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ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE ESTUDIOS ANGLO-NORTEAMERICANOS
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RAY BRADBURY
ISAAC ASIMOV

My Antigone: Grief, Medical Humanities and the COVID-19 Pandemic

William Wordsworth

Developing and Exploiting the Corpus of Historical English Law Reports 1535-1999

The Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing: Challenge and Reward

Some Challenges behind the Compilation of the Salamanca Corpus: the Wiltshire Dialect as a Case Study

SUNCODAC: a Corpus of Online Forums in Higher Education

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SARA MARTÍN ALEGRE
UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA

Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury: The Art of Writing, from Pulp to Universal Acclaim

The names of Isaac Asimov (2 January 1920 - 6 April 1992) and Ray Bradbury (22 August 1920 - 5 June 2012) have been joined together in this year, 2020, because of the accident of their having been born within a few months of each other. They are, however, very different as writers, despite having jointly brought much respectability—each in their own style—to the American fantastic. It is, nonetheless, a mistake to see them as authors basically connected with the field of science fiction, for Bradbury wandered into many other fields (from Gothic fantasy to realist autobiographical fiction) and genres (drama, poetry, and the screenplay), whereas Asimov's science fiction occupies a relatively small segment of his truly wondrous production as a popularizer of all topics, from chemistry to Shakespeare, passing through the obscene limerick.

It is my intention to examine here primarily how Asimov and Bradbury saw themselves as writers, and what they had to say about the evolution of their careers from pulp to universal acclaim. It is not my aim to present works which any interested reader of Anglophone fiction is possibly familiar with—such as Asimov's short story collection *I, Robot* (1950) or Bradbury's dystopia *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)—but to go one step beyond their bibliographies into the material conditions of production which these two men faced as authors struggling to succeed in the US literary market from the 1940s onwards.

Whereas the more literary writers tend to eschew the discussion of monetary matters as a tasteless deviation from the discussion of the beauties of creation, Asimov and Bradbury described with the same glee the art of writing and the art of selling their work. They knew how to turn themselves into a brand while being at the same time singularly perceptive about their writing methods; both were honest and candid about how writing only reaches an audience through the complicities (even disagreements) with agents, editors, and publishers. They were also outstanding examples of what I will call the happy constant writer. Asimov and Bradbury approached writing as a joyful daily activity and by no means as a chore, and were much surprised to see their passion for the written word be welcome by so many national and international readers.

Asimov and Bradbury analyzed their craft and their careers in two informative, insightful volumes, respectively the autobiography *I, Asimov* and the essay collection *Zen in the Art of Writing*, which assembles some of Bradbury's prefaces to his own books and other scattered pieces. Both volumes were published in 1994, and though they are very different in content and intention, they offer together a fascinating panorama not only of Asimov's and Bradbury's respective trajectories but also of the evolution of American fantasy since the 1920s, when these two men were children of a very modest social background fascinated by pulp fiction but also by the literary classics borrowed from their local libraries. The two men have in common, above all, a passion for reading that nourished in them the passion for writing which secured for them a top position in American fiction. In any case, both Asimov and Bradbury were convivial men who preferred being known for their geniality rather than for their genius, and who firmly rejected the literary mystique often invoked by less prