del siglo XIX (Bouso 2020b). Los resultados obtenidos corroboran la persistencia del fenómeno de la contaminación construccional, confirman el tratamiento de la ROC como un caso de construcción de herencia múltiple (Bouso 2021), y arrojan nuevas luces al proceso de transitivización que ha caracterizado a la lengua inglesa desde el periodo del inglés antiguo.

Palabras clave: Gramática de Construcciones Diacrónica, construcción con objetos de reacción, diversidad léxica, contaminación construccional, construcción de herencia múltiple, transitivización.

Introduction

This paper addresses a case of what Pijpops and Van de Velde call "constructional contamination" (2016). The term essentially describes a relation between two *or more* constructions such that usage frequencies of one construction influence a choice of variants present in a slot of an alternative construction. Constructional contamination is seen as evidence for horizontal links (Pijpops and Van de Velde 2016; Pijpops et al. 2018; Hilpert and Flach 2022) between formally different constructions and it is therefore relevant for theories such as Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2006, 2019; Hilpert 2019, among many others). This is a theory of linguistic knowledge that has as one of its major tenets the idea that the totality

of our knowledge of a language is organised in a network of constructions "*and nothing else in addition*" (Hilpert 2019: 2, emphasis in original).

Pijpops and Van de Velde (2016) introduced the phenomenon through examples from Dutch morphology and encouraged the study of similar cases in other languages. Hilpert and Flach (2022) provided a case of constructional contamination in English syntax by looking at adverb placement variation in the English passive in examples such as those given in (1a, 1b).

> (1)
> a. The disease was sexually transmitted.
> b. The disease was transmitted sexually.

The argument they made is that "at least some of the variability in adverb placement in the English passive can be explained by constructional contamination" (2022: 2). Specifically, they hypothesised that the frequency of a noun phrase construction that involves a fixed sequence of an adverb and a participle as a complex modifier of the head noun (e.g. *sexually transmitted disease*) influences the placement of the adverb in the English passive (e.g. 1a, 1b). They confirmed this hypothesis on the basis of data from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (*COCA*; Davies 2008) and by using different frequency measures of modified noun phrases (i.e. the contaminating construction) on the one hand, and of the passive (i.e. the construction that is affected by this contamination) on the other.

This paper sets out to examine another case of constructional contamination in English syntax. The focus is on lexical variation in the object slot of the so-called Reaction Object Construction (henceforth ROC; Levin 1993: 97-98). As shown in the examples in (2), the ROC consists of an originally intransitive verb of manner of action (e.g. *nod* and *smile*) followed by a non-prototypical type of object that expresses a reaction of some kind (e.g. *satisfaction*, *brightness*, *intelligence*, *acquiescence*, and *interest*). The result of this syntactic amalgam is a transitivising or valency-increasing construction whose overall meaning is "express X by V-*ing*" as in "the old lady expressed her satisfaction by nodding", "those expressed an interest by smiling" in (2a) and (2d), respectively.

> (2)
> a. The old lady *nodded* <u>the satisfaction which this proof of the surly man's foresight imparted to her feelings</u>.
>
> (*BSNC* 1836-1837, Dickens; *Pickwick Papers*)
>
> b. She *nodded* <u>an excellent artificial brightness</u>.
> (*BSNC* 1890-1891, Meredith; *One of Our Conquerors*)
>
> c. Jobbling *nods* <u>intelligence and acquiescence</u>.
> (*BSNC* 1852-1853, Dickens; *Bleak House*)

d. Better declare at once 'Paul Carl Emanuel —je te déteste, mon garçon!'— than *smile* <u>an interest</u>, look an affection, and be false and cold at heart.

<div align="right">(<i>BSNC</i> 1853, Charlotte Brontë; <i>Villette</i>)</div>

It could be suggested that the ROCs in (2a-2d) simply reflect lexical idiosyncrasies. For instance, the generative grammarian Ross defined the ROC as an "insane" type of construction, pointing out that "[t]here are some *strange restrictions* on whatever rule it is that produces such sentences" (1970: 266, emphasis added). ROC examples like these could also be argued to be the result of the convergence of a number of factors. For instance, the ROC examples in (2) are characteristic of the Late Modern English (henceforth LModE) period and most particularly of the nineteenth-century British sentimental novel which, like the ROC, shows a strong emphasis on feeling (Rowland 2008: 193) (e.g. Richardson's *Clarissa* and Brooke's *The Fool of Quality*). Bouso (2017, 2020a, 2020b, 2021), and Bouso and Ruano San Segundo (2021a, 2021b) also argued that some ROCs are created as a result of poetic licence (cf. examples 3 and 4), while others are used as extravagant alternatives of a more neutral subtype of discourse presentation construction. In (5), for instance, the role of the narrator is foregrounded in the ROC (5a) but backgrounded in the direct discourse construction (henceforth DDC), where more relevance is put on the words of a particular character (e.g. *my father* in 5b) (for details, see Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021a).

(3)
Nay, I have heard that Statesmen —great and wise—
Will sometimes counsel with a Lady's eyes;
The servile suitors —watch her various face,}
She *smiles* <u>preferment</u> —or she *frowns* <u>disgrace</u>,}
Curtsies a pension here —there nods a place.}

<div align="right">(<i>OED</i> 1775, Sheridan; <i>The Rivals: A Comedy</i>, example from Bouso 2017: 208)</div>

(4)
But smaller, subtler than the fleshly self,
So wandered forth for airing when it pleased.
And see! beside her cherub-face there floats
A pale-lipped form aerial *whispering*
<u>Its promptings</u> in that little shell her ear.

<div align="right">(<i>BSNC</i> 1871-1872, George Eliot; <i>Middlemarch</i>)</div>

(5)
a. It sympathized on the side of his backers too much to do more than *nod* <u>a short approval</u> of his fortitude.

<div align="right">(<i>BSNC</i> 1895, Meredith; <i>The Amazing Marriage</i>)</div>

b. "The prince is a gentleman, grandada. Come with me. We will go alone. You can relieve the prince, and protect him".
My father *nodded*: "I approve".
   (*BSNC* 1870-1871, Meredith; *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*; example from Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021a, 2021b)

The argument made here is that, apart from these other important factors (i.e. stylistic, poetic licence, and extravagance) at least *some* lexical variability in the object slot in the ROC can also be explained by the phenomenon of constructional contamination (see Section 2.2). More specifically, the analysis in this paper examines the potential influence on the modelling and shaping of the LModE ROC (i.e. the contaminated construction) of a set of constructions (i.e. the potentially contaminating constructions), namely those included in (6) below. These are: a Complex Verb Phrase involving a verb followed by a postverbal modifier in the form of a Prepositional Phrase (Complex VP with PP), a Complex Noun Phrase involving a noun and a post-modifying PP (Complex NP with PP), and a pre-modifying participial adjective (Complex NP with Participle).

17

(6)
a. Mrs. Loveday *nodded* with satisfaction. [Complex VP with PP]
                (*BSNC* 1880, Hardy; *The Trumpet Major*)

b. Sam gave a short *nod* of intelligence. [Complex NP with PP]
                (*BSNC* 1836-1837, Dickens; *Pickwick Papers*)

c. After a short pause of expectation, during which he looked with *smiling* interest and wonder, on his nurse, and saw that she had not forgotten Floy, Walter was brought into the room. [Complex NP with Participle]
                (*BSNC* 1836-1837, Dickens; *Pickwick Papers*)

In all these examples, the first element in the sequence (the verb *nodded*, the noun *nod*, and the participial adjective *smiling*, respectively) semantically corresponds to the verb in the ROC (e.g. *nod* and *smile*), while the second element, namely the PPs *with satisfaction* and *of intelligence*, and the noun *interest* correspond to the Reaction Object (henceforth RO) proper (e.g. *satisfaction*, *intelligence*, and *interest*). We can say then that the ROC (see examples in 2) and the constructions just described and exemplified in (6) exhibit superficial similarities in form and meaning. They are, in fact, interchangeable in most contexts even if they differ regarding their morphosyntactic properties, that is, even if they count as essentially four grammatically independent constructions.

This is not the first time that the structures in (6) have been mentioned in connection with the ROC (2). For instance, Zwicky (1971) and Martínez-Vázquez

(2016) point out that the main difference between a ROC and constructions of the type in (6a) is the communicative dimension of the former. As for constructions like the one in (6b), Ross refers to them as "associated nominalizations" of the ROC (1970: 267), whereas Mirto draws an interesting parallel between them and the ROC itself, with both involving noun predicates and "a support (light) verb" (2007: 1). Finally, Felser and Wanner (2001) as well as Kogusuri (2009) mention that instances like those in (6c), which they call "attributive adjectival passives", serve to justify the argument status of a RO (i.e. the object *interest* in the ROC *smile an interest*).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 justifies the need for this study in order to arrive at a complete historical account of the LModE ROC and provides a brief overview of constructional contamination, including how this novel concept has been applied to the present study. Section 3 discusses how the data was collected and the methods used for the analysis. Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 ties the results to a discussion of how these findings fit in within the history of the ROC and offers some concluding remarks.

2. State of the art

2.1. The History of the ROC

From the perspective of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2006, 2019; Hilpert 2019), the ROC is defined as a form-meaning pairing, specifically a valency-increasing argument structure construction that involves an originally intransitive verb of manner of action (e.g. *nod* and *smile*) followed by a non-prototypical object type that expresses a reaction or an emotion of some kind (e.g. *satisfaction* and *interest*). This emotional object can be of three different types: delocutive nouns, deverbal illocutionary nouns, and emotional abstract nouns (Martínez-Vázquez 2010, 2014, 2015). All these types of ROs express mental states and differ regarding their derivational status. For instance, delocutives derive from locutions such as *adieu* in (7a), whereas deverbal illocutionary nouns derive from speech act verbs, such as *acquiesce* for the RO *acquiescence* in example (7b). Finally, in ROCs with emotional abstract nouns the subjects express their feelings of the emotion conveyed by the object, for instance, of *satisfaction* (2a), *brightness* (2b), *intelligence* (2c), *discontent* (7c), and *love* (7d).

> (7)
> a. <u>She</u> *waved* him <u>an adieu</u> from the window, and stood there for a moment looking out after he was gone.
>
> (CLMET3.0 1847-1848, Thackeray; *Vanity Fair*)

b. The Chief Justice *smiled* acquiescence, thanked him, and the man before night was safe in prison.

(CLMET3.0 1839, Darwin; *The Voyage of the Beagle*)

c. Dumouriez, conquering Holland, *growls* ominous discontent, at the head of Armies.
(CLMET3.0 1837, Carlyle; *The French Revolution*)

d. James, with full heart, *murmured out* his ardent love, his sense that no captive had ever been so generously treated as he.

(CLMET3.0 1870, Yonge; *The Caged Lion*)

As for its diachronic development, although the seeds of the ROC as a form-meaning pairing are to be found in the Early Modern English (EModE) period (1473-1700), its real development only takes place in the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century with the increase in its frequency and the identification of highly idiosyncratic instances of ROCs such as those included in (2). Bouso (2021), in this regard, argues that since more than 70 % of her LModE data stems from narrative fiction, this proliferation of the ROC could well be a direct consequence of the continuous development of the novel and, in particular, of the nineteenth-century British sentimental novel with which the ROC shares crucial similarities, among them a chronological coincidence and a particular emphasis on emotions.

On the basis of a corpus of 21 million words (Ruano San Segundo and Bouso 2019), evidence is provided in Bouso and Ruano San Segundo (2021a, 2021b) for a close relation between the ROC and the nineteenth-century British sentimental novel by showing that the ROC is in fact more diverse in terms of object types in this novel subtype than, for instance, in the first two decades of the twentieth-century American English novel. In addition to this, it is shown that the ROC develops in a parallel, correlated fashion with a particular subtype of discourse presentation construction that is also characteristic of this novel subtype, and which has been hypothesised to be the original source construction of the ROC (e.g. *She smiled, "I don't believe you"* > *She smiled disbelief*) (Visser 1963-1973). Despite this correlation and their functional similarities (see, in particular, Section 2.2 in Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021a), the analysis indicates that Visser's original hypothesis does not really hold up, as these two constructions differ both semantically and structurally: (i) they attract different verb types, (ii) diachronically, some verbs appear in the ROC earlier than in the DDC, and those that occur first in the DDC are more marginal in the ROC (e.g. *whisper*, *murmur*, and *shout*), and (iii) most importantly, they also show a *low* degree of collocational overlap. These insights are the starting point for the present investigation. Since the discourse presentation construction mentioned above should not be treated as the (single) source construction of the ROC, then, what other structures may have influenced

19

its development? More specifically, have there been several constructions, namely the structures included in (6), that were "attracted" (De Smet et al. 2018) to the ROC and that contributed somehow to the modelling and shaping of its LModE development, making it an example of "multiple source construction" (for this label, see De Smet et al. 2013; also Pijpops and Van de Velde 2016)?

2.2. The Concept of Constructional Contamination

Pijpops and Van de Velde define constructional contamination as follows:

> Constructional contamination is the effect whereby a subset of instances of a target construction is (stochastically) affected in its realization by a contaminating construction, because of a coincidental resemblance between the *superficial* strings of instances of the target construction and a number of instances of the contaminating construction. (2016: 543, emphasis added)

The authors demonstrate the effect of constructional contamination with the Dutch partitive genitive construction (*iets verkeert(s) gegeten* 'I ate something wrong'). This consists of a quantifier in the form of an indefinite pronoun (e.g. *iets* 'something') or numeral, followed by an adjectival phrase (e.g. *verkeert* 'wrong') that shows variation in the inflectional suffix -*s* that occasionally appears attached to it. The argument they put forward is that the variation between the suffixed (*iets verkeerts*) and the bare variant (*iets verkeert*) is influenced by a contaminating construction that is fixed and contains a string of words that superficially resembles the bare variant of the partitive genitive (see 8 and 9). To put it another way, frequent exposure to this fixed string has led speakers to be biased towards the bare variant of the partitive genitive.

(8) Target construction: partitive genitive
in   begin   van   de   week   *iets*   *verkeerd*   gegeten
[in   beginning of   the   week]$_{PP}$ [something wrong]$_{NP}$ eaten
'I ate something wrong at the start of the week.'

(9) Contaminating construction: construction with adverb
dat   *iets*   *verkeerd*   geïnterpreteerd   wordt?
that   [something]$_{NP}$ [wrongly]$_{AdvP}$ interpreted   gets
'...that something gets wrongly interpreted?'

More recently, Pijpops et al. provide a more fine-grained definition of the effect of constructional contamination:

> In every-day language use, two *or more* structurally *unrelated* constructions may occasionally give rise to strings that look very similar on the surface. As a result of this superficial resemblance, a subset of instances of one of these constructions may *deviate in the probabilistic preference* for either of several possible formal variants. This effect is called 'constructional contamination'. (2018: 269, emphasis added)

The difference with regard to their 2016 definition is that the focus now is on the fact that there may be more than one contaminating construction affecting the distribution of the variants of a particular construction. The authors also complement their previous study with three other cases of constructional contamination in Dutch to show that the phenomenon is quite widespread and that it may not only affect the area of morphology, as in the example of the Dutch partitive genitive construction (see 8), but also the field of syntax as reflected, for instance, in the competition between Dutch long and bare infinitives.

Apart from these interesting new insights on its effect, in their 2018 study the authors describe the circumstances under which constructional contamination takes place and also distinguish two types of such contamination. More specifically, they claim that for constructional contamination to occur, two conditions must be met. First, there must be a target construction with some form of formal alternation; and second, the contaminating construction must have a subset of instances that are superficially (near-)identical to a subset of instances of the target construction. If these superficially similar instances yield a probabilistic preference for one of the variants of the target construction, the effect achieved is one called first-degree constructional contamination. In turn, if the target construction then subsequently affects other constructions that "do not show direct superficial overlap" (Pijpops et al. 2018: 275) with the original contaminating construction(s), the obtained effect is one of second-degree constructional contamination. This second type of constructional contamination is therefore dependent on the first type and is illustrated by Pijpops et al. (2018) with the competition between long and bare infinitives.

It should be noted that it may be difficult to establish in the literature a clear-cut distinction between the phenomenon under examination here and the mechanism of change known as "analogisation" (Traugott and Trousdale 2013).[1] For instance, De Smet et al. mention that "since functionally similar expressions are similar by definition, it would be surprising if they did not trigger analogical change" (2018: 217). Pijpops et al. also defined contamination as "a specific type of analogical interference, on a par with other types such as four-part analogy, paradigmatic levelling, […]" (2018: 272). Despite being indeed two closely related concepts, I would like to argue here that these mechanisms of change should be kept apart (Hilpert 2021). As traditionally defined, analogisation "is a process of change bringing about matches of meaning and form *that did not exist before*" (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 38, emphasis added), that is, analogisation involves the creation of new constructs, i.e. new instances of constructions. Constructional contamination, by contrast, rather than being a creative type of process, yields "lexical biases in morphosyntactic variation" (Pijpops et al. 2021; see also Pjpops

and Van de Velde 2016: 549). To be more specific, analogisation should not be treated as a *sine qua non* condition for constructional contamination as not all cases of contamination necessarily involve the attestation of *new* instances. For instance, the paradigmatic cases previously mentioned (Pjpops et al. 2018, 2021; Hilpert and Flach 2022) simply show a frequency effect on the part of one contaminating construction, which brings about a preference for one of the already existing variants of the contaminated construction. As will be shown in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, the constructional contamination case under discussion here combines both the frequency effect that is characteristic of constructional contamination proper (see Section 4.2; Table 3) and the creative dimension that is typical of classical examples of analogisation (see Section 4.3; Table 4).

Finally, to conclude this brief overview of the concept, Pijpops and Van de Velde (2016) relate the effect of constructional contamination to the constructionist view that knowledge is organized in a network (Langacker 1987; Goldberg 1995). The constructions that form this network are linked to each other via different types of links (Goldberg 1995; Hilpert and Diessel 2017; Hilpert 2019) among which are "vertical" inheritance links, polysemy links, metaphorical links, and subpart links. The latter, i.e. subpart links, are of particular relevance for constructional contamination in that they apply to constructions that share some aspect of their form and/or some aspect of their meaning without one being an instance of the other (Hilpert 2019: 62). As explained by Hilpert and Flach (2022), if it can be demonstrated that constructions that show some kind of formal overlap exert a mutual influence, some light will have been shed on the importance of associative links in the construction (Van de Velde 2014; Torrent 2015; Traugott 2018; Hilpert 2018, 2019; Luiz Wiedemer et al. 2019; da Costa do Rosário 2019; Sommerer and Smirnova 2020).

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Data Retrieval

For the present study, I build on ROC data from earlier work (Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021a, 2021b) based on the *British Sentimental Novel Corpus* (Ruano San Segundo and Bouso 2019; henceforth *BSNC*). This is a 21-million-word corpus originally compiled with the aim of testing the close relation between the ROC and the English sentimental novel. Given its suitability for the previous analyses of the ROC, from this very same corpus additional data was retrieved for the present study in search of examples of the potentially contaminating constructions mentioned in (6) (see Section 1). The pruning of the data was done once again manually after retrieving all tokens for all forms of the seven most

prototypical verbs of the ROC (cf. Bouso 2017), that is, the verbs *mutter*, *murmur*, *smile*, *nod*, *whisper*, *shout*, and *wave* (18,772 tokens). This procedure followed the recommendations made by Pijpops and Van de Velde (2016: 297). Despite being work-intensive, manual checking of corpus instances is a good method of tracking down potential contaminating constructions. The three types of contaminating constructions selected were, in fact, chosen not just because they had been previously mentioned in passing in the literature about the ROC, but mostly because it was noticed in several historical analyses of the ROC conducted by Bouso (2021) that they were especially frequent in the data.

For an example to be considered an instance of one of the potentially contaminating constructions discussed above, the second element of the sequence had to comply with the expressive meaning of the ROC. Thus, examples such as those in (10), which lack the presence of an emotional component, were discarded whereas those examples similar to the ones in (11) whose expressive meaning is clear were stored in the database for further analysis. In order to exclude false positives, this second element of the potential contaminating construction was also classified into one of the three ROs mentioned above (i.e. delocutive, deverbal, or simply emotional), mostly with the help of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Finally, metaphorical examples such as those included in (12) for the verb *wave* were excluded; the reason for this is that the meaning of *wave* in such contexts differs from the manner of action interpretation that is required for the verb included in the ROC; compare, in this regard, example (13) against any of the examples included in (12).

(10)
a. You *nodded* <u>to me</u>, sir? [Complex VP with PP]
(*BSNC* 1836-1837, Dickens; *Pickwick Papers*)

b. 'Yes', said Betty with a good-humoured smile and *nod* <u>of the head</u>. [Complex NP with PP]
(*BSNC* 1864-1865, Dickens; *Our Mutual Friend*)

c. While Newton went (not without a *muttered* <u>grumbling</u>) to undo the shawls … Margaret looked round upon the nursery; […]. [Complex NP with Participle]
(*BSNC* 1853-1855, Gaskell; *North and South*)

(11)
a. Peg *nodded* her head <u>in strong assent</u>. [Complex VP with PP-deverbal]
(*BSNC* 1837-1839, Dickens; *Nicholas Nickleby*)

b. But Mrs. Crawley did not give the *nod* <u>of assent</u>. [Complex NP with PP-deverbal]
(*BSNC* 1866-1867, Trollope; *The Last Chronicle of Barset*)

c. His *nodded* <u>affirmative</u> altered her face and her voice. [Complex NP with Participle-deverbal]

<div align="right">(*BSNC* 1884, Meredith; *Diana of the Crossways*)</div>

(12)

a. She could see Stephen now lying on the deck still fast asleep, and with the sight of him there came a *wave* <u>of anguish</u> that found its way in a long-suppressed sob. [Complex NP with PP-metaphorical]

<div align="right">(*BSNC* 1860, Eliot; *The Mill on the Floss*)</div>

b. There were plenty among them who had very moderate faith in the Frate's prophetic mission, and who in their cooler moments loved him little; nevertheless, they too were carried along by the great *wave* <u>of feeling</u> which gathered its force from sympathies that lay deeper than all theory. [Complex NP with PP-metaphorical]

<div align="right">(*BSNC* 1862-1863, Eliot; *Romola*)</div>

c. He took her hand again and held it awhile, and a faint *wave* <u>of gladness</u> seemed to flow through her. [Complex NP with PP-metaphorical]

<div align="right">(*BSNC* 1892, Hardy; *The Well-Beloved*)</div>

(13)

d. With a passing gesture of his hand at the picture —what! a menace? No; yet something like it. A *wave* as <u>of triumph</u>? No; yet more like that. [Complex NP with PP-emotional]

<div align="right">(*BSNC* 1846-1848, Dickens; *Dombey and Son*)</div>

3.2. Methodology

The case under examination here meets the two main conditions for constructional contamination to kick into action (see Section 2.2). First, there is a target construction with some form of formal alternation; more specifically, the ROC shows patterns of variation in the object slot, as evinced in previous research (Bouso 2020b; Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021a) and also in the present article with the idiosyncratic ROC examples given in (2) and (7). As for the second condition, the potential contaminating constructions identified in (6) feature instances that are superficially similar, even near identical, to a subset of instances of the target construction (compare in this regard the examples in 2 with those included in 6). Following Pijpops and Van de Velde (2016: 573), by (near-) identical I mean that the potential contaminating constructions under analysis are not simply related formally but also semantically to the target construction. As also pointed out by Hilpert and Flach, the mere entrenchment of a string is "not enough to trigger constructional contamination […] [t]he string has to appear in a context that at least potentially alternates with the construction that is to be contaminated" (2022: 21; see also Boyd and Goldberg 2011: 76). This is certainly the case of the examples under analysis here (see 2 and 6).

To provide an answer to the question of whether the potentially contaminating constructions identified here exerted an influence on the diversity, or lexical variation, of the nineteenth-century ROC, several operationalisations had to be conducted. First, I calculated the overall token frequency for the patterns under analysis as well as their variability in terms of type frequencies. In a second step, I measured the degree of collocational overlap between the ROC and each of the potential contaminating constructions separately and also identified the most strongly attracted combinations to each construction type using the method of distinctive collexeme analysis (Gries and Stefanowitsch 2004; Hilpert 2006, 2014; Gries 2014). Then, I looked for time-frequency correlations among the four patterns. Finally, to further test the effect of these constructions on the lexical variation of the object slot of the Present Day English (PDE) ROC, additional data was retrieved from *COHA* (Davies 2010), *COCA*, and the web corpus.

4. Results

4.1. Token and Type Frequencies

Table 1 shows the overall token frequencies for the patterns under examination alongside the type frequencies of the two core linguistic items that make up such patterns. As can be seen, these constructions are far from being ordinary patterns.

	Tokens analysed: 18,772	**Verb Types** [First element in the contaminating construction and in the ROC]	**Emotional Noun Types** [Second element in the contaminating construction and in the ROC]	**Different (verb-noun) combinations**
ROC (e.g. *nod satisfaction, nod intelligence, smile an interest*)	468	7	150	238
Complex NP with PP (e.g. *nod of intelligence*)	450	6	184	233
Complex VP with PP (e.g. *nod with satisfaction*)	199	7	110	132
Complex NP with Participle (e.g. *smiling interest*)	115	6	78	90

Table 1. Tokens and type frequencies of the constructions under analysis

The most frequent ones in terms of both type and token frequencies are the ROC with 468 tokens and 150 RO types followed by the Complex NP with PP construction with 450 tokens and 184 RO types, and the Complex VP with PP with 199 tokens and 110 RO types.

4.2. Degree of Collocational Overlap

Table 2 below offers a view of the ten most frequent combinations in the database that occur at least once with each constructional variant, that is, with one of the potential contaminating constructions and the ROC. The results offer some support to the hypothesis that more than one structure could have influenced the variation of the ROC as all of them show some degree of collocational overlap.

	Complex NP with PP	ROC
nod recognition	11	2
murmur applause	11	1
nod intelligence	11	1
shout applause	10	2
smile recognition	9	2
murmur approbation	8	1
smile welcome	7	4
nod assent	6	55
murmur assent	5	5
smile delight	5	1

	Complex NP with Participle	ROC
mutter oath	6	5
mutter curse	3	14
mutter exclamation	3	3
smile interest	3	1
whisper request	3	1
mutter prayer	2	10
mutter invocation	2	2
whisper remark	2	2
smile peace	2	1
whisper threat	2	1

	Complex VP with PP	ROC
nod affirmative	9	3
nod satisfaction	7	1
smile reply	5	1
nod assent	4	55
smile meaning	2	1
murmur reply	2	6
smile acquiescence	2	1
nod intelligence	1	1
smile delight	1	1
nod approbation	1	2

Table 2. Most frequent (verb-noun) combinations in the constructions under analysis

A look at the proportions shows that the Complex NP with PP construction accounts for 18% of the 238 ROC verb-noun combinations, the Complex NP with Participle construction for 12% of this dataset, and finally the Complex VP with PP construction for 10%. To be more precise, 79 strings of the 238 of the ROC (i.e. 33% of my overall ROC data) have been found in some way or another represented in one of the three potential contaminating constructions identified here. Figure 1 aims to zoom in on this; note here that, for space reasons, not every point in the graph has a label on the *x*-axis.
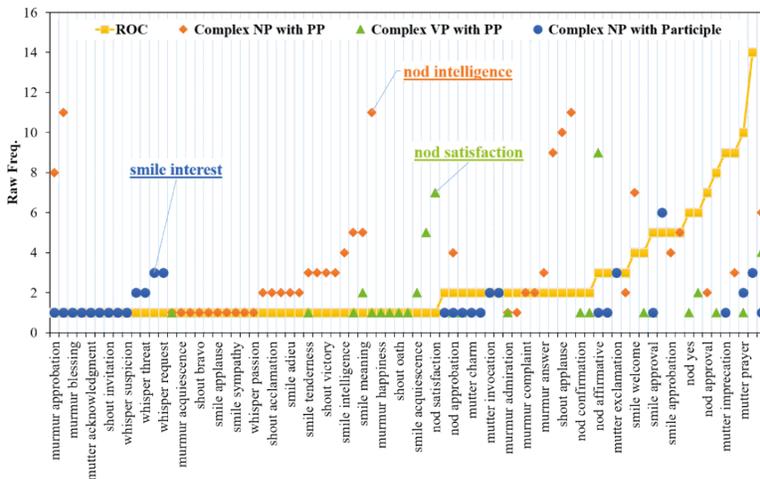
Figure 1. Sources of the ROC verb-noun combinations alongside the Zipfian distribution of the ROC[2]

In this graph, each vertical line stands for a different (verb-noun) combination, and the shapes included (i.e. ■, ♦, ▲, ●) indicate the nature (ROC, Complex NP with PP, etc.), and the (raw) frequency of the patterns in which the string in question has been attested. In other words, Figure 1 represents the Zipfian distribution of the ROC in my *BSNC* data and the extent to which the verb-noun combinations attested in the ROC qualify, on the one hand, as novelties (hapaxes or one-offs) in the ROC and, on the other, as more regular patterns in each of the three contaminating constructions analysed. For instance, using as examples the one-off ROCs in (2), the string *nod intelligence* (2c) amounts to up to 11 tokens in the Complex NP with PP construction (♦), the string *nod satisfaction* (2a) accumulates seven tokens in the Complex VP with PP construction (▲), and finally the string *smile interest* (2d) amounts to up to three tokens in the Complex NP with Participle construction (●).

A distinctive collexeme analysis supports the strong association between a number of idiosyncratic (verb-noun) combinations attested in the ROC (see examples in 2) and each of the contaminating constructions analysed here. Tables 3a-c show the results, and also reveal that the only combination that is significantly attracted to the ROC is the highly redundant string *nod assent* which is one of the few strings (jointly with *smile meaning*, *nod approbation* and *mutter prayer*) that are attested simultaneously in the three potential contaminating constructions analysed (cf. Figure 1). For the correct interpretation of Tables 3a-c, note that values of above three for collocational strength indicate a high significance level ($p < 0.001$), those above two indicate a medium significance level ($p < 0.01$), and those values between two and 1.30103 are significant at a $p < 0.05$ level. Strings not showing a statistically significant attraction to either construction have been excluded.

Combination	obs.freq. NPPP	obs.freq. ROC	exp.freq. NPPP	exp.freq. ROC	coll.strength
murmur applause	11	1	5.88	6.11	2.60 (NPPP)
nod intelligence	11	1	5.88	6.11	2.60 (NPPP)
nod recognition	11	2	6.37	6.62	2.04 (NPPP)
shout applause	10	2	5.88	6.11	1.80 (NPPP)
murmur approbation	8	1	4.41	4.58	1.78 (NPPP)
smile recognition	9	2	5.39	5.60	1.56 (NPPP)
nod assent	6	55	29.9	31.0	10.7 (ROC)

Table 3a: Distinctive collexemes of the Complex NP with PP (NPPP) and the ROC (shaded)

Combination	obs.freq. VPPP	obs.freq. ROC	exp.freq. VPPP	exp.freq. ROC	coll.strength
nod satisfaction	7	1	2.38	5.61	2.93 (VPPP)
nod affirmative	9	3	3.58	8.41	2.83 (VPPP)
smile reply	5	1	1.79	4.20	1.98 (VPPP)
nod assent	4	55	17.6	41.3	5.13 (ROC)

Table 3b: Distinctive collexemes of the Complex VP with PP (VPPP) and the ROC (shaded)

Combination	obs.freq NPP	obs.freq. ROC	exp.freq. NPP	exp.freq. ROC	coll.strength
mutter oath	6	5	2.16	8.83	1.99 (NPP)
smile interest	3	1	0.78	3.21	1.58 (NPP)
whisper request	3	1	0.78	3.21	1.58 (NPP)
nod assent	1	55	11.0	44.9	4.42 (ROC)

Table 3c: Distinctive collexemes of the Complex NP with Participle (NPP) and the ROC (shaded)

4.3. Diachronic Distribution

Figure 2 shows the diachronic distribution of the potential contaminating constructions and the ROC. There are strong, positive and significant correlations for the ROC and the Complex VP with PP construction (Pearson's $r = 0.96$; $p < 0.05$), the Complex NP with Participle construction (Pearson's $r = 0.79$; $p <$

Figure 2. Diachrony of the potential contaminating constructions and the ROC

0.05), and the Complex NP with PP construction (Pearson's r = 0.66; p < 0.05). The figure also shows that the Complex NP with PP construction, i.e. the construction with the greatest collocational overlap with the nineteenth-century ROC and the largest number of distinctive collexemes (six in total), is the most frequent constructional pattern at the start of this period.

To test the influence of the Complex NP with PP construction on the configuration of the ROC, additional data was retrieved from *COHA* (1820-2019), *COCA* (1990-2010) and the web corpus. ROC counterparts were searched for the 233 combinations (see Table 1) found in the Complex NP with PP construction in the

Verbs-noun combinations	Emotional nouns (192 Complex NP with PP strings attested in the ROC) 192/233 (82%)
Murmur (46)	**acquiescence**, **admiration**, agreement, **answer**, **applause**, **approbation**, **approval**, **assent**, astonishment, benediction, commiseration, compassion, **complaint**, confession, confidence, curiosity, denial, derision, despair, disapprobation, dissatisfaction, distrust, expectation, farewell, gratification, horror, Hush!, impatience, indignation, **inquiry**, interest, **love**, pain, pity, plaudit, pleasure, question, remonstrance, response, satisfaction, shame, sorrow, support, surprise, **sympathy**, weakness
Nod (15)	acknowledgement, **acquiescence**, **affirmative**, **approbation**, **approval**, **assent**, dismissal, farewell, friendship, greeting, **intelligence**, invitation, **recognition**, resignation, **understanding**
Shout (39)	acclamation, admiration, affliction, **applause**, astonishment, attachment, **bravo**, congratulation, contempt, **defiance**, delight, derision, disappointment, enthusiasm, excitement, execration, exultation, gratulation, grief, ha, ha, huzzah, jollity, joy, jubilation, jubilee, merriment, **no**, patriotism, rage, recognition, reprobation, scorn, supplication, surprise, thanksgiving, triumph, vengeance, **victory**, **welcome**
Smile (72)	**adieu**, admiration, affection, amusement, **applause**, apprehension, **approbation**, astonishment, beauty, bitterness, complacency, complaisance, composure, condescension, confidence, consolation, contempt, content, contentment, courtesy, cunning, **delight**, denial, derision, disdain, **encouragement**, enjoyment, excuse, feeling, forgiveness, glee, goodwill, gratification, **gratitude**, **greeting**, hope, hospitality, incredulity, indulgence, innocence, **intelligence**, invitation, irony, joy, kindness, **meaning**, **patronage**, pity, pleasantry pleasure, politeness, protection, protestation, **recognition**, relief, rest, sarcasm, satire, satisfaction, scorn, serenity, simplicity, submission, superiority, sweetness, **sympathy**, **tenderness**, timidity, toleration, triumph, understanding, **welcome**
Wave (1)	triumph
Whisper (19)	alarm, anguish, applause, astonishment, beauty, caring, condemnation, encouragement, goodwill, Hush!, indication, **inquiry**, mystery, **passion**, **reply**, sorrow, terror, truth, uneasiness

Table 4. Complex NP with PP combinations attested in the PDE ROC. Based on the *BSNC* (in boldtype), *COCA, COHA* and the web corpus

BSNC. The results, included in Table 4, also confirm the eventual influence of this construction on the configuration of the PDE ROC with 82% of these combinations emerging in the construction at some later point in time (i.e. 192/233). Though not shown here for space limitations, similar results for the ROC were obtained for the combinations of the other two contaminating constructions.

Finally, before moving on to the conclusions, it should be noted here that Bouso (2021) shows that after the nineteenth-century consolidation of the ROC, the construction continued undergoing further "post-constructionalization constructional changes" (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 27) over the course of the twentieth century with its gradual expansion to an increasing number of verb types and classes. The construction at this point is found with verbs of communication (e.g. *phone*; for similar results, see also Martínez-Vázquez 2020), verbs of activity (e.g. *play*), and verbs of light emission (e.g. *flare*). For the present analysis, the important aspect of these novel verb-noun combinations of the ROC is that they cannot be easily found in any of the three original contaminating constructions identified here in (6). It becomes in fact an arduous task to find counterparts of these constructions for ROCs with verbs of instruments of communication (e.g. *He phoned good-bye to some neighbours*) and verbs of activity such as *play* in the ROC *They played goodbye to the piano* (cf. **play with goodbye to the piano*, **a play of goodbye to the piano*, **a goodbye play to the piano*). Something similar occurs with ROCs involving verbs of light emission such as the highly metaphorical example *The star flared its goodbye* with the verb *flare* and the delocutive RO *goodbye* (**a flare of goodbye*, **a flared goodbye*, and **flared in goodbye*). An in-depth analysis of examples like the ones just mentioned certainly goes beyond the scope of this article and sets the basis for future investigations on the many different changes that the ROC seems to have continued experiencing over the course of the twentieth century. As I see it, the question to be addressed is the extent to which the PDE ROC has become freed from its LModE sources (Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021b) and, in connection with this, whether the ROC reveals more striking similarities in its development with other resultative constructions, and in particular with the *way*-construction (Perek 2020; Bouso 2021: 269-306).

5. Concluding Remarks

This paper has investigated the lexical variation in the object slot in the ROC, an aspect of the construction that had been previously addressed in the literature, but only in connection with the British sentimental novel (Bouso 2020b; Bouso and Ruano San Segundo 2021a). The contribution of this study is that the lexical diversity in the object slot of the nineteenth-century ROC cannot simply be

accounted for by its close connection with this highly emotional genre subtype. Here I hope to have demonstrated that intralinguistic factors such as the phenomenon of constructional contamination must also have played a role: some lexical variation in the object slot of the LModE ROC is determined by a set of frequent overlapping strings that are strongly associated with the syntactic patterns analysed here, making the ROC an example of multiple source construction. Out of these patterns, the one that stands out and that can be treated as the most fitting candidate for constructional contamination, is the Complex NP with PP construction (e.g. *nod of intelligence*). This syntactic pattern emerges in my historical data as one of its earliest sources, and is also the construction with the greatest degree of collocational overlap with the ROC, and the largest number of distinctive collexemes.

On a broader level, the findings adduced here provide further evidence of the large-scale transitivisation process experienced by the English language since Old English times (Visser 1963-1973; Bouso 2021). Regarding this process, Mondorf and Schneider (2016) argued that what they called "Moderate Transitivity Contexts" involving pseudo-objects such as cognate objects, *way*-objects and dummy *it* objects served as a breeding ground for waxing verbs. In Mondorf's words, "pseudo-objects are the incipient stages of (de)transitivization processes" (2016: 99). This is particularly true in my historical data for some manner of action verbs like *moan*, *bray*, *yelp*, and *roar* (see Bouso 2020a: 253-254). The nineteenth-century data reported in this article can be seen as a follow-up to this large-scale process. Once the template of the ROC as a form-meaning pairing was formed, the lexical variation in the object slot of the ROC was subsequently modelled and shaped by a number of superficially similar constructions, most commonly the Complex NP with PP construction.

On the whole, this paper aims to have contributed to the discussion of constructional contamination, pointing out its pervasiveness at all levels of linguistic analysis and the need for more evidence, on the basis of corpus data, on the existence of associative links in the construction (Van de Velde 2014; Torrent 2015; Hilpert 2018; Traugott 2018; Sommerer and Smirnova 2020). As mentioned by Pijpops and Van de Velde, "features may travel horizontally from one construction to the next, on the basis of superficial formal and semantic resemblance […], forming the basis of multiple source constructions in diachrony […]" (2016: 576). In the light of the evidence presented here, the ROC indeed qualifies as one such construction; its earliest source is the Complex NP with PP construction, and over the course of the LModE period the ROC developed alongside other structures with which it shows important semantic and functional similarities, and that contributed to its LModE and PDE configurations.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. I thank an anonymous reviewer for having encouraged me to make this distinction clearer.

2. The string *nod assent*, which amounts to up to 55 tokens for the ROC, has been excluded from the graph for the sake of clarity (last column).

Works Cited

Bouso, Tamara. 2017. "*Muttering Contempt* and *Smiling Appreciation*: Disentangling the History of the Reaction Object Construction in English". *English Studies* 98 (2): 194-215. DOI: 10.1080/0013838X.2016.1210358

Bouso, Tamara. 2020a. "The Growth of the Transitivising Reaction Object Construction". *Constructions and Frames* 12 (2): 239-271. DOI: 10.1075/cf.00041.bou

Bouso, Tamara. 2020b. "The Shaping of the Late Modern English Reaction Object Construction". In López Ropero, Lourdes, Sara Prieto García-Cañedo and José Antonio Sánchez Fajardo (eds.) *Thresholds and Ways forward in English Studies*. Alicante: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante: 179-191.

Bouso, Tamara. 2021. *Changes in Argument Structure. The Transitivizing Reaction Object Construction*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Bouso, Tamara and Pablo Ruano San Segundo. 2021a. "Another Turn of the Screw on the History of the Reaction Object Construction".

Functions of Language 28 (2): 208-231. DOI: 10.1075/fol.20026.bou

Bouso, Tamara and Pablo Ruano San Segundo. 2021b. "*The British Sentimental Novel Corpus* (*BSNC*) and the ROC-DDC Alternation at the Level of the Individual". *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 20 (1): 215-257. DOI: 10.35360/njes.659

Boyd, Jeremy K. and Adele E. Goldberg. 2011. "Learning What *Not* to Say: The Role of Statistical Preemption and Categorization in *A*-adjective Production". *Language* 1 (87): 55-83. DOI: 10.1353/lan.2011.0012

Da Costa Do Rosario, Ivo. 2019. "Interview with Graeme Trousdale / Entrevista com Graeme Trousdale". *Soletras* 37 (19): 10-19. DOI: 10.12957/soletras.2019.36451

Davies, Mark. 2008. "The *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (*COCA*)". <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>. Accessed May 28, 2021.

Davies, Mark. 2010. "The *Corpus of Historical American English* (*COHA*)". <https://www.

english-corpora.org/coha/>. Accessed May 28, 2021.

DE SMET, Hendrik, Frauke D'HOEDT, Lauren FONTEYN and Kristel VAN GOETHEM. 2018. "The Changing Functions of Competing Forms: Attraction and Differentiation". *Cognitive Linguistics* 29 (2) 197-234. DOI: 10.1515/cog-2016-0025

DE SMET, Hendrik, Lobke GHESQUIÈRE and Freek VAN DE VELDE. (eds.) 2013. *On Multiple Source Constructions in Language Change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

FELSER, Claudia and Anja WANNER. 2001. "The Syntax of Cognate and Other Unselected Objects". In Dehé, Nicole and Anja Wanner (eds.) *Structural Aspects of Semantically Complex Verbs*. Bern: Peter Lang: 105-130.

GOLDBERG, Adele E. 1995. *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

GOLDBERG, Adele E. 2006. *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*. Oxford: Oxford U.P.

GOLDBERG, Adele E. 2019. *Explain me this: Creativity, Competition, and the Partial Productivity of Constructions*. Princeton: Princeton U.P.

GRIES, Stefan Th. 2014. "Coll.analysis 3.5. A Script for R to Compute Perform Collostructional Analyses". <http://www.stgries.info/teaching/groningen/index.html>. Accessed May 28, 2021.

GRIES, Stefan Th. and Anatol STEFANOWITSCH. 2004. "Extending Collostructional Analysis: A Corpus-based Perspective on Alternations". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 1 (9): 97-129. DOI: 10.1075/ijcl.9.1.06gri

HILPERT, Martin. 2006. "Distinctive Collexeme Analysis and Diachrony". *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory* 2 (2): 243-256. DOI: 10.1515/CLLT.2006.012

HILPERT, Martin. 2014. "Collostructional Analysis: Measuring Associations between Constructions and Lexical Elements". In Glynn, Dylan and Justyna A. Robinson (eds.) *Corpus Methods for Semantics: Quantitative Studies in Polysemy and Synonymy*. Amsterdam:

John Benjamins: 391-404. DOI: 10.1075/hcp.43.15hil

HILPERT, Martin. 2018. "Three Open Questions in Diachronic Construction Grammar". In Coussé, Evie and Joel Olofsson (eds.) *Grammaticalization Meets Construction Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 21-39. DOI: 10.1075/cal.21.c2

HILPERT, Martin. (2014) 2019. *Construction Grammar and its Application to English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P.

HILPERT, Martin. 2021. "Variable Adverb Placement in the English Passive: *It has to be Analyzed Carefully / Carefully Analysed*". VI Setmana del Postgrau, Palma de Mallorca (online), Universitat de les Illes Balears, April 23.

HILPERT, Martin and Holger DIESSEL. 2017. "Entrenchment in Construction Grammar". In Schmid, Hans-Jörg (ed.) *Entrenchment and the Psychology of Language Learning: How We Reorganize and Adapt Linguistic Knowledge*. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton: 57-74. DOI: 10.1037/15969-004

HILPERT, Martin and Susanne FLACH. 2022. "A Case of Constructional Contamination in English: Modified Noun Phrases Influence Adverb Placement in the Passive". In Grygiel, Marcin (ed.) *Contrast and Analogy in Language: Perspectives from Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 1-24.

KOGUSURI, Tetsuya. 2009. "The Syntax and Semantics of Reaction Object Constructions in English". *Tsukuba English Studies* 28: 33-53.

LANGACKER, Ronald W. 1987. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar: Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford: Stanford U.P.

LEVIN, Beth. 1993. *English Verb Classes and Alternations: A Preliminary Investigation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LUIZ WIEDEMER, Marcos, Marcia MACHADO VIEIRA and Maria MAURA CEZARIO. 2019. "A Discussion on the Relationship between Variation and Change in Construction Grammar: Interview with Martin Hilpert". *Diadorim* 21 (2): 30-43. DOI: 10.12957/cadsem.2018.36724

34

Martínez-Vázquez, Montserrat. 2010. "Reaction Object Constructions in English: A Corpus-based Study". In Moskowich, Isabel, Begoña Crespo-García and Inés Lareo (eds.) *Language Windowing through Corpora*. A Coruña: SP da Universidade de A Coruña: 551-556.

Martínez-Vázquez, Montserrat. 2014. "Reaction Object Constructions in English and Spanish". *ES. Revista de Filología Inglesa* 3: 193-217.

Martínez-Vázquez, Montserrat. 2015. "Nominalized Expressive Acts in English". *Verbum* 37 (1): 147-170.

Martínez-Vázquez, Montserrat. 2016. "La construcción *llorar las penas*: Un nuevo caso de tipología germánica en una lengua romance". *Verba. Anuario Galego de Filoloxía* 43: 107-128. DOI: 10.15304/verba.43.2051

Martínez-Vázquez, Montserrat. 2020. "*Trump tuiteó su malestar*: English Argument Structure Borrowing in Spanish". *Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada* 19 (2): 126-144.

Mirto, Ignazio Mauro. 2007. "*Dream a Little Dream of Me*: Cognate Predicates in English". 26th International Conference on Lexis and Grammar, Bonifacio, France, October 2-6. <http://infolingu.univ-mlv.fr/Colloques/Bonifacio/proceedings/mirto.pdf>. Accessed May 28, 2021.

Mondorf, Britta. 2016. "*Snake Legs It to Freedom*: Dummy *It* as Pseudo-object". *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory* 1 (12): 73-102. DOI: 10.1515/cllt-2015-0071

Mondorf, Britta and Ulrike Schneider. 2016. "Detransitivisation as a Support Strategy for Causative *Bring*". *English Language and Linguistics* 3 (20): 439-462. DOI: 10.1017/S1360674316000290

Perek, Florent. 2020. "Productivity and Schematicity in Constructional Change". In Sommerer, Lotte and Elena Smirnova (eds.) *Nodes and Networks in Diachronic Construction Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 142-166. DOI: 10.1075/cal.27.04per

Pijpops, Dirk, Isabeau De Smet and Freek Van de Velde. 2018. "Constructional Contamination in Morphology and Syntax: Four Case Studies".

Constructions and Frames 2 (10): 269-305. DOI: 10.1075/cf.00021.pij

Pijpops, Dirk, Isabeau De Smet and Freek Van de Velde. 2021. "Attraction through Formal Resemblance. Five Case Studies on Constructional Contamination". 5th Usage-based Linguistic Conference, Tel Aviv (online), Israel, July 5-7. <https://limo.libis.be/primo-explore/full display?docid=LIRIAS3480390&context=L&vid= Lirias&search_scope=Lirias&tab=default_ tab&lang=en_US&fromSitemap=1>. Accessed September 28, 2021.

Pijpops, Dirk and Freek Van de Velde. 2016. "Constructional Contamination: How does it Work and how do we Measure it?" *Folia Linguistica* 2 (50): 543-581. DOI: 10.1075/cf.00021.pij

Ross, John Robert. 1970. "On Declarative Sentences". In Jacobs, Roderick A. and Peter S. Rosenbaum (eds.) *Readings in English Transformational Grammar*. Waltham, MA: Ginn and Company: 222-277.

Rowland, Ann. 2008. "Sentimental Fiction". In Maxwell, Richard and Katie Trumpener (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.: 191-206. DOI: 10.1017/CCOL9780521862523.012

Ruano San Segundo, Pablo and Tamara Bouso. 2019. *British Sentimental Novel Corpus* (*BSNC*). Cáceres: Departamento de Filología Inglesa, Universidad de Extremadura.

Sommerer, Lotte and Elena Smirnova. (eds.) 2020. *Nodes and Networks in Diachronic Construction Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/cal.27

Torrent, Tiago Timponi. 2015. "On the Relation between Inheritance and Change: The Constructional Convergence and the Construction Network Reconfiguration Hypotheses". In Barðdal, Jòhanna, Elena Smirnova, Lotte Sommerer and Spike Gildea (eds.) *Diachronic Construction Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 173-212. DOI: 10.1075/cal.18.06tor

Traugott, Elizabeth C. 2018. "Modeling Language Change with Constructional Networks". In Pons Bordería, Salvador and Óscar Loureda Lamas (eds.) *Beyond*

35

Grammaticalization and Discourse Makers. Leiden: E.J. Brill: 17-50.

Traugott, Elizabeth C. and Graeme Trousdale. 2013. *Constructionalization and Constructional Changes*. Oxford: Oxford U.P. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199679898.001.0001

Van de Velde, Freek. 2014. "Degeneracy: The Maintenance of Constructional Networks". In Boogaart, Ronny, Timothy Colleman and Gijsbert Rutten (eds.) *Extending the Scope of Construction Grammar*. Berlin: De Gruyter: 141-180. DOI: 10.1515/9783110366273.141

Visser, Frederikus T. 1963-1973. *An Historical Syntax of the English Language. Volume I: Syntactical Units with One Verb*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

Zwicky, Arnold M. 1971. "In a Manner of Speaking". *Linguistic Inquiry* 2 (2): 223-233.

36

"I REGRET LYING" VS. "I REGRET THAT I LIED": VARIATION IN THE CLAUSAL COMPLEMENTATION PROFILE OF REGRET IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH ENGLISH

"I REGRET LYING" VS. "I REGRET THAT I LIED": VARIACIÓN EN EL PERFIL DE COMPLEMENTACIÓN CLAUSAL DE REGRET EN INGLÉS AMERICANO Y BRITÁNICO

RAQUEL P. ROMASANTA
Universidad de Vigo
raquel.romasanta@uvigo.es

Abstract

The historical development and change of the English complementation system has received a great deal of attention in recent years, but work remains to be done on Present-day English. Previous studies on the complement-taking predicate REGRET have shown that in British English the choice between a *that*-clause and the gerundial *-ing* is non-categorical or probabilistic, with the speaker being able to choose between them. This non-categorical variation is the focus of the present article, which aims to identify any existing differences in the clausal complementation profile of REGRET in British and American English, as well as any linguistic variables that might determine speaker choice.

Keywords: complementation, Present-day English, cognitive complexity, British English, American English.

Resumen

El desarrollo y el cambio histórico en el sistema de complementación del inglés ha recibido mucha atención, pero queda trabajo por hacer en relación con el estudio del inglés actual. Estudios previos del verbo REGRET han demostrado que en inglés británico la elección entre una oración de complemento con *that* y una oración de

gerundio en *-ing* es no categórica o probabilística y el hablante puede elegir entre ellas. Esta variación no categórica es el tema central del presente artículo, que tiene como objetivo identificar las diferencias existentes en el perfil de complementación clausal del verbo REGRET en el inglés británico y americano, así como las variables lingüísticas que pueden determinar la elección del hablante.

Palabras clave: complementación, inglés actual, complejidad cognitiva, inglés británico, inglés americano.

1. Introduction

Clausal complementation is a popular and productive area of research and it has been explored in depth in many diachronic studies in the field of English historical linguistics (see Rohdenburg 1995, 1996, 2006; Fanego 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1998, 2007, 2016, among others). These studies focus especially on a series of changes undergone by the English clausal complementation system over previous centuries, frequently referred to as the Great Complement Shift. Some of the major changes in this shift are the evolution of the gerund from being nominal in the early periods, to acquiring full verbal properties by Late Modern English (Fanego 2007), and its establishment "as a second type of non-finite complement" (Rohdenburg 2006: 143) at the expense of infinitives and *that*-clauses. However, despite extensive research in the field, there is room for further studies of complementation in Present-day English, "where comparatively little work has been done" (Fanego 2007: 161).

This article is an attempt to contribute to existing research by looking at the complementation profile of REGRET, a verb that has been shown to exhibit variation between finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses in earlier periods of English (Heyvaert and Cuyckens 2010; Cuyckens et al. 2014; Romasanta 2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b). In particular, I aim to explore differences in the alternation between *that-* and *-ing* complement clauses with the verb REGRET in American English (AmE) and British English (BrE), as in the examples shown in (1) below, as well as the factors that may influence a speaker's choice of one pattern over the other, as attested in data from the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE; Davies 2013).

> (1)   a. *Will I <u>regret</u> leav**ing** my current job with its strong sense of purpose and stability, even if it doesn't pay as well and even if I have advanced as far as I can there?* (GloWbE-US G)
>
>   b. *I <u>regret</u> **that** I can't offer chocolate chip ones online.* (GloWbE-GB B)

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. In section 2, I present a brief account of the previous literature on variation and change in clausal complementation, and set out the research questions to be addressed. In section 3, I describe the methodology adopted and, in section 4, I present and discuss the findings. Finally, I summarize the main conclusions in section 5.

2. Background: Variation in Clause Complementation

The complementation system in English has undergone very extensive restructuring over previous centuries, commonly known as the Great Complement Shift (see Rohdenburg 1995, 1996, 2006, 2015; Fanego 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2010, 2016; Rudanko 2011; De Smet 2013). Fanego (2016: 85) discusses both major and minor restructuring changes, including the spread of infinitive clauses at the expense of finite clauses (see Rohdenburg 1995); the rise and development of *for NP to*-infinitives, as in *it was easy for him to go* (Fischer 1988; De Smet 2013: 73-101); the progressive development of verbal features of gerundives since Early Middle English times (e.g., *weakening the body by too much abstinence*) and their establishment as a second type of non-finite complement alongside infinitives (Fanego 1996b, 2004a).

One of the verbs that illustrates these restructuring over previous centuries and the one of interest to us here is REGRET and its possible complementation patterns. FrameNet, a lexical database of English which annotates examples according to their use in actual texts and provides information on their meaning, usage and valence, describes five patterns: noun phrase (NP), as in example (2), *wh*-clauses, example (3), *that*-clauses, with or without a complementizer, examples (4) and (5), *-ing*-clauses, with or without an expressed subject, examples (6) and (7), and *to*-infinitive clauses, example (8).

    (2)   *He regrets the fashionable attacks on critics.* (FrameNet)

    (3)   *"Do you regret what you've done?" she asked, moving around so that she was able to look at his face.* (FrameNet)

    (4)   *We regret that tickets can not be exchanged.* (FrameNet)

    (5)   *She regretted she would not be seeing Urquhart again for only one reason, or so she told herself.* (FrameNet)

    (6)   *I deeply regret my being unable to be with you and to join the memorial service and the dedication together with the related activities.* (FrameNet)

    (7)   *He regretted leaving Myeloski alone in the afternoon.* (FrameNet)

    (8)   *Now I regret to say that the only political party that actually entered into negotiations on this occasion was the Conservative Party.* (FrameNet)

As can be seen in examples (7) and (8), the verb REGRET belongs to the set of catenative verbs known as retrospective verbs, as is also the case with REMEMBER and FORGET. This means that the alternation between *to*-infinitive and *-ing* clauses has a functional differentiation and thus cannot be used interchangeably. The infinitive has a prospective or future meaning (*I regret to tell you that John stole it*, which can also be expressed as *I regret that I am about to tell you that John stole it*; Quirk et al. 1985: 1193), and the *-ing* construction has a retrospective or anterior meaning, as in *I regret lying*, which can be paraphrased as *I regret that I lied* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1193; see also Fanego 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; Mair 2006).

Whereas non-finite patterns seem to have a semantically dependent distribution, the alternation between finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses is non-categorical or probabilistic (Heyvaert and Cuyckens 2010; Cuyckens et al. 2014; Romasanta 2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b). That is, speakers' choices between the two structures seem to be motivated by factors other than meaning. This non-categorical or probabilistic variation is the focus of the present article, specifically in contemporary American and British English. Cuyckens et al. (2014) consider the non-categorical differentiation between *that*-clauses and non-finite clauses with the verbs REGRET, REMEMBER, and DENY in Late Modern English. They examine the changes that have occurred in complement choice over time and try to determine the semantic and syntactic factors that condition the type of complement clause used. They find that, with REGRET, there was a slight increase in the use of finite patterns (*that*- and zero *that*-clauses) over non-finite patterns (*-ing* clauses and *to*-infinitives). For all three verbs, Cuyckens et al. (2014) conclude that a number of factors determining speaker choice disfavor the use of non-finite patterns: the use of state verbs in the complement clause, the presence of intervening material, a complex noun phrase as subject of the complement clause, non-coreferential subjects, inanimate subjects in the complement clause, and an anterior temporal relation between the complement clause and the main clause. Some of these syntactic factors that have an effect on complement alternation relate to the Complexity Principle (Rohdenburg 1995, 1996, 2006), which expresses a correlation between cognitive complexity and grammatical explicitness (Rohdenburg 2006: 146). Rohdenburg describes the Complexity Principle as, "in the case of more or less explicit constructional options, the more explicit one(s) will tend to be preferred in cognitively more complex environments" (1996: 151). Generalizations related to linguistic complexity include, for example, the fact that negative sentences are cognitively more complex than their affirmative counterparts, that the presence of any intervening material between the main and subordinate clauses increases the processing burden, and that the processing complexity of passives is greater than their active counterparts (Rohdenburg 1996, 2006).

In the case of complementation, finite clausal structures are more explicit than non-finite ones because they explicitly mark tense, agreement and modality, and have an explicit subject and a complementizer (that is, when it has one; see example (9) below). All this makes it more explicit and transparent and easier to learn and process than non-finite structures (Givón 1985; Ortega 2003; Steger and Schneider 2012; Di Domenico 2017; Green 2017).

(9)   a. *I regret **that** you left the navy.* (GloWbE-GB G)
        b. *I* regret *you leav**ing** the navy.*

For the present study, I decided to compare variations found in the American English and British English components of the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE, Davies 2013). Different terminology has been adopted to refer to these two varieties, such as, national varieties (e.g., Algeo 2006; Rohdenburg and Schlüter 2009b), mainstream varieties (Schneider 2007; Williams et al. 2015), L1 varieties (Hoffmann and Siebers 2009), supranational varieties (Mair 2013), and metropolitan varieties (Aceto 2004), among others. As Rohdenburg and Schlüter claim, "at many levels of description, British-American contrasts are widely recognized" (2009b: 1). For instance, Rohdenburg's study on nominal and prepositional complementation refers to American English as favoring "the formally less explicit or simpler option over its more complex variant" (2009: 194). In the current article, this hypothesis will be tested for clausal complementation. Another example of the contrast between the grammars of American and British English is non-finite sentential complementation (Vosberg 2009). Vosberg shows that even though both varieties "follow the same trends in the development of non-finite complement variants [they do so] at clearly different speeds" (2009: 226). In general, American English is considered more innovative than British English (Leech et al. 2009; Mair 2013), and I seek to explore whether differences in the use of REGRET between these two varieties provides evidence of this. In particular, I seek to answer the following research questions:

- What are the differences and similarities between the clausal complementation profiles of the verb REGRET in American and British English?

- What are the differences and similarities within the two varieties between the General and the Blogs corpus subdivisions?

- Which linguistic factors are relevant for speaker choice among the complementation patterns available?

- Does the Complexity Principle (Rohdenburg 1996) affect the complement choice to any extent?

41

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Data Selection

As noted above, the data for this study have been retrieved from the GloWbE corpus, using its website interface. This is an online corpus released in 2015 with data taken from the Internet from the years 2012-2013 (Davies and Fuchs 2015; Lange and Leuckert 2020). It contains 1.9 billion words from 20 different countries in which English is spoken, either as L1 (e.g., the United States, Canada, Great Britain) or as L2/L3 (e.g., India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Nigeria). The two components used for this study contain a total of 774,424,429 words (386,809,355 words in the American English component and 387,615,074 words in the British English component). The texts are divided into two categories: the Blogs corpus subdivision, which accounts for about 60% of the corpus, and the General subdivision, which accounts for 40% of the corpus and contains web-based materials such as newspapers, magazines, and company websites. This distinction between Blogs and General, intended to provide a contrast between more speech-based texts and more written-based and formal ones, has been questioned in previous research. Loureiro-Porto (2017), for instance, compares GloWbE to the *International Corpus of English* (ICE; Greenbaum 1996) and argues that, in terms of orality and informality, both sections of GloWbE, Blogs and General, are very similar.

The choice of the GloWbE corpus for the present study is informed by its size. For example, the ICE corpora is smaller and a search of its British and Indian components yielded only 41 and 25 examples of REGRET. The greater number of words in GloWbE allows us to study low-frequency structures, as is the case with clausal complementation (Davies 2012: 162), as well as low-frequency lexical items such as REGRET (Romasanta 2021a). Another reason for the selection of this corpus is its inclusion of numerous varieties of English from around the world, which have already been the focus of research and will continue to be so (see, for example, Romasanta 2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b).

However, the use of GloWbE also brings with it a number of difficulties, and I have tried to minimize these as follows. First, there is some duplication of examples. In order to identify and discard these, I sorted all the examples of each variety alphabetically. Secondly, I identified some imperfections in the tagging of the corpus which yielded false positives. I dealt with these by manually cleaning any false positives that I had retrieved through the search for the verb REGRET (regret*_v*); that is, any examples in which REGRET was not a verb but was either used as a noun or an adjective (as in examples (10) and (11) below) were excluded.

> (10) *I would say this record displays a wide range of themes —family, love, <u>regret</u>, fear, youth,…* (GloWbE-GB B)

(11) …*whose style of preaching you find painfully below that of his <u>regretted</u> predecessor?*
(GloWbE-US G)

All the instances of the verb REGRET retrieved in American English and British English were included in an Excel spreadsheet, and all false positives or duplicated examples discarded. I then took a random sample of 2,000 hits from each variety. The total number of examples for each variety is proportional in terms of text type, in that I took 1,000 from General and 1,000 from Blogs.

3.2. Data Coding

The 4,000 examples selected needed further manual cleaning and pruning. For example, I decided to exclude the examples in which REGRET takes a compound or coordinated complement clause, because it is not possible to examine the relevant linguistic factors in such clauses. This limitation is illustrated below in the discussion of the factors selected.

In order to establish the final number of valid tokens, and to limit the scope of variation under investigation, I considered two factors:

a. COMPLEMENTATION TYPE. This is the dependent variable and has two values:
   i. *that*
   ii. (S) *-ing*

b. TEMPORAL RELATION. This factor refers to the temporal relation between the time expressed by the verb in the complement clause and the time expressed by the verb in the main clause.
   i. anterior (example (12) below)
   ii. simultaneous, as in (13).

43

   (12) a. *The United States government <u>regrets</u> **that** some individuals have abused their right to free speech by showing disrespect for other nations,…* (GloWbE-US G)

   b. *I <u>regret</u> tak**ing** part in the fighting now because of what has happened to me.* (GloWbE-GB G)

   (13) a. *I <u>regretted</u> **that** I hadn't any cash with me.* (GloWbE-GB B)

   b. *I <u>regret</u> leav**ing** my friends here.* (GloWbE-US G)

The total number of valid tokens, that is, examples of the verb REGRET followed by a *that-* or *-ing* clause with anterior or simultaneous temporal relation, is shown in Table 1 below. These examples were then coded for a number of variables, in order to shed light on the factors that determine complement choice.

	General	Blogs	TOTAL
AmE	247	287	534
BrE	289	289	578

Table 1. Total number of viable examples of REGRET in American and British English

Among the factors to be taken into consideration, I included some external ones related to the text type and the variety of English:

c. TEXT TYPE. General (G) and Blogs (B).

d. VARIETY OF ENGLISH. American English (AmE) and British English (BrE).

As for language-internal factors, Table 2 below provides a summary of the intra-linguistic factors included in the analysis.

Main clause	Complement clause	Relationship between clauses
e. MC TYPE OF SUBJECT	f. CC VOICE g. CC VERBAL MEANING h. CC TYPE OF SUBJECT i. CC SUBJECT ANIMACY j. CC COMPLEXITY k. CC NEGATION	l. SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY m. INTERVENING MATERIAL

Table 2. Summary of the intra-linguistic factors

The internal linguistic variable (e) below concerns the main clause (MC):

e. MC TYPE OF SUBJECT. This factor is important in terms of examining the influence of Rohdenburg's Complexity Principle (1996) on the choice of complementation patterns.

  i. pronoun: 1st, 2nd, 3rd person personal pronouns, and *wh*-pronoun (example (14) below);

  ii. simple noun phrase: one or two words, example (15);

  iii. complex noun phrase: more than two words, as in (16);

  iv. none: an explicit subject in the main clause is missing, see example (17).

(14) ***We* *regret* greatly that the memorandum did not measure up to what the Director...** (GloWbE-US G)

(15) ***Democrats* will *regret* embracing the expansion of executive power because...** (GloWbE-US B)

(16) *a new study has revealed that **nearly a third of people** <u>regret</u> getting them done.* (GloWbE-GB B)

(17) *Show facts: do not <u>regret</u> missing this show, because the music was…* (GloWbE-US G)

Regarding the complement clause (CC), I considered the following factors:

f. CC VOICE. This factor has been considered to play a role in the selection of competing options within the study of Rohdenburg's Complexity Principle (1996). Two values are distinguished:
   i. active, as in (18);
   ii. passive, see example (19);
   iii. copular/intransitive, as in (20).

(18) *Nonetheless, he doesn't <u>regret</u> try**ing** to make the switch.* (GloWbE-US G)

(19) *It is so common to hear how people <u>regret</u> not hav**ing** their wedding filmed professionally after the event.... when it's too late* (GloWbE-GB B)

(20) *Some days I <u>regret</u> **that** I did not go into another line of work.* (GloWbE-US G)

g. CC VERBAL MEANING. The verb of the complement clause may denote a state (example (21)), or an event/action, as in (22), following Quirk et al.'s (1985: 201) classification.

45

(21) *I <u>regret</u> **being** alive still.* (GloWbE-US G)

(22) *All in all, I <u>regret</u> **paying** for this game.* (GloWbE-GB B)

This is one of the factors which cannot be studied in compound or coordinated complement clauses because the verbs in the different complement clauses may have different meanings. This is also the case for the type of subject of the complement clause, subject animacy, complexity, negation, and coreferentiality (sections h, i, j, k, l below). Therefore, as already noted, compound or coordinated complement clauses are excluded from the analysis of the factors.

h. CC TYPE OF SUBJECT. As well as in the main clause, this factor is important in order to consider the influence that the Complexity Principle may have on the choice of complement clause type (Rohdenburg 1996). It has two levels:
   i. complex noun phrase (CNP), as in example (23). A complex noun phrase as subject of the complement clause contains more than one word.
   ii. Other, as in example (24).

(23) *I' too, <u>regret</u> that **a misleading and rather vexatious attempt to divert attention from the potential importance of the overall result** was made.* (GloWbE-US B)

(24) *As an atheist, I <u>regret</u> that **I** cannot consign that malignant miserable…* (GloWbE-US G)

i. CC SUBJECT ANIMACY. The subject in the complement clause may be animate, as in (24), or inanimate, as in (23) above. However, there are examples of collective nouns which can be considered either animate or inanimate. Sometimes plural agreement with the verb stresses the personal individuality within the group, as in (25), and examples are therefore classified as animate. In some other cases, singular agreement with the verb stresses the non-personal collectivity of the group, being understood as a company, association, team, etc., and therefore examples are classified as inanimate, as in (26) (Quirk et al. 1985: 316-317). There are, however, some problematic examples in which the verb in the complement clause semantically requires an animate subject (see example 27), with a volitional ('be willing to') meaning. In such cases, the subject is considered to be animate, regardless of the agreement distinction.

> (25) *I regret that **arsenal** are so lacking in these qualities at present.* (GloWbE-GB B)

> (26) *I regret that **the Court** has stopped short of this holding indispensable to…* (GloWbE-US G)

> (27) *I regret very much that the **United Kingdom** was not willing to join…* (GloWbE-GB G)

j. CC COMPLEXITY. This factor is important in order to examine the potential influence of the Complexity Principle (Rohdenburg 1996). This variable was operationalized as the number of graphemic words. In example (25) above, for instance, the number of words would be 10.

k. CC NEGATION. Rohdenburg (2006, 2015) considers the presence of a negative marker as adding complexity to the sentence and, therefore, as potentially conditioning the speaker's choice of one complementation pattern over the others. Romasanta (2021c) studies the effect of different negative markers on the alternation between *that-* and *-ing* clauses and *that-* and zero-complement clauses across 16 varieties of English and finds that, when considering *that-* and *-ing* complement clauses, (i) both *not*-negation and *no*-negation trigger the use of finite complement clauses, and (ii) this preference for *that*-clauses is stronger with *no*-negation. Here I look at the effect of the presence of any type of negative marker (*not*, *n't*, *never*, *neither*, *nobody*, *no*, *none*, *nor*, *nothing*, *nowhere*) on the complement clause. This factor has two levels:

> i. affirmative, example (28);

> ii. negative, as in (29).

> (28) *Does Maher regret spending 14 years in the closet professionally?* (GloWbE-US G)

> (29) *I had always encouraged him to at least try before he got too old and regretted never even making an attempt at it.* (GloWbE-US G)

In addition, I considered some factors related to the relationship between the main clause and the complement clause, namely:

l. SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY between the subject of the main clause and the subject of the complement clause. The two values are coreferential (see example (30) below) and non-coreferential, as in (31).

> (30) *Given the sensitive nature of this matter* **we** *regret that* **we** *are unable to provide further details at this stage.* (GloWbE-GB B)

> (31) **They** *would be* *regretting* **the press** *being there, not the usual come on to them.* (GloWbE-GB G)

m. INTERVENING MATERIAL. Rohdenburg (1995: 376) considers the presence of intervening material as an important factor that adds complexity to the structure and that may therefore influence the speaker's choice of complement clause. It indicates the number of words that occur between the verb REGRET and the first word of the complement clause, as in example (32).

> (32) *You will* *regret* **more and more each day** *this non-suit is in OUR White House* (GloWbE-US B)

4. Results

Figure 1 shows the distributions of finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses in the British and American Englishes samples. We see that these distributions are very similar, with a clear preference for *-ing* clauses, 73.01% of *-ing* clauses in British English and 73.03% in American English. This similarity in distribution may indicate that the two varieties are not so different in terms of their complementation systems, at least for the verb REGRET.
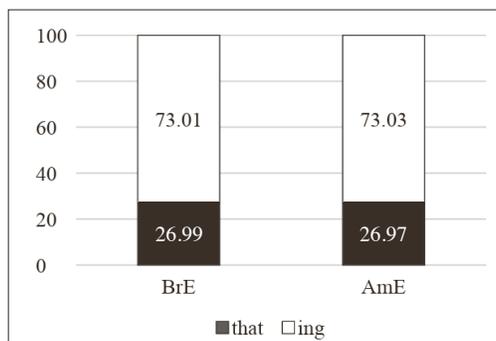
Figure 1. Distribution of finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses complementing REGRET in British and American English

Table 3 summarizes the extra- and intra-linguistic factors analyzed and their distribution in the data. Figure 2 presents the distribution of the individual factors considering the complementation type, *that* or *-ing* clause, and the relative effect that the factors have on the choice between the two patterns. I use Chi-square and Cramer's V tests to test for independence between dependent and independent factors and describe the type of relationship, if any (Field et al. 2012: 818).

Factor	Distribution
a. COMPLEMENTATION TYPE	N = 300 ***that*** (26.98%); N= 812 *-ing* (73.02%)
b. TEMPORAL RELATION	N = 966 anterior (86.87%); N = 146 simultaneous (13.13%)
c. TEXT TYPE	N = 536 General (48.2%); N = 576 Blogs (51.8%)
d. VARIETY OF ENGLISH	N = 578 BrE (51.98%); N = 534 AmE (48.02%)
e. MC TYPE SUBJECT	N = 91 none (8.18%); N = 176 NP (15.83%); N = 561 pron1 (50.45%); N = 109 pron2 (9.8%); N = 175 pron3 (15.74%)
f. CC VOICE	N = 781 active (70.23%); N = 50 passive (4.5%); N = 281 copular (25.27%)
g. CC VERBAL MEANING	N = 946 event (85.07%); N = 166 state (14.93%)
h. CC TYPE OF SUBJECT	N = 109 CNP (9.8%); N = 1,003 other (90.2%)
i. CC SUBJECT ANIMACY	N = 984 animate (88.49%); N = 128 inanimate (11.51%)
j. CC COMPLEXITY	*Mean* = 8.79; *Min* = 1; *Max* = 87
k. CC NEGATION	N = 741 affirmative (66.64%); N = 371 negative (33.36%)
l. SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY	N = 934 coreferential (83.99%); N = 178 non-coreferential (16.01%)
m. INTERVENING MATERIAL	*Mean* = 0.11; *Min* = 0; *Max* = 9

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the extra- and intra-linguistic factors described in Section 3.2

The following values show a significantly stronger preference for *that*-clauses: simultaneous temporal relation between the main clause and the complement clause, state verbs, complex noun phrases and inanimate entities as subjects in the complement clause, passive and negative complement clauses, non-coreferential subjects between the clauses, and longer complement clauses. There are also significant differences in the distribution depending on the type of subject in the main clause, with a stronger preference for *that*-clauses with first person personal pronouns, noun phrases, and no subject. The factors TEXT TYPE, VARIETY, and INTERVENING MATERIAL do not seem to have a significant effect on the choice of complementation.

In the results for the Cramer's V test for the measurement of the effect size, absolute values of 0 mean no association and absolute values of 1 mean perfect association.

(a) $x^2 (1) = 2.17$, p > .001

Cramer's V = 0.04

(b) $x^2 (1) = 3.99e^{-30}$, p > .001

Cramer's V = $5.99e^{-17}$

(c) $x^2 (4) = 56.88$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.22

(d) $x^2 (2) = 103.97$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.31

(e) $x^2 (1) = 78.45$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.27

(f) $x^2 (1) = 275.85$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.5

(g) $x^2 (1) = 279.47$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.5

(h) $x^2 (1) = 30.29$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.17

(i) $x^2 (1) = 484.67$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.66

(j) $x^2 (1) = 149.47$, p < .001

Cramer's V = 0.37

(k) Binary logistic regression estimate = -0.14, p < .001

(l) Binary logistic regression estimate = -0.24, p > .001
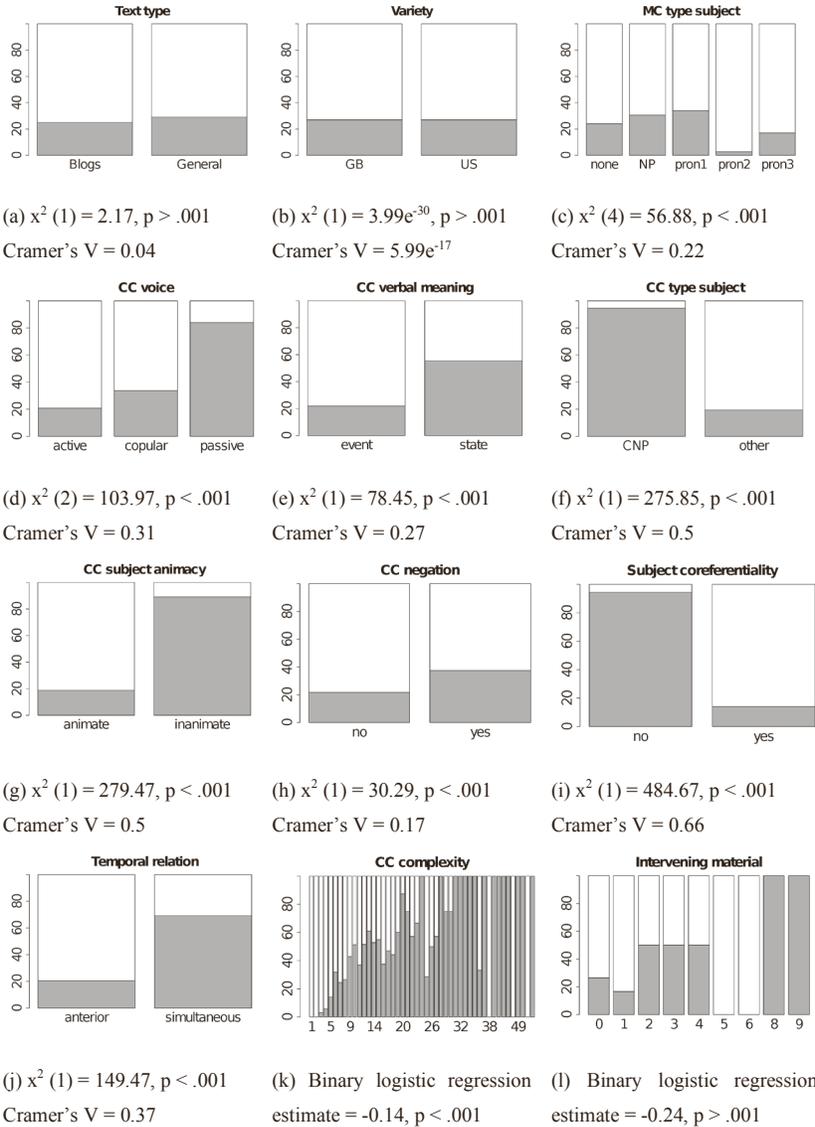
Figure 2. Distribution of extra- and intra-linguistic factors according to complementation type

49

Here we see that the factors CC VOICE, CC SUBJECT TYPE, CC SUBJECT ANIMACY, and SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY have a strong effect size, and MC TYPE SUBJECT, CC VERBAL MEANING, and TEMPORAL RELATION have a moderate effect size. All the other factors analyzed have a small effect size (TEXT TYPE, VARIETY, and CC NEGATION).

Table 4 sets out the results from the binary logistics regression model by means of the coefficients, standard errors, p-values with significance rating, odds ratio, and confidence intervals. Predicted estimates are for finite *that*-clauses. The factor with the strongest significant effect on the alternation between *that*- and *-ing* clauses with the verb REGRET, that is, the one with the largest number under the coefficients column, is the coreferentiality between the subjects of the main and complement clause (SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY). With coreferential subjects, the preference for finite *that*-clauses decreases considerably (negative number in the coefficients column). The other factors that significantly determine this alternation are the type of subject in the main clause (MC TYPE SUBJECT), TEMPORAL RELATION, complexity

	coef.	std. error	p-value		OR	CI 95%
Intercept	-1.69	0.80	0.03	*	0.18	(-3.25, -0.09)
TEXT_TYPE: General	0.29	0.22	0.18		1.34	(-0.12, 0.71)
VARIETY: AmE	0.24	0.22	0.27		1.27	(-0.18, 0.67)
MC_TYPE SUBJECT (default: none)						
MC TYPE SUBJECT: NP	-0.92	0.44	0.04	*	0.40	(-1.79, -0.05)
MC TYPE SUBJECT: pron1	-0.33	0.37	0.37		0.72	(-1.03, 0.41)
MC TYPE SUBJECT: pron2	-2.56	0.89	0.004	**	0.08	(-4.62, -1.03)
MC TYPE SUBJECT: pron3	-0.73	0.45	0.10		0.48	(-1.61, 0.16)
CC_VOICE (default: active)						
CC_VOICE: copular	-0.07	0.26	0.80		0.94	(-0.59, 0.43)
CC_VOICE: passive	1.00	0.74	0.18		2.73	(-0.42, 2.47)
CC_VERBAL_MEANING: state	0.37	0.29	0.21		1.44	(-0.21, 0.93)
CC_TYPE_SUBJECT: other	0.78	0.74	0.29		2.18	(-0.65, 2.31)
CC_ANIMACY: inanimate	1.07	0.57	0.06		2.93	(-0.07, 2.18)
CC_NEGATION: negative	0.96	0.22	$1.49e^{-05}$	***	2.60	(0.53, 1.39)
SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY: coreferential	-4.18	0.61	$9.10e^{-12}$	***	0.02	(-5.53, -3.08)
TEMPORAL_RELATION: simultaneous	1.82	0.31	$2.36e^{-09}$	***	6.19	(1.23, 2.43)
log_cc_words	1.37	0.17	$1.01e^{-15}$	***	3.94	(1.04, 1.72)
log_intervening_material	0.006	0.27	0.98		1.01	(-0.54, 0.51)
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1						

50

Table 4. Summary of the binary logistic regression model together with Odds Ratio (OR) and 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) for the estimated OR

of the complement clause (log_cc_words), and CC NEGATION. From the signs in the coefficients column, we see that with second person personal pronouns and noun phrases as subjects of the main clause the tendency for the use of *that*-clauses also decreases (negative number). In contrast, a simultaneous temporal relation between the main and complement clause seems to favor the use of *that*-clauses to complement REGRET (positive numbers). The same applies to longer and negative complement clauses.
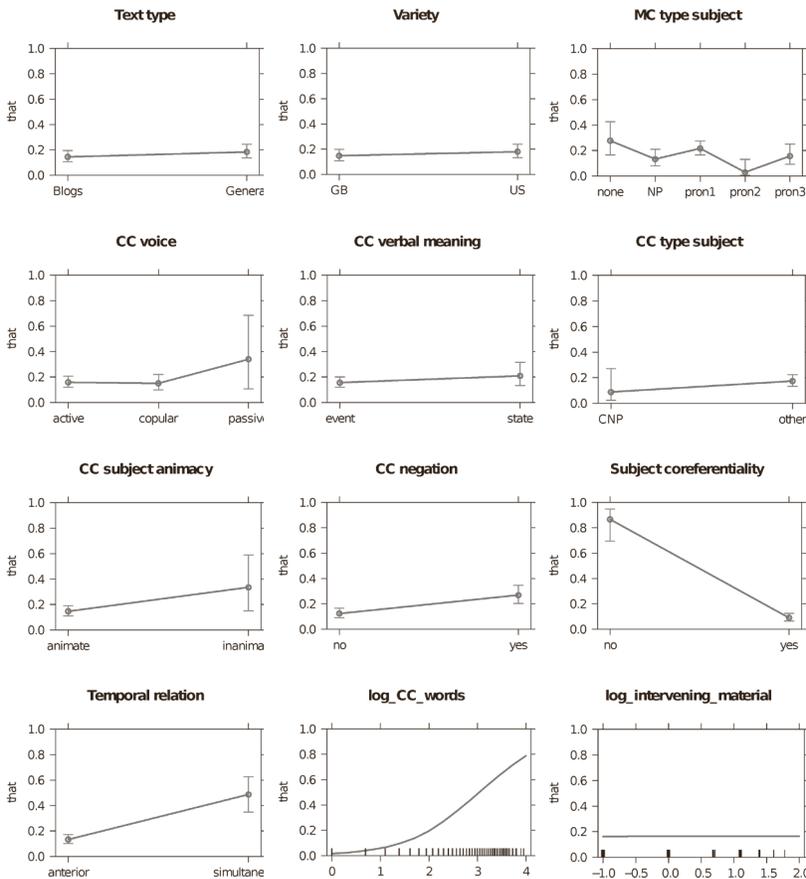
Figure 3. Effect size of the extra- and intra-linguistic factors described in Section 3.2

None of the other factors, namely TEXT TYPE, VARIETY, CC VOICE, CC VERBAL MEANING, CC TYPE SUBJECT, CC ANIMACY, and INTERVENING MATERIAL, have a significant effect on the choice. It therefore appears that the distinctions between General and Blogs and between British and American English are not significant for the present alternation between finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses. The fact that the two sections of the corpus, General and Blogs, do not show significant differences in the complementation of the verb REGRET seems to provide further confirmation of the findings in Loureiro-Porto (2017) regarding the orality and informality of Blogs. In her study, the author finds that Blogs "cannot be considered equivalent to spoken material" (2017: 46) and that the use of linguistic features characteristic of oral and informal language does not differ significantly in the data.

Figure 3 graphically illustrates the effect of each factor in the model. In this figure, the 95% error bars in each factor express the uncertainty of the estimate and are marked with vertical lines for the categorical factors and with a shadow for the continuous ones. When these error bars are fairly wide, we cannot say whether there is a definite effect on the alternation. Looking at the figure, we see again that the strongest predictor seems to be SUBJECT COREFERENTIALITY, with non-coreferential subjects clearly increasing the proportion of *that*-clauses. Second person personal pronouns as subjects of the main clause prefer the use of *-ing* clauses, as do noun phrases but to a lesser extent. In contrast, a simultaneous temporal relation between the two clauses, as well as longer and negative clauses, shows a preference for *that*-clauses.

In the discussion in section 2, I considered Rohdenburg's Complexity Principle (Rohdenburg 1995, 1996, 2006). Rohdenburg (2006: 146) describes this as a correlation between cognitive complexity and grammatical explicitness, which could have an effect on different alternations in the language. Some of the results presented here are consistent with this principle in the sense that cognitive complex environments, such as negative and long complement clauses, favor the most explicit option, *that*-clauses. However, complex subjects in the main clause, such as noun phrases (NP), seem to favor the less explicit option, *-ing* clauses. Other cognitively complex environments, such as the passive voice, complex subjects in the complement clause, and the presence of intervening material between the two clauses, do not seem to have any effect on the alternation between *-ing* and *that*-clauses. Thus, we might agree with the conclusion of Cuyckens et al. that "Rohdenburg's proposed disfavouring effect cannot be generalised to all structural complexity factors, and in that sense, Rohdenburg's complexity principle does not apply as generally as commonly held" (2014: 199).

5. Conclusion

This article considers the complementation profile of the verb REGRET in two supranational varieties of contemporary English, namely American and British English, as represented in the language of the internet, in the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE). It focuses on the non-categorical alternation between the finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* clauses and a number of intra- and extra-linguistic factors that could potentially have an effect on speaker choice between the two complementation patterns.

Based on previous research, the article poses four research questions. Regarding the first question on the differences and similarities between the clausal complementation profiles of the verb REGRET in American and British English, my findings show that these are not statistically significant. Both varieties show a stronger tendency for *-ing* complement clauses (73.01% of *-ing* clauses in British English and 73.03% in American English). This clear preference for *-ing* clauses seems to continue the historical spread of this pattern at the expense of finite complement clauses. Research question (2) concerns the potential differences and similarities between the two text types contained in the corpus, General and Blogs. The differences between these have not been found to be statistically significant.

Research question (3) refers to the factors that are relevant for speaker choice regarding the dichotomy between finite *that*-clauses and non-finite *-ing* patterns. The following factors turned out to have a statistical significance and seem to trigger an increased preference for *that*-clauses: simultaneous temporal relation between the main and complement clause, and longer and negative complement clauses. With second person personal pronouns and noun phrases as subjects of the main clause, and with coreferential subjects, however, the tendency for *that*-clauses decreases significantly. The effect of the following factors is not statistically significant: text type, variety of English, voice of the complement clauses, verbal meaning and type of subject in the complement clause, the animacy of the subject in the complement clause, and the presence of intervening material between the two clauses.

Regarding the potential effect of the cognitive linguistic principle that may influence the speaker's choices between the available complementation patterns considered, research question (4), the Complexity Principle (Rohdenburg 1995, 1996, 2006) postulates that an increase in the processing burden favors the use of the more explicit forms. I examined several features that are said to increase structural complexity and found some of them to have an influence on the choice of complementation pattern. When some features occur in a clause there is a

statistically significant higher proportion of *that*-clauses, the more explicit grammatical form, over -*ing* clauses. These features are the presence of negative markers in the complement clause and long complement clauses. Interestingly, however, complex subjects in the main clause, such as noun phrases (NP), increase the tendency for the more complex, less explicit -*ing* clauses. From this, we cannot draw any firm conclusions concerning the effect of the Complexity Principle in general or its effect on the clausal complementation system of the verb REGRET in particular.

To conclude, the findings of this study contribute to several areas of research. First, they confirm the historical tendency in English to replace finite patterns with non-finite -*ing* complement clauses, a tendency attested and described in numerous diachronic studies (Rohdenburg 1995, 1996, 2006, 2015; Fanego 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2010, 2016; Rudanko 2011; De Smet 2013). Secondly, the findings contribute to the existing literature on non-categorical variation in clausal complementation and the intra-linguistic factors determining the speaker's choice between multiple possibilities (Heyvaert and Cuyckens 2010; Bernaisch 2013; Cuyckens et al. 2014; Deshors 2015; Deshors and Gries 2016; Romasanta 2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, among others). Third, from a methodological perspective the study shows that a combination of qualitative work (the detailed manual pruning and selection of valid examples) and quantitative analysis (binary logistic regression modeling) is necessary to obtain reliable results. Fourth, it provides further evidence in support of the view that the two sections into which GloWbE is divided, General and Blogs, are not in fact very different. At the same time, it shows that the corpus is a valuable tool for the analysis of low frequency lexical items and constructions, given its large size, as long as the researcher is willing to conduct a fine-grained weeding out of repeated and mistagged examples. Finally, this article shows that variation in complementation remains a prolific area of research, especially regarding (i) the language-internal and external predictors that determine it, and (ii) the intervarietal differences that may, or may not, characterize it. As claimed by Fanego (2007), much research is needed in this area, and this claim should be extended to cover variation in other varieties of English around the world. As Schneider points out, "in the process of structural nativization, verbs begin to allow and later prefer new structures to complement them and build a complete sentence" (2007: 86). This includes outer-circle languages, already addressed in García-Castro (2018, 2019, 2020) and Romasanta (2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b), expanding-circle varieties, and learner varieties, where cognitive factors derived from language contact in multilingual settings and second language acquisition are likely to pay a role in clausal complement choice.

Acknowledgments

Works cited

ACETO, Michael. 2004. "Eastern Caribbean English-derived Language Varieties: Phonology". In Schneider, Edgar W. (ed.) *Varieties of English: The Americas and the Caribbean*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter: 290-311. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511607240

ALGEO, John. 2006. *British or American English? A Handbook of Word and Grammar Patterns*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

BERNAISCH, Tobias. 2013. "The Verb-complementational Profile of Offer in Sri Lankan English". In Huber, Magnus and Joybrato Mukherjee (eds.) *Corpus Linguistics and Variation in English: Focus on Non-native Englishes*. Helsinki: Varieng. <https://varieng.helsinki.fi/series/volumes/13/bernaisch/>. Accessed February 10, 2021.

CUYCKENS, Hubert, Frauke D'HOEDT and Benedikt SZMRECSANYI. 2014. "Variability in Verb Complementation in Late Modern English: Finite vs. Non-finite Patterns". In Hundt, Marianne (ed.) *Late Modern English Syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.: 182-204. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139507226.014

DAVIES, Mark. 2012. "Examining Recent Changes in English: Some Methodological Issues". In Nevalainen, Terttu and Elizabeth C. Traugott (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of English*. Oxford: Oxford U.P.: 263-287.

DAVIES, Mark. 2013. "Corpus of Global Web-Based English: 1.9 Billion Words from Speakers in 20 Countries". <http://corpus.byu.edu/glowbe/>. Accessed February 8, 2017.

DAVIES, Mark and Robert FUCHS. 2015. "Expanding Horizons in the Study of World Englishes with the 1.9 Billion Word Global Web-based English Corpus (GloWbE)". *English World-Wide* 36 (1): 1-28. DOI: 10.1075/eww.36.1.01dav

DE SMET, Hendrik. 2013. *Spreading Patterns: Diffusional Change in the English System of Complementation*. New York: Oxford U.P. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199812752.001.0001

DESHORS, Sandra C. 2015. "A Constructionist Approach to Gerundial and Infinitival Verb Complementation Patterns in Native and Hong Kong English Varieties". *English Text Construction* 8 (2): 207-235. DOI: 10.1075/etc.8.2.04des

DESHORS, Sandra C. and Stefan Th. GRIES. 2016. "Profiling Verb Complementation Constructions across New Englishes: A Two-step Random Forest Analysis of *ing* vs. *to* Complements". *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 21 (2): 192-218. DOI: 10.1075/ijcl.21.2.03des

DI DOMENICO, Elisa. 2017. "Introduction". In Di Domenico, Elisa (ed.) *Syntactic Complexity from a Language Acquisition Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing: 1-22.

FANEGO, Teresa. 1996a. "On the Historical Development of the English Retrospective Verbs". *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 97: 71-79.

FANEGO, Teresa. 1996b. "The Development of Gerunds as Objects of Subject-control Verbs in English (1400-1760)". *Diacronica* 13: 29-62. DOI: 10.1075/dia.13.1.03fan

FANEGO, Teresa. 1996c. "The Gerund in Early Modern English: Evidence from the Helsinki Corpus". *Folia Linguistica Historica* 17 (1-2): 97-152. DOI: 10.1515/flih.1996.17.1-2.97

FANEGO, Teresa. 1998. "Developments in Argument Linking in Early Modern English Gerund Phrases". *English Language and Linguistics* 2: 87-119. DOI: 10.1017/S1360674300000708

FANEGO, Teresa. 2004a. "On Reanalysis and Actualization in Syntactic Change: The Rise and Development of English Verbal Gerunds". *Diachronica* 21: 5-55. DOI: 10.1075/dia.21.1.03fan

FANEGO, Teresa. 2004b. "Some Strategies for Coding Sentential Subjects in English: From Expectation to Grammaticalization". *Studies in Language* 28: 321-361. DOI: 10.1075/sl.28.2.03fan

FANEGO, Teresa. 2007. "Drift and Development of Sentential Complements in British and American English from 1700 to the Present Day". In Pérez-Guerra, Javier, Dolores González-Álvarez, Jorge Luis Bueno-Alonso and Esperanza Rama-Martínez (eds.) "*Of Varying Language and Opposing Creed": New Insights into Late Modern English*. Bern: Peter Lang: 161-235.

FANEGO, Teresa. 2010. "Variation in Sentential Complements in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century English: A Processing-based Explanation". In Hickey, Raymond (ed.) *Eighteenth-century English*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.: 200-220. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511781643.012

FANEGO, Teresa. 2016. "The Great Complement Shift Revisited: The Constructionalization of ACC-*ing* Gerundives". *Functions of Language* 23 (1): 84-119. DOI: 10.1075/fol.23.1.05fan

FIELD, Andy, Jeremy MILES and Zoë FIELD. 2012. *Discovering Statistics Using R*. London: SAGE.

FISCHER, Olga. 1988. "The Rise of the *for NP to V* Constructions: An Explanation". In Nixon, Graham and John Honey (eds.) *An Historic Tongue: Studies in English Linguistics in Memory of Barbara Strang*. London: Routledge: 67-88. DOI: 10.4324/9781003074687-7

FrameNet. 2015. "FrameNet Project". <https://framenet.icsi.berkeley.edu>. Accessed May 3, 2017.

GARCíA-CASTRO, Laura. 2018. "Variation in Verbal Complementation Patterns in Nativised Varieties of English: The Case of *Remember* in Indian English". In Ferrández San Miguel, María and Claus-Peter Neuman (eds.) *Taking Stock to Look Ahead: Celebrating Forty Years of English Studies in Spain*. Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de la Universidad de Zaragoza: 207-213.

GARCíA-CASTRO, Laura. 2019. "Synchronic Variability in the Complementation Profile of *Remember*: Finite vs. Non-finite Clauses in Indian and British English". *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies* 59: 137-164.

GARCíA-CASTRO, Laura. 2020. "Finite and Non-finite Complement Clauses in Postcolonial Englishes". *World Englishes* 39: 411-426. DOI: 10.1111/weng.12481

GIVÓN, Thomas. 1985. "Iconicity, Isomorphism and Non-arbitrary Coding in Syntax". In Haiman, John (ed.) *Iconicity in Syntax*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins: 187-219. DOI: 10.1075/tsl.6.10giv

GREEN, Clarence. 2017. *Patterns and Development in the English Clause System: A Corpus-based Grammatical Overview*. Singapore: Springer.

GREENBAUM, Sidney. (ed.) 1996. *Comparing English Worldwide: The International Corpus of English*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

HEYVAERT, Liesbet and Hubert CUYCKENS. 2010. "Finite and Gerundive Complementation in Modern and Present-day English: Semantics, Variation and Change". In Winters, Margaret E., Heli Tissari and Kathryn Allan (eds.) *Historical Cognitive Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 132-159. DOI: 10.1515/9783110226447.132

HOFFMANN, Thomas and Lucia SIEBERS. (eds.) 2009. *World Englishes – Problems, Properties*

and Prospects. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. DOI: 10.1075/veaw.g40

LANGE, Claudia and Sven LEUCKERT. 2020. *Corpus Linguistics for World Englishes: A Guide for Research.* London/New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780429489433

LEECH, Geoffrey, Marianne HUNDT, Christian MAIR and Nicholas SMITH. 2009. *Change in Contemporary English: A Grammatical Study.* Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511642210

LOUREIRO-PORTO, Lucía. 2017. "ICE vs GloWbE: Big Data and Corpus Compilation". *World Englishes* 36 (3): 448-470. DOI: 10.1111/weng.12281

MAIR, Christian. 2006. "Nonfinite Complement Clauses in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of *Remember*". In Kytö, Merja, Mats Rydén and Erik Smitterberg (eds.) *Nineteenth-century English: Stability and Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.: 215-228.

MAIR, Christian. 2013. "The World System of Englishes: Accounting for the Transnational Importance of Mobile and Mediated Vernaculars". *English World-Wide* 34 (3): 253-278. DOI: 10.1075/eww.34.3.01mai

ORTEGA, Lourdes. 2003. "Syntactic Complexity Measures and their Relationship to L2 Proficiency: A Research Synthesis of College-level L2 Writing". *Applied Linguistics* 24 (4): 492-518. DOI: 10.1093/applin/24.4.492

QUIRK, Randolph, Sidney GREENBAUM, Geoffrey LEECH and Jan SVARTVIK. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language.* London: Longman.

ROHDENBURG, Günter. 1995. "On the Replacement of Finite Complement Clauses by Infinitives in English". *English Studies* 4: 367-388. DOI: 10.1080/00138389508598980

ROHDENBURG, Günter. 1996. "Cognitive Complexity and Increased Grammatical Explicitness in English". *Cognitive Linguistics* 7 (2): 149-182. DOI: 10.1515/cogl.1996.7.2.149

ROHDENBURG, Günter. 2006. "The Role of Functional Constraints in the Evolution of the English Complementation System". In Dalton-Puffer, Christiane, Dieter Kastovsky, Nikolaus Ritt and Herbert Schendl (eds.) *Syntax, Style*

and Grammatical Norms: English from 1500-2000. Bern: Peter Lang: 143-166.

ROHDENBURG, Günter. 2009. "Nominal Complements". In Rohdenburg, Günter and Julia Schlüter (eds.): 194-211. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511551970.011

ROHDENBURG, Günter. 2015. "The Embedded Negation Constraint and the Choice between More or Less Explicit Clausal Structures in English". In Höglund, Mikko, Paul Rickman, Juhani Rudanko and Jukka Havu (eds.) *Perspectives on Complementation: Structure, Variation and Boundaries.* Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan: 101-127. DOI: 10.1057/97811 37450067_6

ROHDENBURG, Günter and Julia SCHLÜTER. (eds.) 2009. *One Language, Two Grammars? Differences between British and American English.* Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511551970

ROHDENBURG, Günter and Julia SCHLÜTER. 2009. "Introduction". In Rohdenburg, Günter and Julia Schlüter (eds.): 1-12. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511551970.001

ROMASANTA, Raquel P. 2017. "Contact-induced Variation in Clausal Verb Complementation: The Case of *Regret* in World Englishes". *Alicante Journal of English Studies* 30: 121-147. DOI: 10.14198/raei.2017.30.05

ROMASANTA, Raquel P. 2019. "Variability in Verb Complementation: Determinants of Grammatical Variation in Indigenized L2 Varieties of English". In Parviainen, Hanna, Mark Kaunisto and Päivi Pahta (eds.) *Corpus Approaches into World Englishes and Language Contrasts.* Helsinki: Varieng. <https://varieng.helsinki.fi/series/volumes/20/romasanta/>. Accessed February 10, 2021.

ROMASANTA, Raquel P. 2021a. "Substrate Language Influence in Postcolonial Asian Englishes and the Role of Transfer in the Complementation System". *English Studies* 102 (8): 1151-1170. DOI: 10.1080/0013838X.2021.1966968

ROMASANTA, Raquel P. 2021b. "A Morphosyntactic Approach to Language Contact in African Varieties of English". *Studia Neophilologica*: 1-24. DOI: 10.1080/00393274.2021.1978314

ROMASANTA, Raquel P. 2021c. "Negation as a Predictor of Clausal Complement Choice in World Englishes". *English Language and*

57

Linguistics: 1-23. DOI: 10.1017/S1360674321000241

Rudanko, Juhani. 2011. *Changes in Complementation in British and American English: Corpus-based Studies of Non-finite Complements in Recent English*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schneider, Edgar W. 2007. *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511618901

Steger, Maria and Edgar W. Schneider. 2012. "Complexity as a Function of Iconicity: The Case of Complement Clause Constructions in New Englishes". In Kortmann, Bernd and Benedikt Szmrecsanyi (eds.) *Linguistic Complexity: Second Language Acquisition, Indeginization, Contact*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter: 156-191. DOI: 10.1515/9783110229226.156

Vosberg, Uwe. 2009. "Non-finite Complements". In Rohdenburg, Günter and Julia Schlüter (eds.): 212-227. DOI: 10.1017/CBO978 0511551970.012

Williams, Jeffrey P., Edgar W. Schneider, Peter Trudgill and Daniel Schreier. (eds.) 2015. *Further Studies in Lesser-known Varieties of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139108652

58

SPANISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' USE OF AUTHENTIC VIDEOS AND THEIR MOTIVES FOR ENGAGING IN THIS INFORMAL ACTIVITY: A STUDY WITH EFL LEARNERS OF DIFFERENT PROFICIENCY LEVELS

EL USO DE VÍDEOS AUTÉNTICOS POR ESTUDIANTES UNIVERSITARIOS ESPAÑOLES Y SUS MOTIVOS PARA REALIZAR ESTA ACTIVIDAD INFORMAL: UN ESTUDIO CON ESTUDIANTES DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA DE DISTINTOS NIVELES DE COMPETENCIA

EKATERINA SINYASHINA
Universidad de Alicante
kate.sinyashina@ua.es

Astract

This paper examines informal learning practices of Spanish university EFL learners of different proficiency levels with authentic videos in English and the reasons for engaging in this activity. For this purpose, one hundred and fifty-six students of mixed proficiency levels completed a questionnaire. The general percentages revealed that the majority of them are exposed to authentic videos with very high or considerably high frequency, they normally undertake this activity alone using their computers, laptops or mobile phones, and they tend to watch authentic videos with captions/subtitles either in English or in Spanish. The Internet and streaming services were identified as the two most commonly used sources. Furthermore, many of the respondents enjoy this activity and find it particularly useful for developing their listening skills and lexis. A statistical analysis of the results revealed a clear impact of the proficiency level on the frequency of exposure, the use of subtitles/captions, the sources and reasons for doing this informal activity.

Keywords: authentic video, informal learning, proficiency level, captions, subtitles.

Resumen

El presente estudio examina el uso informal de vídeos auténticos en inglés así como las razones para estas prácticas de los estudiantes universitarios españoles de

inglés como lengua extranjera de distintos niveles de competencia. Con esta finalidad, ciento cincuenta y seis estudiantes de niveles mixtos de competencia lingüística en inglés respondieron a un cuestionario. Los porcentajes generales revelaron que la mayoría de ellos están expuestos a vídeos auténticos con una frecuencia considerablemente alta o muy alta, suelen usar ordenadores, portátiles y teléfonos móviles como dispositivos para ver los vídeos, y normalmente los ven con subtítulos en inglés o en español. Se constató también que las fuentes que usan habitualmente para realizar esta actividad informal son Internet y servicios de transmisión de vídeo. Asimismo, muchos de los encuestados disfrutan realizando esta actividad y la consideran particularmente útil para desarrollar sus habilidades auditivas en inglés y el aprendizaje de nuevo vocabulario. Aplicando un análisis estadístico se observó un claro impacto del nivel de competencia en inglés de los estudiantes en referencia a los resultados de la frecuencia de exposición a vídeos auténticos, el uso de subtítulos, las fuentes de estos videos y las razones para desarrollar esta actividad informal.

Palabras clave: vídeos auténticos, aprendizaje informal, nivel de competencia, subtítulos.

60

1. Introduction

Due to recent developments in ICT (Information and Communication Technology), particularly online technologies (e.g. videos-on-demand, streaming services, smart TVs, etc.), these days English language educators and learners have easy access to different sources of authentic videos, which can be used for informal learning practices of English at all stages of education with learners of different proficiency levels. Furthermore, scholars emphasize that viewing authentic videos can be beneficial for English language learning in many ways: they provide input in the target language (TL) through video, audio and subtitles/captions, allow learners to observe communication in real-life situations, and motivate learners to spend hours practicing doing this activity (Cruse 2007; Talaván 2007; Lin and Siyanova-Chanturia 2014). Consequently, many papers have addressed questions concerned with how English language learners use authentic video material in an informal environment, their opinions on the effectiveness of this activity for achieving progress in language learning, and the real efficacy of watching authentic videos for the acquisition of foreign language skills. In general, questionnaires about the informal practices of learners of English from Spain and other parts of the world with authentic videos indicate that they tend to do this activity in their free time and perceive it as a possible way to enhance their language proficiency (see, for example, Talaván 2011; Ismaili 2013;

Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera 2015; Talaván et al. 2016; Trinder 2017; Muñoz et al. 2018; González Vera and Hornero-Corisco 2019; Lertola 2019; Muñoz 2020; Wang and Chen 2020; Muñoz and Cadierno 2021). It is important to note, however, that none of the above-mentioned works considered the possible relationship between the level of proficiency of EFL learners, how they manage authentic videos outside the classroom and their motives for performing this informal activity. The present study provides further analysis of the informal use of authentic videos by Spanish EFL learners and addresses the issue of the possible effects of their proficiency level.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. English Language and Proficiency

English has long been considered the international language, whose dominance all over the world can be explained by economic, technological and cultural factors (e.g. Crystal 2003; Dewi 2013; McKay 2018). Consequently, in Europe, English is nowadays among "the most widely spoken foreign language in 19 of the 25 Member States where it is not an official language" (European Commission 2012: 21), and around 70% of Europeans consider English as "one of the two most useful languages for themselves" (European Commission 2012: 7). Following the classification of *World Englishes* (Kachru 1991), we can make a distinction between native (L1), Foreign Language (FL) and Second Language (SL or L2) users of English. In Spain, English is normally studied and used as a Foreign Language (FL); that is, it is not an official language and exposure to it is mainly limited to the educational environment. At the same time, the terms *Lingua Franca (LF)* or *English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)* are frequently used whenever referring to English as a tool of communication employed by people from different countries who do not have any other language in common (e.g. Seidlhofer 2005; Berns 2009; Jenkins 2009).

Irrespective of the term applied in reference to a person who studies and uses English, all constant English language learners share one feature: as they advance in their acquisition of English, their proficiency level should also improve. The concept of the proficiency level came under the spotlight in the 1970s (Harsch 2017). Verhoeven and De Jong provide an exhaustive summary of numerous works that contributed to the development and understanding of aspects involved in the term 'proficiency' from different perspectives: from "the theoretical understanding of human language processing with respect to the modularity of mind (Chomsky, 1982; Fodor, 1983; Sternberg, 1980; 1985b; Vygotsky, 1962), to speaking and its underlying cognitive operations (Levelt, 1989), to the process of reading (Perfetti, 1985; Ballota, Flores d'Arcais & Rainer, 1990), and to the

process of writing (Bereiter & Scardamelia, 1987; Flower 1988)" (1992: 2). Different opinions were expressed regarding the divisible or unitary concept of proficiency. Thus, Oller (1979) claimed that proficiency is indivisible into smaller units, whereas Palmer and Bachmann (1981) stated that proficiency can be separated into different aspects or competences.

Today's most commonly cited reference of language proficiency is the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*, which was put forward by the Council of Europe. The CEFR defines proficiency as "guided by 'can do' descriptors rather than a 'deficiency' perspective focusing on what the learners have not yet acquired" (2001: 28). The general simplified profile consists of six proficiency levels and is boosted by introducing many descriptor scales, which are reference tools for various language competences and skills involved in the TL learning-teaching process.

On the whole, the CEFR descriptors are a useful tool for determining the progress of English language learners, although they can be reflected differently in the various aspects and skills involved in the TL learning-teaching process. It is also worth noting that a TL learner's proficiency level can be considered as one of the factors that affects the process of new language learning and the choices made by TL learners during this process. Some studies, for example, provide evidence of the positive relationship between the higher proficiency level of TL learners and their learning of new vocabulary while viewing authentic videos (Tekmen and Daloğlu 2006; Chen et al. 2017; Peters and Webb 2018). Other papers reveal differences in the choice of the learning strategies employed by TL learners of lower and higher proficiency levels for acquiring different aspects and abilities of the TL (Salahshour et al. 2013; Habók and Magyar 2018; Kocaman et al. 2018, among others).

2.2. Authentic Videos and Informal Learning

ICT has facilitated informal practices of learning English all over the world (Stevens 2010). Informal learning occurs in contexts "that take place outside of school" (Meyers et al. 2013: 356), and it is usually "not linked to any course or institution" (Trinder 2017: 402). Thus, for example, Toffoli and Sockett refer to the term *Online Informal Learning of English (OILE)*, which "involves language development through online activities such as social networking, streaming and/ or downloading television series or films, listening to music on demand and web browsing" (2015: 1). Authentic videos can therefore be considered one of the sources of informal learning practices.

Authentic videos, such as TV programmes, TV series, films, documentaries, commercials, the news, internet videos, etc. (see Sherman 2010: 1), are produced

and released in TL speaking countries (in the case of English, the UK, the USA, Australia, etc.) and are "originally created for native speakers of the language" (Talaván 2007: 7). When imported by other countries, they then need to be adapted for viewers. Two of the several possible approaches for adaptation are subtitles and captions (European Commission 2011; Albergaria Almeida and Dinis Costa 2014). While subtitles are "a printed statement or fragment of dialogue appearing on the screen between the scenes of a silent motion picture or appearing as a translation at the bottom of the screen during the scenes of a motion picture or television show in a foreign language" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*), captions include not only "the type-written version of the audio component", but also "visual display of the dialogue, narration, music and sound effects" as they are particularly designed for the hard of hearing (see Jelinek Lewis 1999).

In the last few years, several studies in different countries of the world have used questionnaires to examine whether learners of English use authentic videos for informal learning of the TL. These include the study by Hyland (2004), who analysed the out-of-class English language learning practices of students in Hong-Kong and concluded that watching videos and TV programmes in English was one of the most frequently carried out activities. Similar results were observed in the survey administered by Inozu et al. (2010) with Turkish students from the English Language Teaching department in Adana and Mersin Universities. In the study by Toffoli and Sockett (2010), non-specialist learners of English from France replied that watching authentic videos (e.g. TV series and films) was one of the most predominant informal activities for acquiring English. Eighty-seven percent of the participants from Lertola's study, who were studying Italian language at the National University of Ireland, stated that they watch FL movies and 56% of the respondents "frequently watched subtitled movies and 28% frequently watched both dubbed and subtitled movies" (2012: 65). Trinder (2017) reported that films and television series were among the most frequently chosen sources for the acquisition of different skills of English by Austrian university students. University students from a wide range of academic disciplines at two public universities in northern Taiwan also responded that they "watch YouTubers' English-teaching videos mostly for finding learning resources" (Wang and Chen 2020: 342).

In Spain, this issue has been addressed in papers by Talaván (2011), Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera (2015), Talaván et al. (2016), González Vera and Hornero-Corisco (2019), Muñoz et al. (2018), Muñoz (2020), and Muñoz and Cadierno (2021), among others. The studies by Muñoz et al. (2018) and Muñoz and Cadierno (2021), for example, compared Danish and Spanish teenagers and young learners' contact with authentic videos in English with different types of subtitles. The results showed that the Danish participants were more frequently exposed to

63

authentic audio-visual material in English than their Spanish counterparts: more than one third of the Spanish respondents did not watch authentic videos with subtitles in English or without any kind of subtitles (Muñoz and Cadierno 2021). Similarly, Muñoz (2020) revealed that although watching YouTube videos was the second most frequently practiced activity by Spanish learners of English, more than half of the respondents never watched movies or series in English without subtitles, and around half of the respondents were not exposed to authentic videos with subtitles in English in their free time.

The results of the questionnaire conducted by Talaván et al. (2016) revealed that the great majority of the participants primarily opted for films and TV series as a source of informal learning rather than books or radio programmes. Thirty percent of the undergraduate students of the Degree in Primary Education in the study by González Vera and Hornero-Corisco (2019) reported using video clips outside the classroom, although not very often. In reference to the frequency of exposure to authentic videos, Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera found that the vast majority of the participants from the UNED (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) used audiovisual material "almost on an everyday basis" (2015: 155). Regarding the use of subtitles, 74% of the students from the Official School of Languages in Spain claim that they use subtitles, especially in the TL, as a support while viewing authentic videos at home (see Talaván 2011). In the study by Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón (2015), half of the participants from the UNED prefer interlingual subtitles/captions, whereas the other half favour intralingual ones.

 Overall, the results of the above-mentioned questionnaires seem to point to the idea that the so-called *iGeneration* (see Twenge 2006) of students and learners of English from all over the world are normally open to the use of authentic videos for TL learning outside the classroom. It is worth noting, however, that the issue of the possible impact that a TL learner's proficiency level can have on how they use authentic videos in their free time as well as their reasons for embarking on this activity has not been raised in the papers cited in this section.

2.3. Advantages, Potential Difficulties and Effectiveness of Viewing Authentic Videos

Authentic videos open up many opportunities for TL learners in their pursuit of improving their language skills and other aspects of their learning. Thus, for example, they can enhance their language competence "particularly, in their increasingly fluent speech, more native-like accent and a growing repertoire of useful expressions for informal social contexts" (Lin and Siyanova-Chanturia 2014: 4). Watching authentic videos engages both left and right hemispheres of the brain (Schlaug et al. 1995; Hébert and Peretz 1997). Moreover, a video

provides a TL learner with multimodal input: visual, audio and verbal information (Talaván 2007; Williams and Lutes 2007), the combination of which can greatly contribute to language performance across diverse contexts.[1]

Another advantage of viewing authentic videos is that they "offer the range of situations and settings, the knowledge of and insights into target language attitudes, values and behaviour" (Vanderplank 2016: 20), and they can provide information regarding the habits, traditions and culture of the TL speakers (Talaván 2007). Besides, videos communicate with viewers on an emotional level so they can motivate TL learners to engage in this informal activity and dedicate many hours to it (Cruse 2007; Bajrami and Ismaili 2016).

Nonetheless, viewing authentic videos can pose certain difficulties for TL learners. The first is the challenge of understanding natural language, particularly for low level TL learners (Harmer 2003), as authentic videos do not "provide modified input (e.g. foreigner talk) like educational videos do" (Lin and Siyanova-Chanturia 2014: 7). Furthermore, although a combination of words and pictures can foster the learning process, a high level of interactivity of several elements of authentic videos (sound, video, subtitles, grammar, etc.) can limit the processing capacity of a TL learner.[2] Among other drawbacks, we can mention poor viewing conditions and the content of what is being watched, which may not always be suitable for all age groups of viewers (e.g. videos with violent content) (Lin and Siyanova-Chanturia 2014). Also, it is frequently the entertaining side of authentic videos that attracts and motivates TL learners to engage in this activity, particularly if it is carried out in an informal environment (King 2002; Lin and Siyanova-Chanturia 2014). Language learning, therefore, might not be the main focus of the watching process.

Concerning the effectiveness of viewing authentic videos for TL learning, it is worth noting studies which, by means of surveys, have examined TL learners' views on the usefulness of this activity (Seferoğlu 2008; Wang 2012; Ismaili 2013; Shabani and Pasha Zanussi 2015; Kabooha 2016; Trinder 2017). Their results generally indicate that TL learners believe that it can contribute to the acquisition of different skills and aspects of the language they are studying. For example, Ismaili (2013) reported that the respondents see movies as a good way to practice and improve their vocabulary. The participants of Shabani and Pasha Zanussi's survey (2015) believe that watching and listening to documentaries and TV series can be beneficial for improving their listening, speaking and lexis skills, whereas the respondents of Trinder's study consider films and TV "the most useful medium for improving listening skills and pronunciation" (2017: 407). Most importantly, however, the positive attitudes of English language learners are corroborated by experimental studies that provide numerical evidence of the effectiveness of

viewing authentic videos with different subtitling/captioning conditions (interlingual, intralingual, standard and reversed) for acquiring different aspects and skills of the TL. For instance, incidental acquisition of new lexis was reported in the studies by Zarei (2009), Lertola (2012), Rodgers (2013), Frumuselu et al. (2015), Ávila-Cabrera and Rodríguez Arancón (2018), Chen et al. (2018), Lertola (2019) and Pujadas and Muñoz (2019), whereas Mitterer and McQueen (2009), Darmawan (2018) and Wisniewska and Mora (2020) reached the conclusion that watching authentic videos can facilitate TL learners' attunement to an unfamiliar accent as well as the acquisition of other pronunciation features (e.g. stress, intonation, etc.). Incidental learning of other aspects of a TL (cultural and intercultural awareness, pragmatic awareness, listening comprehension, writing, etc.) while viewing authentic videos and completing tasks related to subtitling/ captioning in the TL was also reported in the studies by Talaván (2011), Borghetti and Lertola (2014), Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón (2014), Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera (2015), Lertola and Mariotti (2017), and Talaván et al. (2017).

Finally, it is interesting to note that some experiments show that learners with higher linguistic competence tend to benefit more from different types of subtitles/captions than lower level learners of a new language (see Bianchi and Ciabattoni 2008; Lwo and Lin 2012; Chen et al. 2018). Thus, for example, the results of the study by Chen et al. (2018) with young learners of English revealed that students with a high level of linguistic competence scored higher in aural form recognition and form-meaning knowledge tests than those with intermediate and low levels of competence. In Lwo and Lin's experiment (2012), high-school students with a more advanced proficiency level benefitted more from captions in the TL than in their native language in terms of reading comprehension, although no such effect was observed for vocabulary learning. Similarly, Bianchi and Ciabattoni (2008) found that beginners scored higher in vocabulary and language-in-use post-tests when viewing authentic videos with subtitles/captions in L1, whereas more proficient students of English benefitted more from subtitles/captions in English.

3. The Survey

3.1. Research Questions

Previous research showed that learners of English in Spain and other parts of the world normally turn to authentic videos as a source of informal learning practice. Nevertheless, no research has so far focused on the relationship between the proficiency level of Spanish university EFL learners and their use of authentic videos in an informal context or their reasons for engaging in this activity. For this

purpose, a questionnaire was designed and the following four research questions were formulated:

- How do Spanish university EFL learners use authentic videos in their free time?
- What are the reasons for performing this informal activity?
- Does the level of proficiency of the EFL learners have a significant impact on their use and reasons for fulfilling the informal activity of watching authentic videos?
- Is there a significant difference among the three proficiency groups (B1, B2 and C1) regarding the use of authentic videos and the reasons for engaging in this informal activity?

3.2. Participants

One hundred and fifty-six university students from the University of Alicante (Spain) completed the questionnaire (see Table 1 for detailed characteristics of the participants). The great majority of the participants were native Spanish speakers, but there were also four respondents of Russian, Arab, Polish and Romanian nationalities (respectively), who have a native-like competence of Spanish and are residents in Spain. Their proficiency level (which was corroborated by means of official certificates such as those issued by the University of Cambridge, Trinity, etc.) was mixed, ranging from B1 to C1 (according to the CEFR).

Age	18-20 21-23 24-26 27-29 30+	122 25 6 1 2
Gender	- Male - Female	125 31
L1	- Spanish - Other	152 4
English Proficiency Level	- B1 - B2 - C1	36 76 44
Degree subject	- English Studies - Translation and Interpreting	136 20
Year of Studies	- First - Second - Third - Fourth	105 23 22 6

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents

3.3. Structure and Procedure

For the purposes of this study, an anonymous online questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was piloted, firstly, with three colleagues from the English Philology Department (University of Alicante). Their comments helped to ensure that the questions were appropriate and well-formulated. At this stage, some changes were made to the questions about the use of subtitles and sources of authentic videos: some answers were grouped under more general categories (e.g. Netflix, Amazon, HBO under the category 'streaming services/platforms'). After that, thirteen English Studies undergraduates with different proficiency levels were asked to answer the survey and give feedback regarding the clarity of the questions. No significant problems were detected at this stage of piloting the questionnaire.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of two parts (for more detailed information, see Appendix A). The first six questions aim at collecting background information about the participants' L1, gender, age, proficiency level of English, etc. They are followed by six main questions designed to elicit specific information concerning how frequently, with whom, and on which device(s) they watch authentic videos in their free time and the source(s) of these videos, whether they watch authentic videos with different modes of subtitles/captions, and what their reasons are for engaging in this informal activity. These questions shed light on the conditions under which Spanish university students who study English as their main degree watch authentic videos, which can affect the quality of the watching process and the attention paid during this informal activity and, consequently, its possible benefits. It is important to note that, in answer to the first two main questions of the survey, the participants could mark only one option, whereas when responding the other four main questions they could choose more than one answer.

The questionnaire was administered at the end of a university lecture. The participants had around 20 minutes to answer it and the author of this paper was present throughout the whole process in order to advise and help the participants in case they had any doubts or questions.

3.4. Results

The participants' responses to the questions were subjected to frequency counts: we counted the number of times the respondents chose one, or in some questions, more than one option provided for them. The results of the frequency count are presented in percentages. Fisher's Exact Test of Independence was applied to analyse if there were statistically significant differences in the percentages obtained for the three proficiency groups. The more rigorous Fisher test was used instead of the more commonly used chi-square test due to the limited sample of the participants. The results are presented following the order of the six main questions explained in the previous section and respecting the format of the answers to each question.

3.4.1. *Question 1*

Question 1 enquired about the frequency with which university EFL learners are exposed to authentic videos in English. The general results (see Figure 1) reveal that almost two-thirds of the participants (61%) chose the answer *every day*, which was followed by *2 or 3 times a week* (29%). Very few of the respondents watch authentic videos only *2 or 3 times a month* (2%).

EVERY DAY ONCE A WEEK
2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK 2 OR 3 TIMES A MONTH
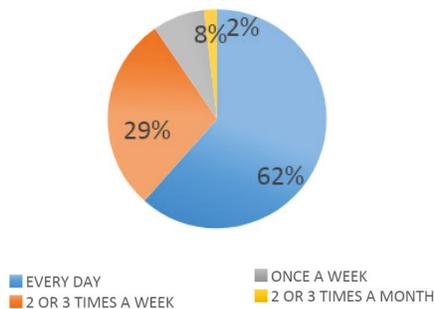
Figure 1. General results: frequency of watching authentic videos

Regarding the effect of the competence level, the Fisher test revealed a statistically significant difference across the three conditions with a *p* value of < 0.01. As can be seen in Table 2, the C1 level students watch authentic videos most frequently (91%, *every day*), whereas the most commonly marked option by the B1 level respondents was *2 or 3 times a week* (44.4%).

Level	Frequency				
	Every day	**2 or 3 times a week**	**Once a week**	**2 or 3 times a month**	**Total**
B1	36.1%	44.4%	16.7%	2.8%	100.0%
B2	56.6%	34.2%	7.9%	1.3%	100.0%
C1	90.9%	6.8%	0.0%	2.3%	100.0%

Table 2. The effect of proficiency level: frequency of watching authentic videos

3.4.2. *Question 2*

In response to the second question of the survey, concerned with the use of subtitles/captions, over half of those who answered the questionnaire (54%)

usually watch authentic videos with subtitles/captions in English (Figure 2). 29% of the university EFL learners prefer subtitles/captions in Spanish, whereas 17% of the survey respondents indicated that they habitually watch them without any type of subtitles/captions.
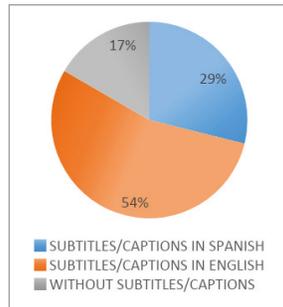
Figure 2. General results: the use of subtitles/captions

As to the possible influence of the proficiency level, the Fisher test detected a statistically significant difference with a p value <0.01 among the three proficiency groups (see Table 3). Although the students of the three proficiency levels seem to use subtitles/captions in English equally, the respondents of the higher competence level (C1) watch authentic videos without subtitles/captions more often than the EFL students of the B1 and B2 levels. Moreover, the B1 level respondents prefer to activate subtitles/captions in Spanish more frequently compared to the EFL learners of the advanced proficiency level.

Level	The Use Of Subtitles/Captions			Total
	Subtitles/Captions in Spanish	Subtitles/Captions in English	Without Subtitles/ Captions	
B1	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%	100%
B2	28.9%	57.9%	13.2%	100%
C1	15.9%	56.8%	27.3%	100%

Table 3. The effect of proficiency level: the use of subtitles/captions

3.4.3. *Question 3*

The general results of the third question, which asked with whom university EFL learners normally watch authentic videos in English, are presented in Figure 3 (each pie chart corresponds to one of the four options available to the respondents).

The great majority of the respondents indicated that they normally watch authentic videos in English alone (96%). Almost a quarter of the respondents (23%) view authentic audio-visual material with friends, while an equal number of those surveyed (10%) replied that they watch them with their family or partner.

Regarding the possible effect of the proficiency level, the Fisher test did not demonstrate any statistical difference among the three proficiency groups for each one of the four options (see Table 4): *with friends* – *p* value of 0.327, *with my family* – *p* value of 0.459, *with my partner* – *p* value of 0.257, and *alone* – *p* value of 0.375.
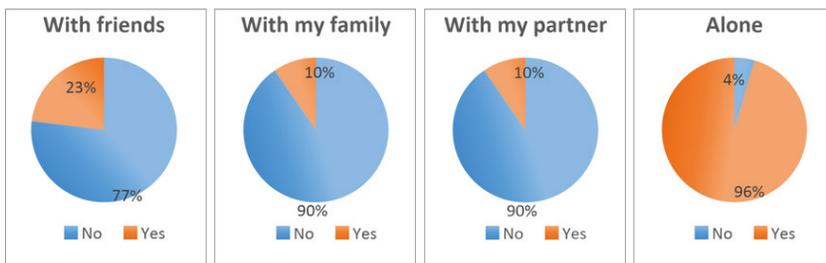
Figure 3. General results: with whom Spanish university EFL learners watch authentic videos

Level	With Whom			
	With friends	With my family	With my partner	Alone
B1	13.9%	5.6%	8.3%	94.4%
B2	26.3%	13.2%	6.6%	94.7%
C1	25%	6.8%	15.9%	97.7%

Table 4. The effect of proficiency level: with whom Spanish university EFL learners watch authentic videos

3.4.4. *Question 4*

Figure 4 shows the general results related to the type of devices the Spanish university EFL learners use for viewing authentic videos. The majority of the respondents in the sample indicated that they use their mobile phones (78%) and computers/laptops (86%) for watching authentic videos in English. Tablets are the least used device as only 19% of the participants marked this option. Thirty-one percent watch authentic videos on TV by changing the audio to English or viewing satellite television.
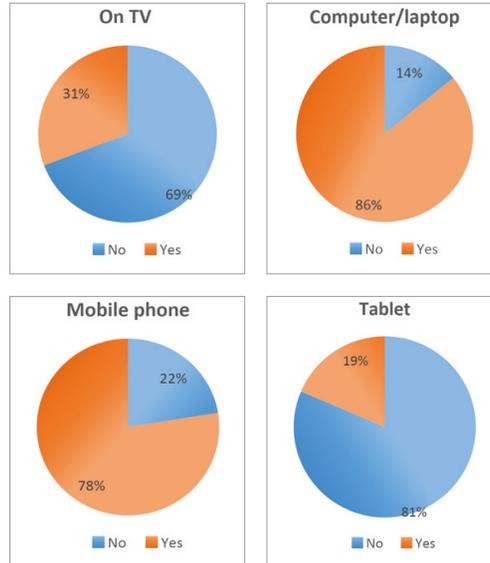
Figure 4. General results: devices for watching authentic videos

When broken down by proficiency groups, the Fisher test revealed a statistically significant difference for the option *computer or laptop* (*p* value of 0.044). This device is particularly popular among the B2 level Spanish EFL learners (see Table 5).

Level	Devices			
	On TV	Computer or laptop	Mobile phone	Tablet
B1	25.0%	75.0%	72.2%	13.9%
B2	28.9%	92.1%	73.7%	18.4%
C1	38.6%	84.1%	88.6%	22.7%

Table 5. The effect of proficiency level: devices for watching authentic videos

3.4.5. *Question 5*

Figure 5 reflects the general results of the fifth question concerned with the sources used for viewing authentic videos in English. The two most popular sources of authentic videos utilised by the university EFL learners are *streaming services* (92%) (e.g. Amazon, Netflix, HBO, etc.) and *the Internet* (97%). Only 10% and 11% respectively make use of Spanish TV channels or view authentic videos in the cinema. Less than 20% of the respondents watch foreign TV channels.
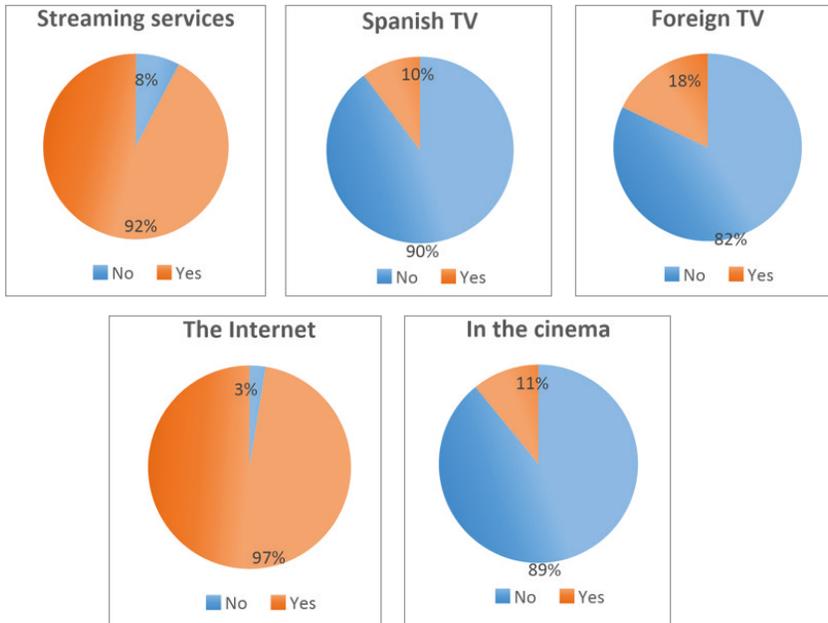
Figure 5. General results: sources of authentic videos

Concerning the effect of the proficiency level, the Fisher test revealed a statistically significant difference among the three groups (B1, B2 and C1) only for the option of watching authentic videos *in the cinema* (p value of 0.039). In particular, the C1 level respondents tend to watch authentic videos in the cinema more often than the B2 or B1 respondents (see Table 6).

Level	Sources				
	Streaming services	Spanish TV channels	Foreign TV channels	Videos on the internet	In the cinema
B1	86.1%	8.3%	8.3%	94.4%	2.8%
B2	92.1%	6.6%	17.1%	98.7%	9.2%
C1	97.7%	18.2%	27.3%	97.7.%	20.5%

Table 6. The effect of proficiency level: sources of authentic videos

73

3.4.6. *Question 6*

The last question of the survey looked into the reasons why the Spanish university EFL students engage in the informal activity of viewing authentic videos. The pie charts in Figure 6 reveal that 83% of those who answered the survey watch
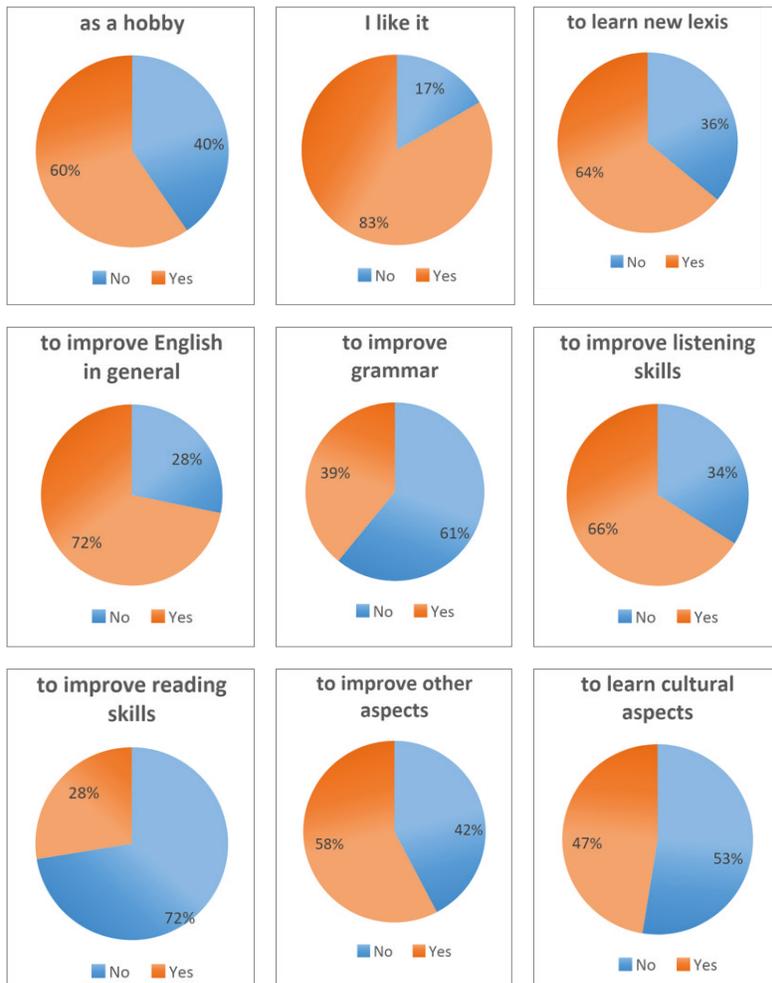
Figure 6. General results: reasons for watching authentic videos

authentic videos because they enjoy this activity and 72% believe it can help them improve their level of English in general. Sixty-six percent of the respondents see this informal activity as useful for improving their listening skills, while 64% of the participants find it positive for acquiring new lexis in English. Sixty percent of the students consider viewing authentic videos a hobby and around 60% of the respondents feel they can improve other aspects of their English (e.g. pronunciation). Almost half of the respondents believe they can acquire some cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries while viewing authentic videos, whereas 28% and 39% of those surveyed, respectively, indicated that exposure to authentic videos can be beneficial for improving their reading skills and their English grammar.

Table 7 summarises the answers of the respondents of different proficiency levels. The Fisher test found a significant difference for only five of the nine options: *to learn some cultural aspects*, *p* value of 0.025; *to improve the listening skills*, *p* value of 0.013; *to learn new lexis*, *p* value of 0.001; *I like watching authentic videos*, *p* value of 0.007; *as a hobby*, *p* value of 0.021. Thus, unlike the B1 level students, the more advanced level EFL learners (B2 and C1) believe they can acquire cultural information through exposure to authentic videos. Similarly, the more advanced respondents perceive this informal activity as a hobby and enjoy it, in contrast to the B1 level EFL students. In their turn, the students with the lower competence level (B1) find this informal activity particularly beneficial for increasing their vocabulary in English. Moreover, the B1 and B2 level students believe watching authentic videos can be effective for developing their listening skills.

Level	Reasons								
	As a hobby	I like it	To improve English in general	To learn new lexis	To improve grammar	To improve listening skills	To improve reading skills	To improve other asepcts	To learn cultural aspects
B1	41.7%	66.7%	72.2%	80.6%	44.4%	72.2%	33.3%	52.8%	27.8%
B2	60.5%	85.5%	75.0%	68.4%	43.4%	73.7%	27.6%	64.5%	53.9%
C1	59.6%	93.2%	65.9%	43.2%	27.3%	47.7%	22.7%	50.0%	52.3%

Table 7. The effect of proficiency level: reasons for watching authentic videos

3.5. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this study was to explore the informal practices of Spanish university EFL learners with authentic videos as well as their reasons for engaging in this beyond the classroom activity, with a particular focus on the differences among students of lower and higher proficiency levels. The results are discussed following

the order of the survey questions, followed by general conclusions based on the research questions.

The general results of the first question revealed that the great majority of the respondents (90%) are exposed to authentic videos either every day or 2/3 times a week. Firstly, this finding is in accordance with previous surveys administered to learners of English from Spain and other countries in the world (Toffoli and Sockett 2010; Talaván 2011; Talaván and Ávila-Cabrera 2015; Talaván et al. 2016; Trinder 2017; Lertola 2019; Wang and Chen 2020). Secondly, it seems to indicate that the informal activity of viewing authentic videos constitutes part of the ordinary weekly routine of Spanish university EFL learners. This fact, taken together with the evidence from previous experimental studies regarding the positive effect of viewing authentic videos for incidental learning of different aspects of the TL (Baltova 1999; Mitterer and McQueen 2009; Zarei 2009; Talaván 2011; Rodgers 2013; Borghetti and Lertola 2014; Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón 2014; Frumuselu et al. 2015; Lertola and Mariotti 2017; Chen et al. 2018; Darmawan 2018; Lertola 2019; Pujadas and Muñoz 2019; Wisniewska and Mora 2020, etc.), makes a strong case for the use of authentic audio-visual material in an informal environment due to the possible benefits it can bring to Spanish EFL learners in their pursuit of acquiring English.

A statistical analysis of the possible impact of the proficiency level confirmed that Spanish university EFL students of higher and lower competence levels differ in their exposure time to authentic videos. The more competent students (C1 level) tend to watch authentic videos every day, whereas the B1 level respondents perform this informal activity with a slightly lower frequency (*2 or 3 times a week*). This result does not seem surprising as viewing authentic videos requires a high degree of control of various aspects and skills of English. For example, Vandergrift warns about the complex nature of the listening comprehension skill, as "the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered in all of the above, and interpret it within the immediate as well as the larger sociocultural context of utterance" (1999: 168). Furthermore, Webb and Rodgers determined that in general "knowledge of the most frequent 3,000 families may be the vocabulary size from which movies may become useful for language learning" (2009: 20). As a rule, B1 learners of English might have a knowledge of 2,750-3,250 most frequent words (see Milton and Alexiou 2009: 198), which is not sufficient to feel comfortable when performing this informal activity. It would, therefore, be fair to say that the level of difficulty of the majority of authentic videos is usually more appropriate for more advanced learners and may have the effect of putting off low level EFL learners.

Concerning the use of subtitles/captions, the results revealed that the majority of Spanish university EFL learners normally watch authentic videos with subtitles/captions either in English or Spanish, which concurs with the positive attitudes to the use of subtitles/captions expressed by young people in the *Final Report of the Study on the Use of Subtitling* (European Commission 2011) and in the questionnaires administered by, for example, Lertola (2012), Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón (2014), Lertola and Mariotti (2017), Talaván and Costal (2017), Lertola (2019), Talaván (2019). This is certainly a positive outcome of the present survey, especially considering the fact that the facilitative role of subtitles/captions for TL learning has been reported in various experimental studies (e.g. Bianchi and Ciabattoni 2008; Winke et al. 2010; Frumuselu et al. 2015; Montero Pérez et al. 2017). Some differences among lower and higher-level learners, however, emerged from the statistical analysis: while the B1 level EFL learners use both English and L1 subtitles/captions, more proficient respondents (B2 and C1 levels) tend to give preference to subtitles/captions in English and C1 students prefer not to activate either of the two types. This difference can be explained by the fact that in general advanced EFL learners are more linguistically skilled and confident. As a result, they are more likely to feel comfortable watching authentic videos with subtitles/captions in English or without them, and perceive this informal activity as an opportunity to discover all the knowledge they have in the TL. It is also worth noting that previous research has demonstrated that TL learners of lower and higher linguistic competence can distinctly profit from subtitles/captions. For example, Bianchi and Ciabattoni (2008) found that subtitles/captions in the TL were less useful for B1 level students for acquiring the vocabulary comprehension skill. Similarly, the study conducted by Chen et al. (2018) reveals a more beneficial effect of subtitles/captions for students of higher proficiency level (C1) in terms of vocabulary learning than for their counterparts with lower competence levels (B1 and B2).

The answers to the third and fourth questions of the survey generally suggest that Spanish university EFL learners usually watch authentic videos alone on mobile phones or computer/laptops. No evidence of a statistically significant effect of the proficiency level was found regarding the answers to these two questions except for only one option: *computers or laptops*. This option was narrowly significant thus suggesting that laptops and computers are particularly popular among the B2 level respondents. A comment, however, should be made concerning this result: when applying the commonly used chi-square test, no statistically significant difference among the three proficiency groups was found. Bearing in mind the results of both statistical tests, it seems reasonable to suppose that the significant result of the Fisher test for this option was obtained simply by chance and that with a bigger sample size of participants it could have resulted statistically insignificant.

Consequently, it can be inferred that proficiency level does not seem to determine with whom Spanish university EFL students view authentic videos or on which devices. Instead, social and affective factors (Gardner and Lambert 1972; Cook 2001), such as participants' or their family's income and purchasing power, their relationships with people (e.g. whether they rent a flat alone or share it with several roommates; if they are in a relationship or single, etc.), are possibly of more relevance.

With regard to the sources employed by Spanish university EFL students for viewing authentic videos, the Internet and streaming services were by far the two most popular options marked by the respondents. This result can be explained by the undeniable popularity of the YouTube website, which "was created as a forum for people to create and share short video clips online" (Terantino 2011: 10), but turned into one of the most popular sources of all types of videos. Similarly, we can observe the increasing power of streaming services (e.g. Netflix, Amazon, etc.) in the media world, with millions of subscribers all over the planet (Wayne 2018). A statistical analysis revealed that generally proficiency level does not seem to affect EFL learners' choice of sources, except for one option: viewing authentic videos in the cinema. More advanced EFL students watch original versions of films in the cinema more frequently, which is reasonable given the fact that viewing a full-length authentic film in the cinema is a challenging task that requires a good command of all English language skills, an ability which B1 level EFL learners are less likely to possess.

Finally, concerning the reasons why Spanish university EFL learners watch authentic videos in their free time, the results suggest that it is because they enjoy this activity and believe it can be useful for improving their English in general and the listening and vocabulary aspects in particular. The latter concurs with the findings from previous questionnaires reported by, for example, Seferoğlu (2008), Wang (2012), Ismaili (2013), Shabani and Pasha Zanussi (2015), Talaván and Rodríguez-Arancón (2015), Kabooha (2016), Talaván et al. (2016), and Trinder (2017). Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the respondents with different proficiency levels vary in their motives for engaging in this informal activity. Unlike B1 level students, for whom it is mainly a source of opportunities to improve some of their English skills (more precisely, listening skills and lexis), more advanced respondents tend to focus on the entertaining side of it and find authentic videos useful for acquiring some cultural knowledge. This difference is understandable because for low level EFL learners (B1), the main priority is to acquire the basic aspects of the language. For example, EFL learners' linguistic competence is directly related to vocabulary knowledge because "words are the main carrier of information and conceptual knowledge" (Baltova 1999: 16), and

when an EFL learner wants to say something in English "it is usually the words they feel they struggle for rather than grammar or pronunciation" (Cook 2001: 66). As EFL learners progress in their pursuit of English learning, the range of unknown lexis, grammar structures and other aspects decreases. Consequently, more advanced EFL learners become fonder of discovering new features of the language they are studying, particularly the cultural aspects, which is one of the most neglected aspects of English in all European educational systems (see Jones et al. 2012).

Overall, the data from this study indicate that Spanish university EFL learners usually engage willingly in the informal activity of watching authentic videos with very high or considerably high frequency. They normally prefer to do it alone and tend to activate subtitles/captions either in their mother tongue or in English. The devices most commonly used for this activity are computers/laptops or mobile phones, and among the most preferred sources of original videos we can find the Internet and streaming services. Furthermore, the majority of EFL students enjoy this informal activity and consider it valuable specifically for improving their listening skills and for expanding their vocabulary knowledge. The results of the study also demonstrate a clear effect of the proficiency level with regard to the frequency of exposure to authentic videos, the use of subtitles/captions and the reasons that motivate them to engage in this informal activity. Broadly speaking, more advanced learners tend to perceive this activity as entertainment and more keenly engage in it with high frequency in order to acquire some cultural information. Conversely, lower-level students have a more practical attitude and focus mainly on the educational value of this activity related to improving their vocabulary and listening skills. Given the findings of this survey, and taking into account the potential benefits of authentic videos for English language learning, the informal watching of videos should undoubtedly be promoted among university EFL learners. This should, however, be accompanied by appropriate technological and methodological guidance from English language teachers as well as adjustment to the needs of EFL learners of different proficiency levels (Toffoli and Sockett 2015; Trinder 2017), especially when dealing with low-level learners.

Additional studies in this area are desirable, particularly considering the fact that students from only one Spanish university took part in this study and, as a consequence, the results should not be extrapolated to any other teaching and learning contexts. Moreover, further research could focus, for example, on strategies employed by EFL learners when they view original versions of videos in English, on different types of authentic videos, and on the different ways of using videos for English language learning and teaching purposes.

79

Notes

1. See the *Dual Coding Theory (DCT),* by Paivio and Sadoski (2017).

2. See the *Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML),* by Mayer (2005) and the *Cognitive Load Theory (CLT),* by Sweller (1988, 1994).

Works Cited

Albergaria Almeida, Patrícia and Patrícia Dinis Costa. 2014. "Foreign Language Acquisition: the Role of Subtitling". *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 141: 1234-1238. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.212

Ávila-Cabrera, José Javier and Pilar Rodríguez Arancón. 2018. "The OFFTATLED Project: OFFensive and TAboo Exchanges SubtiTLED by Online University Students". *Encuentro* 27: 204-219.

Bajrami, Lumturies and Merita Ismaili. 2016. "The Role of Video Materials in EFL Classrooms". *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232: 502-506. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.068

Baltova, Iva. 1999. "The Effect of Subtitled and Staged Video Input on the Learning and Retention of Content and Vocabulary in a Second Language". PhD Dissertation. University of Toronto.

Berns, Margie. 2009. "English as Lingua Franca and English in Europe". *World Englishes* 28: 192-199. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-971X.2009.01578.x

Bianchi, Francesca and Tiziana Ciabattoni. 2008. "Captions and Subtitles in EFL Learning: an Investigative Study in a Comprehensive Computer Environment". In Baldry, Anthony, Maria Pavesi, Carol Taylor Toresello and Christopher Taylor (eds.) *From Didactas to Ecolingua: An Ongoing Research Project on Translation and Corpus Linguistics*. Trieste. EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste: 69-90.

Borghetti, Claudia and Jennifer Lertola. 2014. "Interlingual Subtitling for Intercultural Language Education: A Case Study". *Language and Intercultural Communication* 14 (4): 423-440. DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2014.934380

Chen, Yi-Ru, Yeu Ting Liu and Andrew Graeme Todd. 2018. "Transient but Effective? Captioning and Adolescent EFL Learners' Spoken Vocabulary Acquisition". *English Teaching & Learning* 42 (1): 25-56. DOI: 10.1007/s42321-018-0002-8

Cook, Vivian. (1974) 2001. *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. London: Hodder Arnold.

Council of Europe. 2001. *A Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

Cruse, Emily. 2007. "Using Educational Video in the Classroom: Theory, Research and Practice". *Library Video Company* 1-24. <https://www.safarimontage.com/pdfs/training/usingeducationalvideointheclassroom.pdf>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

Crystal, David. (1997) 2003. *English as a Global Language*. New York: Cambridge U.P.

Darmawan, Syaifudin Latif. 2018. "The Influence of Watching YouTube Pronunciation Videos towards Students' Pronunciation Ability". *JL3T. Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Language Teaching* 4 (1): 1-15. DOI: 10.32505/jl3t.v4i1.747

Dewi, Anita. 2013. "English as an International Language: An Overview". *Journal of English and Education* 6 (2): 1-11. DOI: 10.20885/jee.vol6.iss2.art1

European Commission. 2011. *Study on the Use of Subtitling: The Potential of Subtitling to Encourage Foreign Language Learning and Improve the Mastery of Foreign Languages, Final Report*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e4d5cbf4-a839-4a8a-81d0-7b19a22cc5ce>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

European Commission. 2012. *Special Eurobarometer 386: Europeans and their Languages*. <file:///C:/Users/K/AppData/Local/Temp/gp_eudor_WEB_NC0313176ENN_002.pdf.en.pdf>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

Frumuselu, Anka Daniela, Sven De Maeyer, Vincent Donche and María del Mar Gutiérrez-Colon Plana. 2015. "Television Series inside the EFL Classroom: Bridging the Gap between Teaching and Learning Informal Language through Subtitles". *Linguistics and Education* 32 (Part B): 107-117. DOI: 10.1016/j.linged.2015.10.001

Gardner, Robert and Wallace Lambert. 1972. *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-language Learning*. Rowley: Newbury House.

González Vera, Pilar and Ana Hornero-Corisco. 2019. "Audiovisual Materials: A Way to Reinforce Listening Skills in Primary School Teacher Education". *Language Value* 8: 1-25. DOI: 10.6035/LanguageV.2016.8.2

Habók, Anita and Andrea Magyar. 2018. "The Effect of Language Learning Strategies on Proficiency, Attitudes and School Achievement". *Frontiers in Psychology* 8: 1-8. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02358

Harmer, Jeremy. (1983) 2003. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.

Harsch, Claudia. 2017. "Proficiency". *ELT Journal* 71 (2): 250-253. DOI: 10.1093/elt/ccw067

Hébert, Sylvie and Isabelle Peretz. 1997. "Recognition of Music in Long-term Memory: Are Melodic and Temporal Patterns Equal Partners?" *Memory & Cognition* 25: 518-533. DOI: 10.3758/BF03201127

Hyland, Fiona. 2004. "Learning Autonomously: Contextualising Out-of-class English Language Learning". *Language Awareness* 13 (3): 180-202. DOI: 10.1080/09658410408667094

Inozu, Julide, Sehnaz Sahinkarakas and Hulya Yumru. 2010. "The Nature of Language Learning Experiences beyond the Classroom and its Learning Outcomes". *US-China Foreign Language* 8 (1): 14-21.

Ismaili, Merita. 2013. "The Effectiveness of Using Movies in the EFL Classroom – a Study Conducted at South East European University". *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 2 (4): 121-132. DOI: 10.5901/ajis.2012.v2n4p121

Jelinek Lewis, Margaret. 1999. "Television Captioning: a Vehicle for Accessibility and Literacy". *Disability Information Resources*. <https://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/Us_Eu/conf/csun_99/session0057.html>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2009. "English as a Lingua Franca: Interpretations and Attitudes". *World Englishes* 28: 200-207. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-971X.2009.01582.x

Jones, Neil, Erna Gille, Johanna H. Kortes and Karen Ashton. 2012. *First European Survey on Language Competences: Final Report*. European Commission. <https://mro.massey.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10179/14078/Full%20Executive%20sumamry_Final%20report.pdf>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

Kabooha, Raniah. 2016. "Using Movies in EFL Classrooms: A Study Conducted at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdul-Aziz University". *English Language Teaching* 9 (3): 248-257. DOI: 10.5539/elt.v9n3p248

Kachru, Braj. 1991. "World Englishes and Applied Linguistics". In Tickoo, Makhan L. (ed.) *Languages & Standards: Issues, Attitudes, Case Studies.* Singapore. Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization: 178-205.

King, Jane. 2002. "Using DVD Feature Films in the EFL Classroom". *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 15 (5): 509-523. DOI: 10.1076/call.15.5.509.13468

81

Kocaman, Orhan, Merve Yildiz and Büşra Kamaz. 2018. "Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies in Turkish as a Foreign Language Context". *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies* 5 (2): 54-63. DOI: 10.17220/ijpes.2018.02.7

Lertola, Jennifer. 2012. "The Effect of the Subtitling Task on Vocabulary Learning". In Pym, Anthony and David Orrego-Carmona (eds.) *Translation Research Projects 4.* Tarragona: Intercultural Studies Group: 61-70.

Lertola, Jennifer. 2019. "Second Language Vocabulary Learning through Subtitling". *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada/ Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics* 32 (2): 486-514. DOI: 10.1075/resla.17009.ler

Lertola, Jennifer and Cristina Mariotti. 2017. "Reverse Dubbing and Subtitling: Raising Pragmatic Awareness in Italian ESL Learners". *JoSTrans. The Journal of Specialised Translation* 28: 103-121.

Lin, Phoebe and Anna Siyanova-Chanturia. 2014. "Internet Television for L2 Vocabulary Learning". In Nunan, David and Jack Richards (eds.) *Language Learning beyond the Classroom*. London. Routledge: 149-158.

Lwo, Lwun-syin and Michelle Chia-Tzu Lin. 2012. "The Effects of Captions in Teenagers' Multimedia L2 Learning". *ReCALL* 24 (2): 188-208. DOI: 10.1017/S0958344012000067

Mayer, Richard. 2005. "Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning". In Mayer, Richard E. (ed.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning (Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology)*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.: 31-48. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511816819.004

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

Meyers, Eric, Ingrid Erickson and Ruth Small. 2013. "Digital Literacy and Informal Learning Environments: An Introduction". *Learning, Media and Technology* 38 (4): 355-367. DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2013.783597

McKay, Sandra Lee. 2018. "English as an International Language: What it Is and What it Means for Pedagogy?" *RELC Journal* 49 (1): 9-23. DOI: 10.1177/0033688217738817

Milton, James and Thomaï Alexiou. 2009. "Vocabulary Size and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages". In Richards, Brian, Michael Helmut Daller, David D. Malvern, Paul Meara, James Milton and Jeanine Treffers-Daller (eds.) *Vocabulary Studies in First and Second Language Acquisition*. London: Palgrave Macmillan: 194-211. DOI: 10.1057/9780230242258_12

Mitterer, Holger and James M. McQueen. 2009. "Foreign Subtitles Help but Native-language Subtitles Harm Foreign Speech Perception". *PLOS ONE* 4 (11): 1-5. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0007785

Montero Pérez, Maribel, Elke Peters and Piet Desmet. 2017. "Enhancing Vocabulary Learning through Captioned Video: An Eye-tracking Study". *The Modern Language Journal* 99: 308-328. DOI: 10.1111/modl.12215

Muñoz, Carmen. 2020. "Boys Like Games and Girls Like Movies. Age and Gender Differences in Out-of-school Contact with English". *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada* 33 (1): 171-201. DOI: 10.1075/resla.18042.mun

Muñoz, Carmen and Teresa Cadierno. 2021. "How Do Differences in Exposure Affect English Language Learning? A Comparison of Teenagers in Two Learning Environments". *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 11: 185-212. DOI: 10.14746/ssllt.2021.11.2.2

Muñoz, Carmen, Teresa Cadierno and Isabel Casas. 2018. "Different Starting Points for Early English Language Learning: A Comparative Study of Danish and Spanish Young Learners". *Language Learning* 68 (4): 1076-1109. DOI: 10.1111/lang.12309

Oller, John W. 1979. *Language Tests at School: A Pragmatic Approach*. London: Longman.

Paivio, Allan and Mark Sadoski. 2011. "Lexicons, Contexts, Events, and Images: Commentary on Elman (2009) from the Perspective of Dual Coding Theory". *Cognitive Science* 35: 198-209. DOI: 10.1111/j.1551-6709.2010.01146.x

Palmer, Adrian and Lyle Bachman. 1981. "Basic Concerns in Test Validation". In Alderson, J. Charles and Arthur Hughes (eds.) *ELT Documents 111 – Issues in Language Testing*. London: British Council: 135-152.

82

PETERS, Elke and Stuart WEBB. 2018. "Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition through Viewing L2 Television and Factors that Affect Learning". *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 40 (3): 1-27. DOI: 10.1017/S0272263117000407

PUJADAS, Geòrgia and Carmen MUÑOZ. 2019. "Extensive Viewing of Captioned and Subtitled TV Series: A Study of L2 Vocabulary Learning by Adolescents". *The Language Learning Journal* 47 (4): 479-496. DOI: 10.1080/09571736.2019.1616806

RODGERS, Michael. 2013. "English Language Learning through Viewing Television: An Investigation of Comprehension, Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition, Lexical Coverage, Attitudes, and Captions". PhD Dissertation. Victoria University.

SALAHSHOUR, Farzad, Mahnaz SHARIFFI and Neda SALAHSHOUR. 2013. "The Relationship between Language Learning Strategy Use, Language Proficiency Level and Learner Gender". *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 70: 634-643. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.103

SEFEROĞLU, Gölge. 2008. "Using Feature Films in Language Classes". *Educational Studies* 34 (1): 1-9. DOI: 10.1080/03055690701785202

SCHLAUG, Gottfried, Lutz JANCKE, Yanxiong HAUNG, Jochen F. STAIGER and Helmuth STEINMETZ. 1995. "Increased Corpus Callosum Size in Musicians". *Neuropsychologia* 33 (8): 1047-1055. DOI: 10.1016/0028-3932(95)00045-5

SEIDLHOFER, Barbara. 2005. "English as a Lingua Franca". *ELT Journal* 59: 339-341. DOI: 10.1093/elt/cci064

SHABANI, Karim and Marjan PASHA ZANUSSI. 2015. "The Impact of Watching Captioned TV Series on Vocabulary Development of EFL Students". *Journal for the Study of English Linguistics* 3 (1): 118-129. DOI: 10.5296/jsel.v3i1.8301

SHERMAN, Jane. (2003) 2010. *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom*. New York: Cambridge U.P.

STEVENS, Anna. 2010. "Study on the Impact of ICT and New Media on Language Learning". European Commission. <https://web2learn.eu/wp- content/uploads/2020/07/Final_Report.pdf>. Accessed November 30, 2021.

SWELLER, John. 1988. "Cognitive Load during Problem Solving: Effects on Learning". *Cognitive Science* 12: 257-285. DOI: 10.1207/s15516709cog1202_4

SWELLER, John. 1994. "Cognitive Load Theory, Learning Difficulty, and Instructional Design". *Learning and Instruction* 4 (4): 295-312. DOI: 10.1016/0959-4752(94)90003-5

TALAVÁN, Noa. 2007. "Learning Vocabulary through Authentic Video and Subtitles". *TESOL-SPAIN Newsletter* 31: 5-8.

TALAVÁN, Noa. 2011. "A Quasi Experimental Research Project on Subtitling and Foreign Language Acquisition". In Incalcaterra, Laura, Marie Biscio and Máire Aine Ní Mhainnín (eds.) *Audiovisual Translation Subtitles and Subtitling. Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Peter Lang: 197-218.

TALAVÁN, Noa. 2019. "Creative Audiovisual Translation Applied to Foreign Language Education: A Preliminary Approach". *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* 2 (1): 53-74. DOI: 10.47476/jat.v2i1.57

TALAVÁN, Noa and José Javier ÁVILA-CABRERA. 2015. "First Insights into the Combination of Dubbing and Subtitling as L2 Didactic Tools". In Gambier, Yves, Annamaria Caimi and Cristina Mariotti (eds.) *Subtitles and Language Learning*. Bern: Peter Lang: 149-172.

TALAVÁN, Noa and Tomás COSTAL. 2017. "iDub – The Potential of Intralingual Dubbing in Foreign Language Learning: How to Assess the Task". *Language Value* (9): 62-88. DOI: 10.6035/LanguageV.2017.9.4

TALAVÁN, Noa, Ana IBÁÑEZ and Elena BÁRCENA. 2017. "Exploring Collaborative Reverse Subtitling for the Enhancement of Written Production Activities in English as a Second Language". *ReCALL* 29 (1): 39-58. DOI: 10.1017/S0958344016000197

TALAVÁN, Noa, Jennifer LERTOLA and Tomás COSTAL. 2016. "iCap: Intralingual Captioning for Writing and Vocabulary Enhancement". *Alicante Journal of English Studies* 29: 229-248. DOI: 10.14198/raei.2016.29.13

TALAVÁN, Noa and Pilar RODRÍGUEZ-ARANCÓN. 2014. "The Use of Reverse Subtitling as an Online Collaborative Language Learning Tool".

83

Interpreter and Translator Trainer 8 (1): 84-101. DOI: 10.1080/1750399X.2014.908559

Talaván, Noa and Pilar Rodríguez-Arancón. 2015. "The Use of Interlingual Subtitling to Improve Listening Comprehension Skills in Advanced EFL Students". In Garzelli, Beatrice and Michela Bald (eds.) *Subtitling and Intercultural Communication. European Languages and Beyond*. Pisa: InterLinguistica ETS: 273-288.

Tekmen, Anne Ferrell and Ayşegül Daloğlu. 2006. "An Investigation of Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in Relation to Learner Proficiency Level and Word Frequency". *Foreign Language Annals* 39 (2): 220-243. DOI: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2006.tb02263.x

Terantino, Joseph M. 2011. "YouTube for Foreign Languages: You Have to See This Video". *Language Learning & Technology* 15 (1): 10-16.

Toffoli, Denyze and Geoff Sockett. 2010. "How Non-specialist Students of English Practice Informal Learning Using Web 2.0 Tools". *ASp Online* 58: 125-144. DOI: 10.4000/asp.1851

Toffoli, Denyze and Geoff Sockett. 2015. "University Teachers' Perceptions of Online Informal Learning of English (OILE)". *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 28 (1): 7-21. DOI: 10.1080/09588221.2013.776970

Trinder, Ruth. 2017. "Informal and Deliberate Learning with New Technologies". *ELT Journal* 71 (4): 401-412. DOI: 10.1093/elt/ccw117

Twenge, Jean. 2006. *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled – and More Miserable than Ever Before*. New York: Free Press.

Vandergrift, Larry. 1999. "Facilitating Second Language Listening Comprehension: Acquiring Successful Strategies". *ELT Journal* 53 (3): 168-176. DOI: 10.1093/elt/53.3.168

Vanderplank, Robert. 2016. *Captioned Media in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching: Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing as Tools for Language Learning*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/978-1-137-50045-8

Verhoeven, Ludo and John Hal De Jong. 1992. "Modelling and Assessing Language Proficiency". In Verhoeven, Ludo and John Hal De Jong (eds.) *The Construct of Language Proficiency*. Amsterdam. John Benjamins: 1-13. DOI: 10.1075/z.62

Wang, Yu-Chia. 2012. "Learning L2 Vocabulary with American TV Drama from the Learner's Perspective". *English Language Teaching* 5 (8): 217-225. DOI: 10.5539/elt.v5n8p217

Wang, Hung-chun and Cheryl Wei-yu Chen. 2020. "Learning English from YouTubers: English L2 Learners' Self-regulated Language Learning on YouTube". *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 14 (4): 333-346. DOI: 10.1080/17501229.2019.1607356

Wayne, Michael. 2018. "Netflix, Amazon, and Branded Television Content in Subscription Video On-demand Portals". *Media, Culture & Society* 40 (5): 725-741. DOI: 10.1177/0163443717736118

Webb, Stuart and Michael Rodgers. 2009. "The Lexical Coverage of Movies". *Applied Linguistics* 30 (3): 407-427. DOI: 10.1093/applin/amp010

Williams, Richard and Peter Lutes. 2007. "Using Video in the ESL Classroom". *Takamatsu University Journal* 48: 1-13.

Winke, Paula, Susan Gass and Tetyan Sydorenko. 2010. "The Effects of Captioning Videos Used for Foreign Language Listening Activities". *Language Learning and Technology* 14: 65-86.

Wisniewska, Natalia and Joan Mora. 2020. "Can Captioned Video Benefit Second Language Pronunciation?" *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 42 (3): 599-624. DOI: 10.1017/S0272263120000029

Zarei, Abbas Ali. 2009. "The Effect of Bimodal, Standard, and Reversed Subtitling on L2 Vocabulary Recognition and Recall". *Pazhuhesh-e Zabanha-ye Khareji* 49: 65-84.

Appendix A

Part 1

Age	• 18-20
	• 21-23
	• 24-26
	• 27-29
	• 30+
Gender	• Male
	• Female
L1 (Mother Tongue)	• Spanish
	• Other:_____
English Proficiency Level	• B1
	• B2
	• C1
What Degree are you studying?	• Your answer:_____
	•
Year of Studies	• First
	• Second
	• Third
	• Fourth

Part 2

1. How frequently do you watch authentic videos in English in your free time?
• every day
• 2 or 3 times a week
• once a week
• 2 or 3 times a month

2. How do you use subtitles/captions when viewing authentic videos in English?
• with subtitles/captions in Spanish
• with subtitles/captions in English
• without any subtitles/captions

3. With whom do you usually watch authentic videos in English? (you can mark more than one option)
- with my friends
- with my family
- with my partner
- alone

4. On which device/devices do you usually watch authentic videos in English in your free time? (you can mark more than one option)
- on TV (e.g. Spanish TV channels, I change the audio to English or watch satellite television)
- on my computer or laptop
- on my mobile
- on my tablet

5. What sources of authentic videos in English do you usually use? (you can mark more than one option)
- streaming services/platforms (e.g. Netflix, Amazon, HBO, Disney+, etc.)
- Spanish TV channels (I change the audio to English)
- foreign TV channels (satellite TV)
- videos on the Internet sites and webpages (including You Tube and videos downloaded from the Internet)
- in the cinema

6. Why do you watch authentic videos in English in your free time? (you can mark more than one option)
- as a hobby
- I like watching them
- it's good for my English in general
- to learn new words and expressions in English
- to improve my English grammar
- to improve my listening skills in English
- to improve my reading skills in English
- to improve other aspects of English (e.g. pronunciation)
- to learn cultural aspects

EVELYN WAUGH'S *BRIDESHEAD REVISITED:* SITES OF MEMORY AND TRADITION

BRIDESHEAD REVISITED, DE EVELYN WAUGH: LUGARES DE MEMORIA Y TRADICIÓN

CARLOS SÁNCHEZ FERNÁNDEZ
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)
csanchez319@alummno.uned.es

Abstract

In this article, it is my intention to analyse two theoretical notions related to space, namely Pierre Nora's idea of the site of memory and Gaston Bachelard's thoughts on space and the house, as applied to Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). I base my analysis on the symbolic value of the English country house with regard to the interwar English aristocracy and upper classes as depicted in this novel; that is, as a site of memory. I consider the point of view of three characters: Charles Ryder, the novel's first-person narrator, Lord Sebastian Flyte, Ryder's intimate friend, and Lord Marchmain, Sebastian's father, who triggers the novel's sudden and unexpected ending through his deathbed conversion to Roman Catholicism, his family's creed. My conclusion links the decline of aristocratic and Christian ideals with the disappearance of communities of memory and their traditions after the Second World War.

Keywords: *Brideshead Revisited*, sites of memory, communities of memory, tradition, English Catholicism.

Resumen

En el presente artículo, analizaré dos nociones teóricas relacionadas con el espacio, a saber, la idea de *lugar de memoria* de Pierre Nora y el pensamiento de Gaston

Bachelard sobre el espacio y la *casa*, en su aplicación a *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), de Evelyn Waugh. Basaré mi análisis en el valor simbólico de la gran mansión de campo inglesa en relación con la aristocracia y las clases altas de la Inglaterra de entreguerras según es descrita en esta novela: esto es, como un lugar de memoria. Haré esto desde la perspectiva de tres personajes: Charles Ryder, el narrador en primera persona, Lord Sebastian Flyte, amigo íntimo de Ryder, y Lord Marchmain, padre de Sebastian y causante del rápido e inesperado final de la novela mediante su conversión, en su lecho de muerte, al credo de su familia: el catolicismo. Llegaré a una conclusión que vincula el declive de los ideales aristocráticos y cristianos con la desaparición de comunidades y tradiciones de memoria tras de la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

Palabras clave: *Brideshead Revisited*, lugares de memoria, comunidades de memoria, tradición, catolicismo inglés.

1. A Brief Synopsis

In spite of the popularity of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* since it first came out (1945), a popularity that was undoubtedly enhanced by its adaptations for both television (1981) and the cinema (2007), it may be convenient to offer a brief synopsis of the plot. Charles Ryder, a painter serving as an army captain during the Second World War, fashions a frame story about his military experiences in the Phoney War as a way into the main narrative, that of his life from his first days as an Oxford undergraduate in the early 1920s until his separation, on the brink of war, from the woman he loves, Julia Flyte. The prologue triggers the main story through Ryder's nocturnal, inadvertent arrival at Brideshead House, the ancestral home of the Flytes, in the wake of military exercises and rumours of the mobilisation of his company. After an initial flashback, taking us back twenty years to a perfect moment of youthful summer bliss in an English meadow beside his beloved friend, Lord Sebastian Flyte, Ryder's memories are presented mostly in a linear sequence, with a few instances of analepsis. The epilogue takes us back to 1943 when, after a visit to Brideshead chapel, Charles hints at his recent conversion to Roman Catholicism: after all, as the novel's subtitle indicates, these are Ryder's not merely *profane* but also *sacred* memories.[1]

2. Charles Ryder: The Stately Home, Englishness, Civilisation

Ryder's conversion to Catholicism is preceded by his conversion to an aristocratic ethos which he contrasts with his bleak, middle-class, motherless childhood and

adolescence, his estrangement from his father, and the rigours of public school education. His attitude with regard to the Flytes and their ways coincides with Waugh's "romantic veneration of the aristocracy" (Hastings 1994: 482). Charles's conversion can be related to several aristocratic places of beauty: Brideshead Castle, Marchmain House —the Flytes' London home and their base during the London season— and decadent Venice, where Sebastian's father lives in exile as a social leper. Ryder experiences Brideshead as a revelation, an epiphany. Instantly, he becomes a convert to the Baroque, which substitutes for his avowed teenage "insular and mediaeval" sentiments (Waugh 1945: 82). This conveys a subtext we should not miss: beyond Brideshead being "an aesthetic education in itself" (80), an essential element in the novel's discourse, intimately related to Brideshead, is a certain social and religious ideology, a major component thereof being tradition.[2] Thus, Waugh's novel can be construed as an attempt to preserve and fictionally reconstitute "an aristocratic Catholic heritage in England" (Rothstein 1993: 318).[3]

Brideshead House is a privileged embodiment of tradition in that it has been built with the stones of a castle previously existing in the valley it now commands. Ryder associates the house with "the august, masculine atmosphere of a better age" (Waugh 1945: 138).[4] This has an effect on Charles's moral education: Brideshead brings together the ideals of community, Englishness and civilisation, along with the values they are invested with (Coffey 2006: 60). The old, venerable place is what Pierre Nora calls a *site of memory*: the treasure house of a collective identity based on an old tradition of memory, part of the remains of an outdated civilisation. Its dwellers are "witnesses of another age" (2008: 24, my translation),[5] an age defined by its "illusions of eternity" (24-25, my translation).[6] Memory, moreover, instils "remembrance within the sacred" for the members of an ideologically cohesive community or group (21, my translation).[7] Thus, Charles has embarked on a pathway leading him from love of form and tradition to awareness of and convinced support for the social role of the aristocracy, and eventually to love of God as a Catholic.[8] This is a *Bildungsroman* with a double focus: the aesthetic and moral education of an artist, but also the spiritual pilgrimage of a human being in search for love —first human and eventually divine.

There are important hints at Charles's future development in his first visit to Brideshead, where he is shown the chapel, Lord Marchmain's art-nouveau wedding gift to his bride for bringing him back to the faith of his ancestors. Not much later, as he spends his first summer vacation alone with Sebastian at Brideshead, Ryder describes his experience as a time of "peace and *liberation*" (Waugh 1945: 78, emphasis added), where he felt himself "very near *heaven*" (79, emphasis added), both expressions being close to the language of religious experience. As the plot unravels, we witness a progressive shedding of aesthetic

concerns in favour of the moral and spiritual in both Charles and Sebastian. Brideshead is an emblem of the city, being depicted as hallowed ground at the end of the novel, when its requisition by the army is felt as the defilement of a sacred site (Berberich 2007: 108).[9] Indeed, for the many centuries elapsed since the building of Brideshead as a castle proper and until the disruption and destruction brought about by the army setting up camp in the palace grounds in 1943, every instance of social ritual taking place there has been "a religious repetition of that which has *always* been done" (Nora 2008: 20, my translation, emphasis added).[10] This idea of the stately home as the "*templum*" (39, emphasis in original) of a Catholic recusant minority shows in ritualised, pious family practices such as praying the Rosary or worshipping the Eucharist in the chapel. It was no accident that Waugh played with the idea of "Household of the Faith" as a working title before deciding on *Brideshead Revisited* (Wykes 1999: 141).

Within Brideshead's magical circle, "everything matters, everything symbolises, everything means" (Nora 2008: 39, my translation).[11] This "everything" takes place outside history because of its appertaining to "the undifferentiated time of heroes, of origins and myth" (20, my translation).[12] It is to that time that belong the ghosts of such atavistic leaders of men as Lady Marchmain's brothers, fallen in the Great War and disregarded by history. In Ryder's narration, they are described as the truly English "aborigines" (Waugh 1945: 138), "the Catholic squires of England", men "of the woods and caves", hunters, judges "of the tribal council, the repository of the harsh traditions of a people at war" (139). The life and work of these forgotten heroes set the boundary between the memory corresponding to a veritably primitive, archaic, agrarian society on the one hand, and history on the other. While the former is totalising and unconscious of itself, the latter is discriminating, selective and closely linked to modernity, democracy, massification and the media. If memory posits an eternal present founded on unchanging values, history's overall design, grounded on continuous change, is one of oblivion (Nora 2008: 19-21). Indeed, "a site of memory's fundamental reason to be is to stop time, to block the work of oblivion" (34, my translation).[13] Hence, in the village church, along with the bodies of Sebastian's elders, lie nine centuries of English Catholic civilisation, a time when England was, in Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion's words, "the island of saints, and the most devoted child of the See of Peter" (in Williams 1996: 294, n. 40). Asleep in their graves, they await resurrection and eternity, once time and change are no more.

Brideshead is also a symbol of *essential* Englishness in that the house is part and parcel of a class system Charles Ryder will eventually identify with national character, in the same way as Waugh himself saw the country seats of England as its "chief national artistic achievement" (Waugh 1962: x). Certainly, Brideshead

can be understood as a symbol of the civilising function of the class system, a fortress against social chaos and the barbarism of contemporary life, as embodied by Ryder's middle-class nemesis, Lieutenant Hooper (Coffey 2006: 63, 67).[14] Hooper is a young businessman under Ryder's command who speaks with "a flat, Midland accent" (Waugh 1945: 7), delights in expressions such as "rightyoh" (10) or "okeydoke" (14), advocates the gassing of psychiatric patients, and finally describes Brideshead as a "great barrack of a place" (16). According to the aristocratic discourse Brideshead House symbolises, civilisation would be "the work of aristocracies" (Cannadine 1999: 50). Brideshead represents "the authentic traditions and values upon which society should be based" (Coffey 2006: 63), which are in turn "ingrained in the specific mores and conventions of the upper classes" (63). For Waugh, civilisation can only be Christian (that is to say, Catholic), neo-feudal and aristocratic, the country house functioning as "a perfect locus 'for a mythology of the social order'" (Terentowicz-Fotyga 2015: 27) and "the site of meaningful narratives of the past" (30).[15]

The foundation of these narratives would be the eternal order established by God, as well as His rule through that of His temporal magistrate (Nolte 1969: 57). Any trespassing on this eternal dispensation, either by the market or the (welfare) state, would ultimately be one against *nature*, beyond the merely circumstantial and contingent.[16] This is why Ryder, even while still an agnostic, specialises as an architectural painter: *to eternalise* an endangered *essence*, a trace of God's work among men and nations, mourning for a world that probably never was, where "rank was not negotiable and duties were not a matter of opinion" (Berberich 2007: 96).

Nevertheless, the sites of memory that make up the world painted by Ryder exist as such only because of the disappearance of genuine "*milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory" after the end of the Second World War (Rothstein 1993: 319). Hence the openly elegiac tone of Ryder's narration, as it not only laments the lost innocent days of his idyll with Sebastian, but also reflects "his belief in a vanished way of life which had been at once grandiose and, in his wishful eyes, responsible" (Berberich 2007: 96).[17]

3. Lord Sebastian Flyte: Domains of Intimacy, Catholic Tradition

What Charles discovers at Brideshead and at Sebastian's flamboyant lodgings at exclusive Christ Church College, Oxford, is yet again not only an aesthetic paradise: he also falls madly in love with the aristocratic way of life and values. In this way, he becomes a novice in a new world where his intuition finds a promise of happiness

and wholeness. As he is becoming a man, Charles feels there may be something at Brideshead that could help him overcome his bleak boyhood, as well as the rational, restricting approach to the world he has been supplied with since his nursery days. Thus, for instance, when Sebastian takes Ryder, barely acquainted with him, to Oxford's botanical gardens, the only reason he gives to his friend's questioning is, in a nonchalant way that dismisses any rational grounding, "to see the ivy" (Waugh 1945: 34). In other words: just because, or because he says so. In 1923 and for a young aristocrat, Oxford was just what he would make of it. Sebastian chooses to see his first Oxford term with Charles as a time of Dionysian ecstasy, the ivy being a classical symbol of Dionysus, the god of green vegetation and wine. This links up with sober, bourgeois Charles's introduction to wine while at Brideshead during an Arcadian summer of splendid isolation from the rest of the world.[18] Brideshead is a place of initiation for Charles, and Sebastian is his personal hierophant.

Yet, in the end things become very different for Sebastian in the seeming paradise Charles has just discovered. Overwhelmed by the expectations and demands that his mother, Lady Marchmain, puts on him, he does not feel up to the task of emulating his dead uncles or even his ineffectual elder brother, the Earl of Brideshead, all of them Oxford men. Sebastian longs for the timeless place where things are not questioned and pressures do not exist: the nursery, his one *domain of intimacy* (Bachelard 1994: 12). That is his cosmos, his first university, his own "corner of the world" (4), his "land of Motionless Childhood" (5). As Bachelard remarks, "memories are motionless, and the more securely fixed they are in space, the sounder they are" (9). For Sebastian, "a truly Peter Pan-like figure" (Słyszewska 2017: 214), "childhood is certainly greater than reality" (Bachelard 1994: 16). Reality, among other things, means those dreadful family occasions in the sitting room, when his mother very edifyingly reads Chesterton aloud to her children, or the ghastly, formal dinners when he only dreams of "refuges" such as a hut or a nest, or "nooks and corners in which he would like to hide away, like an animal in its hole" (30).

In this realm of childish indifferentiation between the self and the world, Sebastian eschews the values whose conservation and transmission are the task of a society, or community of memory. This is so because he grows more and more estranged from his family and their faith —the family being, along with the church, among the most significant agents of such a task (Nora 2008: 20). He has neither been made to follow in his uncles' footsteps as warriors, judges and leaders, nor to pray the Rosary with his mother. To him, Brideshead is neither the repository of such values nor his home, but rather "where my family live" (Waugh 1945: 35). Also, he could not care less for the art that entrances his only true friend in Oxford, Charles Ryder, or for what it may mean in axiological or religious terms. Expected to cut a gentlemanly and scholarly figure at the ancient university's most exclusive

college, to become a "bulwark of the nation" through "abnegation of the self" (Deslandes 2005: 2), and, despite his unwittingly quoting St. Augustine ("Oh God, make me good, but not yet", Waugh 1945: 86), the only book we see this Oxford fresher glance at throughout the novel is one he picks up at random in Charles's rooms while waiting for him.[19]

Hence, early in the novel and of all places, Charles and Sebastian set out on a motorcar trip to see Nanny Hawkins, who dominates "the corner of [… Sebastian's] most cherished memories" (Bachelard 1994: 14). All Sebastian wants is to run away "as far and as fast" as he possibly can (Waugh 1945: 135). Described as "harmless as a Polynesian" (Waugh 1945: 127), and being a complete stranger to "that barbaric vitality which animates the upper classes even in decadence" (Kermode 1960: 283), the only memories he wants to keep are those related not to values, duties or any community, but to those rare instances of that very elusive thing, happiness, that he has felt in his life. His are "memories of protection", "fixations of happiness" (Bachelard 1994: 6). As for his family's Catholic tradition of memory, he resists it by drinking himself to death.

And yet, at the end of his self-destructive race towards nothing and nowhere, he ends up, in the words of his sister Cordelia, a holy man, a saint. An incurable alcoholic at this point, he is accepted as "a sort of under-porter" by a monastic community in Carthage (Waugh 1945: 307). "Lost in the darkness", he sees "a distant glimmer of light" in the faith of his elders (Bachelard 1994: 31), embodied by this "ancient community of memory" (Rothstein 1993: 323). Following the example of Augustine of Hippo, he finally drops the "not yet" from his supplication to God and accepts divine grace and its consolations, not afraid of holiness any longer. At last, if not a regular member of the order that receives him, he finds an "absolute refuge" in this "universe of meditation and prayer", which, like the nursery at Brideshead, becomes a "universe outside the universe" (Bachelard 1994: 32).[20] Thus, if destitute and innerly maimed, with neither dignity nor any power of will, and awaiting an early death, he ultimately links up with the very same tradition that his mother, his younger sister Cordelia and his Jesuitical elder brother Bridey have all given their lives to: Roman Catholicism. He has transcended time and history into an "eternal present" of faith and eschatological expectation (Nora 2008: 21, my translation).[21]

4. Lord Marchmain: Nobility and Essential Englishness

It is my contention that it is Sebastian's father, Lord Marchmain, who articulates the most poignant discourse in the novel involving Englishness, the English Catholic tradition, and the stately home with all its historical, cultural and

existential implications. Ryder meets Sebastian's father twice. The first occasion is in the summer of 1923, when Sebastian invites him to visit his father's Venetian "palace of sin" (Waugh 1945: 72). This is an ironic description prompted by the nobleman's notorious living in blatant adultery with an Italian demi-mondaine and for having abandoned Catholicism or any other form of Christianity. Charles finds him a studiously detached, Byronic character. Lord Marchmain himself speaks in no ambiguous terms about his utter indifference to his position, party (the Conservative Party) and duties. In this sense, he might be only one among many of the members of a beleaguered aristocracy who "simply lost interest" in politics in the interwar era (McKibbin 1998: 21).

Lord Marchmain has not left any personal imprint on the place he inhabits, a palazzo looking out over the Grand Canal, which is as decadent as Venice itself. This seems to be a merely temporary residence for the nobleman, despite the fact of his having lived there in exile since surviving the slaughter of the Great War. In his sloth and degeneracy, his palazzo appears to be the exact opposite of an English aristocrat's home: an utterly foreign site. Everything seems to indicate that Lord Marchmain will not go back to England before his wife dies, and even so he detests the prospect of having to face the English landscape once more. As Cara, his mistress, explains to Ryder, he is full of hatred, and has been so since the war ended. Ultimately, he is an aristocratic, profligate good-for-nothing who, if not in theory at least in practice, might even have renounced his Englishness.

It is, however, nearly two decades later that Ryder meets Lord Marchmain again on the occasion of the latter's return to England after his wife's passing. That the latter's relationship with his abode is now completely different shows in his reception. It solemnly takes place at the palace's main entrance, presided over by his daughter Julia and her lover, Charles Ryder, along with the upper servants: the rightful lord of the manor is back. If this ritualism were not enough, the nobleman's flag waves above them all. Having been won at no less than the battle of Agincourt, where the courage of his ancestors was rewarded with a barony, the Flytes had been knights before then. Compared with this flag, an emblem of the old landed oligarchy of England, the Union Jack itself could be looked down on as a recent, plebeian symbol. The old soldier has returned to die and to lie in state in the big house as a nobleman must, when not fallen on the battlefield. Thus, he who for many years was a man without qualities, apart from his condition of social pariah, amateur sportsman, adulterous lover and heavy drinker, shows that he is the one and only sovereign ruler of the house from the very moment he steps over its threshold. This is to be seen, for example, in his eccentric, whimsical choice of the room where he is to lie till death comes (the Chinese drawing room), as well as of the almost theatrical Queen's bed that he

orders to be placed in it. Such choices also make clear that until he dies his intention is to live a nobleman's life, with gold plate, champagne and all, notwithstanding the debts incurred under Lady Marchmain's long and inept administration of his estate.

Furthermore, while Lord Marchmain discusses his inheritance with his daughter Julia, he exercises an almost feudal power as he bestows Brideshead Castle on her. What this means, going against the common practice of Europe's smallest, most exclusive and powerful aristocracy, is no less than disinheriting his eldest son, the Earl of Brideshead. It is only after performing this deed of indisputable authority that the old soldier dies. Expected to be a man of action, an aristocrat must act, and act in a decisive way which is different from the herd's, transcending it. This is another aspect of Lord Marchmain's redemption: he leaves behind him decades of anomie, alienation and purposelessness by taking measures for his bloodline to survive. He faces up to his own death in a manly way, consciously waiting for it, thus giving his life, even in retrospect, a meaning: he has been loyal to his lineage and its continuation.

This continuation has a connection with a discourse Lord Marchmain articulates throughout his stay at the stately home, one which underlines his role as a builder after the example of his ancestors: his lineage is not one of blood alone, but also of stone and memory. As we already saw early in the novel, Sebastian tells Charles how his father had Brideshead chapel built for his mother, and how he had converted to her religion, too. Thus, by adhering publicly to the faith of his ancestors (that is to say, those living before the Reformation) in his first conversion, Lord Marchmain willingly reaches for a tradition of memory such as that of England's tiny yet staunchly Catholic aristocratic minority. This he does in his deathbed soliloquy.

In fact, during his dying days, not only is Lord Marchmain associated with the traditions of memory of his lineage, but also with those of his subordinates, "unlettered men" who "had long memories" (Rothstein 1993: 327), memories he tries to orally pass on to his offspring before dying. Those were the men who, as Lord Marchmain's brothers-in-law did during the First World War, silently, almost anonymously fought the battles of medieval England by the side of their betters, the warriors lying in the church of the small village in the valley. Like these men, Lord Marchmain will die and be laid to rest, though not before playing the principal role in the novel's most symbolically important yet also most critically questioned moment, namely his second, last-minute acceptance of the Catholic faith. This is implicit in his making the sign of the cross after receiving the sacrament of the anointing of the sick.[22]

These are the early stages of Ryder's own conversion to Catholicism, after his breakup with Julia Flyte resulting from the rekindled religious prejudices and fears

she experiences after her father's death. She feels she was made for some greater purpose than merely human love, setting Charles up "a rival good to God's" (Waugh 1945: 340). Just as Charles had been expelled from Brideshead many years before by a disappointed and angry Lady Marchmain, who was aware that Ryder was paying for her son's drinking bouts, his dreams of possessing a place of "peace and love and beauty" such as Brideshead (31), the world that had once been Sebastian's, come to nothing in the end.

Some twenty years after being delivered this rebuke by Lady Marchmain, during his military stay at Brideshead, the novel's final scene takes place with Captain Charles Ryder kneeling in Brideshead chapel, himself having become a warrior waiting to lead his men into battle, possibly in the Middle East. Here, an explicit mention is made of his recent conversion to Catholicism —"I said a prayer, an ancient, *newly learned* form of words" (Waugh 1945: 350, emphasis added)— as he thinks of other soldiers, "far from home, farther, in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem" (351). Lord Brideshead, Julia and Cordelia Flyte could be among them, as Nanny Hawkins tells Ryder. He also thinks of those knights in the village church who saw from their tombs the same little red light which Ryder sees now, "burning anew among the old stones" (351), as a sign not only of his faith, but also of his commitment to a certain English, Catholic and aristocratic tradition and community of memory. In spite of the Flytes being scattered to the four winds, and notwithstanding the historical whirlwind of the Second World War, that community survives in spirit. That is what the red flame signifies: the spiritual presence of those who died in the faith, those who wield the arms of England now, and those who remain to worship: Ryder, Nanny Hawkins and the few more or less invisible servants who persevere in the faith. They all remain loyal to the faith that makes them a cohesive group with a common collective identity at a time when society tends to conceive of people only as "equal and identical" (Nora 2008: 25, my translation).[23] This all takes place in a house now desacralised by the offspring of modernity as an agent of deracination, "heirs-at-law of a century of progress" (Waugh 1945: 4), instructed in "recent industrial change" (9), the sons of equality: Hooper and his likes, who inhabit and destroy the hallowed place as they wait to be transferred to a theatre of war.[24]

Now, Ryder's faith is that of a man who admits to being "homeless, childless, middle-aged, loveless" (Waugh 1945: 350). Nevertheless, on finishing this confession to the infamous Lieutenant Hooper, he looks, as his second-in-command tells him, "unusually cheerful" (351). No wonder: finally, he knows that he was brought amidst the Flytes with "a unique purpose in God's design" (Heath 1982: 161), which he accepts. At last, there is meaning and sense in his life: he has been able to reconnect with "an ancient bond of identity", "enclosed and enshrined

in memory" (Rothstein 1993: 319), which he had been severed from. Up to this point, this *Bildungsroman* has had an unreliable narrator and hero who is "profoundly unaware of his own role in a drama beyond his belief or comprehension" (Slater 2016: 126). He understands now, his early life having been "annihilated by an avalanche of grace" (Heath 1982: 8). Eventually, the tiny parts of a person he was made of (artist, lover, soldier) have come together as a whole (Davis 1992: 33). Thus, he becomes the true spiritual heir of the Brideshead estate (Raven 2015: 127). Doubtless, faith works miracles, but only, Waugh seems to think, in a "context of tradition, legend, and memory" whereby it becomes "linked simultaneously to the preservation of a Catholic identity" and "a sense of historical continuity, threatened with extinction" (Rothstein 1993: 320-321).

5. History and the Disruption of Memory

Coming back to Lord Marchmain's second conversion, he thereby returns to the heritage of the faith he once adhered to before the Great War. After his death, Brideshead Castle will still be a major emblem of such a heritage. It is only through the Second World War, an occurrence of history rather than of memory, that the stately home's role in preserving this tradition, which is intimately connected with eternity, will be disrupted.[25] This disruption is inherent in the very nature of modernity as the force of history "invading a tradition of memory protected within the Catholic enclave at Brideshead" (Rothstein 1993: 320).

Like any metaphysical essence, especially if related to memory, the neo-rural and neo-feudal English ethos defended by both Ryder and Waugh is fraught with danger. To begin with, as a charismatic notion, its apprehension, its very knowledge requires a special 'expertise'. This expertise belongs to those worthy of trust: the happy few, the elect, the insiders; that is to say, the members of a charismatic aristocracy and those co-opted by them within the upper classes, such as Charles Ryder. This is why he is the author of several series of paintings where he laments and denounces, with prophetic tones, the disappearance of both country and London houses. In so doing, he makes an inventory of the material signs of a fading aristocratic tradition representing the downfall of England itself.

Other voices in the novel, for example Rex Mottram's, Julia Flyte's husband, an MP and a man of the world of troubled origins and barbarian ways, are only allowed to provide a contrast to the legitimate, aristocratic ones. Rex is depicted precisely as someone who is totally in the dark about the sacred minutiae of the Catholic faith and the haughty conundrums and demanding ethos of essential Englishness (presumably, he is a half-breed and certainly plebeian Canadian). A fortiori, he is utterly ignorant of the reality and ultimate predicament of the English

aristocracy (which to him is only represented by details such as the 100,000 sterling debt that obliges Lord Marchmain to sell Marchmain House in London), with the result that his opinions and his entire worldview can be cavalierly ignored or waved aside. This sort of financial problem is related to the inner contradictions of a retreating and bankrupt caste living within a decadent and declining culture doomed to disappear after the Second World War. At this time, their mansions will be reduced to the category of heritage monuments open to the public under the management of the National Trust.[26] This is how Waugh's efforts in favour of the neo-feudal rule of a Christian and paternalistic aristocracy would ultimately and disastrously come to nought, unrealised and unrealisable.[27]

6. Epilogue: Vanity of Vanities

The Flytes' lifestyle should be thought of as alternative, not oppositional to the dominant social dispensation existing after the Second World War. If at that moment Brideshead House had eventually come under the authority of the National Trust (which the novel, of course, does not specify), the estate would have undergone a semiological reinterpretation, in an ideologically *diluted* way, as part of the "significant past" or the "selective tradition" of the nation (Williams 1973: 7). Thus, Lord Marchmain's flag would have ceased to be a meaningful sign, only to become yet another duly labelled exhibit shown to visitors behind a pane of glass. The Flytes' world can only inspire nostalgia, not rebellion. In letting himself be co-opted by them, Charles joins a tribe of "misfits", living "on the fringes" (Rothstein 1993: 321). They may be the last to commune with a dying tradition of memory, lost in a mass society where their values ultimately amount to nothing and where stately and country houses are no longer "formidable statement[s] […] about wealth, authority and status" (Terentowicz-Fotyga 2015: 9).

Against such a background, what Brideshead Castle supports is a mythical image of England as a Garden of Eden that "occludes questions of class, race, and the Protestant tradition" (Su 2005: 129). It also distorts, among other instances of social unrest, the 1926 General Strike. Although this historical event is depicted in *Brideshead Revisited*, it is done so in comical and satirical terms, with Ryder being unable to refrain from acknowledging the elation he found in attacking strikers: "We charged in cheerfully" (Waugh 1945: 206).[28] In the end, Waugh's idealised, mythical world of chivalric martyrs of the faith seems to be a mere delusion. At a hard time for traditions of memory, that of English, aristocratic Roman Catholicism may have breathed its last after 1945. As Ryder himself, the latter-day Jeremiah of the English aristocracy, laments: "Quomodo sedet sola civitas" (220), how doth the city (that is, Jerusalem, Brideshead being a symbol thereof) sit solitary. Sites of

Catholic memory are no more in England. During the war, despite his recent conversion and considering Brideshead Castle and "the age of Hooper" (351), Captain Ryder concludes: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (351). For him, that is what England's new, agnostic, materialistic, acquisitive, ruthlessly capitalistic ethos stands for.

Notes

1. As critic V.C. Clinton-Baddeley puts it, "while the story is told through the consciousness of an intelligent agnostic, this view of the world is effectively an historical re-creation by a hero who has transcended it" (1984: 238, n.1).

2. Charles's conversion to the Baroque, the Catholic art style par excellence since the Counter-Reformation, could be interpreted as a first unwitting step on his long path towards conversion to Catholicism. In the same paragraph, Ryder compares Brideshead's baroque fountain to "a life-giving spring" (Waugh 1945: 82). On the Baroque and Tridentine Catholicism, see Kermode (1960: 281).

3. That this is so is shown in Waugh's preface to the 1960 edition of the novel, where, in the face of impending doom and the "decay and spoliation" at work since the Second World War or even before, he acknowledges that he has "piled it on" in defence of the grand country place in the original 1945 edition. The measures adopted by the National Trust after the war, however, made of Waugh's novel a self-admitted "panegyric preached over an empty coffin" (Waugh 1962: x). As to aristocratic values and their survival, he states how "the advance of Hooper has been held up at several points" (x). Later on, more about Lieutenant Hooper, Ryder's subordinate during the war, who is represented as a symbol of a modern age of business, supposed progress, crass ignorance and self-contented philistinism.

4. Regarding country houses as living emblems of a certain tradition and a social and political ideal, architectural painter Ryder confesses: "I loved buildings that *grew* silently with the centuries, catching and keeping the best of each generation" (Waugh 1945: 226, emphasis added).

5. "*De otra época*".

6. "*Ilusiones de eternidad*".

7. "*El recuerdo en lo sagrado*".

8. In the end, both the English aristocracy and the Catholic Church share an alleged "historical legitimacy and a hierarchical structure" (Coffey 2006: 64).

9. In this respect, Frank Kermode is wrong, in my opinion, when he declares that "Sebastian […] shows [Charles] that the beauty of the City can be known only to the rich, that architecture and wine, for example, are aspects of it" (1960: 285). As I see it, the element that makes ultimate sense of the novel is a little red flame flickering in "a beaten-copper lamp of *deplorable design*" (Waugh 1945: 351, emphasis added). This conflation of the sublime and the vulgar at the end of the novel would be the last step in a long process whereby Ryder, the agnostic artist, rejects beauty for beauty's sake and as "a mode of ultimate meaning" in favour of something higher than it (White 2006: 191). This higher element consists of spirituality and awareness of the sublime beauty of God's

99

creation, and its relationship with His inscrutable purposes. Therefore, "art and beauty cannot substitute for religion" (181). And religion is for everyone, even for those who do not have either good taste or money. In Jeffrey Heath's opinion, "the chapel and the sanctuary lamp encapsulate the novel's theme: the operation of grace through the *inauthentic*" (1982: 168, emphasis added). This is just a part of his daring depiction of Brideshead House as the "derivative and only partly finished" home of "the half-heathen family of an apostate father" (166). Besides and above all, it "does not represent the Roman Catholic Church" (166), as it belongs to the Protestant side of the family (that is, Lord Marchmain's before his first conversion to Catholicism). Because of the divided attitudes of the members of the family regarding the Catholic faith, Brideshead would be "an emblem [...] of schism" (166). As I see it, this is all wrong. During Lord Marchmain's notorious exile, with Lady Marchmain and the Earl of Brideshead steadfastly at the helm and in spite of all troubles, Catholicism is the law of the house; after Lord Marchmain's deathbed conversion, even Charles Ryder ends up a convert; and Sebastian, for all his personal tragedy of incurable alcoholism, poverty and loneliness, is considered a saint of sorts.

10. "*Repetición religiosa de lo que se ha hecho desde siempre*".

11. "*Todo cuenta, todo simboliza, todo significa*".

12. "*Al tiempo indiferenciado de los héroes, de los orígenes y del mito*".

13. "*La razón de ser fundamental de un lugar de memoria es detener el tiempo, bloquear el trabajo del olvido*".

14. Ultimately, "the country house [...] both reproduces the social order and epitomises it, bringing together in one highly pertinent symbol the concepts of community, nationhood and civilisation" (Coffey 2006: 60). Furthermore, Waugh believes in an anthropological foundation for the class system, therefore rendering it *natural* (64, emphasis added). Lieutenant Hooper embodies "the new vulgarity which the war had introduced", being the representative of a

hateful world without "learning, scholarship, intelligence and the humanities" (Berberich 2007: 125).

15. In his neo-feudal ideal, Waugh had literary forerunners: he was converted to "the medieval, traditionalist Catholicism whose feudal image had been projected by Belloc and Chesterton" (Pryce-Jones 1960: 274-275).

16. This all reveals Waugh's sympathy with a contemporary mistrust of modern mass society, already interpreted by Nietzsche as a bridgehead of socialism, and his fear of the ever-growing modern state, powerful enough to crush the individual and hence felt to be the greatest danger to civilisation (Carey 1992: 3-4).

17. Both as a painter and a narrator, Ryder can be seen as an archivist, "absorbed in the work of recording, remembering, and meticulously reconstituting each sign and site of memory that tells of his own story and the story of the Brideshead" (Rothstein 1993: 328). In so doing, he is also indirectly propping up his new identity as a Catholic. Memory is so important for Ryder because, in his own words, "we possess certainly nothing except the past" (Waugh 1945: 225).

18. In any case, Sebastian's was not the only instance: "at least half the undergraduates were sent to Oxford simply as a place to grow up in" (Wykes 1999: 28), regardless of their academic prospects. Waugh himself, an Oxford man during the 1920s, avows that "from the first I regarded Oxford as a place to be inhabited and enjoyed for itself, not as the preparation for anywhere else" (28).

19. "But I, wretched young man that I was —even more wretched at the beginning of my youth— had begged you for chastity and had said: 'Make me chaste and continent, but not yet'" (Augustine of Hippo 2001: 164). This "not yet" represents, according to J. Heath, Sebastian's "chronic immaturity" and "blighting selfishness" (1982: 176).

20. For Christine Berberich, this African monastery is "a nursery replacement" where social obligations and pressure do not exist (2007: 122).

100

21. "*Presente eterno*".

22. To cut a long story short, criticism of this scene is comprehended within a general critical tendency to accuse Waugh of merging Catholic dogmatism and snobbery in his novel (Slater 2006: 124).

23. "*Iguales e idénticos*".

24. Regarding the physical destruction of country houses during the war, James Raven remarks: "Wartime requisitioning had often interrupted lines of family occupation and left houses damaged beyond affordable repair" (2015: 8). As to the desacralisation of Brideshead by Hooper and his mates, all of them being agents of modernity and history, Pierre Nora tellingly writes: "Memory is always suspicious for history, whose true mission is to restrain and destroy it. History is the delegitimisation of the lived past. On the horizon of the societies of history, at the limits of a completely historicised world, there would be definitive and ultimate *desacralisation*" (2008: 21, my translation, emphasis added: "*La memoria siempre es sospechosa para la historia, cuya misión verdadera es destruirla y reprimirla. En el horizonte de las sociedades de historia, en los limites de un mundo completamente historicizado, habría desacralización última y definitiva*").

25. History would be a way of recording time as an objective, linear dimension that, unlike memory, does not aim at eternity. History would comprehend an event such as the Second World War, an all-out, dreadfully technified kind of conflict where the link between the individual and the sites and traditions of memory they belong to is thoroughly disrupted.

26. Waugh, among other contemporary radical right-wing intellectuals, feels this to be an "intrusion" into the places civilisation has created for "the best people" (Carey 1992: 3). According to them, such an intrusion would detach "the country house from its former status as the lynchpin of community and social values" (Coffey 2006: 61). Reified into heritage, "social, living memory is rejected, and the symbiotic relationship between past and present is denied" (62). As for "the best people" during

the interwar years, Ross McKibbin has tentatively estimated the upper classes to have been around 40,000, that is some 0.1% of Britain's total population at the time (1998: 2, n. 2).

27. Waugh seems to take for granted a supposedly benevolent, generous administration of agricultural activity by the landed aristocracy and gentry as he depicts it in the novel on the occasion of a rural fair presided over by the earl of Brideshead. This benevolence may be contradicted by the very existence of the stately home. This is so on the grounds of the huge accumulation of wealth that was necessary to put up such magnificent buildings all over the country. For about a century before this agricultural show, concurring evidence against a presumed patrician concern for their social inferiors would be the fact that at this period workhouses were filled to the brim, and that millions had to leave for America or the dominions. All through this century-long period, the ruling of the country corresponded to a Parliament that could be considered to be a "committee of landlords" (Moore 1973: 19), who legislated the livelihoods of their inferiors and took care of agriculture as an activity directed by private interest and economic freedom, rather than as a means of supporting the population (8). In any case, by the outbreak of the First World War this presumably benign system obtained no longer (Raven 2015: 6-7). For widespread jubilant reactions to the disappearance of the country house after the Second World War, see Raven (2015: 10).

28. Christopher Isherwood seems to describe Ryder's and his friends' reaction by calling the clashes with the strikers a "tremendous upper-middle class lark", the "Poshocrats coming down from Oxford and Cambridge in their hundreds —out for all the fun that was going" (Ferrall and McNeill 2015: 109). The Catholic Archbishop of Westminster epitomises Waugh's attitude towards the strike: it was "a direct challenge to a lawfully constituted authority […] a sin against the obedience which we owe to God" (McKibbin 1998: 288). It must be noted, however, that the real power in Catholic Northern England, the Archbishop of Liverpool, the head of by far the biggest congregation in the country, was of a very different opinion (288). Even Bridey, the

101

bigoted Stonyhurst old boy, has moral scruples about joining the strike-breakers: "he was not satisfied with the justice of the cause" (Waugh 1945: 208). Both the 1926 strike and the Second World War, according to David Rothstein, "represent the broader political forces that surround and threaten the insular aristocratic paradise at Brideshead" (1993: 320).

Works Cited

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO. (AD 397-400) 2001. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Trans. R. Warner. New York and London: New American Library.

BACHELARD, Gaston. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. M. Jolas. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

BERBERICH, Christine. 2007. *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia*. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

CANNADINE, David. 1999. *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*. New York: Vintage.

CAREY, John. 1992. *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia*. London: Faber and Faber.

CLINTON-BADDELEY, V.C. (1945) 1984. "Spectator". In Stannard, Martin (ed.): 237-238.

COFFEY, Laura. 2006. "Evelyn Waugh's Country House Trinity: Memory, History and Catholicism in *Brideshead Revisited*". *Literature and History* 15 (1): 59-73. DOI: 10.7227/LH.15.1.4

DAVIS, Robert M. 1992. "Imagined Space in *Brideshead Revisited*". In Blayac, Alain (ed.) *Evelyn Waugh: New Directions*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan: 22-34.

DESLANDES, Paul R. 2005. *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana U.P.

FERRALL, Charles and Dougal MCNEILL. 2015. *Writing the 1926 General Strike: Literature, Culture, Politics*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge U.P. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781316163771

HASTINGS, Selina. 1994. *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography*. London: Minerva.

HEATH, Jeffrey. 1982. *The Picturesque Prison: Evelyn Waugh and his Writing*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's U.P.

KERMODE, Frank. (1960) 1984. "Mr Waugh's Cities" In Stannard, Martin (ed.): 279-287.

MCKIBBIN, Ross. 1998. *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951*. Oxford: Oxford U.P.

MOORE, Barrington Jr. 1973. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

NOLTE, Ernst. 1969. *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism*. Trans. L. Vennewitz. New York and Toronto: Mentor Books, The New American Library.

NORA, Pierre. (1984) 2008. "Entre memoria e historia: La problemática de los lugares". *Pierre Nora en* Les lieux de mémoire. Trans. L. Montello. Montevideo: Trilce: 19-39.

PRYCE-JONES, David. 1960. "Time and Tide". In Stannard, Martin (ed.): 272-76.

RAVEN, James. 2015. "Introduction". In Raven, James (ed.) *Lost Mansions: Essays on the Destruction of the Country House*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 1-21. DOI: 10.1057/9781137520777

ROTHSTEIN, David. 1993. "*Brideshead Revisited* and the Modern Historicization of Memory". *Studies in the Novel* 25 (3): 318-331.

SLATER, Anne Pasternak. 2016. *Evelyn Waugh*. Tavistock, Devon: Northcote House.

102

Słyszewska, Aleksandra. 2017. "Religion and the Nursery: Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*". *Beyond Philology* 14 (3): 201-217.

Stannard, Martin. (ed.) 1984. *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage*. London and New York: Routledge.

Su, John. 2005. *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

Terentowicz-Fotyga, Urszula. 2015. *Dreams, Nightmares and Empty Signifiers: The English Country House in the Contemporary Novel*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Waugh, Evelyn. 1945. *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Waugh, Evelyn. (1960) 1962. "Preface". *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*. London and New York: Penguin: ix-x.

White, Laura. 2006. "The Rejection of Beauty in Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*". *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature* 58 (3): 180-194. DOI: 10.5840/renascence200658314

Williams, Michael E. 1996. "Campion and the English Continental Seminaries". In McCoog, Tomas S.J. (ed.) *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits: Essays in Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall, Oxford (1896-1996)*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press: 285-299.

Williams, Raymond. 1973. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory". *New Left Review* 1 (82): 3-16.

Wykes, David. 1999. *Evelyn Waugh: A Literary Life*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

W.F. DEACON AND HIS REVISION OF ROMANTICISM IN *WARRENIANA* THROUGH LITERARY PARODY AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS TO PROMOTE BLACKING

W.F. DEACON Y SU REVISIÓN DEL ROMANTICISMO EN *WARRENIANA* DESDE LA PARODIA LITERARIA Y LAS CAMPAÑAS PUBLICITARIAS PARA PROMOCIONAR EL BETÚN

MARÍA ROCÍO RAMOS RAMOS
Universidad de Huelva
rocio.ramos@dfing.uhu.es

Abstract

This study aims to reassess William Frederick Deacon (1799-1845) and his work *Warreniana* (1824) by demonstrating that although it is a work of textual parody, its apparent triviality conceals a sophisticated exercise in literary criticism, constituting a valuable contemporary commentary on Romanticism. The collection presents a witty and sophisticated exercise in criticism of the literature and style of its period, being composed of texts attributed to a selection of Romantic authors supposedly promoting a very trivial product: Warren's blacking (shoe polish). Deacon thus acts as another Romantic critic, albeit a more original and unconventional one. Due to space constraints, this paper will focus only on the parody of the poetic style of British romantic authors. The parody of their journal style will be analysed in another article.

Keywords: Deacon, *Warreniana*, literary parody, Romanticism, advertisement.

Resumen

Este estudio pretende revalorar a William Frederick Deacon (1799-1845) y su obra *Warreniana* (1824) demostrando que, aun siendo una obra de parodias textuales, su aparente trivialidad esconde un sofisticado ejercicio de crítica literaria,

constituyendo un valioso comentario contemporáneo al Romanticismo. La obra presenta un ingenioso y sofisticado ejercicio crítico de la literatura y el estilo de este periodo, pues son textos atribuidos a los autores románticos selectos que supuestamente promocionan un producto muy trivial: el betún de Warren. Deacon actúa pues, como otro crítico romántico, aunque más original y poco convencional. Este artículo se centrará en la parodia al estilo de los autores románticos británicos —'poet parody'— quedando la parodia al estilo editorial y periodístico como objetivo de otro estudio.

Palabras clave: Deacon, *Warreniana,* parodia literaria, Romanticismo, anuncio.

1. Introduction: The Genius of William Frederick Deacon (1799-1845) and his Relationship with the World of Advertising

Born at a time when novel discourses of Romanticism were emerging, William Frederick Deacon played a significant role in his response to and recreation of Romantic ideas, authors and works. He moved away from his initial works of fiction to write comic portraits and parodic texts, for which he is best known today among critics who have long ignored his important work in the development of Romanticism. John Strachan's leading and complete edition of 1999, in the collection *Parodies of the Romantic Age,* was already an important first step in highlighting his work —and it will be the edition used for this study.

One of Deacon's earliest biographical portraits was by his Reading School classmate and childhood friend, Thomas Noon Talfourd, later an MP, judge and author. In "Prefatory Memoir of the Late William Frederick Deacon", published in Deacon's novel *Annette. A Tale* (1852), his friend described him as "more than a tasteful critic, an accomplished scholar, and an elegant writer —he was all these— but he was also a high minded gentleman, a kind husband, and anxious parent" (Strachan 1999: viii). It is this portrait of a moderate person that explains the tone adopted in his unique parodic recreations, which are loaded with a dose of good humour. It is a humour that contrasts with that of his friend, the radical British press freedom campaigner William Hone, known for his acid attacks on government censorship. Deacon chose another route in *Warreniana.* While criticism and mockery are constant, the parody is gentle in tone, and far removed from the crude and harsh politically-tinged attacks of works such as *The Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner,* a parodic newspaper by Canning, Ellis and Frere created to oppose the radicalism of the French Revolution, also included in Strachan's collection of 1999.

Deacon's work was published anonymously in 1824 under the title *Warreniana; with Notes, Critical and Explanatory, by the Editor of a Quarterly Review*. There was a later edition in the United States in 1851. Besides, critics such as Kent and Ewen (1992) also selected some of its parodies in their collection, an anthology that included for the first time not only poetry, the most common literary manifestation of Romaticism, but also prose: "Old Cumberland Pedlar", parodying Wordsworth; "Carmen Triumphale", parodying Southey; "The Sable School of Poetry", parodying *Blackwood's Magazine;* and "The Childe's Pilgrimage", which parodies Byron's style. Surprisingly, however, *Warreniana* was not republished in its complete form until Strachan's 1999 edition. Despite this fact, the international impact of Deacon's work was considerable. Interestingly, *The Port Folio*, a monthly miscellany published in Philadelphia, which had been started in 1801 by Asbury Dickins and Joseph Dennie, included in its volume XVII of 1824 a review of *Warreniana*, as well as the short *Warreniana Americana – No. 1* by a certain "H. N. of Baltimore" which praised "the merits of Warren's incomparable liquid blacking" (Hall 1824: 453). It is interesting to see the online edition of volume XVII edited by John E. Hall for examples of those merits.

Deacon's original idea cannot be understood without alluding to Robert Warren, the well-known entrepreneur and owner of a blacking factory of the same name, famous for the promotion of his products. Deacon's genius was to link Warren and his blacking to well-known authors and newspapers of the Romantic era. Deacon in his parody made use of the idea that William Gifford (1756-1826), an important publisher of the time, had been commissioned to bring together established Romantic writers and major publishers to praise Warren's blacking and Warren as a salesman and publicist. The result is a book supposedly edited by Gifford — whose style is also parodied— in which fifteen contributions are joined by an introduction, appendix and critical notes. The level of sophistication of this compendium is evident and, as Strachan rightly notes, it does not parody advertisements per se, but establishes a direct link to the genre: "Though *Warreniana* is not advertising parody as such, it does have links to the genre" (1999: xxii). Indeed, the work shows the importance acquired at the time by the literary advertisement, which creates its space and reactivates its interest in the literature of the moment, as in *Warreniana*. Furthermore, it combines the egotistical outpourings of the conventional Romantic poet and the journalistic genre of the ingenious creator of advertisements, producing practical and direct benefits from that combination. It is interesting to see how, through the burlesque imitation of sublime aspects of Romantic ideology —and the critical style of the literary newspapers of the day, not analysed in this study— a product as unromantic as blacking could be promoted.

Warreniana drew inspiration from the existing parody of advertisements, which was closely related to the fashionable advertisement "The Cat and the Boot", illustrated by Cruikshank. Furthermore, Wood (1994) brilliantly explains William Hone's influence on this literary scene, becoming an author who was able to incorporate all the forms and techniques of advertisements into his work. Among his best-known works are *The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder* (1820), and the pamphlet *Non mi ricordo* (1820) related to the so-called *Queen Caroline's Affair* — studied by authors such as Laqueur (1982) or Smith (1994) as the accusation of adultery made by King George IV against his wife Queen Caroline. Because of this supposed adultery, the King wanted to divorce through the Bill of Pains and Penalties Act of Parliament, which penalised a person "without resorting to a legal trial, not a judicial act" (Fulford 1967: 41). Also *A Slap at Slop* (1821), a burlesque newspaper in close collaboration with Cruikshank in which the advertisement for Warren's product mentioned above appeared.

Hone's work was important as he was one of the pioneers in combining in the same work text and illustrations in advertisements in *La Belle Assemblée or, Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine Addressed Particularly to the Ladies*, one of the most famous women's magazines of the time. Founded by John Bell, this magazine was published from 1806 to 1832 and known for its illustrations featuring famous painters of the time such as Arthur William Devis and John and William Hopwood.

The genre of the advertisement had attained a primordial role in the promotion of certain products, especially those most useful in the domestic space. Botein et al. (1981), among others, point to products that had received this attention since the 18th century. Toothpaste, certain medicines, and items essential for the comfort of the home and personal hygiene form part of a list of products that were regularly advertised with widespread acceptance: "fabrics, furniture, wine, horses, and cosmetics as well as an abundance of books, medicines, and dwellings" (Botein et al. 1981: 486). In the early nineteenth century, the list included 'Warren's Blacking', a well-known boot polish which became the surprising subject matter for the parodies contained in *Warreniana*. Boot polish was a popular product and the use of its advertisements was systematic and had become regular and constant in the publications and works of the time. Strachan goes so far as to mention "the near-ubiquity of blacking advertisments in the Romantic period" (2007: 139), defining blacking as a social phenomenon and noting that even George IV himself had "his own royal blacking mixture" (2007: 120). Besides, even Dickens was linked to blacking. At twelve, as Giddings notes, he had to work for six shillings a week at "Warren's Blacking Warehouse, Hungerford Stairs (now beneath Charing Cross Station)" (2002: 17). This company, however, was not Robert Warren's but that of Jonathan Warren, who started his business taking advantage of having the

same surname. Dickens would never forget his experience at the factory and his references to the world of blacking are recorded in *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Pickwick Papers.*

Many of Robert Warren's highly creative blacking advertisements became a landmark in the history of English advertising. The success of the aforementioned advertisement, "The Cat and the Boot, or, An Improvement upon Mirrors" (1820), was considerable. It is a combination of a verse stanza and an illustration by Cruikshank in which a cat spits at its own figure reflected in a very shiny boot thanks to Warren's shoe polish. According to Presbrey "it made Warrren's Shoe Blacking known through the Kingdom and produced a heavy sale of it" (1968: 85). Strachan notes Warren's novelty in the combined use of verse text and image, which he calls "idea illustration" (1999: 87) and which became "the most famous advertising image of its day" (2007: 38). Warren profited from this famous 'puff' —an advertisement or promotional method to exaggeratedly praise a product— showing how the use of his blacking rendered mirrors unnecessary when shaving. Many imitations of this advertisement emerged. Wood (1994: 155-214) lists the most interesting ones: "Warren's Black-Rat Blacking", the result of a collaboration between Hone and Cruikshank and published in *A Slap at Slop* (1821), focused on attacking "another" Warren, Charles Warren, a Tory aspiring to the judiciary. The illustration, also playing with the animal motif, showed a rat-turned-judge in a wig. In 1839, an imitation by Donnison, another blacking manufacturer, replaced Cruikshank's cat with a cockerel.

The image of the shiny boot as a mirror in Hone's famous advertisement exaggerated the properties of Warren's everyday product in the same way that *Warreniana*, through compositions supposedly written by romantic authors and columnists and supposedly edited by Gifford, extolled the qualities of Warren's blacking and its entrepreneur in hyperbolic style. It is not surprising that the cover illustration for *Warreniana* chosen by Strachan for his edition was "Scene from Hamlet". Published in 1830 in Robert Seymour's *The Looking Glass*, it shows a frightened Hamlet facing a ghost in armour and shining boots with the caption: "The Blacking most approv'd through the land Is Robert Warrens 30 Strand".

Warreniana thus starts from an imitation of the type of advertisements Warren used to promote his product. It is of interest for its construction as an unconventional romantic work. The purely romantic theme is parodied by adopting the format of the genre of the advertisement. For this reason, the key elements of advertising texts are repeated throughout the work. The interplay of capital letters, italics and bold types, together with images and content is combined with the name of the advertised product and its manufacturer:

A Shilling of WARREN'S PASTE BLACKING is equal to
four Shilling Bottles of *Liquid Blacking*; prepared by
Robert Warren
30, STRAND, London;
and sold by most Venders of *Blacking* in every town in
the Kingdom, in Pots, 6d. 12d. and 18d. each. (Strachan 1999: vii)

As noted by Strachan, propaganda campaigns were clever exercises that relied not only on street cries —often associated with newspaper sales— but on a whole series of puffs of which Warren's is just one example (2007: 124). Many products were advertised, with text or with text and image, in newspapers, pamphlets, flyers, billboards, posters, or signs on vehicles. In addition, Warren's campaign in the mid-19th century was a precursor of the 'jingle copy' and lasted for some fifty years (87). Strachan describes Robert Warren as a pioneer in the development of advertising in England and details his innovative resources:

> Warren's ran a series of ground-breaking campaigns in favour of its product, extolling it in a nationwide series of newspapers advertisements, puffing it in handbills, saluting it in advertisements painted on the side of metropolitan buildings and praising it in letters two feet high daubed on fences at the road side in the country. (xi)

It was this notoriety and repercussion of the advertising world at that time that Deacon exploited, and his peculiar way of adapting advertising discourse is what makes *Warreniana* original. He took advantage of the knowledge and taste of the readers of the time for romantic writers, which he then exploited within a devised advertising context. This guaranteed the success of his parody.

2. The Nature and Structure of *Warreniana*

Warreniana (1824) is described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as "a series of burlesque imitations of popular authors in the style of the *Rejected Addresses*, and in praise of Warren's blacking" (Stephen 1888: 249). Indeed, this collection is based on the parodic imitation of poems, essays, stories or reviews of romantic works that adopt the format of advertisements or puffs to praise something as prosaic as boot polish. Just as Warren employed all his rhetorical resources in advertising discourse to promote his polish, Deacon resorted to playing on the knowledge that readers of the time had of the most famous contemporary authors and the style of the newspapers to compile his work. 'Eminent literary figures' of the day, and editorial contributions supposedly contracted by Warren, seemed to go to great lengths to promote his blacking. The contributions imitate compositions that could have been written by Washington

Irving, Wordsworth, James Hogg, Leigh Hunt, Charles Mills, Southey, Townshend, Barry Cornwall (Bryan Waller Procter), Byron, Coleridge or Scott. The collection also parodies the style of articles and reports published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *New Monthly Magazine* and *The Times*.

With clear antecedents in the tradition of *ad rem* parody, which can be traced back to the 18th century with *A Pipe of Tobacco, in Imitation of Several Authors* (1736) by Isaac Hawkins Browne (1705-1760) or in the collective work *Rejected Addresses* (1812) as well as later in *Rejected Articles*, *Warreniana* uses the advertisement as the basis for its parodic strategy. The common thread that unites all the compositions is a product as common and mundane as blacking. The variety of tones and authors of the Romantic period parodied in the collection, coherently united around the same objective and style, stands out, as Strachan states: "In many of these parodies, we see an ostensible 'low' subject matter, boot polish, addressed in discourses which employ stylistic and formal devices that are aesthetically 'high'" (1999: xxvi).

Warreniana presents a clear cohesion as the work opens and closes in the same key. The rigorously scholastic voice in the preface parodies that of the well-known editor of the time, William Gifford, who signs a pompous dedication to the king, and is also parodied in the introduction and endnotes to the work. The work is made up of 15 varied long parodies and an appendix, containing four short parodies, whose inclusion is explained on the grounds that the authors were late in sending in their contributions.

111

Strachan explains that the idea for the resource originated in an actual incident involving Byron, who was credited with writing advertisements for the promotion of blacking sold by Warren's competitor, the *Day and Martin Company*. Strachan records Byron's words in *The Two Foscari* (1821):

> Whilst I have been occupied in defending *Pope*'s character, the powers of Grub-street appear to have been assailing *mine:* […] One of the accusations in the nameless epistle alluded to is still more laudable: it states seriously that I "have received five hundred pounds for writing advertisements for Day and Martin's patent blacking!" This is the highest compliment to my literary powers which I have ever received. (1999: xvi, emphasis in original)

Deacon adopted this anecdote for his edition and transformed Byron's quotation into a paratextual element at the beginning of the work: "I have even been accused of writing Puffs for Warren's Blacking. LORD BYRON" (In Strachan 1999: 1). Thus, the book opened with the assumption that the rest of the authors would have received, like Byron, a similar commission.

3. Parodying the Style of British Romantic Authors

3.1. Wordsworth and the Naivety of the Observer

Special mention should be made of Wordsworth, one of the most parodied authors especially in the first decades of the nineteenth century, when he began to achieve notoriety as a poet (Bauer 1975; Bates 2012; Stewart 2018). Thus, Deacon could not pass up the opportunity to have the well-known Wordsworth appear as one of the poets praising Warren. The poem "Old Cumberland Pedlar" is a parody of the founding father of Romantic poetry, arranged following the first book of Wordsworth's *The Excursion* (1814) and containing references to characters from *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth's well-known character, his metaphysical 'Wanderer' —known to have been parodied to exhaustion under the name of Peter Bell, as it is also parodied and named in *Warreniana*— is transformed by Deacon into a 'pedlar'. In doing so, the author uses the original but gives a twist in the representation of Warren, who is comically portrayed in a rural and natural environment, imbued with a reflection and meditation of moral dyes that have lost their philosophical aspect to adopt a mercantilist nuance related to blacking and Warren. The aim of the parody is achieved: Wordsworth's emotion is imitated and transformed into an exaggerated and emotional eulogy to mere blacking.

The parody is very well constructed, comprising a brief 'Summary of contents' and seven stanzas of complex dense verse. Deacon brilliantly transforms Wordsworth style into the description of a solitary protagonist who not only finds the name of Warren "graven on the tawny rock" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 28), in the midst of a vast, gentle and primitive landscape, but who also establishes a dialogue with a merchant, curiously named Peter Bell, who works for Warren's firm. The coincidences with Wordsworth's work are indisputable in this successful parody, and the description of nature and emotion with a commercial hue is unsurpassed:

> Beauteous it was but lonesome, and while I
> Leaped up for joy to think that earth was good
> And lusty in her boyhood, I beheld
> Graven on the tawny rock, these magic words,
> "BUY WARREN'S BLACKING", then in thought I said,
> My stars, how we improve! Amid these scenes
> Where hermit nature, jealous of the world,
> Guards from profane approach her solitude;
> E'en here, despite each fence, adventurous art
> Thrusts her intrusive puffs; as though the rocks
> And waterfalls were mortals, and wore shoes. (28-29)

If, as Williams rightly notes, in *Peter Bell* "the uncouth bray of an ass is the chosen medium through which the most profound mysteries are expressed" (2017: 80),

it is the bite of a mosquito that Deacon uses to complete his parody, mixing the vulgar bite with the parodied Wordsworth's typically profound meditations:

> Touching these gnats, I could not choose but feel, […]
> The venomous superficies of a pimple,
> On the left side of my nose: […]
> It was a gnat-bite!! […]
> Thus nature warns her sons, and when their thoughts
> Aspire too boldly, or their soaring minds
> Elope with truant fancy from the flesh,
> Their lawful spouse, she spurns the gross affront,
> And sends a gnat to tell them they are clay. (In Strachan 1999: 31)

As also indicated by Stewart, "Wordsworth so often asks his readers to reflect on the unlikely affinities between things, to take some objects of seeming insignificance and find in it a hidden depth" (2018: 609). Yet, as Stewart rightly states, Wordsworth would not have advertised boot polish. In any case, blacking and nature, simplicity and deep meditations or feelings, all remain together in *Warreniana* through a symbiosis that shows that, as Stewart properly admits,

> the success of the parody lies in the way that if follows Wordsworth in teasing out an idea, in testing the boundaries between categories of things. He recognizes that Wordsworth's claim for his own value share much with its opposite, the advertiser's puff, because they both are in the business of publicly claiming the distinctiveness of their products. (2018: 609)

3.2. James Hogg and the Ballad

Deacon draws on the stereotype of the autodidactic poet James Hogg, the so-called 'Ettrick shepherd', who taught himself to create his own poetic style while mixing with the Scottish *intelligentsia* and becoming a columnist for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. While he was known for his satirical and parodic works and for his novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), Deacon turns to him for his pastoral, lyrical and transparent style with which to promote Warren. With Hogg it was possible to parody the Romantic milieu that extolled nature and the primitive, for this author combined the influence of German theorists with their praise of *Volkpoesie* and a taste for the works of people living in "natural", primitive, uncivilised environments. This was evident in his use of the ballad.

In the chapter "Warren in Fairy Land", Deacon includes an insightful parody based on elements of the ballad, the folk tradition and the supernatural that sharply transforms Hogg's poem "Kilmeny" (1813). Like his young protagonist, Bonnie Rob Warren is transported in his dreams to the fairy world where he sees the future success of his blacking. The detailed description of the natural landscape

surrounding the character is comical from the beginning of the poem, which sometimes also recreates an archaic language:

> Bonine Rob Warren gaed up the lang glen–
> 'Twas on Saturday last, at a quarter to ten–
> The morn was still, and the sky was blue,
> And the clouds were robed in their simmer hue,
> And the leaf on the elm looked green as the sea
> When it sleepeth in brief tranquility; . . .
> Till rapt in reverie strange and deep,
> Bonnie Rob Warren fell fast asleep. (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 35)

The reader can walk with Warren through the vision of a future where his blacking and company will become famous, selling all over the globe. He also witnesses the boy's happiness when he wakes up and returns home. The poem's narrator, in a conventional ending to the ballad, makes a wish for longevity to all who hear it, encouraging the readers to buy blacking. An ingenious symbiosis of parodied romantic poetry and commercialism is thus achieved:

> Now lang live a' those wha hae money to lend,
> And lang live a' those wha have ony to spend;
> And lang live a' those wha hae gowd to receive,
> And ditto to those wha have ony to give;
> Provided, that lang as 'tis likely to sell,
> *They'll buy Warren's Blacking, and puff it as well.* (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 41, emphasis in original)

3.3. Leigh Hunt and Nursery Odes

In his game of sustained parody through poems, Deacon includes "A Nursery Ode", imitating the work of the well-known caustic critic Leigh Hunt. Interestingly, rather than using one of his well-known works, Deacon creates a threefold exercise in parody. First, he draws on a poem Hunt once wrote for one of his sons as a rebuke —"To J. L., Four Years Old" (1816). Second, highlighting the motif of childhood so closely associated with the development of Romanticism, he includes surprisingly varied mythological references identifying many Romantics who, along with Leigh Hunt, had been pejoratively identified as the *Cockney School of Poetry* —such as Hazlitt, Keats and Webb— and, third, presents the composition as Hunt's personal gift to Warren's son, justifying it as follows:

> […] originally written for private circulation, and transmitted, together with an ounce of crisp gingerbread-nuts, to my little acquaintance, John Warren, junior, by way of a birth-day present […] the Editor of this Volume, to whom it was shown by the father, imagined that it might be serviceable in promoting the interests of his Work. (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 47)

3.4. Charles Mills and the Crusade Chronicles

Deacon does not overlook a taste for the past in his sophisticated compendium of romantic parodies. With great imagination he devises "Digression on The Family of Warren at the time of the Crusades" using the genre of historical study, specifically part of the general knowledge of Gibbon's work. This well-known historian, famous for his work on the Roman Empire, had included a "Digression on the Family of Courtenay". Deacon assumes the persona of Gibbon's real-life disciple, Charles Mills, and creates a chronicle in which he delves into the annals of Warren's history. He parodies historical seriousness to define Warren's timeline, and the reader is amused to read of a supposed ancestor of the high-flown businessman, Michael de la Warene, who, of humble origin, accompanies his lord as a vassal to the crusades. In the middle of the desert, he will sacrifice his boots in exchange for food. The chronicle is structured to explain how he and his descendants —Michael de la Warene and, after his death, his son Robert Blackboots— will be rewarded by the king, and the act of the boots serves to praise the marvellous properties of the blacking preparation used.

This "Digression on the Family of Warren", signed C.M., plays on Deacon's knowledge of Charles Mills' work on the crusades, which was once praised by Scott. Its interest lies in the recreation of such an exotic, historical and orientalist theme, which includes the fictional origins of Warren and his family. The battle with the Muslims is described as a clash between boots and bare feet, and invocations of St. George's boots are included: "Behold the boots of St. George! Do you fear to follow the saint!" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 57). The narrator manages to praise the alleged historical origin of this blacking:

> [...] the historian will not be justified in concealing from the curious enquirer the existence of a singular tradition. In his death-bed Robert Blackboots the Polisher anticipated the present grandeur of his house, and foretold that a Robert de la Warene (the Warren of the corruption or change of our tongue) should benefit and surprise the world with the discovery that boots in general may be rendered as dark and as polished —perhaps too as durable— as the Black-boots of St. George himself. (58-59)

3.5. Southey and Laudation

Deacon sharpens the parodic attack on Southey by taking into account not only his status as *Poet Laureate*, but also his known errors in verse through his supposed facility in constructing odes. In this case, such a lyric genre is taken as the basis for creating the exaggerated praise of Warren. Southey's reputation, attacked not only by the conservative authors of *The Anti-Jacobin* but also by more liberal writers such as Byron, Hone or Hunt, declined as a result of the criticism of his changing

political views and is parodied in direct relation to the praise of Warren. Deacon succeeds with the parody "Carmen Triumphale By R.S." in fanning the contemporary attacks on Southey in a poem he supposedly composed in praise of Warren. It is based on the first work the poet wrote as poet laureate —"Carmen Triumphale, For the Commencement of the Year 1814"— in which he rejoiced in Europe's resistance and military victories over Napoleon. This provides an excuse for Deacon to transform Southey's style by describing the success of Warren's blacking.

The poetic voice associated with Southey is pretentious, egotistical and petulant. While waiting for his servant to return the boots he is cleaning for a walk, he decides to create a panegyric to praise Warren, as important as himself:

> I sate me down in a chair, and thus apostrophised Warren.
> "Pontiff of modern art! Whose name is as noted as mine is",
> Noted for talent, and skill, and the cardinal virtues of manhood,
> Receive this tribute of praise from one whose applause is an honour.
> (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 65)

Interestingly, the egocentric poet insists that Warren's eulogy will succeed because of his fame, showing how his influence spreads across the country, and then moving on to Europe:

> In Brighton thy name is known, and waxeth important at Cheltenham,
> Travels *per coach* to Bath, that exceedingly beautiful city,
> Thence crossing the Chanel to Wales, it stirs up attention at Swansea […]
> Till valley, and rock, and glen, ring aloud with "Buy Warren's Blacking",
> But not unto Britain alone is thy fame, Robert Warren confined: o'er
> The civilised regions of Europe, believe me, 'tis equally honoured […] (67)

All the familiar elements of the original that lauded the glory of the king in early 1814 are transformed into a parodic exercise in which the supposed Southey hints at his preoccupation with explaining his own fame rather than Warren's. Hence, at many points he lapses into an exaggeratedly bombastic presentation of himself, turning the praise of Warren into an exaltation of his own self:

> For I am the bard of time, the puffer of peer or of a peasant,
> Whether Russ, German, or French, Whig, Radical, Ultra or Tory,
> Provided my *sack-butt* is paid with a *butt of sack* for each bouncer.
> Hence, nobles are proud to bow to my laurelled head at Saint James's,
> Deeming His Majesty's grace dispensed through me, for they well know
> His Majesty loves in his heart my political creed. (68-69)

This multi-dimensional parody thus succeeds in exploiting the possibilities of the panegyric genre. It includes the promotion of Warren and his blacking in Southey's parodied voice and makes the Romantic poet appear vain, emphasising his lack of

political consistency. The exaggerated praise of the king in the original is transformed into an encomium of the romantic poet himself, curiously in almost mercantilist competition with the businessman Warren.

3.6. Townshend and the Academic Prizes

For his parodic compositions, Deacon drew on authors who might be known for their academic, literary or intellectual work, in this case, Chauncy Hare Townshend. A clergyman, poet and intellectual, connected with the scholarly world of Cambridge where he graduated, Townshend received the "Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement July, 1817" for his poem "Jerusalem" (Strachan 1999: 70). Deacon uses this poem, and the idea of that prize, as a basis for describing Warren's role in contemporary London life in a burlesque imitation entitled "The Triumph of Warren. A Cambridge Prize Poem. By C.H.T." It copies the bombastic style of the original, providing an intentional recreation of the burlesque epic. The consumerism of urban life is portrayed through fashions and the promotion of advertisements. For that, Deacon tangentially touches on the genre of the so-called *parody of learning* with the intention of satirizing the budding ingenuity of young people graduating from university institutions. Warren's glory in the poem is exaggerated. It is compared, for example, with the beauty of nature:

> As when young day first blushes in the skies,
> Each virgin flowret starts with glad surprise,
> Thus when the name of Warren greets the eye,
> Thrills with angelic bliss each passer-by […] (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 73)

The muses also pause before its magnificence:

> But halt, my Muse; not thine in vengeful verse
> The countless dupes of fashion to rehearse; […]
> 'Tis thine to pluck a berry from each bough,
> And twine the wreath round Warren's classic brow. (77)

Against the backdrop of everyday life, Warren's brilliance stands out with echoes of Thomas Love Peacock's 1820 parodic essay *The Four Ages of Poetry* —iron, gold, silver and brass— in this case focusing on the brass age, which offers an untidy catalogue of mixed categories that includes characters, professions, cultural aspects and ways of life that the reader of the day would recognise and which Deacon looks upon with derision —sermons, actors, tie-dye business, hat business, balloon rides, lottery players, etc.:

> His wide-spread fame adorns this age of brass—
> Thrice honoured age of churches and of quacks,

> Of Scotch orations, Liston, and Almack's:
> Each summer gale or winter blast that roars,
> Puffs some new folly to thy guileless shores:
> See, graced by fashion, Petersham's cravats,
> Hoby's spring boots, and Dando's dandy hats;
> On wings of gas see aëronauts arise,
> The Captain Cookes of undiscovered skies,
> Explore new clouds, and coast around the moon,
> Till burst at once the bubble and balloon;
> See lottery crews, our national corsairs,
> Proffer their golden sheaves, but yield the tares;
> While quackery's genius, hovering o'er her isle,
> Prompts each aspiring folly with a smile. (In Strachan 1999: 76)

In this curious parodic composition, Deacon, through the veneer of a supposedly prize-winning poem, accentuates the value of Warren and his business in a context where he satirises everyday life.

3.7. Bryan Procter, the Cockney style and its Amorous Uses

Deacon masterfully covers all the romantic stereotypes in his brilliant and at the same time desperate commercial salesmanship and praise of Warren's blacking. Impersonating the Cockney poet Procter, he not only uses his pseudonym —Barry Cornwall— but creates the composition "The Girl of Saint Mary-Axe" to parody the author's well-known poem "The Girl of Provence", published in 1823.

The reader of the time would automatically associate the composition with this author associated with the so-called *Cockney School* and would also laugh at the parallels drawn between the original and the copy. Deacon adopts a pathetic tone to address the theme of unrequited love and the narrative of impossible relationships which, logically and comically, includes Warren as the subject who does not reciprocate the lady's love for him. This is the topic of impossible love, one of the manifestations of feelings frequently exploited by the romantic sentimental writers and their parodists. For example, Peacock parodied not only romantic love in general terms, but specifically Werther's prolongued sorry for his unrequited love in *Nightmare Abbey* (1818). This issue is presented in *Warreniana* with the damsel dying of love singing a hymn to Warren. Exaggerated sentimentality is used as a starting point, already announced in the opening introductory note, which describes the composition as "the melancholy catastrophe" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 80).

The most successful passages are those in which Procter in his poetic composition presents the suffering of the lady, who discovers with despair that Warren has been married for three years. To this is added an exaggerated appreciation of nature.

There is no lack of references to the waves of the sea, to pure water, or to green forests together with the mention of urban and common elements such as the cooker Warren wants to buy (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 83). Lyrical exaggeration is also deployed in the description of the lady's last moments where, before the doctor, she is able in extremis to sing a song promoting Warren's blacking: "Hymned a low tune, (sung partly through her nose),/ And WARREN's BLACKING was the theme she chose" (90). Even the little bird that mourns her death, intones the slogan about Warren: "With voice of girlish fondness seem to cry,/ 'BUY WARREN'S BLACKING!' to each passer by" (91).

3.8. Byron and his Heroes

Deacon imitates many of the elements of Byron's well-known "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (1812-1818) in "The Childe's Pilgrimage", creating a very original eulogy to Warren. This time the narrative poem created by Byron is transformed into twenty-two stanzas. Like the pilgrimage of the original hero, Childe Harold, the parody presents a tormented character, a tradesman —called Higgins— who crosses part of London westwards to discover a sacred place, the neighbourhood where Warren's company is located. The pilgrimage from the darkest, soberest, most mercantile and saddest of the area of departure contrasts with the arrival at the bright and shining destination of *N 30 The Strand*. Deacon captures the character's romantic and misanthropic musings. His preoccupations with the world and his despair are meant to mimic the deep meditations of the romantic hero, but he is nonetheless a very mundane character, afflicted by an unglamorous toothache, as he reflects from the outset:

<div align="center">

Whilome in Limehouse docks there dwelt a youth,
Childe Higgins hight, the child of curst ennui,
Despair, shame, sin, with aye assaling tooth,
Had worn his beauty to the bone. —Ah me!
A lone unloving libertine was he; (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 104)

</div>

The reason that motivates this character to make his pilgrimage is the newspaper advertisements of the time about Warren, "the Strand bard's self-eulogistic rhymes" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 105). The original satire on Byron's London life becomes in Deacon's poem a model transformed by parody, as a character is created who traverses different areas of London starting from the markets of Whitechapel and the fish or fruit stalls of Billingsgate "where dirt and dullnes dwelt" (107). These well-known places in London are charged with dark connotations. Passing by *The Exchange*, for example, the pilgrim describes "this barbaric booth, this fair of vanity" (107), with echoes of what Thackeray would later recreate in his famous novel. As he passes the Lord Mayor's official mansion, he attacks the exaggerated

affluence of the wealthy classes: "Twas here like geese, they fattened and they died" (108). The stanzas continue in this way with harsh descriptions of the St Paul's congregation, Fleet Street and the City of London. Meanwhile, the protagonist's musings become more philosophical and desperate, curiously with references to blackness, in front of what will appear as a monument among lights, the end of the pilgrimage, Warren's place of work, "the sacred shrine" (111). At this moment, the magic and exoticism of the company's name are exaggerated:

> And saw —bright glittering in the hemisphere—
> Like stars on moony nights —a sacred band
> Of words that formed the bard's cognomen— grand
> Each letter shone beneath the eye of day,
> And the proud sign-boot, by spring breezes fanned,
> Shot its deep brass reflections over the way,
> As shoots the tropic morn o'er meads of Paraguay. (111)

Arriving at this 'sacred' site, the dark character —"the lone unloving Childe" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 111)— will become radiant and his soul seems to be transformed with an inner light that equates to that of the entrepreneur's advertisements with exaggeration and amusement:

> Ere thrilled his soul with such intense delight
> As thrilled it now when Warren's magic till
> Thro' each shop-window gleamed upon his sight,
> Clear as Italian dawn that gilds the brow of night. (111)

It is the magic of parody in fact that this highly original romantic composition manages to include the name of a businessman and the strength of his advertisements and window displays. In this way, Deacon is able to recreate in a poem the main features of the success of his product. While imitating the censorship of some social aspects in Byron's time and following in the footsteps of the original, where the motif of pilgrimage already existed, the prodigious change of Deacon's protagonist is certainly acute due to the equally prodigious blacking being advertised. In the last stanza, the poetic voice disdainfully bids farewell to the powerful characters —"Ye dolphin dames", "Ye dandy drones", "Ye ball-room bards" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 112)— and snaps at them with the expected advertising spot in capital letters: "'BUY WARREN'S BLACKING', as ye hope to crown/ Your senseless souls or soulless senses with renown" (112).

3.9. Coleridge and Esoteric Dreams

The contrast between darkness and light is also maintained in the excellent parody of Coleridge's works in "The Dream, a Psychological Curiosity. By S.T.C.", in which Deacon exploits cues taken from the original "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel"

in a retelling that unravels the dream of a pugilistic combat between Satan and Warren, from which the businessman will naturally emerge victorious. The structural perfection of the parody allows us to see how Deacon, knowing the original in detail, transforms its elements with humour and wit. It consists of two distinct parts: "Advertisement to the reader" parodies Coleridge's well-known preface to the poem "Kubla Khan" (1816), satirising its opacity, its philosophical and metaphysical content, and its motif of the dream as inspiration.

In this context, Wu's exhaustive review of the myth of the dream as inspirational experience in Romantic poetry is of interest. Analysing "Religious Musings", written according to Coleridge on Christmas Eve 1794, Wu explains that the production of "Kubla Khan" was not as spontaneous as Coleridge would have us believe, but the fruit of a long creative process: "In other words, the claim to have written a poem of 420 lines on a single evening belies a more plausible truth: it was written over fifteen months and revised after its first publication over the course of six months. It was, Coleridge wanted readers to understand, a gift from God" (2005: 52). As explained by Wu, Coleridge's text was the result of a painstaking writing process and not an intuitive act inspired by dreams. Likewise, Wu insists on the demystification of the use of opium as a vehicle instigating the process of creation of "Kubla Khan": "Experts on opium addiction doubt it could have been written at once, and even Coleridge's biographers are sceptical of his claims" (53). In the same vein, Ballesteros rightly states: "The poet was interested in fostering the relationship between imagination and drugs, turning the magnificent poem into a text of almost legendary echoes" (2011: 158, my translation).[1]

In *Warreniana*, Coleridge's supposed voice is recorded, proud that Warren had counted on him for the work: "at the instigation of Mr. Warren, who was desirious of enrolling me among the number of his panegyrists" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 117). Before falling asleep, the poet reads a newspaper account of a pugilistic fight between two well-known boxers of the time: "when suddenly falling asleep over a provincial newspaper which detailed the battle between Crib and Molineaux, the thoughts of my waking hours assumed the aspect of the present poetical reverie" (117). This is accompanied by a pedantic and practically incomprehensible exercise on the ideas of Kant, the use of dreams and nonsensical reasoning on psychology, typical of the parodied Coleridge.

The chronological development of this dreamed story unfolds over twenty-four hours, from sunrise to sunset. This allows the narrative progress to follow that of the original "Kubla Khan" but with stanzas detailing the confrontation between pugilists —"The Fight"— and the development of the fight —"The Rounds". Warren's challenge to Satan and his victory through characters fighting in his name is highly original, as is the characterisation of the characters. Warren defines

121

himself as "lord of the Strand" or "the Pride of the Strand" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 127). The "old mother Nightmare life-in-death" is the creature-goblin who brings him into the presence of Satan, surrounded by darkness and power, whose authority seems undermined by the fact that he needs a shave (122). The end of the confrontation explains how all the spirits, Satan included, fall before Warren's powerful product: "The shadowless spectres leaped up with delight, And 'Buy Warren's Blacking' they shouted aloud" (127).

Deacon weaves into the sophisticated composition the contemporary taste for boxing matches and mixes it in an original way with aspects and authors of Romanticism in an alteration of Coleridge's original that is evidence of his creative imagination.

3.10. Scott and Epic Battles

Deacon begins "The Battle of Brentford Green. A Poem in Two Cantos" signed SIR W.S. with a brief explanatory introduction, typical of Sir Walter Scott, on the origin and nature of the work. This very brief opening parody describes the competition between blacking companies as a contest between warriors: "a serious affray took place between those illustrious rivals, Warren, and Day and Martin" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 163). Scott's supposed voice further confirms his sources —"I learned from the black-letter record of the fray" (163)— gives information on the date, 1818 —which he also explains at length in the endnotes— and the place, Brentford, where the pitched battle takes place.

The careful explanation also provides the keys to a burlesque epic in which Deacon recreates Scott's voice in justifying his primitivist historical method of recreating the rivalry of London businessmen in nineteenth-century London in the context of sixteenth-century Scotland:

> I have taken the liberty of adding a few particulars and persons, for the purpose of elevating my subject, a principle which induced me to raise a fictitious superstructure on the historical groundwork of Marmion. (In Strachan 1999: 163)

Deacon, well acquainted with the father of the English historical novel with whom he corresponded, exploited the knowledge that every reader of Romanticism would have of Scott and his play *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* (1808), and would therefore be able to follow the transformation into the genial parody of the medieval joust between Lord Marmion and his rival Sir Ralph de Wilton. The detail and structure of the original are turned into an imaginative burlesque epic. The composition in two Cantos follows Scott's typical patterns. Already in the first Canto, the sunrise in the middle of London is presented in an epic tone, where the focus is on the advertisement of Warren's office:

> Day set on Regent Street, Pall Mall,
> Bathed Westminster's emblazoned hall
> In one wide ruddy glow;
> Lit up the brazen Hand-in-Hand
> Fire-office, eastward of the Strand,
> And gilt, Saint George's Row;
> The Warren sign boot ers't so gay,
> Slow darkled as the darkling day,
> Less wide and less was flung; (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 163-164)

This is the tone that will govern the whole poem. The three parts of the poem are announced by black titles that imitate the gothic style of the poems in "Marmion". Everything in the poem recreates the epic atmosphere. In the first canto —"The Wassail"— a medieval banquet in Warren's office is the setting where a stranger challenges Warren for his use of competing advertisements:

> 'That thou by advertising,
> Hast dulled the Day and Martin's fame,
> Decried their worth, assoiled their name,
> And puffed, —I say it to thy shame—
> With impudence surprising'. (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 167)

Deacon indulges in a parodic recreation of a medieval hero by having Warren speak as a warrior ready to fight:

> 'I, Robert of the sable hand,
> And lord of Number Thirty, Strand,
> Obey their summons to the fight,
> And will on Monday morn, despite
> Their mercenary mob,
> Like cataract on their squadrons rush,
> With banner, broom, and blacking brush
> I will, so help me Bob!' (168)

The second Canto —"The Battle"— picks up on the fierce struggle between the two sides by deploying all the familiar epic formulas in their parodic version: the presentation of the warrior —"Well armed in stern unyielding mood,/ High o'er that Green the Warren stood" (Deacon in Strachan 1999: 169); the harangues of the narrator —"Charge, Warren, charge, yon battle Green, Glitters afar with silvery sheen" (170); the description of the battle —"Each nose is bleeding fast; Strike, strike,— their skulls like walnuts cracking, "For Day, for Martin, and his blacking,/ The battle cannot last" (171); the muse that inspires the press to tell of Warren's victory; the catalogue of the vanquished foes with Day and Martin's apprentices and their wounds; and finally the fame the battle acquired —"The sympathising hind shall tell/ Of those who fought and those who fell,/ At Brentford's grim foray" (174).

123

Deacon does not hesitate to end with a French-echoing ending —"L'Envoy to the Reader" where the bard bids farewell: "[…] nor feel I need/ to add to Warren's fame, my meed/ Of laudatory rhymes" (in Strachan 1999: 174), alluding again to the many places he will be able to visit with clean boots thanks to the familiar blacking: "The sight and sense with awe attacking, […] In boots baptized with WARREN'S BLACKING" (174).

Deacon, like Scott, recreates the existing tradition with a medieval overlay but, through parody, effectively manages to exploit the romantic elements attributable to Scott and bring them into the practical realm of the persuasive strategy of the contemporary advertisement.

4. Conclusion

As explained above, in *Warreniana* each parody has its own rhetoric and only seems to be united by a commercial purpose, in this case 'poetically promotional', emphasising the importance of Warren and his blacking. Its coherence is revealed by a more important feature, its identity and nature as yet another romantic work. While *Warreniana* follows the parameters of previous collections such as *A Pipe of Tobacco* or *Rejected Addresses*, in this one the advertisement of blacking and of its creator is elevated to such an exaggerated level that it charges the overall parody on important authors —and the most popular press of the time— with humour.

If Hazlitt critically reviews in *The Spirit of the Age* aspects of consumer culture —books, commercial blacking firms such as Warren, Turrer's or Day and Martin, bookshops, bookbinders, tailors or fashionable dress— Deacon focuses on just one of these, 'blacking', but in an exhaustive and exaggerated way that heightens its degree of humour. His use of parody does not take on the moralistic tone characteristic of the 18th century, but shows a move to a more novel and modern treatment. While generally exercising a benevolent form of parody, he also writes in the style of many of the contemporary critical and satirical attacks that Romantic authors and their works faced at the time.

This non-canonical type of Romanticism expressed in *Warreniana* takes advantage of the Romantics, extols them, but simultaneously recreates them for an intelligent, modern audience who can decode the clues and recognize their rhetorical publicity. With this original portrayal of Romanticism through the perspective of parody, Deacon and *Warreniana* become worthy of belonging to the Romantic canon.

Notes

1. "*Al poeta le interesó fomentar la relación entre la imaginación y la droga, convirtiendo el magnífico poema en un texto de ecos casi legendarios*".

Works Cited

BALLESTEROS, Antonio. 2011. *Poesía romántica inglesa. Antología bilingüe.* Madrid: Publicaciones ADE.

BATES, Brian R. 2012. *Wordsworth's Poetic Collections, Supplementary Writing and Parodic Reception.* London: Pickering and Chatto.

BAUER, N. Stephen. 1975. "Early Burlesques and Parodies of Wordsworth". *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 74 (4): 553-569.

BOTEIN, Stephen, Jack R. CENSER and Harriet RITVO. 1981. "The Periodical Press in Eighteenth-Century English and French Society: A Cross Cultural Approach". *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (3): 464-490. DOI: 10.1017/S0010417500013451

GIDDINGS, Robert. 2002. *Charles Dickens.* London: Greenwich Exchange.

HALL, John E. (ed.) 1824. *The Port Folio.* Philadelphia: Harrison Hall.

KENT, David A. and D.R. EWEN. (eds.) 1992. *Romantic Parodies, 1797-1831.* London and Toronto: Associated U.P.

LAQUEUR, Thomas. 1982. "The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV". *Journal of Modern History* 54: 417-466.

PRESBREY, Frank. (1929) 1968. *The History and Development of Advertising.* New York: Greenwood Press.

SMITH, E.A. 1994. *A Queen on Trial. The Affair of Queen Caroline.* Phoenix Mill: A. Sutton.

STEPHEN, Leslie. (ed.) 1888. *Dictionary of National Biography.* London: Smith, Elder (14): 249.

STEWART, David. 2018. "Wordsworth, Parody, Print, and Posterity, 1814-1822". *European Romantic Review* 29 (5): 601-618. DOI: 10.1080/10509585.20 18.1511984

STRACHAN, John. (ed.) 1999. *Parodies of the Romantic Age. Vol. 4. Warreniana.* London: Pickering and Chatto.

STRACHAN, John. 2007. *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period.* Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

WILLIAMS, John. 2017. "Wordsworth, Shelley, and the Riddle of Peter Bell". *Romanticism* 23 (1): 75-87.

WOOD, Marcus. 1994. *Radical Satire and Print Culture. 1790-1822.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

WU, Duncan. 2015. *30 Great Myths about the Romantics.* Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

125

INTERROGATING COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE STRANGER IN TENDAI HUCHU'S *THE MAESTRO, THE MAGISTRATE & THE MATHEMATICIAN* (2015)

CUESTIONANDO EL COSMOPOLITISMO Y EL EXTRAÑO EN *THE MAESTRO, THE MAGISTRATE & THE MATHEMATICIAN* (2015), DE TENDAI HUCHU

CRISTINA RIAÑO ALONSO
Universidad de Oviedo
rianocristina@uniovi.es

127

Abstract

This article analyses Tendai Huchu's novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* (2015) in the light of cosmopolitan theory, drawing from Ulrich Beck's conceptualisation of the cosmopolitan society and Vince Marotta's notion of the figure of the cosmopolitan stranger. Urban space theory and Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* is also discussed. This work focuses on the main characters in the novel in order to question the validity of some of the characteristics attributed to the cosmopolitan stranger, principally their ability to transcend standpoint epistemologies. It addresses the characters' common struggle to re-evaluate their identity in the new neoliberal capitalist context of Edinburgh in which they find themselves, as well as their search for belonging in the new community and the creation of a new home. The article also explores the potential of walking the city as a mechanism to reconcile identity conflicts and respond to the anxiety that the city generates —connecting internal time, memories and the body with external time and space— and contrasts it with the experience of running. It is contended that the novel resists the imposition of a definite meaning, portraying the cosmopolitan strangers as nuanced individuals, while also exploring the possibility of failure of the cosmopolitan stranger.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism, rhythm, cosmopolitan stranger, urban space, community.

Resumen

Este artículo se centra en la novela de Tendai Huchu *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* (2015), analizándola a la luz de la teoría cosmopolita, a partir de la conceptualización de la sociedad cosmopolita de Ulrich Beck, y su intersección con la figura del extranjero cosmopolita, tal como la conceptualizó Vince Marotta. También se aplica la teoría del espacio urbano, a través del *Rhythmanalysis* de Henri Lefebvre. Se centra en los personajes principales de la novela para cuestionar la validez de algunas de las características atribuidas al extraño cosmopolita, principalmente su capacidad para trascender epistemologías localizadas. También se presta atención a la lucha común de los personajes por reevaluar su identidad en el nuevo contexto capitalista neoliberal en el que se encuentran a su llegada a Edimburgo, así como a su búsqueda de pertenencia a la nueva comunidad y a la creación de un nuevo hogar. Se explora el potencial de caminar por la ciudad como mecanismo para reconciliar los conflictos de identidad y responder a la ansiedad que genera la ciudad, conectando el tiempo interior, los recuerdos y el cuerpo con el tiempo y el espacio exterior, en contraste con la experiencia de correr. Se concluye que la novela se resiste a la imposición de un significado definido, retratando a los extraños cosmopolitas como individuos matizados, al tiempo que explora la posibilidad de fracaso del extraño cosmopolita.

Palabras clave: cosmopolitismo, ritmo, extraño cosmopolita, espacio urbano, comunidad.

1. Introduction: Situating Huchu's Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism has a long tradition in Western thought, dating back to the Cynics in the fourth century BC. Diogenes the Cynic is credited with initiating the tradition: allegedly, when asked where he came from, he answered *kosmopolités*, meaning "a citizen of the world" (Nussbaum 2019: 1). Nussbaum explains that the tradition was then developed in the following century by the Stoics, who shared the Cynics' belief in the equality of all individuals on account of their capacity for moral choice (2). The concept proved its resilience in modern Western thought, especially through Immanuel Kant's writings and "vision of a cosmopolitan politics that will join all humanity under laws given not by convention and class but by free moral choice" (in Nussbaum 2019: 2). The bicentenary of Kant's book *Perpetual Peace* (1795) —which deals with the cosmopolitan obligation— in 1995, contributed to "the revival of cosmopolitanism since this work was the defining text in modern cosmopolitan thought" (Delanty 2012: 3).

Older critiques directed at this cosmopolitan outlook questioned its apparent rootlessness and contempt for the local, considering it a privileged perspective of a highly mobile elite for whom the world was their stage. However, in recent years it has been understood as an ethical and political response to contemporary challenges and as an effective critique of globalisation. Gerard Delanty argues that, in its broadest sense, "cosmopolitanism is about the extension of the moral and political horizons of people, societies, organizations and institutions" (2012: 2), and that "openness" is a defining characteristic of the cosmopolitan attitude. While it still retains that older sense of belonging and allegiance to a wider global community, there has also been a strong emphasis on the inescapability of the local in the cosmopolitan. Ulrich Beck is among the defenders of a "rooted cosmopolitanism", arguing that "there is no cosmopolitanism without localism" (2002: 19, 36). He equates this term to "ethical glocalism", emphasising that cosmopolitan ways of life and identities are characterized by being ethically and culturally global and local at the same time (2002: 19-36). As a result, cosmopolitanism has been presented as a valid framework within which to understand contemporary world society. In this vein, Delanty contends that "[c]osmopolitanism is expressed in degrees as opposed to being a condition that is either present or absent, elements of cosmopolitanism can be found in all societies" (2012: 4).

129

In the specific Scottish context, since the successful referendum on Scottish national self-rule in 1997, much of post-devolution Scottish literature has been concerned with interrogating the notion of the Scottish nation and identity. In 1998, Cristopher Whyte argued that, "[i]n the absence of an elected political authority, the task of representing the nation has been repeatedly devolved to its writers", also saying that he hoped that "the setting-up of a Scottish parliament will at last allow Scottish literature to be literature first and foremost, rather than the expression of a nationalist movement" (1998: 284). In the same vein, Berthold Schoene contended that in post-devolution Scotland, the Scottish nation should cease to identify itself "in opposition to all things English", in favour of new narratives that examine contemporary Scottish identity along the axes of "class, sexuality, gender, globalisation and the new Europe, cosmopolitanism and postcoloniality, as well as questions of ethnicity, race and postcolonial multiculturalism" (2007: 2). Indeed, Jessica Homberg-Schramm argues that following devolution in 1997, a more "self-confident Scottish identity" emerged, allowing a more "international perspective", which recognized that "[g]lobalisation, transculturalism and cosmopolitanism have widened the frame of reference for identity constructions, and a new generation of writers now comes from a mixed-raced [sic] background, while the voices of immigrant writers enrich contemporary literature" (2018: 195). It is precisely within the framework of cosmopolitanism that I examine the migrant search for belonging in Scottish society and its relation

to the ideas of cultural negotiation, social connection and the experience and performance of urban space in Tendai Huchu's novel *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* (2015). This multi-layered narrative tells the stories of three Zimbabwean migrants in the capital city of Scotland: the Mathematician, a 24 year-old man from a wealthy family doing a PhD in economics at the University of Edinburgh; the Maestro, a 27 year-old working-class clerk at Tesco; and the Magistrate, a middle-aged and middle-class man who was a magistrate in Zimbabwe. I will focus mainly on these last two characters, as they tend to exemplify throughout the novel opposed positions and reactions to the issues I will analyse.

The author of the novel under analysis, Tendai Huchu, appears to share this cosmopolitan vision. A Zimbabwean immigrant in Edinburgh himself, he was asked why he had decided to write his first novel, *The Hairdresser of Harare* (2010), once he was in the Scottish capital, because the story takes place in Zimbabwe, mostly in the capital city of Harare. To that, he answered in a very cosmopolitan way: "[m]y favorite books are often very local in their scope and concerns, yet, somehow, they manage to capture something universal about the human condition" (Jackson 2016). Raised and educated in Zimbabwe before moving to Edinburgh, Huchu also displays in his work features of the Zimbabwean literary tradition. Discussing the transnational critical reception and context in which literature from Zimbabwean writers is received, Jeanne-Marie Jackson argues that the tendency to read "for an abstract kind of literary multiplicity —the epistemological and narratological endorsement of the fluid many over the demarcated one— has in many ways come to signify the progressive cosmopolitan bona fides of literary critics" (2018: 339). In her view, this cosmopolitan disposition "has complicated the reception of even the most heralded Zimbabwean writers" (344), because important Zimbabwean novels tend to "deploy a lot of dichotomous pairs, a technique that […] may easily be read as discontinuous or reductive" within a critical context that is wary of categories and favours plurality as a representational ideal (344). Jackson thus differs from scholars such as Ranka Primorac and Robert Muponde who value precisely the "plurivocal texts" in Zimbabwean literature (2005). Jackson suggests that a technique that relies on categories is "structurally productive" (2018: 346), arguing that "categories are essential to narrative structures of debate, above and beyond the particular categories such structures may seem to entrench" (340). He concludes that,

> Departing from plurality as a post-categorical ideal, however, in favor of theorizing narrative models that rely on categories to argue, shows that dualistic structures do more than enforce social divisions. Key Zimbabwean works are agonistic in form, subjecting even plurality itself to contestation and debate. It is a tradition that privileges categorical conflict over categorical dissolution, thereby relativizing

> plurality to maintain sharper structures of disagreement. This, in turn, may offer an unlikely space for social pluralism to thrive: the agonistic novel keeps the Zimbabwean fight alive, in structural rather than obviously ideological terms. (340)

However, this approach to the formal structure of novels is not at odds with a cosmopolitan framework that takes cosmopolitanism as a project that is still being developed and that values precisely dialogue and debate. Huchu's novel is episodic in form, the views of each of the three narrators are contrasted and contested through the text, and there is a clear dichotomy between Zimbabwean traditional values and Western values, especially in the Magistrate's narrative; there is a tension that is left unresolved. Ambiguity coexists with opposition as a way of testing and bringing to the fore the problems that arise in these migrants' experience and that still need to be taken into consideration in the search for a more cosmopolitan future.

The affinities between the cosmopolitan subject, as the individual endowed with a cosmopolitan outlook or intellectual disposition, and the sociological stranger have been dissected by Vince Marotta. He further argues that a new type has emerged, the "cosmopolitan in-between stranger" (2010, 2017). The figure of the in-between stranger, as theorized by Simmel and Baumann, stands outside of both the host and their own group and this ambivalent position endows them with an epistemic distance that allows them to "adopt and therefore understand the particular view of both parties but be adequately detached from them to identify underlying common or universal interests" (Marotta 2017: Chapter 7). This epistemic distance is also characteristic of the cosmopolitan subject who, thanks to their allegiance to both global and local communities, "can adopt a universal stance while incorporating and understanding local identities", allowing them to move between particularistic and universalist perspectives without being confined to either (Chapter 7). However, Marotta questions the cosmopolitan stranger's ability to transcend standpoint epistemology because the in-between perspective itself "actually collapses into another standpoint" (2010: 118). He also stresses that cosmopolitan strangers are "not ahistorical social actors who float above those who are socially and historically located. Social actors, and their understanding of the world, are formed in the context of customs, traditions and prejudices", as well as backgrounds that would influence their interpretative processes (Marotta 2010: 118).

This idea of an ambivalent position also seems to be present in Ulrich Beck's cosmopolitan sociology, in which he identifies "dialogic imagination" as a defining characteristic of a cosmopolitan perspective. This dialogic imagination, he says, "corresponds to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience, which makes it a matter of fate to compare, reflect, criticize, understand, combine contradictory certainties" (2002: 18). Moreover, it encourages a "*higher amorality*",

understood as an ethical attitude that would deny a belief in the superiority of one's own morality (2002: 36, emphasis in original). The figure of the cosmopolitan subject has been largely theorised as gender-neutral and, thus, favouring the male gender (Nava 2002; Germann Molz 2011; Vieten 2016) —a tendency also identified in the research into the "classical stranger" (Marotta 2017: Chapter 1). Although in this article I analyse the figure of the cosmopolitan male stranger, it is important to bear in mind the gender-blind approach of these accounts. Thus, the three male characters under analysis retain gender —and sexual— privilege, while the Maestro would also enjoy racial privilege, on account of being the only white character. However, as I will discuss, Huchu subverts this character's privileges by portraying him as the most alienated character in the story.

2. The Magistrate: Finding Roots

The tension between cultures is portrayed in the novel through the experiences and feelings of the three migrants mentioned above. Starting with the Magistrate, at the beginning of the novel he is unable to see beyond the traditional hierarchies in which he was embedded back in Zimbabwe. His arrival in Edinburgh causes a disturbance of his position and status, as well as in terms of what is expected from him, both in the public and the domestic sphere. On the one hand, he used to be the head of a traditional household in Zimbabwe, under the state-organized capitalism ideal of the family wage. However, the structure of his family changes once they settle in Edinburgh. Under "disorganized" and neoliberal capitalism, the ideal is replaced by that of the two income family and his wife works long, and often double, shifts as a nurse.[1] Although he tries to find himself a job in Edinburgh that is worthy of his qualifications and experience as a magistrate in Zimbabwe, his search is unsuccessful. Thus, he is forced to alternate between periods of unemployment and periods doing menial jobs. Being the one who spends more time in the house, he is in charge of the domestic duties, and this new situation leads him to compare his life now with what he had back in Zimbabwe, and he finds himself thinking that what he misses the most is their maid. He is now in a position from which he can reflect on the poor working conditions under which this woman was working and wonders "[w]hy did I never question this before — an injustice in my own house, yet there I was dispensing justice every day while I kept a virtual slave in my own house? How could this have seemed normal?" (Huchu 2015: 8). However, even though he now understands and critically interrogates his previous attitudes, he nonetheless later on in the novel talks of the maid and "how he missed her" (68). He would like to go back to the times when the man-earned family wage was enough to raise a family, "a simpler time" where

"a man's role was clearly defined. He was the provider. Nothing else was required of him" (12). Although now he can criticize the labour conditions and gender inequality in Zimbabwean society, his perceived loss of authority and power in the family and social structure in Edinburgh makes him nevertheless long for his past life in Zimbabwe, highlighting Marotta's idea that the cosmopolitan stranger,

> may be 'homeless', but one is never socially or culturally homeless because your 'home' —in terms of your values, prejudices, ideas, traditions and customs— are always with you, even if they change. Something of the past sticks to you however hard one tries to peel it off. (2017: Conclusion)

Thus, Beck's idea of the "dialogic imagination" could here be contested. Although in a tentative manner, aware of the morally questionable ideals, working relations and conditions, the Magistrate still looks back to his way of life in Zimbabwe as the best way of living, feeling that his life in Edinburgh leaves him without his former feelings of greater purpose and authority.

The characters in this novel come from different socio-economic backgrounds, yet they all share the common struggle of re-evaluating their identity within the new neoliberal capitalist context in which they find themselves in Edinburgh. The magistrate, for example, tries to make connections between his former hometown and the new city in an effort to see and feel comfortable with Edinburgh as his new home. As Sara Ahmed argues, migration is related to the process of "finding our way" through what she calls "homing devices" (2006: 9). Interestingly, she points out that, in a way, "we learn what home means, or how we occupy space at home and as home, when we leave home" (9). She describes the experience of migration as "a process of disorientation and reorientation: as bodies 'move away' as well as 'arrive', as they reinhabit spaces" (9). As such, the Magistrate tries to emotionally map Edinburgh, establishing both a physical connection with the city —through walking around and touching its buildings and monuments— and an emotional one through the Zimbabwean music playing on his Walkman, in an effort to orient himself in the city. Walking, in this novel, is thus considered as a way of occupying and re-inhabiting the space, of orienting oneself in a new setting. In this same vein, Rebecca Solnit, in her study of the cultural history of walking, reflected on how "[t]he rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking" that connects internal time, memories and the body with external time and space (2001: Chapter 1). The Magistrate at one point stresses the difference between travelling on the bus in the city and the embodied experience of walking, reflecting on how the physicality of walking and feeling the tiredness of his body stimulates his "topographical awareness of how he was oriented on a gradient, a connectedness not possible at the same level of consciousness on the bus" (Huchu 2015: 62). The physical act of touching is also a valuable mechanism for the Magistrate to,

quite literally, feel connected to the urban space he now dwells within. As Huchu states, the Magistrate,

> was one of those peculiar people who felt the need to touch things, to feel them and connect with them physically. The wall felt rough against the palm of his hand. It had weathered rain, wind and snow for centuries; time had leeched and calcified within. It was solid, fixed in this point of space, and the act of touching it fixed him to it too. They shared roots for a brief moment in time. (93)

Through touching, a sense of his having roots in this new place arises, even if at this stage of the novel it is only for a fleeting moment. During his walks, the Magistrate plays Zimbabwean music on his Walkman, which also helps him develop an emotional connection to the city. As a meaningful cultural marker from the culture to which he feels closest,

> [t]he music on his Walkman provided his soundtrack to the city. The right song at the right moment would fix an image, an emotion, a memory in his mind for the rest of his days. He felt a flutter in his heart, a familiar feeling from long ago. He was falling in love again, falling in love with the city. (91)

Music also shields him from the noisy outside world, enabling him to focus solely on the city and its architecture. In this way, music permits a reflexive intentionality in his interaction with the urban space around him, and one that cultivates a more meaningful connection. The landmarks fixed in his memory work as cardinal points that help him orientate himself in the city, at the same time as anchoring himself to and within it. It is this dialectic between his physical body, Zimbabwean music and the urban space of Edinburgh that allows him to synthesize his own personal cartography of the city, claiming his presence in the space without leaving his past behind. Instead, his present and his past are gradually reconciled, opening up the possibility of a future for him in this new city:

> He found he could clear his mind when walking. It was as though the act of perambulation was complemented by mental wandering, so he could be in two, or more, places at the same time. His physical being tied to geography and the rules of physics, his mental side free to wander far and wide, to traverse through the past, present and future, free from limits, except the scope of his own imagination. (14)

This process could also be interpreted through the logic of the dialogic imagination that Beck outlines as it presupposes the "imagined presence of geographically distant others and worlds" (2002: 31). Significantly, Beck also identifies the actions of migrants and minorities in their struggle to belong as "major examples of dialogic imaginative ways of life and everyday cosmopolitanism" (2002: 30). Huchu shows how this character is embedded in that negotiation, resorting to meaningful signifiers of his "home" culture to provide meaning and make sense of

the otherness of this new context in which he now finds himself, trying to create an embodied connection that will make his experience in Edinburgh liveable.

However, the neoliberal culture of effort and the imperative to work to the point of exhaustion often disturbs the Magistrate's psychogeographic process. When he gets his first job, taking care of the elderly at a care home, he is often too exhausted to walk home, which forces him to take the bus. This makes him feel more alienated from the city, a feeling that is heightened by the numb state to which he succumbs in his "free" time, where he finds that instead of enjoying his time off, it has simply become a time to recharge his batteries in preparation for going to work again. In a sense, this disconnection between time and space, the emptiness that he feels and which makes him too tired to think and carry out his cartographic project, or simply to keep living under these conditions, could be seen as one of the dangers that is always threatening the individual in the work-oriented society of the west. His wife, who has been working longer than him under these conditions, does not have any time at all to walk around the city. When the Magistrate finally convinces her to go with him for a walk, she summarizes this situation saying "'[t]his is the first time I've walked down here', […] 'It's easy to get lost in work and forget you're entitled to a life in this country'" (Huchu 2015: 195). The novel underlines this tension between trying to live a life and meeting the demanding commitments of everyday work, and links it with the associated struggles that migrants endure in their struggle to belong in a new place.

Although the Magistrate finds it difficult at the beginning, by the end of the novel he has achieved a sense of belonging in the community. Early in the novel, when he is still outside of any community in Edinburgh, he finds out that his teenage daughter Chenai is pregnant. His initial reaction is blaming himself, thinking that that would not have happened back in Zimbabwe, that Zimbabwe would have been a better place to raise his daughter, that the problem is teenage boys in Western society. However, when he finally comes to terms with the idea, out of love for Chenai he tries to get to know her boyfriend and his white middle-class family. At one point, the Magistrate, his wife and Chenai go to their house to have Christmas dinner and, although previous encounters between the two families had been problematic, mainly due to cultural differences and their different approaches to their new situation and status as a soon-to-be family, by the end of the soiree the Magistrate starts to think that it feels as though "they had known each other for an eternity and this is how they'd always spent Christmas. Because that was the essence of a holiday, a familiarity rooted in old tradition" (Huchu 2015: 276). Through this old tradition, stripped of its religious meaning but retaining its social function as an event that invites communion and sharing, they connect and feel themselves at home. Time and space also feel heavy with the idea of duration and

permanence, through the imagining of the dinner as something they have been doing annually in the past, opening up the possibility that it will actually be repeated in the future. This brings to mind Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis. When he discusses the necessity of repetition for the production of rhythm, he stresses the relation between repetition and difference, recognising that repetition itself does not exclude difference but in fact creates it (2013: 16-17). As such, in this part of the story the reader feels they are witnessing the wonderful birth of a new rhythm for these two families.

There is another relevant scene where the Magistrate describes the snow outside as follows: "[l]ight snowflakes fell from the sky. They flitted round, tumbling to the earth. And when they got there, they became part of the indistinguishable white blanket, mere threads in a tapestry. If each flake was unique, that uniqueness only served to form something larger, something common" (Huchu 2015: 276). This evokes Gilroy's idea that in our cosmopolitan societies "diversity within sameness" should be acknowledged (2004: 75), and the need to adopt a vision, in the words of Ash Amin, of the "diverse and open society as a community of equals, expressing difference with a common cause" (2012: 3). In the case of the Magistrate and his expanding family —on a very small scale— people are working towards a common goal, the well-being of the new baby and the creation of a new family, even though they come from very different backgrounds and epistemological frameworks. Significantly, at the beginning of the novel the Magistrate talks about the importance of kinship terminology in Shona culture, i.e. the names express the relationship between family members and the community, and constantly adapt themselves to the changes of these organic entities. In this way, the Magistrate explains he always "stayed abreast of births and deaths in the family, each one representing a slight shifting of his position within it" (Huchu 2015: 6). In contrast, "[t]his western business of calling people by their names riled him" (10), because the Shona culture reflected the idea that "[t]he individual was the product of a community and had to be placed in relation to the next man. It was the glue that held them together, giving each value" (11). At this point in the novel, the Magistrate feels his family and community to be located "back home" in Zimbabwe. When Chenai finally gives birth to her daughter Ruvarashe, the Magistrate thinks about how, now, the name of the members of this newly-created family should change and how, symbolically, they should bury their baby's umbilical cord in the garden "binding Ruvarashe and, by extension, themselves to this place" (293). He is not forgetting about his roots but rather putting down new roots in Edinburgh. By the end of the novel, the Magistrate has adapted himself to his new life in Edinburgh, and is even able to create memories without the constant active help of Zimbabwean music,

> [t]hey took the [number] 30 [bus], got off on the South bridge and backtracked to Chambers. The Magistrate was impressed by the solid, grey architecture of the buildings on the row. But the old masonry held no memories for him and, in his despair, he failed to see that, even without music, he could and was in fact creating new ones one brick at a time. (250)

It is interesting that the Magistrate is unable to perceive this new ability that he has developed. Throughout the story, the character develops new bonds both to the city and to the people, and thus becomes part of the community. However, he is still unable to feel his roots growing: "[i]f I die here, make sure my body goes back home. You young ones can be transplanted but my roots are very deep. It's too late for us oldies" (304). This affirmation seems ironic because in fact, in this novel, the one that is unable to adapt himself to the new context, and physically dies, is not the Magistrate, but the Maestro.

It is this failure of the cosmopolitan stranger to adapt himself to the new context which the Magistrate wants to avoid for his fellow expatriates in Edinburgh by means of his leadership; a leadership which, in turn, fills him with purpose. He is persuaded to attend a meeting of the MDC —the "Movement for Democratic Change"— Edinburgh branch, created in support of the main MDC, Zimbabwe's principal opposition party. At the meeting, there are numerous displays of nationalist fervour that are parodied in the novel. For instance, they play the Zimbabwean national anthem, but they stop it at the second stanza because everyone seemed to sing different words such that "[t]he effect was mildly patriotic but mainly comical" (Huchu 2015: 129). Then, the Chairman Dzivarasekwa starts to deliver an inarticulate rambling speech about the political situation back in Zimbabwe, full of weak and incomplete arguments, with the general idea being that the only problem that Zimbabwe has is President Mugabe, and once he was gone, everything would be fine. Thus, rather than explaining the party's branch philosophy and aims, it becomes an impassioned patriotic speech, embellished with declarations such as "I am prepared to die, right here, right now, for the freedom of Zimbabwe" (130). The Magistrate gets involved in the party and later ends up being elected as the new Chairman. Significantly, Dzivarasekwa —who had started calling himself life-chairman—, after being defeated by the Magistrate, abandons the party and announces that he is going to form a splinter faction called "The Real MDC in Edinburgh". The Magistrate points out the underlying irony of this event as being that "[t]his meant the party lost a member as soon as democracy prevailed" (271), the same democracy the party was calling for in Zimbabwe. Although he was not involved in politics in his home country due to his job as a magistrate, he finds that now being the Chairman in Edinburgh restores him to his former prominent status: "[t]he Magistrate, finding himself at the

137

centre of things once more, became energized" (271). Recovering his former authority in Edinburgh boosts his self-confidence.

The turnout at the meetings of the MDC is for him "a reflection of how many people were interested in politics back home, as opposed to the day-to-day business of survival" (Huchu 2015: 271). This statement, together with the policies that the Magistrate wants to implement as the new Chairman of the party, can be interpreted in the light of Beck's rooted cosmopolitanism. It shows that the cosmopolitan stranger does not reject their local roots in the encounter with the culture of the Other. As part of the Magistrate's proposal to improve the structure of the MDC in Edinburgh he, for instance, contacts a law student at the University of Edinburgh to provide the community with a network specialized in immigration matters. He also wants to set up a free childcare group which would also teach Shona —the language of the majority in Zimbabwe— and Ndebele —the language of Zimbabwe's largest minority. By the end of the novel, he is promoted from local Chairman to international development co-ordinator to "liaise with all our branches in the diaspora" not just in the UK, but around the world (Huchu 2015: 323). He wants to help Zimbabwean migrants, on account of their shared roots and heritage, through actions directed to orienting individuals in their new setting, thereby fostering the advancement of the Zimbabwean community in the diaspora, in an attempt to make "the party socially relevant" (322). Thus, in contrast to the previous (dis)organisation of the party and its nationalist zeal, he steers it towards a more ethical and social engagement in its present context.

3. The Maestro: The Failed Quest for Eurhythmia

The Maestro, another character that has been living under this neoliberal system for a long time, feels completely alienated from the city. A quixotic character, unable to orient himself in the city, he secludes himself in his apartment trying to find refuge within books without any success. His feelings of alienation from the present and the urban space are embodied in his way of experiencing the city: in contrast to the Magistrate's reflective walks, he runs through the city looking for self-obliteration. There is one particular passage in the novel that lacks full stops and is written as a succession of repetitive structures, the narrative mirroring the Maestro's agitation. As Fatima Fiona Moolla contends, by linking this white Zimbabwean to Africa in this passage through the symbol of the drum —which is considered the most powerful symbol of "traditional black Africa"— and the shackles —a symbol of trans-Atlantic slavery—, Huchu plays with the motif of routes and roots that appears in much of African diasporic literature, making the

Maestro the recipient of the ancestral call of the African motherland unlike any of the black Zimbabweans in the novel (2018: 14):

> He carried on, one foot after the other, just running, leaving everything behind, edging closer to the zone, his eyes no longer making out distinct shapes or objects, light scattering on his retina, the green of the plants, the black of the track, the brown canal, the blue sky, no objects but colours running in parallel lanes as the world was pushed back behind him to the past, as he was running west, away from the sunrise, fleeing the new day, outside of himself, reaching a state of grace where the only thing that mattered was movement, pushing his body to its physiological limits, and then a thud, and another, and another, the beating of an ancient drum going faster and faster, a loud percussion that pierced through the whooshing and the swirling of the atmosphere, louder and louder, this primitive drum that never broke rhythm only getting louder and stronger, hypnotic in its intonation of sounds from the savannah, the song of the hunter and the hunted, the powerful melody of life and death that plays on and on until he was no longer there, broken free from the shackles of reality into a running induced nirvana, becoming not himself but pure movement. (Huchu 2015: 139-140)

In contrast to the reflexive or even meditative state that the Magistrate reaches during his walks, here the Maestro has "the mind on autopilot" (Huchu 2015: 140), and his rapid ceaseless pace does not foster self-reflection. Running does not allow him to pause, preventing him from physically feeling himself as a part of the city: he cannot touch and symbolically establish that close connection that the Magistrate develops in his walks. He is even unable to see, to notice the shapes of the buildings; everything around him loses its singularity and the urban space takes on an indeterminate form. In the novel, Edinburgh, like any other city, is subjected to the interaction of several rhythms, and it is from this that the particular polyrhythm of the city arises. In Lefebvre's study of rhythms, he starts with the basic premise that "[e]verywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm" (2013: 25), and posits repetition as a necessary condition for rhythm, stating that there is "[n]o rhythm without repetition in time and space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without measure" (16, emphasis in original). He points to the relation between cyclical repetition and linear repetition that constantly interfere with each other in reality. Cyclical repetition originates in the cosmic, in nature, whereas the linear is found in social practice (18). As Lefebvre contends, the cyclical and the linear "exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another; each one makes itself and is made a measuring measure" (18). The body is placed at the centre; it is where social rhythms come into contact with bodily rhythms. In fact, it is from their own body that an individual learns rhythm "in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms", their body acting as a "metronome" (29). Unlike the Magistrate, who strives towards eurhythmia, a harmonious connection on his

walks between his bodily rhythms and the social rhythms of the city, the Maestro is unable to achieve an embodied experience of the rhythms of the city. He finds his job at Tesco draining and alienating: he describes the mechanical rhythm of his work, where time and space are devoid of meaning and sense of duration, and everything is ready to be consumed: "[t]ime was warped in this place, bent, buckled, packaged into little packets called clocking in and clocking out. Everything had a price tag, a value assigned to it by some unseen authority" (Huchu 2015: 46). The building looks like a spaceship: "[e]verything about it felt as though it could just take off at any moment, nothing was permanent, nothing was fixed, it was just a space, a form that could be taken apart and reassembled anywhere else —transient, with no pretence of an eye on eternity" (47).

The linear mechanical rhythm that predominates in the Maestro's workplace ends up imposing itself on and engulfing his life. In fact, Lefebvre does not consider mechanical rhythm to be a rhythm, but just movement. As he argues, "[w]e easily confuse rhythm with movement" (2013: 15). Rhythm presupposes repetition but, as he points out, a repetition that introduces difference, a "qualified duration" (86). Thus, "only a non-mechanical movement can have rhythm" (87). Mechanical movements, with their mere monotonous repetition and accumulation of the same, he confines to the "domain of the quantitative, abstractly detached from quality" (87). The movement, devoid of rhythm, that the Maestro experiences at work intrudes and in fact imposes itself on his body, preventing him from tuning himself to the social rhythm of the city and inducing in him a state of arrhythmia. Untethered from the city, he becomes "pure movement" (Huchu 2015: 140). It should also be noted that the ways each character has of experiencing the city are also related to their socioeconomic position. The Maestro lives in one of the three identical twelve-storey blocks in a low-rent area in Edinburgh, the Calders. This stands in stark contrast to where the Magistrate lives, in Craigmillar Castle Road, close to Craigmillar Castle and Holyrood Park, and closer too to the city centre than the Calders. Thus, whereas on his walks the Magistrate encounters historical buildings, which give him a sense of permanence and duration, the Maestro encounters, once again, in the space around him that sense of repetition, of the same, of futility. However, with his low wage he cannot afford to move, and Huchu tells the reader that "[t]hough the Maestro was grateful for the comforts and protection of the city, he wasn't ready to give in to its seduction and charms, and to love it" (2015: 136).

His detachment from the city mirrors his inability to establish any meaningful social connections, his failure to belong to or in any community. As Gerard Delanty asserts, the idea of rooted cosmopolitanism also implies that there is not "a rejection of real communities" (2012: 2). Although the age we presently live in

and its developments —globalisation, migration, cosmopolitanism, postmodernism, the Internet— seem to have brought about the demise of the idea of community, Delanty argues that, conversely, "community has a contemporary resonance in the current social and political situation, which appears to have produced a worldwide search for roots, identity and aspirations for belonging" (2010: x). Thus, he finds that "the idea of community is related to the search for belonging in the insecure conditions of modern society" (2010: x). Along these same lines, Scott Lyall finds that community "might be more a metaphysics of striving for home, rather than the actuality, or even the possibility, of arrival" (2016: vii). As such, the search for a community is a universal human aspiration that is heightened in our present context, although it entails a particular set of difficulties in the case of migrants who are also so culturally distant from the new community to which they aspire to belong. The Maestro finds himself unable to connect with people, even in fleeting social exchanges. At work, he finds people "zombified" by the consumerist culture. Although he would like to interact with people during his daily commute, he finds that they resemble islands that he is unable to reach, and his use of very physical metaphors highlights what seems to him an impassable social distance:

> [a]lmost everyone else on board was reading the Metro or had created a wall of sound around themselves with headphones. That was the pretence of the Edinburgh bus, that everyone was an island unto themselves and the enforced proximity was a minor inconvenience to be tactfully ignored by way of averted eyes and silence, except for the odd, Excuse me, I need to get off. (Huchu 2015: 205)

This alienation from the rest of the people and the consequent inability to find a sense of community in Edinburgh causes him to experience a profound loneliness. He only has one friend, Tatyana —herself an immigrant from Poland—, and she is the only person that speaks to the Maestro. As I have already mentioned, he is determined to find a solution to his lack of bonds with others in Edinburgh by immersing himself in books, thinking that "[i]f he devoted himself wholeheartedly to literature and gave up his soul to it, then he hoped that at the end of his inquiry he would have glimpsed the secret to life itself" (162). His choice of words, that he should "give up" his soul, points to the disembodied and socially alienating process that he is about to embark on, which stands in stark contrast to the embodied and social quest that the Magistrate has begun.

In the last section narrated by the Maestro, he talks about his final quest. As he explains it, "I went on a journey of discovery, trying to find the meaning of life" (Huchu 2015: 268). This journey takes him out of his apartment and to the city, where he starts to wander around, although "it was not so much walking as staggering, dragging himself step by step" (256). This is not a restorative kind of walk, it does not allow him to heal and reconcile himself with the city. It does not even look like the

movement of a living creature, but of a dying one. In fact, he devotes most of his time to visiting cemeteries, sleeping rough in parks around the city. Although now he moves around the city centre, as the Magistrate does on his walks, the Maestro's depiction of the city remains very different. As a profoundly disembodied individual, he does not feel himself embedded in the social rhythms of the city and thus the "buildings became ethereal shadows. They could have been from the past or the future, for time itself blurred in the thickness of the fog. The reality around him seemed fragile" (261). Just like his life, his narrative ends in an abrupt manner. The reader actually learns of his death from the rest of the characters in the novel. They do not know him; they have indeed never met. But being from Zimbabwe too, they take up the task of trying to find his family back "home". Their search, however, is not successful, they cannot locate any of his relatives. Thus, they decide to collect money among from the Zimbabwean community in Edinburgh in order to pay for his funeral, and they also appeal to the community to attend the rite. His death also reveals that the Maestro is, in fact, white, breaking with the over-representation and identification of racialized bodies as sociological strangers. The novel seems to suggest that the Maestro's strangeness comes from his cultural difference, while also pointing to the alienating conditions of contemporary society that posit the Maestro's struggle as a shared and universal human experience. Moreover, being white is not a privilege for the Maestro, as it contributes to his feelings of alienation. The Magistrate finds security in his attachment to the Zimbabwean culture and nation and, indeed, he uses aspects of his culture to try and connect with the new national setting; and, as I will discuss, the Mathematician feels comfortable in Edinburgh as a member of the Afropolitan elite. However, the Maestro does not feel that he belongs to either the Scottish/British community from which he feels culturally distant or to the predominantly black Zimbabwean community.[2]

4. The Mathematician: A Neoliberal Cosmopolitan

We are introduced to the Mathematician through the description of his room, where a poster of Adam Smith hangs on the wall. This reference is of crucial importance if we consider Nussbaum's analysis of Smith's writings, which helps illustrate some of this character's most defining personality traits. Nussbaum traces the influence of the Cynic and Stoic cosmopolitan tradition in the ideas of Adam Smith and argues that he continues to adopt a "subtle Stoic machismo, the machismo of self-command and the contempt of adversity" (2019: 197). From the beginning, we see the Mathematician's attempts to discipline his body. For instance, he does not use an alarm clock as he has trained his body to know when to rise. He also forces himself to eat at particular times, his mind and bodily

functions and rhythms being subject to the imperative of the clock, "[h]is stomach grumbles, he won't eat till midday though. He wants to have full mastery of his body, of every thought and emotion that comes from it" (Huchu 2015: 23). His detachment from his natural rhythms and submission to social rhythms (Lefebvre 2013) is also reflected in his experience of the city. Contrary to the Maestro, who struggles against the imposition of social rhythms on his bodily rhythms, the Mathematician surrenders to them completely due to his absolute commitment to succeed in this neoliberal society. He also always drives in the city —an individualistic activity that separates him from the rest of society, protected in the private space of his car—, moving between his workplace, Edinburgh University, his flat and different cafés and pubs; his leisure time is strongly linked to consumer activities. Inside his flat, the Mathematician spends his time playing a video game called Pro Evo. Immersed in that disembodied virtual reality, he concludes that "[t]here's no need to play real football, the experience is packaged for him in the comfort of his living room. He doesn't even need to break a sweat for it" (Huchu 2015: 77). He presents himself as a profoundly detached individual that scolds his mates for their idealisation and nostalgia of the past but cannot see his own idealisation of the present. He conceives the present as a time of opportunities for everyone who, like him, works hard enough, believing in the fallacy of neoliberal meritocracy. He regards the present reality as severed from the past, oblivious to the inherited structural and economic inequalities upon which our societies are constructed, failing to consider that coming from a wealthy and educated family has granted him the opportunities he enjoys. In his research, the Mathematician can only see numbers and decontextualized facts, to the point that he even calls himself a "human calculator" unable to see patterns and connections beyond the data he studies (81). His inability to link facts and give them a narrative is also reflected in his contempt for literature, which is in stark contrast to the Maestro's view: while the latter seeks an absolute truth in books, the Mathematician thinks that novels are "a waste of time" and, interestingly, in what is an intratextual reference to the Maestro, he mentions that the last one he tried was Don Quixote, "which was forced on me in my lit class in high school. I didn't even bother; I just bought the video and even that was boring. […] Give me numbers, \$, £, symbols" (32).

The Mathematician endorses that neoliberal cosmopolitanism of mobile elites or elite Afropolitanism which in the novel also stands as an unliveable ideal.[3] He ends up being murdered by Alfonso, his former security guard back in Zimbabwe, who was also living in Edinburgh while secretly working for the Mugabe regime. By chance, Alfonso discovers that the Mathematician was using for his thesis on "The Economic Incentives for Sustaining Temporary Hyperinflationary Environments" the unpublished research of a little-known Angolan economist, Chilala dos Santos Lima Climente, murdered in 1999. Climente was interested in corruption "because

143

he saw it not as the cause of Africa's problems, but merely the symptom of a more fundamental illness" (Huchu 2015: 179), and wrote about the winners of Angola's hyperinflationary period, how investing in hyperinflationary economics, though risky, can be a "highly rewarding investment strategy for people in positions of power, thereby creating a positive feedback loop rewarding negative governance, prolonging crisis" (86). Fearing that the Mathematician would use Climente's findings to investigate and analyse the situation in Zimbabwe, Alfonso murders him and steals his unfinished thesis and Climente's papers. In an ironic twist, he is symbolically murdered by the past he despises as useless and invaluable and because of the connections that he could make between pure facts and actual reality. His lasts feelings and thoughts are crowded with images of the Pac-Man ghost —a game he used to love in his teenage years— which are inserted in the narrative.

5. Conclusion

Following Beck's argument for the anti-essentialist stand of cosmopolitanism (2002: 37), it has been demonstrated that the characters in this novel appear as complex human beings, full of ambivalence and apparently competing internal forces. Yet they do not reach an in-between epistemology, as the Magistrate's constant re-negotiation and re-evaluation of meaning from an ambivalent position illustrates. The Mathematician, who seems to have surrendered himself to the rhythms and imperatives of neoliberal principles, also fails to live by these principles. This character also shows how some cosmopolitan strangers embody their contradictions, not always taking an ethical or moral course of action, but rather the most convenient one. Following Delanty's and Lyall's ideas, I have argued that the characters in *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician* are embedded in an active open-ended process of searching and striving for home in the host society of Edinburgh. These characters attempt and often fail to inscribe themselves in the spatial and social weave of the community. The Maestro foregrounds the possibility of the failure of this cosmopolitan ideal. His experiences are also representative of a wider experience in Western societies: the sense of dislocation, the struggle to belong, and being burnt out by demanding and discriminatory work conditions. Coming from a different social environment, cultural differences can significantly hinder these three characters' process of cementing strong ties in a host community. The lines from the poem "Scotland" by the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid that Tendai Huchu chooses as the opening epigraph to his novel capture the essence of the text: exploring the particular experiences of migrants in Scotland, while inscribing them into the wider history of the nation, considering their particular search for belonging as part of a universal quest characteristic of our contemporary globalized world.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. I am applying here Nancy Fraser's analysis. She explains this shift from state-organized capitalism and the disorganized ideals of neoliberal capitalism in her chapter "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History". She argues that the ideal of the family wage included "a masculinist romance of the free, unencumbered, self-fashioning individual" (2013: 220). The shift to the ideal of the two-earner family produced "a new romance of female advancement and gender justice" (220). However, she contends that the reality that underlies it "is depressed wage levels, decreased job security, declining living standards, a steep rise in the number of hours worked for wages per household, exacerbation of the double shift —now often a triple or quadruple shift— and a rise in female-headed households" (220).

2. This is hinted in the novel in the initial reactions to his death: the Magistrate, after learning that the Maestro is white, asks again if he is really Zimbabwean. Alfonso believes "it's a trap": "[o]ne day you're minding your own business, paying your taxes, and the next thing you know, they've thrown a dead white guy on your doorstep" (Huchu 2015: 297), and the Mathematician's Zimbabwean friend calls him "a random white guy" (301).

3. The term Afropolitanism was popularized by Taiye Selasi in her 2005 essay "Bye-Bye Babar" —where the Afropolitan is defined as an identity category of the "Africans of the world"—, opening an ongoing debate in which the term has been equally celebrated and contested. As Durán-Almarza, Kabid and Rodríguez González argue, over the past few years the term "has become inevitably linked to discussions about what it means to be young, mobile and African in the contemporary world" (2019: 2). Most of the arguments put forward by its detractors are related precisely to "the commodification to which the term has recently been subjected, its association with the West, or the exclusion of ordinary African people and realities it seems to imply" (Bastida-Rodríguez 2019: 24).

145

Works Cited

Aɴᴍᴇᴅ, Sara. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology*. Durham and London: Duke U.P.

Aᴍɪɴ, Ash. 2012. *Land of Strangers*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.

Bᴀsᴛɪᴅᴀ-Rᴏᴅʀíɢᴜᴇᴢ, Patricia. 2019. "Afropolitan in their Own Way? Writing and Self-identification in Aminatta Forna and Chika Unigwe". In Durán-Almarza, Emilia María,

Ananya Jahanara Kabid and Carla Rodríguez González (eds.): 23-37.

Beck, Ulrich. 2002. "The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies". *Theory, Culture & Society* 1-2(19):17-44. DOI:10.1177/026327640201900101

Delanty, Gerard. 2010. *Community*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Delanty, Gerard. 2012. "Introduction. The Emerging Field of Cosmopolitan Studies". In Delanty, Gerard (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies*. Oxon: Routledge: 1-8.

Durán-Almarza, Emilia María, Ananya Jahanara Kabid and Carla Rodríguez González. (eds.) 2019. *Debating the Afropolitan*. London and New York: Routledge.

Durán-Almarza, Emilia María, Ananya Jahanara Kabid and Carla Rodríguez González. 2019. "Introduction: Debating the Afropolitan". In Durán-Almarza, Emilia María, Ananya Jahanara Kabid and Carla Rodríguez González (eds.): 1-8.

Fraser, Nancy. 2013. *Fortunes of Feminism. From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*. London, New York: Verso.

Germann Molz, Jennie. 2011. "Cosmopolitanism and Consumption". In Rovisco, Maria and Magdalena Nowicka (eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Gilroy, Paul. 2004. *After Empire. Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Homberg-Schramm, Jessica. 2018. "*Colonised by Wankers*". *Postcolonialism and Contemporary Scottish Fiction*. Cologne: Modern Academic Publishing.

Huchu, Tendai. 2015. *The Maestro, The Magistrate & The Mathematician*. Cardigan: Parthian.

Jackson, Jeanne-Marie. 2016. "An Interview with Tendai Huchu". <http://www.bookslut.com/features/2016_03_021392.php>. Accessed November 24, 2020.

Jackson, Jeanne-Marie. 2018. "Plurality in Question: Zimbabwe and the Agonistic African Novel". *Novel: A Forum of Fiction* 2 (51): 339-361. DOI: 10.1215/00295132-6846192

Lefebvre, Henri. 2013. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Lyall, Scott. 2016. "Preface: In Search of Community". In Lyall, Scott (ed.) *Community in Modern Scottish Literature*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, Rodopi: vii-xiii.

Marotta, Vince. 2010. "The Cosmopolitan Stranger". In van Hooft, Stan and Wim Vandekerckhove (eds.) *Questioning Cosmopolitanism*. Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York: Springer: 105-120.

Marotta, Vince. 2017. *Theories of the Stranger. Debates on Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Cross-Cultural Encounters*, eBook. Oxon: Routledge.

Moolla, Fatima Fiona. 2018. "Travelling Home: Diasporic Dis-locations of Space and Place in Tendai's Huchu's *The Maestro, The Magistrate and the Mathematician*". *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 2 (56): 1-18. DOI: 10.1177/0021989418802609

Nava, Mica. 2002. "Cosmopolitan Modernity: Everyday Imaginaries and the Register of Difference". *Theory, Culture & Society* 1-2 (19): 81-99. DOI: 10.1177/026327640201900104

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2019. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition. A Noble but Flawed Ideal*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard U.P.

Primorac, Ranca and Robert Muponde. 2005. "Introduction: Writing Against Blindness". Primorac, Ranca and Robert Muponde (eds.) *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*, eBook. Zimbabwe: Weaver Press.

Schoene, Berthold. 2007. "Introduction: Post-Devolution Scottish Writing". In Schoene, Berthold (ed.) *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P.: 1-4.

Selasi, Taiye. 2005. "Bye-Bye Babar". *The Lip Magazine* (March 3). <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76>. Accessed November 4, 2020.

Solnit, Rebecca. 2001. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking,* eBook. New York, London, Auckland,

146

Vᴉᴇᴛᴇɴ, Ulrike M. 2016. *Gender and Cosmopolitanism in Europe: A Feminist Perspective,* eBook. London and New York: Routledge.

Wʜʏᴛᴇ, Cristopher. 1998. "Masculinities in Contemporary Scottish Fiction". *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 3 (34): 274-285. DOI: 10.1093/fmls/XXXIV.3.274

147

HILARY MANTEL'S RE-APPROPRIATION OF WHIG HISTORIOGRAPHY: A READING OF THE *WOLF HALL* TRILOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF BREXIT

LA REAPROPIACIÓN DE LA HISTORIOGRAFÍA WHIG POR PARTE DE HILARY MANTEL: UNA LECTURA DE LA TRILOGÍA DE TOMÁS CROMWELL EN EL CONTEXTO DEL BREXIT

JOSÉ I. PRIETO-ARRANZ
Universitat de les Illes Balears
jose-igor.prieto@uib.es

Abstract

This article analyses Hilary Mantel's critically-acclaimed Tudor novel series (*Wolf Hall*, 2009; *Bring Up the Bodies*, 2012; *The Mirror & the Light*, 2020) in the context of Brexit. Even though Mantel has dismissed any possible analogy between the Reformation and Brexit, this research builds on the hypothesis that the past and the present interact in historical fiction, a genre that has contributed to both feeding and questioning the myths upon which nations are constructed. More specifically, I focus on the trilogy's protagonist, Thomas Cromwell, to argue that he is presented as the architect of what Whig historiography has understood as the pillars of Englishness (and, by extension, Britishness), often evoked in the discursive context surrounding Brexit. However, although the narrative's portrayal of Cromwell undoubtedly fosters the reader's sympathy with the character, a deeper analysis of Mantel's characterisation and narrative techniques —and, more specifically, Cromwell's status as a flawed human being presented through the lens of what turns out to be an unreliable narrator— suggests that Mantel's portrayal of Cromwell cannot be reduced to a simple vindication of the Whiggish notion of Englishness, subtly questioning instead the myths upon which the latter is built.

Keywords: Brexit, Hilary Mantel, historical fiction, Thomas Cromwell, Whig historiography.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la aclamada trilogía de novelas sobre Tomás Cromwell (*Wolf Hall*, 2009; *Bring Up the Bodies*, 2012; *The Mirror & the Light*, 2020) en el contexto del *Brexit*. Aunque Mantel ha rechazado cualquier analogía entre la Reforma y el *Brexit*, este trabajo parte de la hipótesis de que pasado y presente interactúan en la ficción histórica, género que ha contribuido tanto a alimentar como a cuestionar los mitos sobre los que se construyen las naciones. Más concretamente, el artículo se centra en el protagonista de la trilogía, Thomas Cromwell, para argumentar que es presentado como el arquitecto de lo que la historiografía Whig ha identificado como los pilares de la identidad nacional inglesa (y, por ende, británica), frecuentemente evocados en el contexto discursivo del *Brexit*. Sin embargo, aunque el retrato que la narración hace de Cromwell indudablemente fomenta la simpatía del lector hacia el personaje, un análisis más profundo de la caracterización y técnicas narrativas de Mantel —y, más específicamente, el estatus de Cromwell como un ser humano imperfecto presentado a través de los ojos del que se acaba revelando como un narrador no fiable— sugiere que el retrato que Mantel hace de Cromwell no es una simple defensa del concepto Whig de 'inglesidad', sino que cuestiona sutilmente los mitos sobre los que este se ha construido.

Palabras clave: Brexit, Hilary Mantel, historiografía Whig, novela histórica, Thomas Cromwell.

1. Introduction

Historical fiction currently attracts unprecedented critical acclaim in Britain, and the success of Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* (2009) is good evidence of this. Postmodern history, which drew attention to history's narrative nature and the subsequent difficulty of neatly separating historical discourse from fiction (see for example White 1973), played a fundamental role in bringing historical fiction back to the mainstream, as it greatly inspired what would eventually become two highly influential subgenres, namely "recovered histories" —"premised on a tension between the official record as recorded by canonical history […] and other accounts" (Chadwick 2020: 169)— and what Hutcheon famously called "historiographic metafiction" (1988).

Postmodernism very much revolved around a sense of scepticism about the so-called grand narratives, including history itself, casting doubt on the extent to which it is possible to have knowledge of the past. Intimately related to postmodern postulates, historiographic metafiction "refutes the natural or common sense methods of distinguishing between historical fact and fiction" (Hutcheon 1988:

93). This subgenre was used to denounce hegemonic narratives that have traditionally monopolised historical "truth", combining traditional historical fiction strategies with metafiction (thus drawing attention to its own fictional nature). It should be noted, however, that, regardless of the undeniable impact of historiographic metafiction, other forms of self-reflexive historical fiction have since appeared, including what critics are beginning to refer to as 'neo-historical fiction', characterised "by a curiosity about the temporal otherness of the past and about the different ways in which the past was experienced when it was still the present" which does not, however, share the quintessentially postmodern questioning of the possibility of accessing the past (Johnson 2017: 546-547). Mantel has discussed what historical fiction writing is for her, having stated that she clearly focuses on whatever can be recovered from the past, rejoicing in the creative possibilities she sees in the gaps and incoherencies in the historical records (Simpson 2015).

The first in a trilogy of novels, *Wolf Hall* is a fictionalisation of the rise to prominence of a lawyer of obscure origin who would eventually become Henry VIII's chief councillor: Thomas Cromwell (1485-1540). It covers his life from 1500 up to the execution of Thomas More in 1535. Its sequel, *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), covers the period between September 1535 and the summer of 1536, when, upon the execution of Anne Boleyn, Cromwell is granted a barony. The final instalment of the trilogy, *The Mirror & the Light* (2020), spans the last four years of Cromwell's life, up to his execution.

Fuelled by the trilogy's success (including two Booker Prize wins), scholarship has increasingly turned to Mantel's oeuvre, even if she "still awaits discovery for literary criticism and narratology" (Kukkonen 2018: 974). Researchers have so far inquired into the "spectral" quality (Arnold 2016) that permeates much of her "super-realist" fiction (Knox 2010), perhaps best seen in her 2005 novel *Beyond Black* (Stewart 2009). Chadwick (2020) has recently provided an insightful analysis of Mantel's first foray into historical fiction, *A Place of Greater Safety* (1992),[1] arguing that, while clearly inspired by both recovered lives and historiographic metafiction, this novel is not exactly postmodern. This seems to corroborate what Hart detects in another of Mantel's novels, *Fludd* (1989), namely "a nostalgia for a 'grand narrative' […] whose unifying and meaning-making power is no longer feasible" (Hart 2019: 87).

Research on the Cromwell trilogy has not yet addressed the trilogy's third and final novel, with the notable exception of Kenny (2022), who shows how Cromwell's characterisation as a lawyer in the trilogy is influenced by philosophical pragmatism. Among the rest of the scholarly works available, Alghamdi (2018) claims that Mantel's Thomas Cromwell novels have greatly contributed to the

rehabilitation of historical fiction, largely thanks to their extreme originality, even if traces of Walter Scott, Philippa Gregory and even the Gothic novel can be found in them (Griffin 2019: 87; Gačnik 2020). Mantel's linguistic strategies and her use of intertextuality have also been studied as means through which accuracy and authenticity (verisimilitude) are achieved in *Wolf Hall* (Stocker 2012; Saxton 2020). So far, the most exhaustive analysis of the character of Thomas Cromwell and the narrative technique used by Mantel in the trilogy has been provided by Johnston (2017), although, again, this work pre-dates *The Mirror & the Light*, with important consequences as far as the author's narrative technique is concerned, as shall be seen below.

This article aims at exploring the use Mantel makes of Whig historiography in her *Wolf Hall* trilogy. Focusing on characterisation and narrative technique, I will argue that the narrative, far from being a vindication of Whiggism's main tenets, invites profound reflections on identity in twenty-first-century Britain. In doing this I am filling a research gap as, even if scholarship has highlighted that Mantel's works have characteristically explored issues of both individual and collective identity (Knox 2010: 321), to my knowledge researchers have not yet specifically addressed this in the Thomas Cromwell trilogy. In this regard, Baker (2015) attempts to explore the concept of nation in *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*. Her research, however, only explores the extent to which England could be considered a nation in Henry VIII's reign, it does not mention Whiggism and it pre-dates both the Brexit referendum and —crucially— the publication of the trilogy's final instalment, in which the impact of the author's narrative technique can be fully appreciated. Similarly, Griffin does hint that the turbulent England depicted in Mantel's novels remarkably resembles that of 2016 (2019: 87-88). However, Griffin falls short of a full explanation as to how this parallel comes into effect. Last but not least, and as seen above, although previous research has already analysed characterisation and narrative technique, it has tackled both mostly separately, and definitely not in connection with the use of Whiggism in the novels.

The starting point in my analysis is a crucial tenet of historical fiction research: historical novels draw a parallel between the past and the present (Ciplijauskaité 1981: 12-16). More specifically, this genre, whose birth Lukács linked to periods of critical historical transformation (1963: 19-30), is strongly connected to national identity: historical discourse has traditionally presented the nation as a "living" entity rooted in an almost mythical past (Anderson 1991), and the novel has contributed to both feeding and questioning such mythical narratives by featuring national icons as characters and setting their plots in "foundational" times (Brantly 2017: 136). In turn, this points to a synecdochical relationship between the historical fiction hero and the nation (Lukács 1963: 35).

In *Wolf Hall*, this foundational time is Henry VIII's reign, which saw the birth of an independent Church of England, one of the four pillars of Englishness (crown, parliament, constitution and the Protestant church), according to Whig historiography (Kumar 2001: 45). And the present it was written in is no other than that leading to, and immediately following, Britain's 2016 Brexit Referendum, in the discursive context of which the so-called pillars of Englishness have been absolutely central.

Whig historiography has presented Britain as a nation teleologically oriented to increased "liberty, parliamentary rule and religious toleration" (Wilson and Ashplant 1988: 2), invariably siding with Protestants and Whigs (McClay 2011: 48-49), and leaving an indelible trace in the popular imagination. Crucially, this teleological interpretation has identified Henry VIII's reign as a foundational time since "[t]he English Reformation […] gave the liberating kick that prepared the way for the Whig revolution" (Knox Beran 2016). As presented in the rhetoric of former PM Theresa May, Brexit is but the culmination of this long fight for freedom, ushering in "great national change" (Marlow-Stevens and Hayton 2021: 883). May's rhetoric was nothing but a continuation of Britain's official political discourse, as the relationship between Britain and the European Union has always been fraught with difficulties arising from the Whig-induced exceptionalist interpretation of the task the country should perform in Europe (Daddow 2015). Indeed, Post-WWII Britain's (and especially England's) national identity issues had already led to a European Community membership referendum held as early as 1975, preceded by intense parliamentary debate in which Britain's traditions of both "internationalism" (presenting the country as having a global, not exclusively European vocation) and parliamentary democracy and sovereignty featured prominently as threatened by EC membership (Ludlow 2015: 24-26).

English national identity discourses are central to this discussion as they lie at the core of the public debate on Britain's EU membership: Euroscepticism was higher in England than elsewhere in the UK before the 2016 referendum (Kenny 2015: 36) and most of those identifying exclusively as English or more English than British voted Leave (Virdee and McGeever 2018: 1809). Clearly feeding on the tenets of Whig historiography, such discourses have opposed a liberty-loving England to Brussels (Kenny 2015: 44), presented as severely limiting Britain's traditionally international vocation and, most importantly, its links to the 'Anglosphere', as Britain's former Dominions are referred to by the Eurosceptic right (Wellings and Baxendale 2015).

At all events, the fact that *Vote Leave* (the referendum campaign favouring Brexit backed by mostly Conservative leaders including Boris Johnson) chose "Let's take back control" as their slogan, presenting the issue at stake as a battle for Britain's

democracy and parliamentary sovereignty (Virdee and McGeever 2018: 1804), is in itself good evidence of the extent to which Whig historiography has influenced the views of British voters across the political spectrum, especially among the older generations. Not less importantly, it also suggests that the discourse of Brexit clearly transcends the purely political sphere, having dominated British public opinion largely thanks to the disseminating role played by both the traditional press (which the British still rely on at times perceived as especially transcendent) and online media. A "compelling narrative" was thus created, alerting to the dangers of uncontrolled immigration, and drawing on a national identity largely infused by the Whiggish "self-representation of Britain (meaning, more often than not, England) as *the* ideally Liberal and democratic nation first shaped by the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution and later framed by Victorian values" whose survival crucially depends on its independence from freedom-restraining Brussels (Maccaferri 2019: 391-392, 395, emphasis in original).

Interestingly, Mantel has openly dismissed any possible analogy between the Reformation and Brexit: "What foreign policy in the 1530s was trying to do was not come out of Europe but go into a new kind of Europe" (in "BBC Reith Lectures. The Iron Maiden" 2017). While this suggests that Mantel values the Reformation and Brexit very differently —Mantel is a 'Remainer' ("Arts Figures Backing EU Remain Campaign" 2016)— it does not preclude the possibility of reading this narrative against the background provided by Brexit. This is exactly the aim of this article, in which I will argue that while the trilogy's main character, Thomas Cromwell, is presented as the architect of at least some of the pillars of Englishness, a deeper analysis of the character's traits and Mantel's narrative technique —especially her use of an increasingly evident unreliable narrator— suggests that this portrayal of Cromwell goes well beyond a mere rehabilitation of this historical figure —an aim Mantel has herself denied (2012).

2. Becoming Acquainted with Mantel's Thomas Cromwell

Unlike most other fictional accounts of Henrician England, Mantel's trilogy focuses on Thomas Cromwell. Inspired by sympathetic sources (Arias 2014), this Cromwell is very different from the ruthless, amoral character in previous representations. From a literary point of view, the trilogy's most remarkable feature is its third-person present-tense narrative voice, which comes through via a fusion of "a Jamesian free, indirect style with a restrained stream of consciousness" (Mukherjee 2009), which foregrounds Cromwell's thoughts and perceptions (Huber 2016: 78). Thus, it is as if sitting behind a camera placed behind Cromwell's

154

eyes that the reader is mostly given access to the different events and characters (Wilson 2017: 155), including Cromwell himself. Accordingly, it would not be accurate to claim that "we experience the world entirely from the principal protagonist's perspective", as Johnston does (2017: 543). Rather, the story is mostly told as if the narrator had access to Cromwell's conscience, and it is through this conscience that the narrator reproduces not only the words but also (what Cromwell assumes are) the thoughts of other characters. This arguably has a twofold effect: first, as will be explored in this section, both the narrative technique and Cromwell's characterisation foster the reader's sympathy. Ultimately, however, and as will be shown in the next section, the reader is subtly invited to question the whole narrative and consider the extent to which it can be trusted.

In *Wolf Hall*, the reader has access through multiple flashbacks to Cromwell's troubled childhood and adolescence, skilfully used to offer the narrative portrait of a character that twenty-first-century readers find attractive. This is in no small part because Mantel's Cromwell embodies the characteristics of the myth of the self-made man (Gačnik 2020: 77, 88). Thus, he leaves England a nobody, acquires all sorts of skills —including a prodigious memory— being variously employed in France, Italy and the Low Countries, only to return to England, where he succeeds as a lawyer, starts working for Cardinal Wolsey, becomes a member of the House of Commons and, eventually, Henry VIII's right-hand man.

155

The magnitude of Cromwell's achievements undoubtedly gains the readers' admiration. And this in spite of Cromwell's portrayal being essentially problematical: "readers repeatedly witness Cromwell committing acts of brutal ruthlessness, of intimidation and cynical entrapment", all evidence of "his uncanny talent for gauging, with sinister precision, an opponent's […] weaknesses" (Johnston 2017: 539; see also Alghamdi 2018). To this, and in line with Kenny (2022: 111), I would add a non-negligible element of revenge, best seen in how he concocts the destruction of Anne Boleyn. Using evil gossip, he builds a convincing case culminating in the conviction of Anne for adultery with different courtiers and even incest with her own brother —conveniently, those who contributed to, or rejoiced in, Wolsey's fall from grace: "[h]e needs guilty men. So he has found men who are guilty. Though perhaps not guilty as charged" (Mantel 2013: 392).

While I agree that Mantel's portrayal does not conceal Cromwell's flaws, my argument is that the reader's sympathy with the character is not only gained but sustained throughout the entire narrative. This is largely due to a combination of three essential factors, namely the intimate nature of much of Mantel's narrative portrait of Thomas Cromwell, his pragmatic personality and, last but not least, the narrative technique used throughout the trilogy. Indeed, the narrative provides much of Cromwell's private life, almost completely absent from the historical

records. This includes his sexual urges, the comfort he derives from his wife's company, the love he feels for the (sometimes adopted) members of his family, his patronage of scholars and even his charitable nature as he provides for the poor —all of which greatly contributes to humanising this literary character.

Yet one feature may be said to capture the essence of Mantel's Cromwell: pragmatism. Interestingly, this was a virtue cherished by Coleridgean, English Romanticism as a reaction to German metaphysics, widely deemed "otherworldly, abstract, and un-English" (Kaiser 2004: 13). By way of example, perceiving Wolsey's imminent fall, and however much he loves him, Cromwell's common sense dictates he should start provisioning for himself: "He […] is ready to welcome the spring […]. There is a world beyond this black world. There is a world of the possible. A world where Anne can be queen is a world where Cromwell can be Cromwell" (Mantel 2010: 205). Thus, while spending countless hours on state business, he makes himself immensely rich.

Truth be told, Mantel's Cromwell also embodies pragmatism of a less likeable kind. He works his way up by speaking to the right people. He uses his skills as a lawyer and his forceful powers of persuasion to make others comply with his wishes. And he stoops to bribing, handpicking the members of a jury or even fabricating evidence if necessary. Again, the latter is perhaps best seen in the case against Anne Boleyn, whom he destroys once he realises that her chances of giving Henry his coveted male heir are dim. In short, Mantel's Cromwell seems to encapsulate every principle of legal pragmatism, a philosophy that "makes the case for not adhering to principles but focussing on outcomes" (Kenny 2022: 110).

This notwithstanding, the unique perspective from which the story is told (via a narrator that appears to provide full access to his conscience) makes it virtually impossible for the reader not to sympathise with Mantel's Cromwell, thus forgiving him his flaws. For, indeed, his ruthlessness appears to serve a higher purpose. As perceived by Cromwell, the English king is an erratic, dangerous despot: "It is his councillors, as mean a crew as ever walked, who carry his sins for him" (Mantel 2020: 67). Not surprisingly, such sins include "get[ting] the king new wives and dispos[ing] of the old" (15).

Cromwell despises Henry: were he not king, he would "have him locked up" (Mantel 2010: 447). Nevertheless, he respects the institution he represents, although with his usual dose of pragmatism. In his idea of kingship, the "body natural" should be neatly separated from the "body politic" (see Borman 2016: 170). Thus, as a powerful metaphor for Henry's corrupt soul, no words are minced in the narrative to refer to his almost obscene physical decay: "the fine calf visibly bandaged, his face puffy and pale. Henry is the site, his body the locus, the blood and bile and phlegm; his burdened and oppressed flesh the place where all

156

arguments come to rest" (Mantel 2020: 116). Consequently, he does not see Henry as his God-ordained lord: "Henry puts a hand on his shoulder. In that anointed palm there is *vertu*. Once consecrated, a king can heal. So why does he not feel healed?" (380). And yet he recognises that, after the instability caused by the Wars of the Roses, only a strong monarchy can unite the country.

Henry represents the Medieval order. In his own words in the narrative, "[a] king is made by God, not Parliament" (Mantel 2020: 341). Yet Cromwell believes that those times in which the monarch could "override Parliament" and "govern only by himself" have passed (Mantel 2010: 447): "The world is not run from […] his border fortresses, not even from Whitehall. The world is run from Antwerp, from Florence, from places he has never imagined […]. Not from castle walls, but from counting houses" (Mantel 2010: 378). Consequently, he regards it as his duty "to restrain my cannibal king" (Mantel 2020: 119). In the narration, therefore, Cromwell appears as the architect of a new England in which the king's power is to be limited by Parliament. Cromwell's views on governance at least partly justify the foul means he resorts to, including the dissolution of Henry's first marriage to Katherine (which only produces a daughter, Mary), and even his second (which results in the execution of Anne Boleyn): "[w]hat use is Anne's child, the infant Elizabeth? […] [T]his dynasty, still new as kingship goes, is not secure enough to survive such a course" (Mantel 2013: 29).

157

Mantel's Cromwell appears as a supporter of reform. Thus, he takes issue with irrational Catholic dogma and does not favour practices like the cult of images or relics. Likewise, Cromwell is very vocal about the corruption of religious houses. All this —together with the huge economic profit resulting from it— is presented in the novels as the driving force behind the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Yet, as stated above, pragmatism also has an impact on his own religious views: he regards both Catholic and Protestant zealots with equal suspicion. In fact, Cromwell comes closest to defining his views on religion when he suggests that his mind, unlike (Catholic) Thomas More's, is not "fixed on the next world" but on the "prospect of improving this one" (Mantel 2010: 635).

Not surprisingly, as a pragmatic person, Mantel's Cromwell becomes immensely rich whilst implementing his reforms. However, the narrative appears to justify it: "No man in England works harder than he does. Say what you like about Thomas Cromwell, he offers good value for what he takes" (Mantel 2013: 245). Because, as presented in the narrative, what Cromwell does is to put all his political and legal cunning (which results in the making or unmaking of up to four of Henry's marriages) at the service of his vision of what England should become: a country with "an equal justice, from Essex to Anglesey, Cornwall to the Scots border" (82); a country in which the people, represented in Parliament, can limit royal

power; and a sovereign country also in religious matters, with its own, more rational church, which involves the dissolution of "the small monasteries" (243). His star project is, therefore, the English Reformation, legally engineered by Cromwell, which is presented as not only springing from his own religious views but out of national necessity:

> It is time to say what England is, her scope and boundaries […], to estimate her capacity for self-rule. It is time to say what a king is, and what trust and guardianship he owes his people: what protection from foreign incursions moral or physical, what freedom from the pretensions of those who would like to tell an Englishman how to speak to his God. (Mantel 2010: 338)

The narrator thus outlines the pillars of the new state Cromwell is building, arguably designed to safeguard England's sovereignty ("her capacity for self-rule") as the legal reflection of the English national identity he is actively promoting, best expressed through the English people's right to their own national church ("freedom from the pretensions of those who would like to tell an Englishman how to speak to his God").

158

3. Further Insights into Mantel's Cromwell

As suggested in the previous section, the narrator's often imperceptible distance from the character inevitably results in the reader feeling equally close. Additionally, some traits of this personality (most notably his pragmatism), as well as the fact that the narrative seems to present him as the chief agent that started transforming England into the country Whiggism has traditionally understood it should become, make it difficult for the reader not to associate Cromwell with Englishness. However, it is my contention that Mantel's approach to this issue cannot be reduced to a simple vindication of the Whig concept of Englishness.

Cromwell, having travelled around Europe, and being fluent in several languages, not only reflects on who he is, but actually realises that he is in constant change: "He Thomas, also Tomos, Tommaso and Thomaes Cromwell, withdraws his past selves into his present body and edges back to where he was before" (Mantel 2010: 71). This seems to indicate that Mantel's Cromwell's understanding of identity is essentially post-structuralist, viewing it not as a state but as a process (Hall 1991: 47). Otherwise put, identity is not about "being" but about "becoming", an interesting tenet which is expressed through ekphrasis when Cromwell comes across different copies of his portrait being made: "and so he comes into the hall to find versions of himself in various stages of becoming" (Mantel 2013: 8).

Cromwell is therefore presented as a fragmented self who wants to bring change to his country. However, he perceives fellow Englishmen as belonging in an earlier episteme, very much rooted in a mythical past and an organic sense of history, both of these making up the core of the English nation as an imagined community. The ancient myths evoked in *Wolf Hall*'s mysteriously entitled chapter "An Occult History of Britain" (2010: 65-66), linking the origin of Britain to the fall of Troy (as in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*), reinforce this interpretation. As perceived by the character, therefore, the English people —"squalid and ignorant" (Mantel 2013: 96)— very much believe in what Romantics would refer to as the "cultural nation" built upon a common genius that is made visible through history (Heath and Boreham 1999: 34): "These are old stories", his admired master Wolsey tells him, "but some people, let us remember, do believe them" (Mantel 2010: 94). Crucially, this history is presented as a continuum that goes back to "shared historical and social cultural practices" whilst projecting itself into the future, as the nation is nothing but the "organic outgrowth of a people", and the essence or genius of this people must, and will, remain unaltered (Kaiser 2004: 18-19).

It is precisely because he knows this that Cromwell concludes that all peace treaties with France are bound to fail. As Hall puts it, "all identities operate through exclusion, through the discursive construction of a constitutive outside and the production of abjected and marginalized subjects" (1996: 15). Recognising France as England's traditional "constitutive outside" in the discourse of Englishness (see Newman 1997: 124), Cromwell realises that the English hate the French for the war they brought upon them, and the French have not yet forgotten the English "for the talent for destruction they have always displayed when they get off their own island"; consequently, "the kings may forgive each other; the people scarcely can" (Mantel 2010: 117-118).

Accordingly, it is by considering the English people's belief in their *genius* that Cromwell concocts his plan to bring about his changes, which need to be presented as congruent with England's *genius* and organic history. The first step is the toppling of Queen Katherine, and he expects no major opposition to this move: the xenophobic attitudes resulting from the strong sense of English national identity his reforms evoke will naturally awake fear of the other: after all, the English "like Katherine because they have forgotten she is Spanish" (Mantel 2010: 358-359).

Once Katherine is set aside, the first changes may be brought about. *Wolf Hall*'s Part 6 opens with Cromwell enunciating the legal principles behind the English Reformation:

> the prince gets [his power] through a legislative body […]. It is from the will of the
> people, expressed in Parliament, that a king derives his kingship. […] Christ did not

> bestow on his followers grants of land, or monopolies, offices, promotions. […] "The legislative body", he says, "should provide for the maintenance of priests and bishops. After that, it should be able to use the church's wealth for the public good". (Mantel 2010: 532)

In doing this, Mantel's Cromwell presents the four pillars of Englishness to be later upheld by the Whig historical tradition, namely the Crown, Parliament, Constitution and the Protestant church. However, in order to succeed in changing the country, Cromwell first needs to provide an illusion of continuity. He will do so by invoking the unalterable nature of the English *genius*, thereby providing history with a teleological sense. Accordingly, in a stroke of legal pragmatic genius, his Act of Supremacy "doesn't […] make the king head of the church"; it simply "states that he is head of the church, and always has been" (Mantel 2010: 588). To which the narrator ironically adds, "[i]f people don't like new ideas, let them have old ones. If they want precedents, he has precedents" (588). In her characterisation of Cromwell, therefore, Mantel evokes the "invented traditions" used by ideological apparatuses to feed national identity discourses, implying "continuity with […] a suitable historic past" (Hobsbawm 1983: 1).

160

By disclosing Cromwell's conscious manipulation of English public opinion, Mantel subtly raises questions about the organic sense of history and the very existence of the English *genius* that the traditional pillars of Englishness arguably stand for, since Cromwell, rather than securing continuity, is shown as radically breaking with the past. As Katherine's 15-year-old daughter Mary remarks, Cromwell's "ancient precedents" have been "invented these last months" (Mantel 2010: 289-290).

It follows from above that evidence can be found that the author cunningly plays with her readers as regards how they are to interpret Cromwell. And further doubts result from Mantel's narrative technique. As already seen, the story is told as if the narrator had full access to Cromwell's conscience, and this raises questions concerning the extent to which the narrator can be trusted. In Mantel's own words, "[t]he reader has to […] interrogate every line asking how reliable is this person as witness to his story or someone else's story" ("BBC Reith Lectures. Adaptation" 2017). While the narration presents a man of enormous capacity and extraordinary intelligence, the reader knows what the final outcome will be: Cromwell is to die, executed by order of his King, which seems to indicate that he cannot keep him so tightly under control as he seems to in *Wolf Hall*. If his perception of, say, Henry, is therefore not entirely reliable, where does this place his perception of all the other characters or, for that matter, even his worldviews? And what are the implications of this in terms of how the reader is to make sense of Cromwell?

One early clue is highlighted by Johnston (2017: 539): *Wolf Hall* opens with a young Thomas being brutally beaten by his father. Soon afterwards, Thomas leaves England, in search of —the reader assumes— a better future away from his violent father. It turns out, however, that Thomas's beating was the way his father punished him after learning that his son involved himself in a street fight and ended up stabbing another youth. And it is only later that the reader learns from Bishop Stephen Gardiner (Cromwell's enemy) that the youth stabbed by the young Thomas eventually died (Mantel 2013: 86). How could Cromwell, to whose conscience the narrator appears to have full access, forget such a crucial episode? Or is it that this access is not as full as it seems?

Mantel addresses this in *The Mirror & the Light*. Although he struggles to retain his optimism —"he is always inclined to think the world will turn our way" (Mantel 2020: 720)—, the Cromwell that emerges here is one dominated by a feeling of exhaustion and vulnerability: "He feels tired. Seven years for the king to get Anne. Three years to reign. Three weeks to bring her to trial. Three heartbeats to finish it. But still, they are his heartbeats as well as hers. The effort of them must be added to all the rest" (19). As the narration progresses it becomes clear that Cromwell is overwhelmed by increasing anxiety and guilt. He recurrently dreams of Anne Boleyn's execution. Such visions gradually multiply to involve other characters whose deaths he procured, like George Boleyn or Thomas More. Eventually Cromwell is depicted as increasingly haunted by ghosts —a trademark of Mantel's "spectral realism" (Funk 2020)— while he feels abandoned by Thomas Wolsey, whose guidance he has continued to feel even after the latter's death.

Further evidence of the narrator's (and Cromwell's) unreliability can be found in the fact that the trilogy's third novel contains subtle references to Cromwell's eventual fall, although neither the narrator nor (in most cases) the character shows any signs of recognising them as such. For example, quite early in the novel Chapuys (the imperial ambassador) amicably warns Cromwell that he may see Henry's favour withdrawn, reminding him of Wolsey's fall (Mantel 2020: 57-68). Halfway through the novel, Martin (a fictional jailer in the Tower of London who appears as one of Cromwell's protégés) candidly says to him: "I trust it shall be many a day before I see you here [the Tower]" (384). More ominously, Lord Thomas Howard (Norfolk's half-brother) predicts Henry will let Cromwell fall: "I pity you, for there is no way forward for you. He will hate you for your successes as much as your failures" (386). Last but not least, soon after Henry's disastrous first encounter with Anne of Cleves, there is a scene in which Cromwell and his son Gregory eat pastries from an Italian plate, the pattern of which becomes visible as the pastries disappear from its surface: "it depicts the Fall of Troy" (727). Mantel thus poignantly suggests that Anne of Cleves is the Trojan Horse that will bring

161

about Cromwell's destruction, although the narrator does not mention any reaction on Cromwell's part. Even if there are signs in the narration that Cromwell may be giving in to pressure, he still enters a dialectical fight with his enemy Gardiner in which he compares himself to Petrarch, who "lay as one dead for the best part of a day" and "just before the burial party was due, he sat up —and then he lived for another thirty years. *Thirty years*, Stephen" (787, emphasis in original).

By the time it becomes clear to the reader that Cromwell understands that all is lost, the fall is already imminent and subsequent events unfold relentlessly. The narrator depicts Cromwell walking to the Council chamber minutes before his arrest as follows: "It is a boisterous day, and as they cross the court the wind takes his hat off. He grabs at it, but it is gone, bowling in the direction of the river" (Mantel 2020: 803). While this image clearly evokes Cromwell's future decapitation, the narrator does not mention how Cromwell interprets it, although the reader has been told that the night before Cromwell dreams that the Whitehall Palace stairs lead to a cockpit in which a cock baiting spectacle is taking place: one of the fighting animals is killed by the other and "is raked from the sand and thrown to a cur" (803). It is not difficult to construe that Cromwell sees himself represented in the dead cock and understands that the end is inevitable, although the narrator makes no mention of this.

162

My perception of the narrative strategy used in the novels, therefore, and especially *The Mirror & the Light*, differs substantially from Johnston's, who highlights the apparent paradox that, although the reader experiences the world from Cromwell's perspective, their actual access to "Cromwell's interior" is remarkably limited (2017: 543-544). What Johnston crucially omits is that Mantel's narrative technique first gives the reader the *illusion* of full access to Cromwell's conscience. Eventually, however, it cleverly casts doubt on the narrator's reliability —who may not after all have full access to the character's conscience— and, by extension, Cromwell himself: Cromwell seems to take too long to realise the actual danger he is in, but the narrator takes even longer. As the narration progresses, it becomes clear that his ghostly visions are but a sign of guilt: "The feeling around his heart —that it is crushed, forced out of shape— he now understands as a deformity caused by grief. He feels he is dragging corpses, shovelling them up" (Mantel 2020: 853). Yet he only realises this when he is already imprisoned in the Tower, awaiting his own death. Significantly, it is only then that (the ghost of) his mentor Thomas Wolsey makes himself visible again to Cromwell. This enormous sense of guilt, together with an inferiority complex he has still not overcome (and which, it is suggested, may lie behind his resolution to destroy Thomas More), contributes to his mental torture while imprisoned.

All this strongly suggests that in his final days Cromwell concludes that his life has not been well spent. The end does not always justify the means. And this end may

not be the strong, solid edifice he had long envisaged. Throughout *The Mirror & the Light* Cromwell adopts a confessional mode, consigning his fears and tribulations to his diary, which he refers to as "The Book Called Henry". Through this diary, references to which appear earlier on in the trilogy, Cromwell gradually shares with the reader the conclusion he is reaching that his remarkable talent, intelligence, and skills have their limits: "You cannot anticipate or fully know the king. […] Do not turn your back on the king. This is not just a matter of protocol", he writes halfway through the novel (Mantel 2020: 393, 395). This inevitably has a destructive effect on his self-assurance: "He takes out The Book Called Henry. […] He wonders if he has any advice for himself. But all he sees is how much white space there is, blank pages uninscribed" (553).

Consequently, Cromwell appears to come to terms with the fact that he is not the all-powerful, invincible statesman that comes through in the first two novels. He has already paid a high enough price —Cromwell feels he has failed as a caring father (Mantel 2020: 694)— and he will now pay for his efforts with his own life. Yet the question is, were these efforts worth the while? As a prisoner in the Tower, he realises that his new England, which he has created through legislation, is but a construct: "the law is not an instrument to find out truth. It is there to create a fiction" (846). This evokes an earlier reflection appearing in *Wolf Hall*: "When you are writing laws you are testing words to find their utmost power. Like spells, they have to make things happen in the real world" (Mantel 2010: 574). The Thomas Cromwell of the *Wolf Hall* trilogy, very much like Mantel herself, is extremely meticulous as regards his language choices. This suggests that he is fully aware of the illocutionary force of language. In human societies, it is implied here, reality does not exist outside the realm of language in action, i.e. discourse —epitomised here by the law, as befits a lawyer's mind. Ironically, it is this same discourse devised by him (and which creates his new England) that will lead to his death: "He has lived by the laws he has made and must be content to die by them" (Mantel 2020: 846). Thus seen, the trilogy echoes Mantel's first historical novel, *A Place of Greater Safety*, in which Danton, Desmoulins and Robespierre become the victims of the very "apparatus" they helped create (see Chadwick 2020).

4. Conclusion: *Wolf Hall* in the Context of Brexit

In this article I have provided an account of the characterisation of Thomas Cromwell and, especially, Mantel's narrative technique in the *Wolf Hall* trilogy. My ultimate aim, however, was to explore how this narrative addresses issues of the present it was written in, with inevitable connections to national identity issues. In this respect, suggestions have been made that, while such connections can indeed

be detected in the novels, this is a multi-layered narrative affording different, apparently mutually exclusive readings.

On the one hand, the illusion of extraordinary intimacy that the narrator creates between the reader and the main character in this fiction, together with the latter's fascinating personality, make it virtually impossible for the reader not to sympathise with Cromwell. Additionally, the fact that the essentially pragmatic Cromwell is undoubtedly presented as laying the foundations of an independent Protestant church and a parliamentary monarchy —the pillars of Englishness traditionally upheld by Whig historiography— inevitably seems to make him a suitable representative of quintessential Englishness.

On the other hand, however, I have argued that the narrative invites the reader to re-consider his/her views on the character. As the narrative progresses, the reader accesses Cromwell's fragmented, essentially post-structural and arguably post-national sense of self. This crucially collides with the English national identity discourse he evokes. In other words, Cromwell is presented as asking the English people to believe in a fallacy since he sustains his policy on an epistemological foundation he does not uphold as valid.

164

Regardless of this, the reader is somehow led to understand that Cromwell's moves are justified as he knows what is best for his country. Extradiegetically, some doubts may trouble the processing of this understanding on the part of the reader as s/he knows that the real Cromwell is to be eventually executed by order of the king he presumes to know and control. Clues, however, begin to appear, especially in the third novel, suggesting that the narrator's perception of Cromwell is not entirely reliable. Insomnia and ghostly apparitions are used to indicate an increasing sense of guilt while the narrator is not —and the character does not seem to be— able to identify what for the reader are clearly cataphoric references to the latter's eventual fall. As a result, it gradually dawns on the reader that the narrator's perception of Cromwell as in possession of a powerful, virtually infallible mind is not entirely accurate. Both characterisation and narrative technique, therefore, make it possible for the reader to construe that, however admirable, Cromwell's reforms, arguably leading to the creation of a Protestant parliamentary monarchy, not only were based on false premises —the teleological sense of history based on the English genius— but also came at too high a cost (which Cromwell would pay with his own life).

This interpretation is all the more relevant as it is difficult for the reader not to relate it to the historical context in which the trilogy was published, which is none other than that of pre- and immediately post-Brexit Britain. As seen above, the discourse of Brexit has heavily relied on the same teleological view of British history traditionally presented by Whig historiography as an uninterrupted road towards greater freedom (represented by a parliamentary monarchy) and a more rational sense of religion (represented by a national Protestant church). Such

values have been somehow encapsulated in the principle of English (and eventually British) exceptionality, which, working hand in hand with increasingly visible xenophobic attitudes (Gregorio-Godeo 2020), has more recently complicated Britain's relationship with the EC/EU and largely accounts for the country's exit from the latter. Significantly, such values are those evoked by Cromwell in the trilogy, also fostering xenophobia and resulting in England's break with Rome. And if such changes are exposed in the narrative as based on epistemological fallacies, what are the implications of this as far as Brexit is concerned?

As Mantel has clearly stated, the Reformation and Brexit are two very different events. However, this does not seem to make it impossible for a fictionalisation of one to contain relevant allusions to the other. After all, Mantel herself —whose works have characteristically explored issues of both individual and collective identity (Knox 2010: 321)— has referred to Brexit as resulting from "a gigantic failure on the part of the voting public in Britain to know their history", and partly attributed it to the fact that "all nations have a fantasy of a golden age" ("BBC Reith Lectures. Silence Grips the Town" 2017). As I see it, the *Wolf Hall* trilogy definitely identifies the Tudor period as England's golden age celebrated in the popular imagination whilst subtly yet effectively questioning the validity of such myths. Crucially, this is very much in line with the "nostalgia for a 'grand narrative' […] whose unifying and meaning-making power is no longer feasible" that Hart (2019: 87) detects in Mantel's earlier novel *Fludd* (1989). In light of this, and unlike Saxton (2020: 138), I would contend that the Thomas Cromwell trilogy could not be categorised as historiographic metafiction. Although intensely self-reflexive, it simultaneously exudes nostalgia for, and serves to denounce, hegemonic narratives that have traditionally monopolised historical "truth" (in this case, Whig history). Additionally, it crucially does not call into question the extent to which it is possible to have knowledge of the past. Rather, and as suggested above, Mantel seems to be quite happy scrutinising the existing historical records and resorting to her artistry in order to fill the blanks and resolve the contradictions of her sources. This latter aspect draws the trilogy closer to the realm of neo-historical fiction, even if it might be preferable to let the author speak for herself by quoting a short metafictional excerpt from *The Mirror & the Light* in which the narrator, alluding to Henry's first encounter with his daughter Mary after the latter has finally signed her submission to her father's authority, reflects on the beauty of historical fiction:

> When the chronicles of the reign are composed, by our grandchildren or by those in another country, […] they will reimagine the meeting between the king and his daughter —the orations they made each other, the mutual courtesies, the promises, the blessings. They will not have witnessed, they could not record, the Lady Mary's wobbling curtsey, or how the king's face flushes and sweeps her up; her sniffling and his sob, his broken endearments and the hot tears that spring from his eyes. (Mantel 2020: 154)

165

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. *A Place of Greater Safety*, a fictional account of the interconnected lives of three French revolutionary leaders (Camille Desmoulins, Georges Danton and Maximilien Robespierre), was in fact the very first novel Mantel ever wrote. The manuscript was rejected by publishers and so the author focused instead on other literary projects which eventually became her first two published novels: *Every Day is Mother's Day* (1985) and its sequel *Vacant Possession* (1986). Both can be read as state-of-the-nation novels, sordid black humour being effectively used to highlight the pitfalls of the welfare state under (and immediately prior to) Thatcher's premiership. Having become a recognisable literary voice (and historical fiction having by then recovered some of the prestige it had lost over most of the twentieth century), Mantel saw *A Place of Greater Safety* finally published in 1992.

Works Cited

ALGHAMDI, Alaa. 2018. "Hilary Mantel: Embodying Thomas Cromwell and Redefining Historical Fiction through 'Women's Writing'". *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies* 2 (1): 117-134. DOI: 10.24093/awejtls/vol2no1.9

ANDERSON, Benedict. (1983) 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

ARIAS, Rosario. 2014. "Exoticising the Tudors: Hilary Mantel's Re-Appropriation of the Past in *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*". In Rousselot, Elodie (ed.) *Exoticising the Past in Contemporary Neo-Historical Fiction*. London: Palgrave: 19-36.

ARNOLD, Lucy. 2016. "Spooks and Holy Ghosts: Spectral Politics and the Politics of Spectrality in Hilary Mantel's *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street*". *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 57 (3): 294-309. DOI: 10.1080/00111619.2015.1046591

"Arts Figures Backing EU Remain Campaign". 2016. *BBC News* (May 20). <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36340722>. Accessed October 24, 2020.

Baker, Theresa Rae. 2015. "'Beneath Every History, Another History'. History, Memory, and Nation in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*". PhD Dissertation. University of Calgary. <http://hdl.handle.net/11023/2102>. Accessed September 11, 2021.

Borman, Tracy. 2016. *The Private Lives of the Tudors. Uncovering the Secrets of Britain's Greatest Dynasty*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Brantly, Susan. 2017. *The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era: Presenting the Past*. New York: Routledge.

Chadwick, Tom. 2020. "'Documentary Evidence': Archival Agency in Hilary Mantel's *A Place of Greater Safety*". *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory* 31 (2): 165-181. DOI: 10.1080/10436928.2020.1747176

Ciplijauskaité, Biruté. 1981. *Los noventayochistas y la historia*. Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas.

Daddow, Oliver. 2015. "Interpreting the Outsider Tradition in British European Policy Speeches from Thatcher to Cameron". *JCMS. Journal of Common Market Studies* 53 (1): 81-88. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12204

Funk, Wolfgang. (2018) 2020. "Becoming Ghost: Spectral Realism in Hilary Mantel's Fiction". In Pollard, Eileen and Ginette Carpenter (eds.) *Hilary Mantel. Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury: 87-100. DOI: 10.5040/9781474296533.ch-007

Gačnik, Julija. 2020. "The Byronic Hero and the Elements of the Gothic Novel in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*". PhD Dissertation. University of Ljubljana. <https://core.ac.uk/reader/328388250>. Accessed September 11, 2021.

Gregorio-Godeo, Eduardo de. 2020. "Global Populisms in Europe and the Revival of Hard-Right Political Discourses on Immigration in Contemporary Britain: Echoes of Enoch Powell in Nigel Farage's Discourse". In Jarazo-Álvarez, Rubén and José Igor Prieto-Arranz (eds.) *The Humanities Still Matter. Identity, Gender and Space in Twenty-First-Century Europe*. Oxford: Peter Lang: 71-88.

Griffin, Aurélie. 2019. "*Le Conseiller* de Hilary Mantel. Thomas Cromwell, *selfmade man* et (anti)-héros contemporain". In Bost-Fievet, Mélanie (ed.) *La réception de la Renaissance dans la culture contemporaine*. Paris: Classiques Garnier: 75-88. DOI: 10.15122/isbn.978-2-406-09160-8.p.0075

Hall, Stuart. 1991. "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities". In King, Anthony D. (ed.) *Culture, Globalization and the World System. Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*. Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton: 41-68.

Hall, Stuart. 1996. "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" In Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: SAGE: 1-17. DOI: 10.4135/9781446221907.n1

Hart, Carina. 2019. "Alchemy in Contemporary Fiction: Old Texts, New Psychologies". *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 60 (1): 86-97. DOI: 10.1080/00111619.2018.1470081

Heath, Duncan and Judy Boreham. 1999. *Introducing Romanticism*. Duxford: Icon Books.

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1983. "Introduction. Inventing Traditions". In Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.: 1-14. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781107295636.001

Huber, Irmtraud. 2016. *Present-Tense Narration in Contemporary Fiction: A Narratological Overview*. London: Palgrave. DOI: 10.1057/978-1-137-56213-5

Hutcheon, Linda. 1988: *A Poetics of Postmodernism. History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge.

Johnston, Andrew James. 2017. "Hilary Mantel, *The Thomas Cromwell Trilogy* (2009-)". In Reinfandt, Christof (ed.) *Handbook of the English Novel of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*. Berlin: De Gruyter: 536-554. DOI: 10.1515/9783110369489-028

Kaiser, David Aram. (1999) 2004. *Romanticism, Aesthetics, and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9780511484315

167

KENNY, Michael. 2015. "The Return of 'Englishness' in British Political Culture. The End of the Unions?" *JCMS. Journal of Common Market Studies* 53 (1): 35-51.

KENNY, David. 2022. "The Human Pared Away: Hilary Mantel's Thomas Cromwell as an Archetype of Legal Pragmatism". *Law & Literature* 34 (1): 109-139. DOI: 10.1080/1535685X.2020.1804223

KNOX, Sarah L. 2010. "Giving Flesh to the 'Wraiths of Violence'. Super-Realism in the Fiction of Hilary Mantel". *Australian Feminist Studies* 25 (65): 313-323. DOI: 10.1080/08164649.2010.504295

KNOX BERAN, Michael. 2016. "Brexit and All That". *Claremont Review of Books*. <https://claremontreviewofbooks.com/brexit-and-all-that/>. Accessed January 23, 2021.

KUKKONEN, Karin. 2018. "A Moving Target. Cognitive Narratology and Feminism". *Textual Practice* 32 (6): 973-989. DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2018.1486543

KUMAR, Krishan. 2001. "'Englishness' and English National Identity". In Morley, David and Kevin Robins (eds.) *British Cultural Studies*. Oxford: Oxford U.P.: 41-55.

LUDLOW, N. Piers. 2015. "Safeguarding British Identity or Betraying it? The Role of British 'Tradition' in the Parliamentary Great Debate on EC Membership, October 1971". *JCMS. Journal of Common Market Studie*s 53 (1): 18-34. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12202

LUKÁCS, Georg. 1963. *The Historical Novel*. Trans. H. Mitchell and S. Mitchell. Boston: Beacon Press.

MACCAFERRI, Marzia. 2019. "Splendid Isolation Again? Brexit and the Role of the Press and Online Media in Re-Narrating the European Discourse". *Critical Discourse Studies* 16 (4): 389-402. DOI: 10.1080/17405904.2019.1592766

MANTEL, Hilary. (2009) 2010. *Wolf Hall*. London: Fourth Estate.

MANTEL, Hilary. 2012. "How I Came to Write *Wolf Hall*". *The Guardian* (7 December). <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/dec/07/bookclub-hilary-mantel-wolf-hall>. Accessed October 24, 2020.

MANTEL, Hilary. (2012) 2013. *Bring Up the Bodies*. London: Fourth Estate.

MANTEL, Hilary. 2020. *The Mirror & the Light*. London: Fourth Estate.

MARLOW-STEVENS, Samuel and Richard HAYTON. 2021. "A Rhetorical Political Analysis of Theresa May's Statecraft on Brexit". *Parliamentary Affairs* 74 (4): 871-889. DOI: 10.1093/pa/gsaa014

McCLAY, Wilfred. 2011. "Whig History at Eighty". *First Things* (March): 47-53.

MUKHERJEE, Neel. 2009. "The Booker Got it Right: Mantel's Cromwell is a Book for All Seasons". *The Times* (6 October). <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-booker-got-it-right-mantels-cromwell-is-a-book-for-all-seasons-63fhzsvcv02>. Accessed 24 January 2021.

NEWMAN, Gerald. 1997. *The Rise of English Nationalism. A Cultural History, 1740-1830*. Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

SAXTON, Laura. 2020. "A True Story: Defining Accuracy and Authenticity in Historical Fiction". *Rethinking History* 24 (2): 127-144. DOI: 10.1080/13642529.2020.1727189

SIMPSON, Mona. 2015. "Hilary Mantel, Art of Fiction No. 226". *The Paris Review* 212. <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/6360/hilary-mantel-art-of-fiction-no-226-hilary-mantel>. Accessed January 24, 2021.

STEWART, Victoria. 2009. "A Word in Your Ear: Mediumship and Subjectivity in Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black*". *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 50 (3): 293-312. DOI: 10.3200/CRIT.50.3.293-312

STOCKER, Bryony D. 2012. "'Bygonese' —Is this Really the Authentic Language of Historical Fiction?" *New Writing* 9 (3): 308-318.

"The BBC Reith Lectures. Adaptation". 2017. *BBC Radio 4* (July 11). <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08x9947>. Accessed January 26, 2021.

"The BBC Reith Lectures. Silence Grips the Town". 2017. *BBC Radio 4* (June 27). <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08vy0y6>. Accessed January 26, 2021.

168

"The BBC Reith Lectures. The Iron Maiden". 2017. *BBC Radio 4* (June 20). <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08v08m5>. Accessed January 23, 2021.

Virdee, Satnam and Brendan McGeever. 2018. "Racism, Crisis, Brexit". *Ethnic and Racial Studie*s 41 (10): 1802-1819. DOI: 10.1080/01 419870.2017.1361544

Wellings, Ben and Helen Baxendale. 2015. "Euroscepticism and the Anglosphere: Traditions and Dilemmas in Contemporary English Nationalism". *JCMS. Journal of Common Market Studies* 53 (1): 123-139. DOI: 10.1111/jcms.12207

White, Hayden. 1973. *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in 19th Century Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins U.P.

Wilson, Adrian and Timothy G. Ashplant. 1988. "Whig History and Present-Centred History". *The Historical Journal* 31 (1): 1-16. DOI: 10.1017/S0018246X00011961

Wilson, Leigh. 2017. "Historical Representations. Reality Effects: The Historical Novel and the Crisis of Fictionality in the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century." In Bentley, Nick, Nick Hubble and Leigh Wilson (eds.) *The 2000s. A Decade of Contemporary British Fiction*. London: Bloomsbury: 145-171. DOI: 10.5040/9781474217217.ch-005

169

MONSTROUS MOTHERS AND DEAD GIRLS IN GILLIAN FLYNN'S *SHARP OBJECTS* AND *GONE GIRL*

MADRES MONSTRUOSAS Y CHICAS MUERTAS EN *SHARP OBJECTS* Y *GONE GIRL,* DE GILLIAN FLYNN

MAYSAA JABER
University of Baghdad, Iraq
maysajaber@googlemail.com

Abstract

This article explores two predominant images of Gillian Flynn's female characters: the monstrous mother and the missing/dead girl. These two representations of Flynn's female characters showcase the link between female criminality and transgression on the one hand, and the female characters' traumatic history and family dysfunctionality on the other. This article argues that Flynn's use of these two tropes reveals the conflicting facets of female crime, victimhood, and agency in her thrillers, and by so doing her work subverts the murky domain of the portrayal of criminal women in relation to motherhood, mental illness and trauma.

Keywords: Gillian Flynn, motherhood, monstrosity, female criminality, trauma.

Resumen

Este artículo explora dos imágenes predominantes de los personajes femeninos de Gillian Flynn: la madre monstruosa y la niña desaparecida/muerta. Estas dos representaciones de los personajes femeninos de Flynn muestran el vínculo entre la criminalidad y la transgresión femeninas, por un lado, y la historia traumática y la disfuncionalidad familiar de los personajes femeninos, por otro. Este artículo sostiene que el uso que hace Flynn de estos dos tropos revela las facetas conflictivas

de la delincuencia femenina, el victimismo y la agencia en sus thrillers, y al hacerlo su obra subvierte el turbio ámbito de la representación de las mujeres delincuentes en relación con la maternidad, la enfermedad mental y el trauma.

Palabras clave: Gillian Flynn, maternidad, monstruosidad, criminalidad femenina, trauma.

Gillian Flynn's Mothers, Missing Girls, and Criminal Women

Gillian Flynn's *Sharp Objects* and *Gone Girl* present the case for the link between female criminality, a history of childhood trauma and broken families. As far as this link is concerned, Flynn's work displays two prominent images of female characters: the monstrous mother and the missing/dead girl. The monstrous mother is a figure who harms rather than nurtures her children. She stands for a transgressive woman who subverts the image of a loving devoted mother and challenges the constructions of normative femininity. *Sharp Objects* and *Gone Girl* also feature dead and/or missing females who disappear or are murdered within complicated family situations. Like the monstrous mother, the missing/dead female is often depicted with a sordid family history and trauma. The missing/dead girl narrative stands both as a parallel and in contrast to that of the monstrous mother. Both narratives are used to navigate complex issues of femininity, motherhood, criminality, and agency; however, there are nuances in the ways Flynn's narratives negotiate these issues. Flynn's thrillers are structured around female characters who constantly walk the line between victimhood (due to these characters' long and distorted history of personal and family trauma) and agency (as perpetrators of vicious crimes). The oscillation between the female identities of the victim and the criminal creates the tension, reinforces the mystery and is central to the plot of Flynn's thrillers.

In both *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects*, Flynn focuses on negative and often controversial portrayals of female protagonists by portraying subversive roles of the mother, the wife, and the daughter. Both works depict female characters as bad mothers and/or in constant struggle with their mothers —Camille and Amma are in a battle of survival with their mentally unstable mother in *Sharp Objects*, while Amy in *Gone Girl* is exploited by her parents for material gain as she stars as the main character in a successful children's book, and then she herself uses motherhood as a cover to carry out an elaborate revenge plan to frame her husband for murder. In both works, the "bad mother" and the "dead girl" are significant for the characterization of the female criminal and the conflicting questions of victimization and agency.

The "Pathological Mommy", to use Andrew Scull's term (2016: 341), is an integral component in Flynn's thriller scheme.[1] The focus on motherhood sheds

172

light not only on family dynamics and the economic and class background within the family but also on issues of femininity, womanhood and the perception of the sociocultural standards of good *versus* bad mothers. Many scholars have studied and addressed the role of mothers from myriad perspectives; the debates that examine the position and roles of women in relation to employment, reproductive rights and gender biases all have motherhood at the heart.[2] The social expectations for women are also part of the debate on motherhood, as the gender identity of women has often been defined by mothering. For example, Rosi Braidotti' sarticle "Mothers, Monsters, and Machines" argues that "[w]oman as a sign of difference is monstrous" (1997: 65). Braidotti contends that the female body, especially the pregnant maternal body, is a representation of the "Other" as it "provides the fuel for the production of normative discourse" (1997: 64). Barbara Creed also argues that when a woman is defined as monstrous, it is often related to her role as a mother. Creed speaks of various faces of the "monstrous-feminine": the archaic mother, the monstrous womb, the witch, the vampire, and the possessed woman (1993: 7). In terms of the monstrous mother, Creed describes her as the "parthenogenetic mother, the mother as primordial abyss, the point of origin and of end" (1993: 17).[3]

173

In public discourse, mothers are often portrayed within a continuum of "age old Madonna-whore poles of perfect and failed motherhood" (Douglas and Michaels 2004: 27). In this regard, Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels explore the good mother/bad mother discourse, identifying the "good mother" in terms of what they call "the new momism", which is defined as "intensive mothering" where "everyone watches us, we watch ourselves, and other mothers and we watch ourselves watching ourselves" (2004: 5). Indeed, mothers always struggle with meeting social standards of being good mothers. However, when a mother is "deemed substandard" she is judged harshly and the state often intervenes (Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998: 2). There are images and stereotypes attached to "bad" mothers in American culture —"the welfare mother, the teen mother, the career woman who has no time for her kids, the drug addict who poisons her fetus, the pushy stage mother, the overprotective Jewish mother" (Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998: 2). One that is not listed here is the criminal mother, who is easily considered a "bad" mother; when a mother commits a criminal action, she is readily deemed monstrous. The criminal mother is subversive as she challenges social norms of femininity and motherhood as well as she breaks legal codes.

Gillian Flynn situates the monstrous mother at the heart of her narratives as a figure who pushes the boundaries of the representations of women, particularly criminal women in the thriller genre. The aim of this article is to look at the depiction of mothers when they commit criminal acts in Flynn's thrillers. It is

argued that the thriller offers a unique platform to establish a connection between the criminal woman and the "pathological mommy", first by debunking the mythology around mothers as only loving and docile, and second by subverting the depiction of women within a genre that relies on women as helpless victims.[4] Flynn's work also casts doubt on female victimhood by portraying female characters who perform the role of the victim from a position of dominance (Amy in *Gone Girl*) or assume a victim identity but one that is tied to or born out of criminality (Amma in *Sharp Objects*). This confusion between victimhood and criminality in the portrayal of female characters allows for complex female representations and demonstrates how they struggle with a difficult and traumatic family history. This uncertainty, as far as the roles of women are concerned, is also evident in the missing/dead girl trope found in Flynn's work.

Flynn presents a missing/dead female narrative, which reveals the cultural obsession with missing or dead, often murdered, females suffering a violent death. It exposes the morbid fascination with stories of missing, abused, tortured, and murdered women as well as the interest in their bodies, especially the sight of discarded, wounded female bodies. It points to what Mark Seltzer calls "wound culture", which is a "public fascination with torn and open bodies and torn and open persons, a collective gathering around shock, trauma, and the wound" (1998: 1). Trauma, as far as "wound culture" is concerned, becomes the "switchpoint" between bodily and psychic functions and between the private and the public, where the body is the signifier of the "national malady of trauma and violence" (Seltzer 1998: 6). The female body in crime narratives is often a site of investigation as well as trauma for those involved in her death. According to Alice Bolin, the "dead girl" presents "existential knowledge" and a kind of purity that stands in sharp contrast to the violence committed against her (2018: 14-15). Girls are shown as "wild, vulnerable creatures who need to be protected from their own sexualities" (14-15). What Bolin calls the "dead girl" narrative exposes societal anxiety by revealing and expanding the "effect and the meaning of an individual murder" (16). It also shows the "impulse to prey on young [women]", as though it is "both inevitable and beyond the control of men" to enact violence (15). The main component of this narrative is "the investigator's haunted, semi-sexual obsession with the Dead Girl, or rather, the absence she has left" (47). In crime fiction texts, the dead female often becomes the object of the male's effort to resolve the puzzle that revolves around her body, and thus the dead girl narrative invites a reconsideration of the position of the dead and missing female body in the discourse on femininity and violence.

In *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, Elisabeth Bronfen explores the conjunction of femininity, death and the aesthetic in literature and

culture, shedding light on images of women as connected to the omnipresence of death in western culture. Bronfen speaks of the cultural stereotype of the dead female victim where she is "killed again" in representation; the threat of both death and femininity is "recuperated by representation […] because this means appeasing the threat of real mortality, of sexual insufficiency, of lack of plenitude and wholeness" (Bronfen 2017: xii). Claiming that because "death is at work in the cultural construction of femininity" (208), the death of a woman becomes a "social sacrifice" (181), and the

> equation between femininity and death is such, that while in cultural narratives the feminine corpse is treated like an artwork, or the beautiful woman is killed to produce an artwork, conversely, artworks emerge only at the expense of a beautiful woman's death and are treated like feminine corpses. (72-73)

Flynn uses the missing/dead female in both *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects* to highlight the centrality of the female body and the link between criminality, trauma, and femininity. This way, *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects* reveal the gender ideologies that surround women in relation to media and violence. The conjunction between the trope of the missing/dead girl and the malevolent mother in these two narratives is performed through female protagonists who represent complex dynamics of agency and victimization and, at the same time, in relation to the trauma that lies behind these dynamics.

175

The Pathological Mommy and her Daughters in *Sharp Objects*

Sharp Objects follows the return of journalist Camille Preaker to her hometown of Wind-Gap to investigate and cover the murder of two young girls who attend the same school as her younger half-sister, Amma. Whilst the story revolves around the horrific murders of young girls and the investigation uncovering the identity of the killer, it is also about the female characters' traumatic past and disturbing family relationships. Flynn succeeds in presenting a thriller narrative that is more than just a mystery solved at the end by a detective. Instead, *Sharp Objects* uses the mystery around the story of the dead girls to dive deeply into the psychology of motherhood, and the entrapment of female characters in cycles of violence and their own traumatic family history —a history that repeats itself again and again in persistent yet futile attempts to resolve the childhood trauma perpetuated by the malevolent mother.

In *Sharp Objects* Flynn situates violence by and against women against the trauma and dysfunctionality of a matriarchal family. The novel tells the story of a controlling and mentally unstable matriarch, Adora, and the trauma endured by her daughters,

Camille, Amma and their dead sister Marian, at the hands of their mother. There are two parallel stories of dead girls in this novel. Firstly, we hear about the killing of two young girls, Amma's friends Natalie and Ann, who were brutally tortured and killed. It turns out that Amma, the youngest daughter of the Crellin family, is the one who has committed these murders. The fact that Amma, a victim of her own mother, turns out to be a murderer, reveals a cycle of trauma and violence. Secondly, there is the mysterious death of Marian, Adora's daughter, which is revealed not to be due to an illness, as is believed by people in the town; rather the young girl was poisoned and slowly killed by her own mother. This meeting point between violence, trauma and the female body points to a larger discourse that delineates the missing/dead female narrative and underlines a common culture "of the atrocity exhibition, in which people wear their damage like badges of identity, or fashion accessories" (Seltzer 1998: 2).

Flynn's story exposes the monstrous mother that stands behind the violence the female characters face and cause, and explores the effects of this mother on those around her, especially young girls. Flynn also twists the dead girl victim narrative often found in crime fiction by shedding light on her complex female characters who often cross the line from victimhood to transgression and criminality. *Sharp Objects* thus paints dark and disagreeable images of the mother as well as her daughters, who are both victims and perpetrators of violence. The depiction of the monstrous malevolent mother in Flynn's story shows the link between femininity and violence on the one hand, and trauma on the other. The monstrous mother is Adora Crellin, a wealthy aristocratic southern lady who also suffers from Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy. This is a disorder where the "caregiver", as the nurse at the pediatric ward at the hospital where Adora's daughter Marian died explains, is "*almost always* the mother" and she deliberately "makes her child ill to get attention for herself. You got Munchausen, you make yourself sick to get attention. You got MBP, you make your child sick to show what a kind, doting mommy you are" (Flynn 2006: 228, emphasis in original). It is something, she continues, "a wicked fairy queen would do" (228), and considering Adora's money and social class, it seems that she embodies that role of the wicked fairy queen. Adora's first target was Marian, whom the mother showered with attention, care and love only when the child was sick: "Marian is such a doll when she's ill, she dotes on me and wants me with her all the time. I love wiping away her tears" (242). Adora was obsessed with her daughter's illness and kept a diary in which she documented Marian's illness and how the doctors were impressed with her as a mother saying that she "was an angel and that every child should have a mother like me" (242). Adora's diary entry after Marian died shows this intense obsession with her daughter and death itself: "Marian is dead. I couldn't stop. I've lost 12 pounds and am skin and bones. Everyone's been incredibly kind" (242).

Through Camille's narration, readers see the effects of Adora's destructive motherhood. Camille narrates the episodes of Marian's illness and her mother's obsession with her sister. In contrast, Camille recalls her mother's neglect and coldness towards her, which seemingly shaped her upbringing and her mental state. Camille has always resented her mother, and they have a tense relationship. Adora admits that "I've decided today to stop caring for Camille and focus on Marian" (Flynn 2006: 242). Camille was not a "good patient —being sick only makes her angry and spiteful" according to the mother, who then adds that Camille "doesn't like me to touch her […] I hate her" (242). Adora's open admission of hate towards her own child can be viewed in light of the mother's mental state and the broken mother-daughter relationship. In this regard, Camille recalls a story of her roommate's mother bringing her daughter safety pins in case she needed them. Camille's reaction was that of surprise before a kind gesture offered by a mother to her daughter: "Mine phoned once a month and always asked the same practical questions (grades, classes, upcoming expenses)" (96).

In keeping with this, Camille is shown to suffer from a severe trauma after repressing a lot of painful memories from her childhood, especially the trauma of losing her sister Marian at the hand of their mother. The narrative illustrates the failure of the processing of her trauma; Camille is haunted by her past and her pain is literally painted on her body. She cuts herself and admits: "I am a cutter […] Also a snipper, a slicer, a carver, a jabber […] I have a purpose. My skin, you see, screams" (60). She uses her mother's steak knife to inflict pain. Describing her first cutting experience when she was just thirteen years old, she carved the word "wicked" into her skin and felt that cutting is "like a child along red imaginary lines. Cleaning myself. Digging in deeper. Cleaning myself […] Wicked. Relief" (60). Camille embodies words literally and the words on her body become her main narrative, a vehicle for whatever attempts to escape language and expression —her trauma. For female characterization in Flynn's text, trauma is the trigger behind the mystery of the girls' murders. Moreover, Camille's troubling relationship with her mother is the cause behind her trauma and self-harm. When Adora sees her daughter's scarred body on a shopping trip to get a dress for a party, instead of sympathy and compassion for her daughter's pain, the mother shows resentment and anger: "Oh, dear God […] Look what you've done to yourself […] I hope you just loved it. I hope you can stand yourself" (121).

Adora needs to be at the center of her daughters' lives and assume control over them to the point of suffocation and death. She seeks attention and love from her daughters but she takes loving and caring for her children to the extreme. What Camille describes as her mother's "voraciousness about children" is not separate from the violence and control that she exhibits (Flynn 2006: 96). Camille tells a

177

story from her childhood of watching her mother interact with a baby of a family friend at their house. Adora was "staring at the child almost lasciviously" and then she pressed her lips "hard against the baby's apple slice of a cheek" and "took a tiny bit of flesh between her teeth, and gave it a little bite" (97). Camille describes her reaction saying that even as a child she felt "a jealousy, a resentment" towards her mother (96). It is a negative and obsessive image of motherhood, one defined by Adora's admission that "[she] couldn't stop" (242).

It is thus clear that the Crellin household is matriarchal and governed by the tyranny of Adora. Adora has all the power in the household while her husband, Camille's stepfather (Alan Crellin), has no voice. The most complicated aspect in this family, however, is Adora's conflicting relationship with her daughters. While she is cold and even cruel to Camille, she showers Amma with love and affection. Gradually, the narrative illustrates the reasons behind this behavior. While Camille rebels, Amma plays along with her mother, she lets her mother give her the medication that makes her sick yet she also revels in the attention she is given. Throughout the story Camille is presented as a puzzle; she is full of conflicting feelings towards her mother, her family and even the whole town. She refuses to end up like her sister Marian, another "dead girl", and turns her pain, anger, and frustration towards her mother inwards. Her body is a full canvas of her traumatic past, while it also speaks to the present as readers come to view her relationship with her sister Amma and her reunion with her mother when she returns to her hometown.

In the case of Amma's traumatized self, following Miller's theories, Adora is "a girl-woman who occupies an ambiguous space between appearances of innocence and expressions" (2019: 10), while Amma oscillates between the roles of a child victim and a ruthless killer —an angel at home and a devil in the streets. Amma plays the role of the "little doll" for her mother: "I wear this for Adora. When I'm home, I'm her little doll" (Flynn 2006: 43), letting the doting mother pamper her but also make her sick. Amma soaks up the attention that her mother gives and feels contentment. Yet "such childish things" are "left at home" (77), and Amma transforms in not only the way she dresses and behaves but she also turns into a killer outside the house. Amma, in the public sphere, metamorphoses from a doll in a sundress to "a miniskirt, platform sandals, and a tube top" (77), and she exchanges the dollhouse that she plays with at home for alcohol, sex and a gang.

The sexualization of the child exposes the dysfunctional family and the harm that Amma suffers under her mother's hand, but it also reveals the doubling in her personality. The two faces of Amma —a child and an over sexualized girl— disclose the fissure in her psyche and the trauma that lies behind her dissociative behavior. It is the trauma of being a victim of her mother's constant manipulation, which is

soon translated into violence. The relationship between Amma and her mother is at the heart of the argument that Flynn's thriller relies on the morbid relationship between a mother and her daughters to emphasize the two competing narratives of the malevolent mother and the missing/dead girl, which in turn highlights the tie between femininity and violence exposed in this novel.

Moreover, the temporal fluidity in Flynn's story shows how the female characters navigate their reality. The story moves smoothly between the past and present, which creates more tension around the murder mystery of the two dead girls, and at the same time underlines the trauma and the complex family history of the female characters. Readers see the details of the crimes unfold through Camille's eyes in the story. She demystifies and resolves the mystery of the murders and brings attention to the conflicting facets of femininity, victimhood and power. In the end, the answer to the puzzle of the dead girls and the trauma within the Crellin family is the monstrous mother. As Camille states,

> Sometimes I think illness sits inside every woman, waiting for the right moment to bloom. I have known so many sick women all my life. Women with chronic pain, with ever-gestating diseases. Women with conditions [...] Women get consumed. (Flynn 2006: 204)

179

Therefore, in presenting "a lineage of disturbed women", *Sharp Objects* focuses on femininity in a display that reveals a tension between public "performance" and "private deviance" (Miller 2019: 9). Femininity in the novel is closely related to criminality and monstrosity. The text highlights female monstrosity as the source of all the disturbing events in town. Although Adora's daughters are victims of their mother's Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy and had to undergo an unstable upbringing and the death of a sibling, the novel also suggests that there is a mirroring between the mother and her daughters. Flynn establishes Amma as a "monstrous double of the mother" (Thornham 2015: 55), as both Amma and Adora killed girls, while Amma herself is the product of her mother's abusive upbringing. This replication complicates the demarcation lines between victimhood and criminality on the one hand, and victimhood and agency on the other. Is the thirteen-year-old child, Amma, responsible for her criminal actions? The answer to the question, though not clear, may be seen through the dynamics of transgression and dominance in relation to femininity at play in the text.

Through a family full of dysfunction and destruction, Flynn brings to the fore the origin of female monstrosity and dissects the inner workings of femininity and motherhood in this narrative. The story reveals generational hatred and damage in the family structure. Adora says to Camille "I think I finally realized why I don't love you [...] You remind me of my mother Joya. Cold and distant and so, so smug" (Flynn 2006: 148). Then Adora goes into her own history to confirm that

her mother "never loved me, either. And if you girls won't love me, I won't love you" (148). There is a genealogical aspect in the representation of Adora as a mother, as she is the source of the disturbing events that happen within that family. In her article "'Emissaries of Death and Destruction': Reading the Child-as-Killer in *We Need to Talk about Kevin* and *Sharp Objects*", Alyson Miller proposes that Adora is "a wicked source, the product […] of a conflicted maternal heritage" (2019: 10). Through this child killer, Flynn's novel also presents the case of an "internalization of the regulatory practices of patriarchy" where Amma's monstrosity is an "extreme version" of a "patriarchal logic that seeks to annihilate […] the presence of the 'other'" (9). Amma, as part of an "ancestry of monstrous women" and a "biological destiny of evil" represents an "iteration of the dominant culture" (9). That is, the murders that Amma commits can be viewed through the lens of misogynistic violence, as they involve not only torturing and killing girls but also silencing them (taking out their teeth and keeping them as trophies) and discarding their bodies. Amma's motive for committing these horrific murders is jealousy; she was jealous of the attention that her mother was giving to these girls, but it is also clear that the abuse that Amma endured under her mother's hand has turned into rage and violence.

Amma thus turns into a ruthless killer and becomes obsessed with killing. When she pulls the girls' teeth, Amma uses them to decorate her dollhouse, for its marble floor. The dollhouse itself becomes more than a child's game to Amma. It is the site of violence, a site of the trophies of her murders. The dollhouse, an exact replica of the Crellin household with the exact same design and color scheme, holds the secrets of family suffering and trauma. Talking to her sister, Amma describes the dollhouse as her "fancy", and Camille cannot help but notice that the "words floated out of her mouth sweet and round like butterscotch, […] but the phrase was definitely my mother's. Her little doll, learning to speak just like Adora" (Flynn 2006: 43). The dollhouse shows the child in Amma, yet it also reveals a dark and malevolent side of the thirteen-year-old girl that mirrors her mother's monstrosity.

The symbolism of dolls that runs throughout the narrative confirms the pathology that dictates female characterization in the book. It is not merely associated with Amma, but the image of Adora as a "doll" is constantly invoked in the story. The motif of dolls is indicative of the construction of femininity in this narrative on the one hand, and the friction between motherhood and childhood on the other. Adora, the mother, is presented as girlish, even childish, in the way she dresses and acts. She is "like a girl's very best doll, the kind you don't play with" (Flynn 2006: 24). The reference to Adora in terms of a doll infantilizes her and highlights her obsession with children; she loves her image as a perfect lady and hostess, but more

than anything she is obsessed with her role as a mother. It is worth mentioning that this image of Adora as a doll also stands parallel to Amma's obsession with the dollhouse, which is ultimately tied to criminality.

In conclusion, we can agree that both Adora and Amma are responsible for killing young girls. By the end of the book, it is confirmed that the presence of Adora as a pathological mother is ubiquitous. When the mystery of the two murdered girls is resolved, fingers are pointed not just at Amma but also at her mother as the reason behind the thirteen-year-old's criminal behavior. The ending brings the two narratives of the dead girl and the monstrous mother together by situating the frightening matriarch against her murderous daughter. By so doing, Flynn challenges the stereotypes of women by creating female characters, a mother and a daughter, who "slip in and between the regulations of a binary in which women are identified as virgins or whores" and "subvert the conventions of feminine social codes" (Miller 2019: 10).

Amy Dunne Writes her *Gone Girl* Narrative

Gone Girl features Amy Dunne who, when the book begins, is missing. The story follows her disappearance and the investigation that centers on her husband, Nick, as the prime suspect for her presumed murder. The second part of the book, however, reveals that Amy masterminded her own disappearance and fabricated a story about her death in order to frame her husband as a punishment for his infidelity. The novel tackles failure in love, relationships, marriage and family, as it exposes the cycles of betrayal and revenge, especially between a husband and a wife. By presenting a vengeful female protagonist, the novel highlights again the connection between female criminality and dysfunctional family dynamics established via the missing/dead girl narrative.

Like *Sharp Objects*, this novel focuses on a complex female protagonist who does harm to her loved ones. *Gone Girl*, however, does not rely on a mother-daughter relationship as the primary plotline; rather, Amy herself represents the malevolent mother and the missing/dead girl. She pretends to be pregnant using her supposed pregnancy as a means to frame Nick for murder and, in the end, to guarantee his silence and make sure that he stays married to her despite his hesitation. Amy herself represents both narratives of the malevolent mother and the dead girl in a manner that, like *Sharp Objects*, brings trauma and dysfunctional families to the fore. Hence, the text displays the close connection between female transgression and criminality on the one hand, and the portrayal of dysfunctional motherhood on the other. Amy, through her compelling characterization and her ambiguous portrayal as an unreliable narrator, plays multiple roles in the narrative. This

character deliberately confuses the reader regarding her victimhood and her implication in serious crimes; she takes on the active roles of the narrator, mother, wife, victim, criminal, and missing/dead woman.

Amy is full of contradictions. While she rejects the role of the wife, she clings to being Nick's spouse at the end, and the narrative ends where it started: Nick and Amy are married within a turbulent relationship. Moreover, she is at odds with her persona of "Amazing Amy", the character in a successful children's book series written by her psychologist parents and inspired by Amy herself as a child. Amy detested the attention she received as a child due to the success of the Amazing Amy books, yet when she stages her disappearance as an adult she carefully crafts the image of a victimized wife, demonstrating that she really wants to be front page news. Amy lies and deceives others by playing certain roles and adopting personas to suit her purposes. For example, at the end of the story, she assumes the role of the victim again: she fabricates the story of being abducted, abused and raped at the hands of her ex-boyfriend Desi Collings, whom she actually killed, and she uses the victim card again as a comeback story to return to her town. Then, she has one more persona, "an absolute hero" who saved herself and Nick. She is "officially in control of [their] story", which Amy says is "wonderfully symbolic" of her marriage (Flynn 2012: 380, 406). These multiple facets of Amy and the "awful fairy-tale reverse transformation" (49), reveal her ability to create different personas to suit her purposes. She is relentless when it comes to fulfilling her goals and ultimately does not hesitate to resort to crime to express her voice and write her own "Gone Girl" story. In addition to this, Amy uses motherhood as a means of manipulation to achieve her goal of revenge. Like Adora, Amy twists and subverts those social perceptions around motherhood that usually revolve around love, selflessness and sacrifice. Although readers do not see her as a mother in the text, Amy's ploy of using pregnancy is important to the ending of the book in terms of displaying Amy's capability of transgressing social norms and disrupting commonly accepted constructions of femininity and motherhood.

In this novel, the link between criminality and motherhood is woven through Amy's narrative of being missing and/or dead. Amy pretends to be pregnant as she disappears so as to increase people's sympathy for her and thus complete her revenge plan. She writes a diary before she disappears with the intention of framing Nick, and she deliberately fakes an identity that sketches her as a victimized pregnant wife. In this diary, she points out that "now might be the right time. To start a family. Try to get pregnant. I know it's crazy […] I have become the crazy woman who wants to get pregnant because it will save her marriage" (Flynn 2012: 187). Amy, while portraying herself as a wife longing for motherhood, simultaneously writes of Nick's rejection of the idea of having children as follows:

"Now? Now is about the worst time to start a family, which makes him unlikeable and even spiteful" (187). Amy formulated a specific image that would grant her dominance and give her the upper hand while demonizing Nick. However, from Nick's perspective, he narrates that "I whispered the words, Let's do this Amy, let's have a baby —and she said no… just not something she was interested in anymore" (295). The novel is narrated by Amy and Nick, who both turn out to be unreliable narrators. Flynn's book starts with Nick narrating the story of Amy's disappearance just before their fifth wedding anniversary, and we hear Amy's narration through her diary entries. It is not until the second part that we discover that Amy is alive and that they are both lying. Flynn uses the contrasts between the two points of view to flesh out her protagonists' flaws. The two contradictory narratives about Amy's pregnancy and the consequent ambiguity are part of this narrative's mystery. The narration in the hands of Flynn, as it oscillates between Amy and Nick's voices, plays a significant part in portraying gender roles as well as muddying the truth about the missing/dead girl plotline.

The discovery that Amy's diary was fabricated by Amy herself, however, casts more doubts on Amy as a victim in the framework of the missing/dead girl story, while at the same time it challenges the social expectations for readers about female victimization. The diary itself is used throughout the novel as a narrative device that undermines and simultaneously confirms female authorship and voice. Amy is aware of the effect that the diary can produce when the police and her community read it, "like it's some sort of Gothic tragedy" (Flynn 2012: 238). The second part of the book starts with the shocking discovery that Amy is alive and she is the one behind an elaborate revenge plan. The second part starts with these words: "I'm so much happier now that I'm dead. Technically, missing. Soon to be presumed dead. But as shorthand, we'll say dead" (219). Now the dead girl narrative is completely rewritten by Amy herself, it changes her image from a victim to a victimizer, and she maximizes the dead girl narrative transforming "Diary Amy" —a "wonderful, good-hearted woman"— into a work of fiction to achieve the image of an abused mother-to-be who "chooses the wrong mate and *pays the ultimate price*" (238, emphasis in original).

After she returns from being missing, Amy uses Nick's semen, which they had saved in a fertility clinic, to impregnate herself when she is threatened by Nick's decision to write a memoir that he wanted to use to expose Amy's lies. Amy forces Nick to destroy his memoir by threatening him with his unborn child. Once again, Amy uses motherhood as a weapon in her fraught relationship with Nick. She exploits Nick's weakness in their "family-values town" against his plan to divorce her. She thus confirms that he "would never [get a divorce] now, not Good Guy Nick […] believe he's the kind of guy who'd abandon his wife and child", and the

novel closes with an image of a future family life where Nick would "stay and suffer with [Amy]" (Flynn 2012: 204). Amy plays on the fantasy of the pregnant woman, and what it represents in society: "Americans like what is easy, and it's easy to like pregnant women —they're like ducklings or bunnies or dogs" (258). She eventually succeeds in turning the fantasy into reality when she gets pregnant, and the novel ends with her close to her due date. What sounds like a perfect family on the outside is a rather grim reality on the inside, one that points to a dysfunctional marriage and family. At the end of the novel, Amy explains that she is writing her memoir while expecting a baby with Nick:

> You can read more about my thoughts on love in Amazing. Out soon! But first: motherhood. The due date is tomorrow. Tomorrow happens to be our anniversary […] It's so strange to think: A year ago today, I was undoing my husband. Now I am almost done reassembling him. (414)

While the novel is centered on Amy, her revenge and her position within the social institutions of marriage and family are crucial to the psychological construction of Flynn's female protagonist. Amy and Nick's relationship is governed by power dynamics that feed on lies and deception, and it is within this framework that the associations between female criminality and victimhood, on the one hand, and family and motherhood, on the other, are negotiated. There is a class and wealth gap between Amy and Nick which creates a constant tension in their relationship. They seem to be chasing each other just like in the "elaborate treasure hunt" they set up and play on their anniversary every year with one "clue leading to the hiding place of the next clue until [he] reached the end, and [his] present" (Flynn 2012: 18). Nick borrows money from Amy to open a bar after he loses his job but he insists on paying her back "with interest because 'he would not be a man who borrowed from his wife'" (7). Nick's masculine anxieties are not confined to the financial aspect in his relationship with Amy. There is also the sexist baggage he carries from a misogynistic father who was "wounded, vengeful" and who "just didn't like women" (60). Through Amy and Nick, *Gone Girl* offers a critique of the state of marriage and family in American society. It debunks the mythology of the perfect family and couple. Amy, through the narrative of her fake disappearance and presumed death and the consequent suspense that results in Nick's involvement in the investigation, also rewrites the story of family and marriage, which here relies on revenge and greed instead of love, companionship, and devotion. This cynicism around the institutions of family and marriage is summed up by Amy's confirming that love should be conditional —"if love has no boundaries, no limits, no conditions, why should anyone try to do the right thing ever?" (414).

Flynn in *Gone Girl* also creates a narrative about a woman's struggles to accept her

role as a wife and her identity as a married woman without a career in a small town, and the road to transgression and violence. It is not merely pure evil that motivates Amy to go the lengths she went to with such careful planning and cunning to frame Nick. It is also a story of the misfit Amy who tries and often fails to please those around her. Amy repeatedly states that she is unhappy not only in her marriage but also in her life. Since she was a child Amy has been under the pressure of "Amazing Amy". She writes, "My parents have always worried that I'd take Amy too personally" and explains that "I can't fail to notice that whenever I screw something up, Amy does it right: When I finally quit violin at age twelve, Amy was revealed as a prodigy in the next book" (Flynn 2012: 26). Thus, she writes her own missing/dead girl narrative and then she writes her rebirth story. Crime, a primary element in Amy's narrative, is not confined to a mere mystery or whodunit to be solved; it is more tied to female characterization. That is, in Flynn's psychological thriller the focus is on the female character's psychology and her complicated motivations for faking her death and fabricating an elaborate story to frame her husband.

The divide between the persona of the perfect "Amazing Amy" and the murderous Amy creates the tension behind the mystery of Amy's story and allows for the missing/dead girl narrative to operate in the book. The literary doppelgänger of "Amazing Amy" from her childhood is an embodiment of the perfect childish image that the real Amy dislikes. As an adult, Amy maintains the role of the popular "cool girl" in her marriage. This is a façade that Amy in fact dislikes but uses to hide her revenge plans against Nick. In a revealing monologue, Amy talks about the "cool girl", a construction that appeals to men and one that relies on emphasized femininity:[5] "I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinks cheap beer" (Flynn 2012: 222). Cool girls, while maintaining "size 2", are "[h]ot and understanding", they also never get angry, and "only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want" (222). Although Amy plays the role of the "cool girl" in her marriage to fit in with her husband and people in the small town, she resents this model of femininity, and her words clearly criticize the limited construction that confines women to this formula. As Eva Burke maintains:

> Amy has moved from Cool Girl to Gone Girl, from one archetypal embodiment, the acquiescent female, a co-conspirator in her own marginalisation, to another: the victimised or missing woman, a paradigmatic void of sorts into which anything can be, and frequently is, projected […] she is unable to escape the often stifling symbolic confines of femininity in spite of her machinations. (2018: 73-74)

By choosing to write her own disappearance story, Amy is also rewriting her cool girl persona to make room for a new face, albeit not a truthful one, to be displayed through absence —a victimized pregnant wife who is in reality neither pregnant

nor a victim. Although Amy does not escape what Burke calls the "stifling symbolic confines of femininity", through the missing/dead girl persona she enjoys the freedom to reject and rebel against these confines (2018: 74). Amy states that, once she let Nick see the "Real Amy" who was "so much better, more interesting and complicated and challenging, than Cool Amy" (Flynn 2012: 225), Nick rejected this real Amy. She points out that the "hating began" when she showed her "soulmate" her "true self" and he nonetheless rejected her (225). Of the multiple personas that Amy embodies, the role of the criminal stands as the extreme opposite to that of the good wife and the cool girl. Criminal Amy also subverts the confines of sexist notions and constructions of women's identities.

The book reveals how Amy reinvents and situates herself as the heroine of the missing/dead girl story who is in this case the other face of the criminal Amy. When Amy writes her own missing/dead girl narrative, which turns out to be unreliable and untruthful, it becomes the locus of her agency. She is the one in control of her story through which she manipulates not only the police investigation but also the media coverage, using the diary and the crumbs of evidence she left behind to help convict Nick. This "Gone Girl" narrative which centers on Amy's disappearance is an effective part of the thriller plot. Amy weaves a convincing, though deceptive, narrative of her murder at the hand of a jealous husband, and by so doing she recreates her own story of female transgression, and at the same time, she regains her agency. Amy's "exploitation of certain well-worn feminine tropes" offers space to fill in her identity gaps and "interpret her silences accordingly" (Burke 2018: 73). Amy makes an impact through absence, her "non-presence in the narrative of her own undoing is an irrefutable statement" confirming "an inability or unwillingness to verbalise an implicit indictment of Nick" (Burke 2018: 73). In a missing/dead wife narrative, the husband is usually the antagonist. It is "*always the husband* [...] *Everyone knows it's always the husband*" when a woman is missing or killed (Flynn 2012: 43, emphasis in original). Amy writes about Nick as a potential murderer and the media plays the "*Missing Wife game!*" (42, emphasis in original). In her fabricated diary, Amy describes how she caught him looking at her with "those watchful eyes, the eyes of an insect, pure calculation, and I think: *This man might kill me*" (205, emphasis in original). The narrative of the female victim, which feeds on male violence, is twisted and the trajectory of the husband as the only one wholly responsible for the violence is re-evaluated. Using a formulaic narrative of a terrified missing pregnant wife with fingers pointing towards the husband, Flynn subverts crime narrative conventions by making Amy the perpetrator and the agent. She is the one in control of her and Nick's story. Although Nick is guilty of infidelity, he is trapped in the missing/dead wife narrative where the wife herself is the perpetrator. He is situated within a crime story that often relies on images of victimized broken female bodies, but

in this case, the book problematizes the notion of female victimization.

The various conflicting facets at play in the text cement the competing narratives that center on Amy. There is Amy the meek and victimized wife and mother-to-be, as we see her in her diary, and there is the manipulative avenger Amy of the second part of the book. These two Amys —the adoring wife/mother *versus* the missing/ dead avenger— illustrate the blurred lines between these contrasting images, and Flynn destabilizes these narratives by confounding the conventions that frame their representations.

Conclusion

Gillian Flynn's *Sharp Objects* and *Gone Girl* succeed in destabilizing the links between femininity and victimhood by presenting women like Adora and Amy who undermine the image of the good wife/mother. By so doing, Flynn's thrillers challenge the societal prescribed roles of "serving an image, authoritative and central, of man: a woman is first and foremost a daughter/a mother/a wife" (Felman 1993: 21). By confusing and sometimes conflating the roles of the victim/criminal, Flynn's two novels undermine and destabilize the certainty and urgency around the constructions of the female criminal, for example, stereotypes such as the evil seductress, the sexual predator, the prostitute, and the murderess. This opens an avenue to reevaluate the thriller genre conventions, especially in relation to feminism and the feminist project within crime fiction.[6] The two competing narratives of the dead girl and the malevolent mother, told through the medium of a thriller, establish parallel narratives of the conjunction between female crime and trauma and between femininity and violence. Trauma is central to the female characterization and these narratives; it is tied to the female body and "the atrocity exhibition" of broken bodies and violence at the heart of Flynn's novels. In *Sharp Objects*, the trauma the sisters encounter at the hand of their mother dictates not only the plot and the mystery of the dead girls, but it is the key to the resolution of the murders when the perpetrator (Amma) is revealed. In *Gone Girl*, however, trauma occupies a less central position and is more tied to the dysfunctionality of the marriage institution, the violence and Amy's unreliable narrative. Ultimately, Flynn's thrillers paint an intriguing dark picture of femininities with contrasting manifestations of victimhood against agency where traumatized females are set against vengeful ones and missing/dead females are positioned against murderous ones.

187

Notes

1. Andrew Scull points out that "Pathological Mommies" make frequent appearances in film and fiction, especially after World War II. He also contends that much of psychoanalytic theory is related to the family, particularly the mother, and analysts accuse American mothers of being the source of an "expanding array of illnesses and debility, and even a threat to the health of the nation" (2016: 342).

2. Many studies suggest that motherhood is connected to notions of femininity, and women's gender identity is defined by mothering. For example, see Glenn (1994) and McMahon (1995).

3. The parthenogenetic archaic mother, according to Creed, is useful for gaining understanding of the patriarchal ideology that denies difference. It is worth mentioning that the notion of the archaic mother originated in psychoanalysis, especially in Julia Kristeva's work. According to Kristeva, the fear of the archaic mother is considered through the lens of the "fear of her generative power" (in Creed 1993: 43).

4. The primary concern of crime narratives, especially feminist crime fiction, is violence against women. For example, Adrienne E. Gavin argues that women in crime narratives are victims, "captured, raped, murdered, butchered and in the hands of forensic detectives dissected into evidence", which eventually voices a protest against gendered violence (2010: 268).

5. Emphasized femininity, as R.W. Connell argues, is a pattern of femininity that is defined according to women's "compliance and subordination", it is "oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men" (1987: 183). Emphasized femininity highlights how women contribute to their own victimization and marginalization in a patriarchal hierarchy. The notion of emphasized femininity thus brings about gender roles that rely on loving nurturing mothers and domestic women. For more on emphasized femininity, see also Schippers (2007).

6. For more information on the link between feminism and crime fiction, see Irons (1995) and Munt (1994).

Works Cited

BOLIN, Alice. 2018. *Dead Girls: Essays on Surviving an American Obsession*. New York: Harper Collins.

BRAIDOTTI, Rosi. 1997. "Mothers, Monsters, and Machines". In Conboy, Katie, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury (eds.) *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia U.P.: 59-79.

BRONFEN, Elisabeth. 2017. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester U.P. DOI: 10.7765/9781526125637

BURKE, Eva. 2018. "From Cool Girl to Dead Girl: *Gone Girl* and the Allure of Female Victimhood". In Joyce, Laura and Henry Sutton (eds.) *Domestic Noir*. Palgrave Macmillan: 71-86. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-69338-5_5

CONNELL, R.W. 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.

CREED, Barbara. 1993. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203820513

Douglas, Susan and Meredith Michaels. 2004. *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined Women.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Felman, Shoshana. 1993. *What Does a Woman Want? Reading and Sexual Difference.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P.

Flynn, Gillian. 2006. *Sharp Objects.* Broadway Books.

Flynn, Gillian. 2012. *Gone Girl: A Novel.* Broadway Books.

Gavin, Adrienne E. 2010. "Feminist Crime Fiction and Female Sleuths". In Rzepka, Charles J. and Lee Horsley (eds.) *A Companion to Crime Fiction.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell: 258-269. DOI: 10.1002/9781444317916

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1994. "Social Constructions of Mothering: A Thematic Overview". In Glenn, Evelyn Nakano, Grace Chang and Linda Rennie Forcey (eds.) *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency.* New York: Routledge: 1-29.

Irons, Glenwood. (ed.) 1995. *Feminism in Women's Detective Fiction.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ladd-Taylor, Molly and Lauri Umansky. (eds.) 1998. "Introduction". In *"Bad" Mothers: The Politics of Blame in Twentieth-Century America.* New York: New York U.P.: 1-28.

McMahon, Martha. 1995. *Engendering Motherhood: Identity and Self-Transformation in Women's Lives.* New York: Guilford Press.

Miller, Alyson. 2019. "'Emissaries of Death and Destruction': Reading the Child-as-Killer in *We Need to Talk about Kevin* and *Sharp Objects*". *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 60 (4): 1-14. DOI: 10.1080/00111619.2019.1608150

Munt, Sally Rowena. 1994. *Murder by the Book? Feminism and the Crime Novel.* London: Routledge.

Schippers, Mimi. 2007. "Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony". *Theory and Society* 3 (1): 85-102. DOI: 10.1007/s11186-007-9022-4

Scull, Andrew. 2016. *Madness in Civilization.* London: Thames and Hudson. DOI: 10.1515/9781400865710

Seltzer, Mark. 1998. *Serial Killers: Death and Life in America's Wound Culture.* New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203700143

Thornham, Sue. 2015. "'A Hatred so Intense…' *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, Postfeminism and Women's Cinema". *Revista Lusófona de Estudos Culturais* 3 (1): 43-63.

189

METAFICTIONAL PREDESTINATION IN MURIEL SPARK'S *THE DRIVER'S SEAT*

LA PREDESTINACIÓN METAFICTICIA EN *THE DRIVER'S SEAT,* DE MURIEL SPARK

CARLOS VILLAR FLOR
Universidad de La Rioja
carlos.villar@unirioja.es

ANA ALTEMIR GIRAL
CULM – Universidad de Zaragoza
anyepa@unizar.es

Abstract

Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat* is a radical metafictional experiment, suggesting the inexorable connections between contingency and a predetermined plot which are so common to many Sparkian novels. Following Marina MacKay's perception that Spark's experimental narrative operates "in the conceptual space where the more abstract preoccupations of Roman Catholic theology overlap with the metafictional and fabulist concerns of postmodernism" (2008: 506), this essay will discuss how the notion of predestination reverberates in *The Driver's Seat*, not only as a remnant of Spark's Presbyterian education but also as a postmodern re-visitation of classical tragedy in a metafictional key. Spark's preference for predetermined plots may echo a long philosophical and theological discussion spanning many centuries about free will and predestination, particularly intense in the times of the Protestant Reformation, but it also reflects the sense of predestination as a necessary ingredient of classical tragedy. In *The Driver's Seat* Spark deliberately brought to the fore some conventions of Aristotelian tragedy, although she approached them through an experimental subversion ultimately resorting to comedy and ridicule, on Spark's own admission her weapons for the only possible art form. Our contention is that the metafictional implications of *The Driver's Seat*'s prolepses undermine a Calvinist-like certainty concerning predestined salvation or damnation. By using a partial narrator only capable of

producing limited accounts, Spark may be playing with an experimental and essentially postmodern interpretive openness which is in tune with the ultimate uncertainty about each individual's eternal salvation that is commonly accepted in Catholic thought.

Keywords: Muriel Spark, *The Driver's Seat*, metafiction, predestination.

Resumen

The Driver's Seat, de Muriel Spark, es un experimento radical de metaficción que plantea las inexorables conexiones entre lo contingente y una trama predeterminada, tan comunes en muchas novelas de Spark. Siguiendo la percepción de Marina MacKay de que la narrativa experimental de Spark opera en un espacio conceptual donde las preocupaciones abstractas de la teología católica se solapan con los desarrollos metaficticios y fabulistas del posmodernismo, este ensayo plantea cómo la noción de predestinación resuena en *The Driver's Seat*, no sólo como retazo de la educación presbiteriana de Spark, sino también como una revisión posmoderna de la tragedia clásica en clave de metaficción. La preferencia de Spark por tramas predeterminadas se hace eco del amplio debate filosófico y teológico multisecular acerca del libre albedrío y la predestinación, particularmente intenso en los tiempos de la Reforma Protestante, si bien el concepto de predestinación también es un ingrediente necesario de la tragedia clásica. En *The Driver's Seat*, Spark recurre deliberadamente a ciertas convenciones de la tragedia aristotélica, aunque las aborda mediante la subversión experimental que en último término recurre a la comedia y al ridículo, sin duda las armas de Spark para la única forma posible de arte. Mantenemos que las implicaciones metaficticias de las prolepsis de *The Driver's Seat* socavan la certeza calvinista respecto a la salvación o condenación predestinadas. Al utilizar un narrador parcial que solo puede generar relatos limitados, Spark podría estar jugando con cierta apertura interpretativa, experimental y esencialmente posmoderna, en consonancia con la incertidumbre acerca de la salvación eterna de cada individuo comúnmente aceptada por el pensamiento católico.

Palabras clave: Muriel Spark, *The Driver's Seat*, metaficción, predestinación.

1. Introduction: Spark's Favourite Novel

Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat* (1970) is a radical metafictional experiment which admits multiple layers of interpretation. Kolocotroni opens her discussion of this novel by compiling the manifold definitions that previous critics have provided,

some of them contradictory: "an 'absurdist' or 'Christian' parable; a 'macabre melodrama'; a 'vision of evil'; a 'study on the art of fiction itself'; a 'compendium' of modernist techniques; a parody of postmodernism; 'a presentation of the unpresentable'; a study of 'urban psychosis', or 'alienation'; a hysterical text" (Kolocotroni 2018: 1545). Spark's favourite novel (Massie 1987: 18; Hosmer 2005: 135), it succeeds as an inversion of the traditional detective story and as an allegory of the trauma of human contingency in a world without attachments or stable relationships. Combining elements reminiscent of the *noveau roman*[1] —"reflexiveness, use of the present tense, minutely detailed description given in a neutral tone, and narrative discontinuity involving the sacrifice of suspense" (Whittaker 1982: 8)—, this short novel tells the story of Lise, a single woman in her mid-thirties from a Northern European country, an employee in an accountant's office, who arranges a holiday trip to Southern Europe for the sole purpose of bringing about her own murder. While creating a "postmodern hyper-real world […] a decade before Jean-François Lyotard" (Sawada 2007: 3), it features the tragedy of a person devoid of emotional bonds, seemingly invisible and vulnerable in a hostile world, who dies a violent death. Lise is one of those Sparkian heroines who seem to have lost touch with a reality with which they are not satisfied, so they make up their own (Estévez-Saá 2007: 105). According to Meyers, she "lacks a 'fixed-point' and thus cannot find meaning in life. Hence she chooses death" (2001: 80).

Frank Kermode, one of the first critics to highlight Spark's godlike authorial stance and "the control of the writer's presumptuous providence" (1992: 180), saw "nothing to remind one of the writer's religious plots" in an early review of *The Driver's Seat* (1970: 426). However, Whittaker believes that Spark provokes "our perception of a divine or a moral plot behind the obvious one, and the interest is heightened by the tension between the two, and how it is resolved" (1982: 91). Hynes defines Spark as a writer who "has faith and believes that there is a reason for what happens, whether we know the reason or not", and who fictionalizes her understanding of the scope of freedom a Catholic has once she is aware of being simply one character in God's plot (1993: 178). Regarding Lise's desperate attempt to write her own destiny, Page observes that to be in the driver's seat is to be "whether literally or metaphorically, in charge. But the very ending of the novel shows that Lise's belief in her capacity for self-determination is no more than a delusion: it is after all God, not man or woman who writes the plot of our lives" (1990: 79). Such religious readings of *The Driver's Seat* have been recently questioned by James Bailey, who confronts those earlier commentators reading Spark "as an author merrily playing God, whose narratives are seen to revel in a capricious cruelty derived from the relative inconsequentiality of human life" (2021: 11). The former approaches, which Bailey regards as "the myth of Spark",

rely on the understanding of Spark (or her narrator) as "God's spy" (Nye 1970: 14; Drabble 2018), or on concerns with "literary theology" (Sage 1992: 142), and may easily lead to a sort of "doctrinal criticism" (McQuillan 2002: 2).

Even though a few recent commentators meritoriously strive to find new directions in Sparkian criticism, such as her works' "formal and generic liminality, self-reflexivity and stylistic experimentation" (Bailey 2021: 26), we are persuaded that a new analysis of *The Driver's Seat* should not preemptively disregard the underlying presence of Christian motifs and aesthetics in a novel that negotiates issues of free will and eschatology in a world which is losing its spiritual sense, and exposes a society devoid of spiritual values in which reality appears contingent and provisional. Furthermore, Haddox believes that through her use of experimental and postmodernist techniques, Spark "is concerned with making religious belief credible to an intellectual audience presumed not to be predisposed to it", and hints that she may be one of those for whom "the pluralistic postmodernity has become 'a supreme opportunity' […] to assert the Christian narrative anew" (Haddox 2009: 46, 60).

Spark's religious upbringing was considerably hybrid (Cheyette 2000: 10). Brought up in Scotland as the daughter of a Jewish father and an Anglican mother, she was educated at a Presbyterian school, the model for the one appearing in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961). In 1954, however, she was received into the Catholic Church (Spark 1992: 202), a spiritual experience that would shape most of her subsequent fiction, as her writing career and her inherent interest in metafiction developed on a par with her religious conversion. As she later admitted, Spark had an enhanced awareness that her actions were being judged by an omnipotent and omnipresent God, and this ultimately caused her to suffer a physical and psychological collapse: "I decided at last to become a Catholic, by which time I really became very ill. I was going about, but I was ready for a breakdown […] I had a feeling while I was undergoing this real emotional suffering that it was all part of the conversion" (Spark 1992: 25). She may have felt the "wound in the mind" that Caruth places at the heart of trauma, "not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature —the way it was precisely not known in the first instance— returns to haunt the survivor later on" (1996: 3).

The uneasy coexistence of Calvinistic and Catholic ethos in Spark's work has already been noted by critics such as David Lodge, who saw in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* a contest between "the Catholic God who allows free will and the Calvinist one who doesn't" (1992: 76). Our contention is that *The Driver's Seat* also displays echoes of Spark's early Presbyterian schooling and its focus on the notion of predestination, which implies belief in an eternal decree or ruling, out of

which God determines what should befall every human being regardless of their worldly actions (Asante 2014: 67). McQuillan, though refractory to "doctrinal" readings, complains that Sparkian criticism "takes little account of [her] Scottish Presbyterian upbringing" (2002: 2). This essay will, therefore, discuss how the notion of predestination reverberates in *The Driver's Seat*, not only as a remnant of Spark's Calvinist education but also as a postmodern re-visitation of classical tragedy in a metafictional key, that is, as "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh 1984: 2). Certainly, Lise's presence in *The Driver's Seat* negotiates the complex ambivalences of the acts of telling and reading, and as protagonist-creator she dramatizes the making of a narrative from the inside out. Roof sees in this novel "a consciousness of telling a story and a consciousness of the story's shape [that] makes telling itself the subject of the novel [...] an uncertainty that lies not in Lise, but in the character of the narration itself" (2002: 53). Again, in the words of Patricia Waugh, "[i]n providing a critique of their own methods of construction, [metafictional] writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text" (1984: 2).

195

2. End-directed: A Victim Looking for a Murderer

Spark's peculiar treatment of metafictional predestination may echo a long philosophical and theological discussion spanning many centuries about free will and predestination, particularly intense in the times of the Protestant Reformation. In his *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas built upon Augustine's theodicy and Aristotle's metaphysics to elaborate his notion that our inherent nature inclines towards goodness and what we believe is good, "forasmuch as man is rational is it necessary that man have a free-will" (Aquinas 2007: 418). Jean Calvin, though influenced by Augustine, went a step further in his discourse on predestination, and his doctrine on this matter left little or no room for free will. Accordingly, God has right from the outset chosen some elected ones to bring into eternal communion with himself, but those who are not "caught by the 'net' of God's grace for salvation are ordained for eternal damnation" (Addai-Mensah 2020: 25). Therefore, all events have been willed by God and no human intentions or behavior may alter his design.

This immovable concept of fate may be reflected in Spark's characteristically predetermined plots. In an early analysis probably influenced by Kermode, Malcolm Bradbury defined Spark's novels as eminently 'end-directed': "no author could be surer about where things are going. From her novels the beginning, which creates

expectation and freedom, and the middle, which substantiates and qualifies it, seem absent" (1973: 248). *The Driver's Seat* employs the present tense to describe Lise's pursuit of a man to murder her, counterpointed by the use of a shocking prolepsis revealing the ending to the reader in the third chapter of the book:

> She will be found tomorrow morning dead from multiple stab-wounds, her wrists bound with a man's necktie in the grounds of an empty villa, in a park of the foreign city to which she is travelling on the flight now boarding at gate 14 (Spark 1970: 25).[2]

If the 'myth of Spark' scholars have often understood this 'end-directedness' by a godlike authorial figure as an allegory of providence or of religious transcendence, for Sawada, however, Spark's worldliness is behind such a choice of narrative structure, and she observes that her attitude to human failing basically amounts to "a lack of expectancy" (2007: 3). In turn, Carruthers perceives that *The Driver's Seat* "presents a story that is almost entirely predetermined […] and so devoid of life, devoid of possibility" (2010: 83). This is consistent with Bradbury's early perception that Spark's "people arise at the last, from the last; what has withered is a world of motive, purpose, aspiration" (1973: 248). Perhaps the horror of *The Driver's Seat* lies not only in Lise's violent murder but also in the drab world from which she wishes to escape, a world deprived of affection and love and ultimately of a sense of caring providence. The "empty villa" in a "foreign country" of the above quotation provides a metonymy for Lise herself: her thoughts and actions are attached to the accomplishment of a narrative that tends to portray her as a victimized, foreign body, and gloomy desolate landscapes reinforce the plight of a doomed character by hinting at her impossible salvation. From the beginning, Lise is introduced as a tortured character attached to a fatalistic plot: "I wish my mother and father had practiced birth-control", she declares (Spark 1970: 82). Sinclair points out that, "[i]nstead of the search for self-knowledge, or for something greater than the self, Lise wants to eliminate herself. Instead of the new life proclaimed by the gospels, Lise seeks her salvation in annihilation" (2000: 223). According to Jean Calvin, "all are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death" (1960: 3.21.5). Lise is thus viewed as one of the damned, one of those whose name is not written in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15). When asked where her home is, Lise just replies, "[n]owhere special. It's written on the passport" (Spark 1970: 57). Her rootlessness and apparent soullessness are reinforced by the narrative strategies emphasizing a lack of identity; the reader is not informed of her background or family, not even of her surname. Such anonymity and insubstantiality also tie in with the

postmodernist understanding of characters as "verbal constructions, words not beings" (Waugh 1984: 26), no longer unified psychological representations with an individual identity.

Page affirms that "unnaturalness is a central theme in this novel, taking many forms from references to synthetic materials such as plastics to unpredictable and violent language and behaviour" (1990: 69). The novel opens in a dress shop where Lise is searching for a suitable dress fitting her demands. The salesgirl offers a dress in a stain-resistant material, but Lise soon rejects it: "Get this thing off me. Off me, at once. […] I won't be insulted!" (Spark 1970: 5). This recreates an inversion of the famous Shakespearean scene when the sleepwalking Lady Macbeth is determined to remove an imaginary bloodstain from her hands. In contrast, Lise is choosing her "final dress" and wants to get it stained with her own blood, with no possibility of its ever being cleaned. Once she is bent on her predetermined fate, there is no possibility of repentance, no openness to a higher redemptive power. Her determination is also reinforced by a macabre practice of collecting evidence for the postmortem investigations. Throughout the novel "she is laying a trail for the police" (Stannard 2009: 366); she argues with her flat's doorkeeper, picks up strangers, buys a book at the airport with a striking cover and holds it up before her wherever she goes, etc. Lise's bizarre behavior and extravagant appearance do not go unnoticed by the rest of the characters, whose disapproval contributes to her isolation. A kind of misrule seems to preside over her actions through her deliberate adoption of the abnormal, while her unnatural behavior questions conventions of free-will and self-understanding.

Lise's affective state is commonly absent from the narrative, though a rare hint of feeling for her father occurs in a particular scene when she has bought several presents for some acquaintances and relatives:

> [Lise] takes a comfortable chair in the soft-lit rest-room and considers, one by one, the contents of her zipper-bag which she lays on a small table beside her. […] She also leaves unopened a soft package containing the neckties, but, having rummaged in her hand-bag for something which apparently is not there, she brings forth the lipstick and with it she writes on the outside of the soft package, "Papa". (Spark 1970: 92)

Although no information on Lise's family has been provided previously, this scene suggests a glimpse of humanity. The neckties she buys for her father are both black, which implies that she may be making arrangements for her funeral: "give me two black ties, they are always useful" (72). This makes sense later in the plot when we are informed that Lise is strangled with a black tie, highlighting the connection between her parental figure and her murderer, who also acts as liberator by freeing her from a miserable existence. But this image may alternatively be connecting two instances of patriarchal oppression through the black neckties. Lise's quest for love is ultimately a longing for death, in which meeting a man

entails finding her own murderer, a masculine figure that will deprive her of any involvement in her final moments and contribute to her further victimization. Such antagonistic identification is consistent with the Sparkian notion of duality, which is reinforced by the presentation of narrative elements following a twofold pattern: two men flank Lise in the plane, two men try to sexually assault her, she buys two neckties and two scarves at the mall, and checks two knives. She also enters two clothes shops and tries two dresses before buying the one she was looking for. A characteristic Sparkian duality also features in the double-sided role of two functional characters in this story, Mrs Fiedke and her nephew Richard.

3. Comforter/Helper and Victim/Perpetrator

"An elderly woman, small, neat and agile in a yellow cotton dress, whose extremely wrinkled face is the only indication of her advanced age, follows Lise to the pavement. She, too, wants a taxi, she says in a gentle voice, and she suggests to Lise that they might share" (Spark 1970: 54). Mrs Fiedke —significantly "a [Jehovah's] Witness" (56)— appears on the stage as a *deus ex machina* to assist Lise in her drab fate, providing a few significant scenes blending metafiction and predestination. She soon adapts herself to Lise's arrangements and they end up spending the day together; while shopping, Mrs Fiedke buys a pair of slippers for her nephew and a paper-knife (72). In Freudian terms, "the slippers and knife are obvious symbols for, respectively, the female and male genitalia, hinting at the final rape" (Page 1990: 75), a foreshadowing which reinforces the sense of doom. According to Whittaker, in this novel "sexual and spiritual fulfilment are made incompatible. The enjoyment of one entails the destruction of the other" (1982: 71). Before finding the 'right man', Lise goes through a sort of training process during which she meets two other men who fail in their attempts to sexually approach her: "I'm not interested in sex", she says to one of them, "I've got other interests and as a matter of fact I've got something on my mind that's got to be done" (Spark 1970: 87). Here the human body is no source of personal pleasure but instead meant for sacrifice and victimisation. For Meyers, "Lise will use the mutilated remains of her body to gain posthumous attention. In short, Lise will create an identity by becoming a victim" (2001: 80). Since her body is presented as commodified and oppressed by others, it could be argued that by engineering her own death she may be reclaiming control over it.

At the end of the former scene, Lise becomes threatening and intimidating for the first time. Indeed, her increasing empowerment in the plot is triggered by her brief encounter with Mrs Fiedke. The description of a scene where both women share a snack at the bar could be felt to have sacramental connotations,[3] and to

reenact a sort of allegorical communion in which Lise and Mrs Fiedke display some warmth and friendliness in the midst of a cold and impersonal atmosphere, after which Lise confesses her terrors to Mrs Fiedke ("I'm terrified of traffic") and makes an ambiguous revelation which is far from comforting. While they have this 'sacramental' snack, perhaps a sign of women's solidarity, Lise makes the relevant declaration that "one should always be kind in case it might be the last chance" (Spark 1970: 58). The idea of an imminent death is insinuated here but is given a metafictional resonance, since death in the novel —the end of fictional existence— is precisely what gives complete sense to Lise's narrative. Just after pronouncing those words, Lise "cuts her sandwich daintily and puts a piece in her mouth" (59). Afterwards, Lise "orders a rainbow ice while Mrs Fiedke considers one way or another whether she really wants anything more, and eventually declines" (59). The rainbow symbol again gives the scene a transcendental undertone, as in the Bible it may represent God's omnipotence and mercy as found in *Genesis*, *Ezekiel* or *Revelation*.[4] However, as Meyers puts it, "[a]lthough Mrs Fiedke contributes to the success of Lise's plan […] Lise's relationship with Mrs Fiedke demonstrates that human contact does not ensure communication, continuity, or connection" (2001: 78-79). Mrs Fiedke's main contribution to the denouement of the plot is introducing her nephew Richard, Lise's would-be murderer: "It is in my mind and I can't think of anything else but that you and my nephew are meant for each other. As sure as anything, my dear, you are the person for my nephew […] poor Richard may be the very man that you are looking for" (Spark 1970: 76). He will soon be given a prominent position in the narrative and will play a major role in the last passages of the novel. As soon as she has done her task, Mrs Fiedke disappears from the plot as mysteriously as she had appeared: "'I ought to take a nap', says Mrs Fiedke, 'so that I won't feel too tired when my nephew arrives'" (79). Curiously enough, Lise will make no further mention of her.

When Lise arrives at her hotel late at night, she finds a mysterious man in the hall and suddenly a sharp revelation is brought to the fore: the man in the dark suit happens to be Mrs Fiedke's nephew, and in this inexorable story where a predestined ending seems to have been agreed in advance, he is going to be both executioner and victim. Initially, Richard seems to be reluctant to acquiesce to the imposed pattern, as he tries to leave the hall, but he ultimately agrees to get into Lise's car, in whose driver's seat she sits:

> "I've been looking for you all day. […] As soon as I saw you this morning I knew that you were the one. You're my type".
> He is trembling. She says, "You were in a clinic. You're Richard. I know your name because your aunt told me".
> He says, "I've had six years' treatment. I want to start afresh". (Spark 1970: 112)

Richard, as well as Lise, seems to have been suffering from some sort of nervous breakdown or mental derangement, the cause of which is insinuated when Lise asked Mrs Fiedke about her nephew's name: "Richard. We never called him Dick. Only his mother, but not us" (Spark 1970: 73). The slang meaning of his nickname, and the fact that only his mother calls him so, may suggest some failure in his personal development related to his inability to overcome the Oedipus complex. We soon know that Richard is a tormented man who gets aroused when assaulting and murdering women. However, at this point in the novel, Lise appears more frightening than him; her plan is more terrible than suicide itself because she is looking for assistance in her own murder and, in so doing, she is not only putting an end to her existence but also to Richard's possibility of rehabilitation. Once Lise has recognized the man she was looking for, she forces him to fit in with the predestined pattern. She gets into the driver's seat, taking control, and leads the action of the plot which will precipitate her fatal ending. Richard sits on the passenger seat as if obliged by an inner force, and shows himself vulnerable and weak as he complies with the dictates of the narrative.[5] At this point it may look as if some secret alliance had been forged between Lise and the implied author, who informs her of some of the intricacies of the narrative, but in this end-directed story all the roles have been prearranged and the deceitful narrative's inverted pattern shifts the focus onto Richard. Significantly, Lise acts as the plotter only to discover at her very end that she was "being plotted". Richard would later claim, as a sort of justification, that "[s]he told me to kill her and I killed her. She spoke in many languages, but she was telling me to kill her all the time. She told me precisely what to do. I was hoping to start a new life" (117). Conversely, Richard is "being plotted" by Lise only to discover at the very end that he can plot himself by changing Lise's plan:

> "Tie my hands first", she says, crossing her wrists. "Tie them with the scarf".
> He ties her hands, and she tells him in a sharp, quick voice to take off his necktie and bind her ankles.
> "No", he says, kneeling over her, "not your ankles".
> "I don't want any sex", she shouts. "You can have it afterwards. Tie my feet and kill, that's all. They will come and sweep it up in the morning".
> All the same, he plunges into her, with the knife poised high.
> "Kill me", she says, and repeats it in four languages.
> As the knife descends to her throat she screams, evidently perceiving how final is finality. (117)

In this disturbing scene Lise realizes that, if everything must comply with the author's will, she is not, and has never been, the real plotter. Her screaming in four languages as her murderer plunges in the knife "is the voice of the outcast, the scapegoat, those shut out of the house but who refuse to be resolved into the convenient harmony and habitus of the one, the group" (Waugh 2018: 1652).

The final authorial intrusion appears as a showy display of power; through a brutal scene of violence, adding rape to murder, the author modifies the end that Lise had scrupulously planned for herself. In a final macabre twist, Richard ironically tries to leave everything as Lise had told him and ties her ankles together as if hiding the rape. After the murder, he "stands staring for a while and then, having started to turn away, he hesitates as if he had forgotten something of her bidding. Suddenly he wrenches off his necktie and bends to tie her ankles together with it" (Spark 1970: 117). This last authorial self-effacement echoes Lise's comment when she recognized the man she was looking for: "'Not really a presence', Lise says. 'The lack of an absence'" (76). Lise experiences the inevitable manifestation of the godlike author and realizes the impossibility of writing her own story within someone else's fictional pattern. She becomes an outcast in her intended plot, one ordained for eternal (metafictional) predestination.

4. Subversion of Classical Tragedy

Even though Calvinism brought the notion into the theological foreground during the 16th-century Reformation, predestination was an integral ingredient of artistic creation from the origins of classical tragedy. Spark once declared of *The Driver's Seat*, "I did the whole thing like a Greek play" (in Massie 1987: 18), and Hosmer claims that this classical inspiration makes it "a deliberately metafictional exercise just as some scenes in Greek tragedies" (2017: 89). In her recent study of death in Greek tragedy, Sorana-Cristina Man (2020) discusses the diffuse edges of violence as evidenced in the fact that external conflicts are a representation of inner ones in a process of mirroring each other, and observes that the border between reality and fiction can also become diffuse. Man discusses how spectators of classical tragedy projected themselves onto the action in a process of identification and self-discovery and projected their own image onto the particular instances of death. She connects this process with the Greek and Latin sense of predestination (Man 2020: 93-100). Significantly, when Richard envisions his imminent arrest and interrogation by the police in the last paragraph of *The Driver's Seat*, Spark's narrator plays with an explicit reference to the classical notion of catharsis:

> He sees already the gleaming buttons of the policemen's uniforms, hears the cold and the confiding, the hot and the barking voices, sees already the holsters and epaulets and all those trappings devised to protect them from the indecent exposure of fear and pity, pity and fear. (Spark 1970: 114-115)

The final phrase resounds like an echo at the ending of the story, aiming to transcend fictional limitations and inviting readers to stand in the place of the protagonist and purge their emotions. Hosmer sees in these lines an Aristotelian

allusion, "an insistent reminder of the cathartic effect of having peered into the abyss without having fallen in ourselves" (2017: 87). Through the "excess of tragic suffering", Gadamer explains in his discussion of Aristotelian tragedy, "the spectator recognizes himself and his finiteness in the face of the power of fate. What happens to the great ones of the earth has exemplary significance" (1995: 132). Accordingly, Lise's tragic death invites readers to become further concerned with the social and ethical purpose of literature; Spark once observed that art "contains that element of pleasure that restores the proportions of the human spirit, opens windows in the mind" (1971: 25).

But, even if Spark's intention was to imitate the devices of a Greek play, the experimental and metafictional nature of this work eludes a classical patterning and rather suggests its subversion. "The art and literature of sentiment and emotion, however beautiful in itself, however striking in its depiction of actuality, has to go", Spark wrote in 1971; "It cheats us into a sense of involvement with life and society, but in reality it is a segregated activity. In its place I advocate the arts of satire and ridicule. And I see no other living art form in the future" (Spark 1971: 24). In a later interview she insisted that "ridicule is the only respectable weapon we have. In a way, I think it's probably the most deadly" (in McQuillan 2002: 222). In *The Driver's Seat*, a novel "written as if to be filmed" (Rankin 1985: 147), the author presents a distant, detached narrative, which describes Lise's actions as if they were at the same time familiar and alien. When Lise's coat gets stained with a long, black, oily mark, she, exhausted and absurdly overwhelmed, exclaims: "My new clothes. It's best never to be born. […] I feel sick. I feel terrible" (Spark 1970: 82). For a character that is bent on bringing about her own murder, having a stain on her coat seems a disproportionate reason for such a display of despair. It seems that the satirist's detachment precludes a vision of Lise as the classical heroine of this tragedy because the "cult of the victim is the cult of pathos, not tragedy" and "the art of pathos is pathetic […] and it has reached a point of exhaustion" (Spark 1971: 25-26). Similarly, this detached attitude rules out any search for absolute certainties, even an "immutable decree of reprobation" that lies behind the Calvinist notion of predestination (Fergusson 1993: 461). When once asked about the lack of narratorial information about Lise's states of mind, Spark replied: "Yes, God knows. In that book it wasn't for the author to say" (in Frankel 1987: 454).

If the apparently tragical fatality may seem subverted by Sparkian detachment, a similar contrast is suggested between the Calvinist assurance of predestination and the Catholic incertitude of each individual's eternal fate, based on both human free-will and divine mercy. If procuring one's voluntary death may be a well-deserved cause for Calvinist damnation, Carruthers suggests that "one way to read [Lisa's tragic death], theologically, is that God is attempting, in the final instance, to shake

Lise out of her complacency, to rouse her perhaps to fight for her life rather than, as she originally intends, surrendering it" (2010: 83). After her conversion Spark became strongly aware of a new order of experience which posed relevant questions on personal identity. Even though she experienced a nervous breakdown as a consequence of her decision, Spark often admitted that her conversion had triggered her literary creativity: "I think there is a connection between my writing and my conversion […]. Certainly all my best work has come since then" (Spark 1961: 60). In Catholicism Spark saw this connection with the form of fiction —perhaps a sort of permanent appeal to metafictional allegories—, but also an invitation to discern certain anxieties and contradictions of real life, and to negotiate her traumatic experience through her experimental fiction, porous and numinous, to project a sense of the spiritual. Furthermore, *The Driver's Seat* exemplifies that kind of double-telling that Caruth observes at the core of trauma narratives: "the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (1996: 7, emphasis in original). Connecting trauma and religious experience, Rambo argues that "this oscillation between life and death opens up a distinctive middle in which neither can be read apart from each other. Instead, the experience of survival is a death-life experience" (2010: 34).

203

5. Conclusion

Despite some praiseworthy attempts in recent Sparkian criticism to move away from religious interpretations of her novels and find new directions connected with experimentalism and liminality, it may still be possible to link the latter to the former without engaging in excessive "doctrinal criticism" (McQuillan 2002: 2). Marina Mackay finds no incompatibility when she admits that Spark's experimental narrative operates "in the conceptual space where the more abstract preoccupations of Roman Catholic theology overlap with the metafictional and fabulist concerns of postmodernism" (2008: 506). In particular, in *The Driver's Seat* we find a peculiarly experimental blending of metafictional self-reflection with echoes of the theological implications of the Calvinist notion of predestination. This focus in turn revisits the notion of Aristotelian tragedy, whose sense of predestination is a necessary ingredient for the much-needed catharsis, so the denouement of *The Driver's Seat* can be seen as "an implicit metafictional gesture, […] invoking the purgative effects of tragic catharsis" (Bailey 2021: 142).

Under traditional Calvinist doctrine, Lise's attempts to usurp the authorial role must be punished with the prospect of a world with no sense or transcendence, and the state of sin —meant as a state of separation from God— "provokes an

obfuscation of the human faculties that makes the individual unable to recognize the real Good and leads him to selfishly want his own good, that is Evil" (Paparoni 2016: 420-421). Lise therefore should be denied salvation and must face the hopeless idea that there is no divine consolation beyond the tragic end. Quoting from Georg Lukács's famous assertion that the novel is the epic of a world abandoned by God, Susana Lee posits that "the departure of God becomes the formal substance and undertone of the novel, and the novel in turn informs our understanding of secularism and its crises, uncertainties, and potentials" (2006: 11). However, nothing is that clear-cut in Muriel Spark's elusive fiction, always so keen on providing "a pack of lies [… containing] a kind of truth" (Kermode 1963: 78). Lise's plot seems to have been walking in circles to baffle the reader, while the clearing-up scene is never fulfilled since the victim is also the plotter, and the murderer is also the victim. If the way Spark constructs the final twist of the plot is shocking and even cruel for a reader too immersed in Lise's plot to realize that there is an author in control, the disturbing ending proves necessary for a potential interpretation of this "whydunnit in q-sharp major" (Spark 1970: 111), blending ethics and aesthetics under the metafictional subversion of an Aristotelian tragedy.

In his firm rejection of doctrinal readings, Bailey seems to make no distinction between the "Catholic God and the Calvinist one" (Lodge's expression) when he associates "the novel's well-documented use of prolepsis" with "Catholic practice" (2021: 143). But our contention is that the theological implications of prolepsis in *The Driver's Seat*, even within Spark's characteristic practice of "the arts of pretence and counterfeit" (Bailey 2021: 6), undermine the Calvinist certainty of salvation or (as in Lise's case) of predestined condemnation. Instead, Catholic doctrine tends to emphasize God's unfathomable grace and redemptive power, which on the part of external observers implies an unavoidable "incertitude of salvation", a concept that was asserted in Catholic teaching as early as the beginning of the Counter-Reformation at the Council of Trent (Grosse 2011: 66). If we accept that the mysterious, Robbe-Grilletian narrator of the novel is, as Bailey contends, "an anxious and eminently fallible entity […] capable only of producing limited, subjective recordings" (2021: 158), his/her many expressions of lack of knowledge throughout the narrative ("Who knows [Lise's] thoughts? Who can tell?" etc.) are evocative of the ultimate uncertainty of eternal salvation that is accepted in Catholic thought. Urs von Balthasar, a very influential Catholic theologian in Spark's lifetime, argued that "because we can't be certain which way things will turn out […], we shouldn't write off anybody as inevitably damned" (in Brumley 2020).[6] Furthermore, Loddegaard contends that "the Catholic novel emerging after the First World War constructs an absent and silent God" and, as in the works of Spark's fellow-Catholic novelist Graham Greene, "the characters are left in a state of uncertainty with regard to their salvation" (2008: 4).

If *The Driver's Seat* echoes the religious controversy over predestination *versus* choice, it also approaches classical tragedy through its subversion by comedy and ridicule, the weapons advocated by Spark for the only possible "art form in the future" (Spark 1971: 24). As the grim notion of Calvinist predestination can be checked by the Catholic incertitude of salvation, so tragical pre-determined fate can be subverted by the deconstructive effect of satire. Thus, Lise is probably never meant to be taken seriously as a classical heroine of Aristotelian tragedy, much like her delusional attempts to become the author of her own destiny are thwarted by the intrusion of the author or her helpers —notably Mrs Fiedke and Richard. The novel's metafictional experimentation, openness and self-reflexiveness are compatible with its being read as an allegory of a world deprived of transcendence, a quest for answers that may not be readily apparent in the drab world depicted in the story. The crudity of inevitable tragedy is, then, subverted by the "weapon of ridicule" that questions the obvious narrative layers and negotiates the limits of free will and humans' capacity to manage their lives in the face of the prospect of an apparently inescapable fate. And if the only certain fact of Everyman's life-long quest is death, from this sure finale *The Driver's Seat* invites the reader to go back again looking for clues —as if it were a traditional detective story— or for those sparks of grace which may offer its readers a glimpse of hope and transcendence within their earthly (fictional?) limitations.

205

Notes

1. As several critics —most recently Guy (2019) and Bailey (2021)— have observed, Spark's works are strongly influenced by elements from the *nouveau roman*, an interest that can be traced back to *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960).

2. The focus on Gate 14 (7+7) intentionally marks a door to the 'author's dimension'. The novel is full of sevens: it is divided into seven chapters, the action takes place in July, at the office we are told that Lise has seven colleagues above her, another seven below her, Bill's diet is Regime 7, and they meet at seven. In the *Bible*, 7 is the number of completeness and achievement and its meaning is connected to God's creation.

3. According to Patrick Query, sacramentality can be described as "the belief that incorporeal content is capable of transmission through corporeal forms. Such, also, is the imagination of a writer whose style is capable of collapsing the space between form and content and between subject and object such that the surfaces *become* the truth" (2005: 42, emphasis in original).

4. In the *Genesis* account, a rainbow appears right after the great flood, symbolizing God's mercy and the covenant made with Noah to spare the world and the human race from destruction (Genesis 9:13).

5. In an interview with James Brooker and Margarita Estévez-Saá, Spark admitted that she felt more comfortable

writing about women than about men because she was not able to "give men quite the individual identity. [...] But at the same time, a writer also wants to write about what other people feel like. So I'm always trying to deal with a man but somehow I get a weak man. I don't get it quite right" (in Brooker and Estévez-Saá 2004: 1040).

6. Potter observes that in some of her novels Spark manifests "a religious understanding in the form of a Balthasarian Catholic philosophy based on the idea of essence as movement out of the self" (2008: 42).

Works Cited

Addai-Mensah, Peter. 2020. "A Discussion on Augustine's Notion of Predestination and its Later Interpretation in Salvation History". *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 3: 21-27. DOI: 10.47604/jpcr.1109

Aquinas, Thomas. 2007. *Summa Theologica. Volume I – Part I.* Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Cosimo Classics.

Asante, Emmanuel. 2014. *Soteriology: A Discourse on Salvation.* Accra: Pinpoint Media.

Bailey, James. 2021. *Muriel Spark's Early Fiction: Literary Subversion and Experiments with Form.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P.

Bradbury, Malcolm. 1973. *Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel.* London: Oxford U.P.

Brooker, James and Margarita Estévez-Saá. 2004. "Interview with Dame Muriel Spark". *Women's Studies. An Interdisciplinary Journal* 33 (8): 1035-1046.

Brumley, Mark. 2020. "Did Hans Urs von Balthasar Teach that Everyone Will Certainly Be Saved?" *The Catholic World Report* (March 27). <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2020/03/27/did-hans-urs-von-balthasar-teach-that-everyone-will-certainly-be-saved>. Accessed 20 November, 2021.

Calvin, Jean. 1960. *Institutes of Christian Religion.* Ed. John T. McNeil. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Carruthers, Gerard. 2010. "Muriel Spark as Catholic Novelist". In Gardiner, Michael and Willy Maley (eds.) *The Edinburgh Companion to Muriel Spark.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P.: 74-84.

Caruth, Cathy. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative and History.* Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins U.P.

Cheyette, Bryan. 2000. *Muriel Spark.* Devon: Northcote House.

Drabble, Margaret. 2018. "Snapshots on Muriel Spark". *Times Literary Supplement* (June 29). <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/muriel-spark-margaret-drabble>. Accessed 20 November, 2021.

Estévez-Saá, Margarita. 2007. "Caracterización e identidad femenina en la obra de Muriel Spark". *Garoza: Revista de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Literarios de Cultura Popular* 7: 99-110.

Fergusson, David A. S. 1993. "Predestination: A Scottish Perspective". *Scottish Journal of Theology* 46: 457-478.

Frankel, Sara. 1987. "An Interview with Muriel Spark". *Partisan Review* 54 (3): 443-457.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1995. *Truth and Method.* Trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall. New York: Continuum.

Grosse, Sven. 2011. "Salvation and the Certitude of Faith: Luther on Assurance". *Pro Ecclesia: A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology* 20 (1): 64-85. DOI: 10.1177/106385121102000104

Guy, Adam. 2019. *The Nouveau Roman and Writing in Britain after Modernism.* Oxford: Oxford U.P.

HADDOX, Thomas F. 2009. "Religion for 'Really Intelligent People': The Rhetoric of Muriel Spark's *Reality and Dreams*". *Religion and Literature* 41: 43-66.

HOSMER, Robert E., Jr. 2005. "An Interview with Dame Muriel Spark". *Salmagundi* 145/147: 127-158.

HOSMER, Robert E., Jr. 2017. "The Chandeliers of the Metropole: A Vivid Glow upon the Just and the Unjust in Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat*". *Scottish Literary Review* 9: 83-93.

HYNES, Joseph. 1993. "Muriel Spark and the Oxymoronic Vision". In Hosmer, Robert E. Jr. (ed.) *Contemporary British Women Writers*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 161-187.

KERMODE, Frank. 1963. "The House of Fiction: Interviews with Seven English Novelists". *Partisan Review* 30: 61-82.

KERMODE, Frank. 1970. "Sheerer Spark". *Listener* (24 September): 426.

KERMODE, Frank. (1965) 1992. "The Novel as Jerusalem: Muriel Spark's *Mandelbaum Gate*". In Hynes, Joseph (ed.) *Critical Essays on Muriel Spark*. New York: G.K. Hall: 179-186.

KOLOCOTRONI, Vassiliki. 2018. "*The Driver's Seat*: Undoing Character, Becoming Legend". *Textual Practice* 32 (9): 1545-1562. DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2018.1533180

LEE, Susana. 2006. *A World Abandoned by God: Narrative and Secularism*. Lewisburg: Bucknell U.P.

LODDEGAARD, Anne. 2008. "The Silence of God in the Modern Catholic Novel: Graham Greene and French Catholic Novelists Adopting a Pascalian Deux Absconditus Perspective on Faith, Truth, and Reason". *Forum on Public Policy*: 1-10.

LODGE, David. 1992. *The Art of Fiction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

MACKAY, Marina. 2008. "Muriel Spark and the Meaning of Treason". *Modern Fiction Studies* 54 (3): 505-522. DOI: 10.1353/mfs.0.1540

MAN, Sorana-Cristina. 2020. *Instances of Death in Greek Tragedy*. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

MASSIE, Allan. 1987. "Spark of Inspiration". *The Times* (August 1): 18.

McQUILLAN, Martin. (ed.) 2002. *Theorizing Muriel Spark. Gender, Race and Deconstruction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

MEYERS, Helen. 2001. *Femicidal Fears: Narratives of the Female Gothic Experience*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

NYE, Robert. 1970. "Another Suicide". *The Observer* (September 24): 14.

PAGE, Norman. 1990. *Muriel Spark*. London: Macmillan.

PAPARONI, Ginevra. 2016. "Nature and Predestination in William Faulkner's 'Dry September'". *Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie Occidentale* 50: 419-432. DOI: 10.14277/2499-1562/AnnOc-50-16-22

POTTER, Martin. 2008. "Reconciling the Divided Self in Muriel Spark's *The Mandelbaum Gate*". *University of Bucharest Review* 10 (1): 39-45.

QUERY, Patrick. 2005. "Catholicism and Form from Hopkins to Waugh". In Villar Flor, Carlos and Robert M. Davis (eds.) *World Without End: New Trends in Evelyn Waugh Studies*. Bern: Peter Lang: 37-44.

RAMBO, Shelly. 2010. *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

RANKIN, Ian. 1985. "Surface and Structure: Reading Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat*". *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 15 (2): 146-155.

ROOF, Judith. 2002. "The Future Perfect's Perfect Future: Spark's and Duras's Narrative Drive". In McQuillan, Martin (ed.): 49-66.

SAGE, Lorna. 1992. *Women in the House of Fiction*. London: Macmillan.

SAWADA, Chikako. 2007. "Muriel Spark's *The Finishing School* and Postmodern Endings". *Studies in English Literature* 48: 1-20.

SINCLAIR, Peter M. 2010. "Narrative and Eschatology: Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Muriel Spark and Theology of Narrative". PhD Dissertation. University of Connecticut.

SPARK, Muriel. 1961. "My Conversion". *Twentieth Century* 170: 58-63.

SPARK, Muriel. 1970. *The Driver's Seat*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

207

Spark, Muriel. 1971. "The Desegregation of Art". In *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters* (The Annual Blashfield Foundation Address). New York: Spiral Press: 21-27.

Spark, Muriel. 1992. *Curriculum Vitae: A Volume of Autobiography*. Manchester: Carcanet Press.

Spark, Muriel. (1961) 2009. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Stannard, Martin. 2009. *Muriel Spark: The Biography.* London: Orion Books.

Waugh, Patricia. 1984. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction.* London: Methuen.

Waugh, Patricia. 2018. "Muriel Spark's 'Informed Air': The Auditory Imagination and the Voices of Fiction". *Textual Practice* 32 (9): 1633-1658. DOI: 10.1080/0950236X.2018.1533171

Whittaker, Ruth. 1982. *The Faith and Fiction of Muriel Spark.* London: Macmillan.

208

Reviews

EL INGLÉS Y EL ESPAÑOL EN CONTACTO EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS. REFLEXIONES ACERCA DE LOS RETOS, DILEMAS Y COMPLEJIDAD DE LA SITUACIÓN SOCIOLINGÜÍSTICA ESTADOUNIDENSE
Silvia Betti and Renata Enghels, eds.
Rome: Aracne Editrice, 2020

IRENE MENÉNDEZ DE LA ROSA
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
imenendez@ucm.es

The year 2020 will certainly be remembered for the many challenges the whole world has had to face at many levels. And it is precisely the current convoluted cultural and racial situation in the United States —which can be broadly described as "whiteness against otherness"—, enhanced by the racial disparities present during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic and clearly exacerbated by a questionable response by the Trump administration, which makes this book[1] particularly relevant and significant.

El inglés y el español en contacto en los Estados Unidos. Reflexiones acerca de los retos, dilemas y complejidad de la situación sociolingüística estadounidense, edited by Silvia Betti and Renata Enghels, is a collection of unnumbered chapters. For the purposes of this review, these chapters could be divided into two distinguishable sections or focuses, which make up an interrelated discussion topic evolving around the English and Spanish languages in contact in the United States. Section one would feature three contributions, those of Braschi, Betti, and Zentella, which discuss the linguistic situation of the Hispanic community in the existing political context in the United States. Section two would include five chapters (López-García; Enghels, Van Belleghem, and Vande Casteele; Torres; Thomas; and Serra and Moreno), which deal with the concept of 'Spanglish' or *(e)spanglish* [dual spelling],[2] bilingualism, and the active choice of the linguistic code (either formal Spanish, workaday Spanish aka Spanglish, or English) subject to the communication setting.

As a whole, this book deals with the *in-between* identity, arising from the social, cultural, and linguistic mixing between Americans and Hispanics. The Spanish now present in the United States, so-called US Spanish and Spanglish, is a product resulting from the evolution and coexistence of two strong identities.

The first section of this book starts with Puerto Rican writer Giannina Braschi's chapter, who, via a deep reflection on native and foreign identities, explores the ingrained flawed concept of the corruptive linguistic action caused by foreigners speaking less-than-perfect English, and how they are compelled to suppress their native selves to fit into society. In a sense, Ana Celia Zentella's chapter analyzes that same corruptive linguistic action to the Spanish language Braschi mentioned in her chapter and asserts that Spanish speakers in the USA feel that purists deem their Spanish to be somehow inferior. These speakers consider the DRAE definition of Spanglish or espanglish fails to fully convey the reality of their *in-between* daily lives. This, and the fact that they are denied access to official information in their own language, drives many US Spanish speakers to decide not to pass on the legacy of language to their children; while others, take pride in their language and become ambassadors of their *in-between* culture. As Silvia Betti states in her chapter, "[a]lthough there is no single 'Hispanic' culture, there is a common Hispanic language: Spanish" (27), my translation.[3] The direct result of years of Hispanic migration to the United States has left a permanent and multi-layered imprint in the "new" US identity: Spanish, the second most spoken language in the United States, is gaining strength and it only seems natural that news is progressively being presented bilingually in English and Spanish. But despite its ever-expanding speaker base, the stigmas and racial prejudices are still countless.

According to Fernández Vítores (2019), based on estimates made by the US Census Bureau, "[i]n 2060, the United States will be the second Spanish-speaking country in the world, followed by Mexico: almost one out of three Americans will be Hispanic". This statistical forecast can be quite shocking to all who recall the 2016 US presidential campaign and the Republican Primary debate in late 2015, when the then presidential candidate Donald Trump (criticizing Jeb Bush for speaking Spanish) stated: "This is a country where we speak English, not Spanish". Since then, not only has he got to rule the country (2017-2020), but he has also been the architect of many 'English Only' campaigns limiting the largest minority in the United States: the Spanish-speaking community. The right to freedom of speech indeed, but apparently only in English.

It is important to emphasize that despite the thus far unfruitful attempts to declare English as the official language of the United States by means of the English Language Unity Act, the United States has no official language. The English language has acted *de facto* as such, given that the vast majority of people in the

country speak English. However, what would happen if the tables were turned? Spanish is steadily and inexorably making headway in the United States, although some people would prefer this not to be the case, as Braschi, Zentella, Betti, and other authors in this book plainly convey.

The second section of this book opens with Ángel López-García's chapter, where he portrays Spanglish as a Spanish linguistic result born of a simultaneous or alternate dependency regarding the linguistic systems present in Spanish and English languages. This dependency is determined by an external force that governs the communicative context. As for Renata Enghels, Laura Van Belleghem, and An Vande Casteele, they explain they "prefer the term 'Spanglish' to other alternatives (such as 'popular US Spanish'), because it better captures the hybrid nature of this phenomenon" (57), my translation.[4] They highlight that most research and literature on the Spanglish matter show a sociolinguistics approach rather than contributing to its grammatical description. That is precisely what this chapter masterfully focuses on. Antonio Torres' contribution explores several linguistic mergers, describes a study on the implications of bilingualism —based primarily on Costa (2017) and Moreno Cabrera (2016)—, and focuses on the Spanglish phenomena in the US, offering an interesting comparison between the use of Spanish and English in the United States and the use of Spanish and Catalan in Spain. In the next chapter, Juan A. Thomas presents an engaging study on the use of either formal Spanish, workaday Spanish aka Spanglish, or English carried out with a Spanish-speaking community in Utica, New York, and their active election of the linguistic code subject to the communication context (e.g., the generation they interact with, a personal or professional setting). Lastly, Enrique Serra and Sandra Moreno (117) explain the rebellious origins of espanglish as an act of subversion resulting from the Spanish native speakers' refusal to allow their own identity to die at the hands of that of the English-speaking foreign settlers, as well as a tool to achieve success (as a means of communication with those in the highest ranks, who hold the power), and provide an analysis of the grammatical and lexical characteristics of Spanglish.

In the epilogue, Diana Castilleja and Renata Enghels close this book apologizing for the impossibility of covering all othernesses, which is quite understandable given the vast scope of this venture. All in all, this collection provides quite a comprehensive picture of the linguistic situation of the Hispanic community in the United States and the complex idiosyncrasies resulting from two languages such as English and Spanish coming into close contact.

This book is certainly worth reading, as it reflects a diversity of views and approaches of leading experts and professionals in the field. It would merit inclusion in the syllabus of graduate Philology studies to familiarize students with the linguistic

situation of the Hispanic community in the United States (as of the publication date) and its ever-changing political context, as well as the evolution of the concept of Spanglish. Given the dynamic and living nature of its core topics —linguistics and politics— it could be a good idea (and certainly worth reading) for this book to reflect, in a future edition, the transition and/or evolution (if any) from Trump's to Biden's administration. [Note that as of January 20th, 2021, Joe Biden's administration has reversed some of Trump's prior changes, such as revamping the White House website by reincorporating the Spanish tab; recruiting several Latinos within the presidential cabinet (at the time of writing), and modifying the US migrant policy, to name but a few.]

Notes

1. This book was published under Donald Trump's administration, and the review was written once Trump was ousted from the White House by Joe Biden's win in the controversial presidential elections held on November 3rd, 2020.

2. The RAE's definition of (e)spanglish: m. A modality of speech of some Hispanic groups in the United States in which lexical and grammatical elements of Spanish and English are mixed [Translation]. Original source text: "m. Modalidad del habla de algunos grupos hispanos de los Estados Unidos en la que se mezclan elementos léxicos y gramaticales del español y del inglés". Available at https://dle.rae.es/spanglish, redirecting to https://dle.rae.es/espanglish#Rq8JJSS. Accessed March 5, 2021.

3. *"No existe una única cultura 'latina', pero sí existe una lengua común: el español"*.

4. *"(…) preferimos este término a otros alternativos (como 'español popular de los EEUU') porque capta mejor el carácter híbrido del fenómeno"*.

Works Cited

Costa, Albert. 2017. *El cerebro bilingüe. La neurociencia del lenguaje.* Barcelona: Debate.

Fernández Vítores, David. 2019. *El español: una lengua viva. Informe 2019.* Madrid: Instituto Cervantes. <https://www.cervantes.es/imagenes/File/espanol_lengua_viva_2019.pdf>. Accessed December 28, 2020.

Moreno Cabrera, Juan Carlos. 2016. *Multilingüismo y lenguas en contacto.* Madrid: Síntesis.

**PERSUASION IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE.
COGNITIVE AND FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES**
Jana Pelclová and Wei-lun Lu, eds.
Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2018

MIGUEL F. RUIZ-GARRIDO
Universitat Jaume I
mruiz@uji.es

Persuasion is a topic that has engaged the attention of scholars and has been of interest in a wide variety of fields, especially in academia, since Aristotle's work (in the 4th century BC) on rhetoric and concepts such as persuasion and logos, pathos and ethos, as Hogan (2012) explains. Persuasion usually involves a communicative event in which its producer (the persuader) tries to have an influence (positive or negative, stronger or weaker) on the addressees of such event; needless to say, the addressees are able to partially or totally accept the message or reject it. This is what this book is about.

In their opening chapter, Jana Pelclová and Wei-lun Lu, editors of the present volume, explain how persuasion can be treated from different viewpoints, within different fields or contexts (e.g., academia, business, health, media, politics), and in various languages (e.g., English, Hungarian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish). This book contains a good number of excellent chapters on the topic of persuasion from a cognitive and functional perspective, as the subtitle states. The editors clearly point out the gap this book aims at filling: how ample and varied the concept of persuasion is within public discourse in diverse contexts but also in terms of multimodal and multidisciplinary methodological approaches. This is a very ambitious aim but the result is positive. Prospective addressees have the opportunity to read thirteen chapters showing this huge variation in the use of persuasion in real-world texts of oral and written public discourse. Some readers

will confirm views they already have while others will see and learn how the topic of persuasion can be dealt with from perspectives they are not so familiar with.

The first part ("Persuasion from a historical perspective") includes two chapters. In the first, Agnes Kuna deals with Hungarian texts from the 16th and 17th centuries within medical discourse (recipe collections, herbaria and remedy books), and how patients are persuaded by the development of certain strategies that create positive values. The second chapter addresses a more theoretical and classical view of persuasion. Janja Žmavc revisits classical rhetoric and applies it to a Slovenian Prime Minister-designate's speech, showing that ethos is one of the most common forms of persuasion.

The second section is devoted to political discourse, and includes studies about Winston Churchill's speeches, a Catalan president's investiture speech and a Brazilian propaganda video. In Chapter 3, Jan Sebera and Wei-lun Lu study the use of metaphors to support the leadership discourse of Churchill in some of his Cold War speeches. Then, Gonzalo Calle Rosingana explains how four well-supported conceptual and linguistic phenomena enhance the persuasiveness of the speech delivered by a Catalan president. Finally, in the fifth chapter, Francisco Veloso and Dezheng Feng analyse a political propaganda video used in a Brazilian presidential election, promoting the negative image of one of the candidates, Dilma Rouseff.

"Persuasion in social context" is the third part comprising chapters 6 and 7 on the positive effects of biodiversity and the negative use of the term 'Joan of Arc' in Russian newspapers. The former, authored by Anna Franca Plastina, analyses Vandana Shiva's honorary doctorate speech delivered at the University of Calabria trying to persuade listeners of beneficial alternative perspectives on biodiversity by means of the organisation of the information and using linguistic strategies as persuasive techniques: emotional appeals, emotive language, and inclusive language. The latter, written by Ludmilla A'Beckett, deals with the negative side of persuasion (dissuasion). It explains how the use of the term Joan of Arc is a way of stigmatizing some Ukrainian and Russian women who take a stance against Putin's regime and how the readership supports such a view.

Marketing is the main topic of section 4. The first chapter of this part (Chapter 8) is about hoteliers' responses to negative customer reviews on a very well-known customer review website (TripAdvisor). Christopher Hopkinson's article addresses saving face online by means of facework and rapport management strategies as means of persuasion, regarding the hoteliers' responses to the negative reviews as institutional and individual at the same time. In the following chapter (Chapter 9), Carl Jon Way Ng follows a cognitive and functional perspective by means of studying animate and anthropomorphic metaphors. His aim is to analyse the brand

communication of Singapore's publicly-funded higher education institutions regarding their corporate organizational strategies and practices intended to boost their success.

The following section is devoted to persuasion in academia, and the two articles included look at persuasion from an intercultural standpoint. First, Olga Dontcheva-Navrátilová looks at the cross-cultural variation occurring in academic book reviews written in English and Czech whereas Pilar Mur-Dueñas studies the statements of contribution (the writers' justification of their research) that academic authors include in their research articles when writing in Spanish or in English as a Foreign Language. Both chapters (10 and 11) share the view that the linguacultural background of academic writers is a key factor affecting variation in those genres of academic discourse and, consequently, reflecting the differences between authors.

Finally, the last part focuses on multimodality in the final two chapters (12 and 13). The first, written by Jana Pelclová, regards the marketing field from a multimodal perspective. She looks at the iconicity and strategic alignments of noun phrases (visual and typographic) as well as independent adjectival phrases in print advertisements for food products. The final chapter is written by Mihailo Antović, who develops a conceptual blending theory around musical multimedia. He shows how persuasive it can be to apply familiar music themes to unexpected multimedia contexts, such as those used in Serbian and former-Yugoslavia politicians' campaigns, propaganda videos, or commercials.

This book is a good contribution to the topic of persuasion addressed to a wide range of readers. The volume adopts mainly a cognitive and functional framework, but some other frameworks also support the different studies, such as sociolinguistics, historical pragmatics, or interactional pragmatics, among others. From a methodological viewpoint, the research compiled includes quantitative and qualitative studies, sometimes in combination, and shows the variety of devices and elements that can be persuasive in certain contexts. However, as previously said, the approaches to the topic are varied and eclectic. Readers can find specific examples of Critical Metaphor Analysis, Genre Analysis, Rapport Management, Appraisal Theory, Content Analysis, Framing Theory, and Semiotics.

Additionally, the book addresses an undying topic: political persuasiveness. Some of the studies refer to politics in a direct or indirect way, showing strategies to convince people of a specific position. I would like to highlight a few because of their connotations for today's world and their current validity. Chapter 7 reflects that brave women have opposed Putin's regime since a long time ago and that they have been perversely stigmatised. Other chapters (e.g., 3, 5, or 13) give us examples that can equally apply to the recent events concerning the narratives of power and war.

The order of the chapters may be questionable as there are some issues that overlap. However, the editors are aware of this and have taken the main concerns of each paper and used them to give more coherence for readers: the papers are classified according to the most salient feature of the studied object or issue, except the last section (part 6), which deals with the (multi)modal character of the objects of study rather than with the research area it could be included in (e.g., advertisements of food products and the use of familiar music in politics or commercial videos). Another issue that might be considered controversial is that some chapters (e.g., 2, 4 or 8) do not follow the well-known IMRD structure (Swales 2004). Nevertheless, the form is not a problem for the content (the main concern) and when this occurs, the reading of the chapter makes it clear why this is.

Overall, the book is a significant contribution to the everlasting topic of persuasion. It is an excellent compilation showing that many diverse approaches and different theoretical frameworks can be combined and complemented, leading to more thorough studies. Some chapters may be slightly difficult for readers unfamiliar with the topic, but at the same time, those chapters can give readers a broad view of the topic that can lead them to delve into persuasion in public discourse.

218

Works Cited

SWALES, John. 2004. *Research Genres: Explorations and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.. DOI: 10.1017/CBO9781139524827

HOGAN, J. Michael. (2002) 2012. "Persuasion in the Rhetorical Tradition". In Dillard, James Price and Lijiang Shen (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Persuasion: Developments in Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications: 2-19. DOI: 10.4135/9781452 21410.n1

TEACHER TRAINING FOR ENGLISH-MEDIUM INSTRUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Maria del Mar Sánchez-Pérez, Ed.
Hershey PA: IGI Global, 2020

ENRIQUE LAFUENTE MILLÁN
Universidad de Zaragoza
elafuen@unizar.es

219

In the last decade there has been a sharp increase in the number of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) courses and programs in higher education (HE) institutions worldwide. A number of reasons for this exponential growth have been reported, notably improving the foreign language proficiency of students, attracting international students, lecturers and researchers, increasing research output or improving the international profile of universities.

As a consequence of its rising prominence, EMI has generated a great deal of interest in the literature. This research suggests that insufficient attention has been paid to training teaching staff for EMI (O'Dowd 2018) and stresses the need for a new model of teaching and learning that can support the acquisition of 21st century new skills and competences (Coyle 2013; Dafouz and Smit 2016). The diversity of contexts and the existing lack of data constitute an additional difficulty in this search for new pedagogical guidelines in EMI.

The book under review attempts to address some of these gaps by providing a variety of approaches and approximations to teacher training from different experts in the field of EMI. Following the premise that lecturer training and development is crucial to achieve success in EMI at higher education, the book offers descriptions of different EMI courses already in place in Europe and in two Latin American universities, as well as models or frames to assist educational developers in the planning, design and evaluation of training courses. Some of these studies provide

detailed descriptions of modules and activities, in addition to identifying the learning outcomes and skills to be developed by EMI lecturers. Many of the contributions in this volume also include reviews on previous literature on EMI and on EMI training, which allow the reader to form a comprehensive view of the existing challenges and concerns vis-à-vis the implementation of EMI programs and the design of teacher training courses. Additionally, some of the chapters in the book contain qualitative studies which provide new data contributing to our understanding of the teaching and learning process as well as of the context surrounding EMI in different universities. Finally, we can also find much-needed guidelines and principles for teaching in EMI, drawing on different pedagogical trends from the field of education and, more specifically, from second language learning and teaching.

The book begins with a foreword by David Marsh, who stresses the fact that training staff for EMI carries great importance for universities hoping to compete in today's globalized and interconnected world, as this will ultimately determine their ability to offer new programs, disseminate research and generate value. He also emphasizes the need to adapt pedagogical practices to adapt to this new context.

The first section of the book focuses on theoretical perspectives and approaches to teacher training for EMI.

Inmaculada Fortanet presents a research-informed proposal for a teacher training programme for EMI. To do this, she identifies several elements that should be present in EMI pedagogy when dealing with multicultural classes and mobility students. She also suggests a number of training techniques including coaching and mentoring, classroom observation and use of videos. Fortanet then describes the teacher training program at Universitat Jaume I (UJI) and reports on the results of a survey among EMI lecturers and international students, finding differences in student roles as well as insufficient confidence of lecturers in their L2 abilities. Finally, after reviewing a proposal for teacher training at UJI, she briefly describes her own proposal incorporating elements identified along the article.

Davinia Sánchez-García describes some of the outcomes and the rationale of the EQUiip Erasmus+ Project. She establishes three areas for continuous professional development (CPD) of EMI lecturers in an international context: language of instructions, pedagogy and cultural diversity. The author then offers a detailed description of five modules and three outcomes developed within the EQUiip Project, together with guidelines and recommendations for education developers in EMI training and HE leaders involved in internationalization.

Chapter 3 lays out a model where language, pedagogy and emotion are the three key competences for training. After analysing those competences, Rubio-Alcalá and Mallorquín offer indicators for language, methodology and emotion, which can be helpful for designing training courses. They also identify key aspects of methodology consistent with the CLIL model and advocate for a systematic and long-life approach to CLIL training.

The second section includes 9 chapters containing case studies and proposals for teacher training. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive frame for professional development developed at the Karolinska Institut in Sweeden which identifies the skills required by EMI lecturers. Valcke and Båge propose adopting new, active, more effective methodologies based, for example, on student participation and self-direction, using *constructive alignment* to integrate internationalization in their curriculum. They also draw on data extracted from a pilot study to establish key elements for the success of their professional development course.

The role of reflective practices by lecturers is examined by Linares and Mendikoetxea. Using innovative video-enhanced technology, two lecturers are asked to reflect on their interactional practices through self-observation. Ron Martínez and Karina Fernandes then contrast the data obtained with the reflections of trainers and with the students' perceptions of those same lectures. The results show a mismatch between the findings obtained from teachers and students, as the data obtained from students may not be sufficiently specific to allow an in-depth qualitative analysis.

To effectively introduce EMI professional development in Universidad de Guadalajara in Mexico, Wendy Díaz proposes a systemic Key Development Indicator (KDI) matrix. The KDI matrix comprises four decision-making and action parameters made up of several indicators. The chapter offers insights on the development of EMI in a non-European context together with a useful tool to undertake a systemic transformation of EMI teaching breaking with long standing processes and traditions.

Chapter 7 provides a fresh look at EMI training in South America, as it explains the rationale for developing an EMI training course in Brazil. Two training courses were compared: an EMI training workshop designed by an English university and an in-house pilot course. The authors share some practical decisions made to adapt the course to their context and assess the lecturers' perceptions about their ability to implement EMI after the training.

Aguilar-Pérez and Arnó-Macià attempt to identify the elements of a good EMI lecture so as to extract helpful educational implications. To do so, they examine the lecturing behavior and personal attitude of a lecturer considered exemplary of

221

good teaching. They focus on the perceptions of this lecturer and his students using a mixed-method approach to assess the effectiveness of different teaching strategies.

Chapter 9 draws on ethnographic data to report on the process of planning and delivering an EMI degree at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. More specifically, Cristina Escobar provides a planning template to help instructors anticipate the challenges that using an L2 entails and to provide students with the appropriate guidance and support.

Méndez-García and Luque conduct quite a comprehensive review of recent areas of research and outline some of the main challenges and concerns regarding EMI. They rely on data from focus group interviews and case study analyses to ground their pedagogical proposal for in-service EMI teacher training.

Zayas and Estrada also use qualitative data from a questionnaire and focus groups with lecturers to investigate EMI lecturing at the Universidad de Cádiz. Even though they do not discuss in-depth how to adapt methodology to EMI, the authors make some recommendations based on the perceptions of lecturers and highlight several methodological principles that need to be incorporated for EMI teaching.

In Chapter 12, Candela Contero investigates the perceptions and attitudes of CLIL lecturers in training using a sample of some 253 lecturers. After examining the data, she puts forward a training proposal highlighting certain strategies such as interaction, group work, task-based work, adapting L2 input, creating a safe environment, linguistic scaffolding or lesson structure.

The third section comprises some suggestions for innovation in EMI courses as well as for training EMI lecturers. Salaberri and Sánchez report on the use of job shadowing and stress its value as an alternative for EMI professional training and lifelong learning. Their study focuses on a female European lecturer shadowing another colleague at a Portuguese university. The authors propose a job shadowing guide for EMI and illustrate the possible benefits of shadowing. The study can serve as a model for implementation of this technique as a complement to EMI training.

Chapter 14 provides guidelines on how to develop task-based materials for EMI at HE. Javier Ávila reviews current learning theories to derive a methodology on which to base material design and then puts forward his own procedure to create materials. His proposal incorporates concepts and principles from EFL and second language acquisition but does not explain how to adapt them to the EMI context. As a result, one wonders to what extent these principles may be applicable for the EMI teachers and instructors in HE.

Pimentel-Velázquez and Pavón-Vázquez underline that material development needs to evolve to make room for the specific training needs in EMI. Consequently, they make a didactic proposal which includes 8 recommendations for the analysis and design of materials. Their proposal draws heavily from CLIL, including a variety of innovative teaching strategies, and connects the use of technologies and the Internet for the design of materials to the task-based approach.

A proposal for integrating flipped learning in the context of EMI is presented in Chapter 16. Alberto Andújar argues that flipped learning adapts well to the requirements and principles of EMI by promoting effective delivery of contents and providing further practice. The author emphasizes the need to consider certain pedagogical recommendations so that this methodology may adapt effectively to the varied nature of EMI contexts.

The last two proposals are the most ground-breaking and, concurrently, difficult to apply to EMI in HE. Chapter 17 features a complete guide for lecturers to apply gamification in their classrooms using *Classcraft*. Gamification is portrayed as a strategy to deal with issues of lack of engagement and motivation in EMI. The authors, however, do not discuss whether gamification can help achieve other crucial goals like increasing interaction, supporting comprehension or scaffolding output. Chapter 18 presents a 4-stage frame intended to help trainers design CLIL units using digital technology to promote learners' engagement. The Octalysis frame (Chou 2016) is used unequivocally to evaluate motivation in the tasks they propose as examples and which may, perhaps, be a difficult fit for an EMI context.

In conclusion, a call for more attention to pedagogical aspects has been repeatedly made in the literature on EMI. As outlined above, this volume responds to that need by investigating concerns and challenges and identifying the contents, skills and competences for effective EMI training. It also reports on existing professional development courses, providing multiple pedagogical recommendations and guidelines, as well as specific activities, all of which can be very useful for EMI stakeholders.

Perhaps its most obvious limitation is its bias towards the Spanish context of HE. In addition, some of the most innovative proposals may be too close to CLIL or EFL methodology, and may therefore prove difficult to implement for content lecturers in a HE EMI context.

While the qualitative studies presented help provide a picture of what EMI looks like in Spain, more research is necessary to help us understand which methodological strategies are most effective for supporting learning and L2 acquisition in this educational context.

Works Cited

Chou, Yu-kai. 2016. *Actionable Gamification - Beyond Points, Badges, and Leaderboards*. Freemont, CA: Octalysis Media.

Coyle, Do. 2013. "Listening to Learners: An Investigation into 'Successful Learning' Across CLIL Contexts". *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 16(3): 244-266. DOI: 10.1080/13670050.2013.777384

Dafouz, Emma and Ute Smit. 2016. "Towards a Dynamic Conceptual Framework for English-Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings". *Applied Linguistics* 37(3): 397-415. DOI: 10.1093/applin/amu034

O'Dowd, Robert. 2018. "The Training and Accreditation of Teachers for English Medium Instruction: An Overview of Practice in European Universities". *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 21(5): 553-563. DOI: 10.1080/13670050.2018.1491945

Notes for contributors

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal published twice a year by the Department of English and German Philology, University of Zaragoza, Spain. In addition to the printed version of the journal, current and back issues of the journal are available online at the following website:

https://papiro.unizar.es/ojs/index.php/misc

Miscelánea publishes articles on English language and linguistics, on literatures written in English, and on thought, cinema and cultural studies from the English-speaking world.

How to contribute

Unsolicited contributions, in English or Spanish, should neither be published nor being considered for publication elsewhere.

The recommended length for articles is **6,000** to **8,000** words.

Authors are expected to upload their anonymous contributions on the journal webpage.

An abstract of no more than 200 words should also be provided, together with five key words and a translation into Spanish when possible.

Reviews are also accepted of books that are of general interest in the field of English studies and that have been published within the last four years

(recommended length: **1,500** words). They should not only be a mere description of the contents of the book, but should also provide an explanation of its contribution to the field within which it belongs. Reviews will also be refereed.

Notes (brief reports on language, literature, history and lexicography) are also accepted.

Invited (non-refereed) contributions from leading scholars will be acknowledged as such.

There will be no restrictions placed on authors' use of their material for reprints or other publications as long as their first publication is acknowledged.

Reviewing process

Papers may be published if they receive favourable reports from readers who are specialists in the area. Every article is evaluated anonymously by a minimum of two referees, one at least belonging to a university other than that of Zaragoza. Readers will not be apprised of the authorship of these articles. The authorship of the reports will also be confidential, though their purport may be communicated to the contributors concerned if so desired.

228

Readers will be required to weigh up the articles that are sent to them and make out as soon as possible a written report describing the article in terms of the points itemized in an evaluation form. In the case of articles that have not been accepted or need revision, an additional report will be made out indicating the reasons for non-acceptance, or the changes to be made as the case may be.

Selection of contributions

The criteria for selecting unsolicited contributions will be basically: their global interest and originality, their theoretical and methodological rigour, the development of a well defined thesis, the quality of their style and the general observance of the norms required of work of an academic nature. The papers submitted should evince serious academic work contributing new knowledge or innovative critical perspectives on the subject in question. Articles that are of a merely popularising nature will not be accepted.

Although every effort will be made to publish contributions that have received favourable reports, the Editors reserve the right to make a further and final selection when the number of contributions with favourable reports is in excess of the number of articles that can be conveniently published in one issue of the Journal. In the case of partially negative reports as well as positive ones on the same article, the final decision will lie with the discretion of the Editors, who will weigh up the reports and the general interest of the subject matter of the article. Additional reports may also be sought.

The articles submitted should stick to the Publication Guidelines included in this volume (see below). Manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines will be returned to the authors for revision. The Editors may correct clerical or factual errors and introduce stylistic corrections without further notice.

For additional information, contact the Editors, Silvia Pellicer Ortín and Pilar Mur Dueñas, at the following address or via e-mail:

>Silvia Pellicer Ortín (literature, film and cultural studies)
>Pilar Mur Dueñas (language and linguistics)
>
>Revista *Miscelánea*
>Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana
>Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
>C/ San Juan Bosco, 7
>Universidad de Zaragoza
>50009 Zaragoza
>SPAIN
>
>editors@miscelaneajournal.net

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Citations

Double quotation marks should be used for citations. Single quotes may be used to draw attention to a particular item in the text. Italics are used for foreign words, or for emphasis. References in the text to publications should include the author's surname, the year of publication, and, if necessary, page numbers, as in the following examples:

"…era of experimental storytelling" (Bordwell 2006: 73).

…according to Bordwell (2006: 50),…

…language always fulfils three communicative functions (Jewitt et al. 2016).

…this idea has been rejected by several authors (Reger 2017; Evans 2015; Cochrane 2013).

As Suárez Orozco suggests …. (in Inda 2014: 34).

… (Suárez Orozco in Inda 2014: 34).

Should part of the original text be omitted, this will be made clear by inserting […], NOT (…).

Should the emphasis be in the original text, this will be explicitly indicated as "emphasis in original". Should the emphasis be added by the author, "my emphasis" should be added: (Bordwell 2006: 73, emphasis in original).

Bibliographical references

Bibliographical references should be included in alphabetical order at the end of the manuscript and under the heading WORKS CITED. In the Works Cited all references used should be included and not more.

Authors' full first names should be used unless the authors themselves customarily use only initials. Set the author's surname(s) in small caps (e.g. Joyce, neither Joyce nor JOYCE).

References to two or more works by the same author in a single year should be accompanied by a lower-case a, b, etc. after the year of publication, both in the reference list and in citations in the text. If two works by the same author are cited, but in one of them there is a second author, the latter will go after.

Hyland, Ken. 2017a. "Metadiscourse: What is it and Where is it Going?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 113: 16-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2017.03.007.

Hyland, Ken. 2017b. "English in the Discipline: Arguments for Specificity". *ESP Today* 5 (1): 5-23.

… (Hyland 2017b: 21)

Hyland, Ken and Feng Kevin Jiang. 2021. "'Our Striking Results Demonstrate…': Persuasion and the Growth of Academic Hype". *Journal of Pragmatics* 182: 189-202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.06.018.

References to books should include the place of publication and the publisher's name, and references to articles in journals should include volume, issue number (if necessary) and page numbers. Titles of books and journals will be written in italics. Titles of articles and of book chapters will be placed in double inverted commas.

The DOI should be included for all references that have it (see https://doi.crossref.org/simpleTextQuery).

Monographs:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. *Title in italics.* Place: Publisher.
Nagel, James. 2015. *The American Short Story Handbook.* Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). (Year of 1st edition) Year of edition actually used. *Title in italics.* Place: Publisher.
Bauman, Zygmunt. (2005) 2017. *Liquid Life.* Cambridge, Malden: Polity.

Editor's Surname(s), Editor's first name(s). (ed.) Year. *Title in italics.* Place: Publisher.
McNamara, Kevin R. (ed.) 2014. *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

First Author's Surname(s), First author's first name(s), Second author's first name(s) Second Author's Surname(s) and Third author's first name(s) Third Author's Surname(s). Year. *Title in italics*. Place: Publisher.

Pahta, Päivi, Janne Skaffari and Laura Wright. (eds.) 2017. *Multilingual Practices in Language History: English and Beyond*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. *Title in italics*. Trans. Translator's initials. Translator's surname(s). Place: Publisher.

Atwood, Margaret. 2017. *El cuento de la criada*. Trans. E. Mateo. Barcelona: Salamandra.

Chapter or article in a monograph:

If only one chapter or article has been used:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". In Editor's surname(s), Editor's first name(s) (ed.) *Title of monograph in italics*. Place: Publisher: 00-00.

Leonard, Suzanne. 2014. "Escaping the Recession? The New Vitality of the Woman Worker". In Negra, Diane and Yvonne Tasker (eds.) *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity*. Durham and London: Duke U.P.: 31-58. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1131fr9.5.

231

If two or more chapters/articles have been used:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". In Editor's surname(s), Editor's first name(s) (ed.): 00-00. (The reference of the edited book should be written, in full, as a separate entry).

Molina-Guzmán, Isabel. 2014. "'Latina Wisdom' in 'Postrace' Recession Media". In Negra, Diane and Yvonne Tasker (eds.) *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity*. Durham and London: Duke U.P.: 59-80. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1131fr9.6.

Negra, Diane and Yvonne Tasker. 2014. *Gendering the Recession: Media and Culture in an Age of Austerity*. Durham and London: Duke U.P. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822376538.

If the book is a compilation of another author's works:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). (Year of 1st edition) Year of edition actually used. In Editor's surname(s), Editor's first name(s) (ed.) *Title in italics*. Place: Publisher.

Wilde, Oscar. 2017. In Donohue, Joseph (ed.). *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, Vol. 10: Plays 3: The Importance of Being Earnest; 'A Wife's Tragedy' (fragment)*. Oxford: Oxford U.P.

If the author of the collection and of the short piece being cited are the same

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". In *Title of monograph in italics*. Place: Publisher: 00-00.

Oates, Joyce Carol. 2004. "Curly Red". In *I Am No One You Know: Stories*. New York: Harper Collins: 3-20.

Article in a journal:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". *Name of journal in italics* number (volume): 00-00. DOI (if given).

Lu, Xiaofei. 2011. "A Corpus-Based Evaluation of Syntactic Complexity Measures as Indices of College-Level ESL Writers' Language Development". *TESOL Quarterly* 45 (1): 36-62. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2011.240859.

Article in a journal special issue:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year. "Title in double inverted commas". *Name of special issue in italics*. Special issue of *Name of journal in italics* number (volume): 00-00. DOI (if given).

Adami, Elisabetta. 2018. "Styling the Self Online: Semiotic Technologization in Weblog Publishing". *Social Media as Semiotic Technology*. Special issue of *Social Semiotics* 28 (5): 601-622. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2018.1504713.

Citations on electronic sources:

Author's Surname(s), Author's first name(s). Year (if given). "Title in double inverted commas". Information about print publication (if given). <Information about electronic publication>. Access information.

Morris, Regan. 2018. "Is #meToo Changing Hollywood?". *BBC News* (March). <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43219531>. Accessed March 18, 2022.

If no author is given, begin the entry with the title of the document, inserted in alphabetical order with the rest of the references.

"The return of Sir Thomas Phillipps' Italian manuscripts to Italy". 2021. *Institute of English Studies* (blog). (July 2). <https://englishstudies.blogs.sas.ac.uk/2021/07/02/the-return-of-sir-thomas-phillipps-italian-manuscripts-to-italy/>. Accessed March 18, 2022.

Films:

Director's Surname(s), Director's first name(s). Year. *Title in italics*. Production Company.

Ross, Matt. 2016. *Captain Fantastic*. Electric City Entertainment.

Television shows, series and limited series:

CREATOR'S SURNAME(S), Creator's first name(s). Year(s). *Title in italics.* Broadcast studio.

WALLER-BRIDGE, Phoebe. 2016-2019. *Fleabag.* BBC Three and Amazon Prime Video.

The following norms should also be taken into account:

- Non-discriminatory language should be endorsed throughout manuscripts, making use of inclusive expressions and avoiding gender and racist-biased references.

- Keywords should be written in lower case, unless they are proper nouns and they need to be separated by a comma (not a semicolon). A full stop needs to be included at the end.

- Endnotes, which should appear before the Works Cited list, should be as few and short as possible, and their corresponding numbers in the main text should be typed as superscripts.

- Additional comments should appear in between long dashes: (—) rather than (-); —this is an example—, leaving no spaces in between the dashes and the text within them.

- There should be no full stops after interrogation and exclamation marks.

- Inverted commas should never appear after punctuation marks (e.g. "this is correct", but "this isn't.").

- Current (CG Times or Times New Roman) typefaces should be used, and special symbols should be avoided as much as possible.

- "&" should be avoided whenever possible.

- Generally speaking, punctuation and orthography should be coherent (British or American style) all through the article. For example: "emphasise/recognise" rather than "emphasize/recognise"; "colour/colour" rather than "colour/color".

- Authors are encouraged to divide their articles into entitled subsections. Capitalizations in such subsection headings should follow MLA guidelines.

- In the case of co-authored articles, the specific contribution of each author will be indicated in the manuscript. This section will be added before the Works Cited list.

- Funding agency/agencies and project code(s) should be indicated in the Acknowledgements section (not as an endnote) and should be placed before Endnotes.

EXCHANGE POLICY

Miscelánea welcomes exchanges with other scholarly publications. Please write to:

Miscelánea (intercambios)
Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
Universidad de Zaragoza
50009 Zaragoza (Spain)

The basic exchange rate for periodical publications is established on the basis of annual volumes. Quarterly, bi-monthly or monthly journals, or book series editors, may agree to establish other rates or complementary exchanges.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Miscelánea was awarded the Quality Seal for Excellence of scientific journals granted by the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT), a scientific body pertaining to the Spanish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Competitiveness, in 2016 (renewed until July 2022).

Miscelánea is indexed or abstracted in the following databases and directories:

* Linguistics & Language Behavior Abstracts
* MLA International Biography
* MLA List of Periodicals
* ABELL (Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature)
* ULRICHSWEB
* EBSCO Publishing
* DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)
* ERIH (European Reference Index for the Humanities)
* ERIH Plus
* SCOPUS (Elsevier)
* SJR. Scimago Journal & Country Rank
* ISOC, Revistas de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades del CSIC
* RESH, Revistas Españolas de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas del CSIC
* DIALNET, Portal de Difusión de la Producción Científica Hispana
* LATINDEX, Sistema Regional de Información en Línea para Revistas Científicas de América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal
* DICE, Difusión y Calidad Editorial de las Revistas Españolas de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas
* MIAR 2021
* CARHUS Plus+

Notes for contributors

* BEJES (Bibliography of European Journals for English Studies), published by the European Society for the Study of English (ESSE)
* Directory of Electronic Journals, Newsletters and Academic Discussion Lists, published by the Association of Research Libraries Washington, DC, USA
* ROAD Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources
* Index Coppernicus International

Página web: https://papiro.unizar.es/ojs/index.php/misc
Cuenta de Twitter: @MiscelaneaUZ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS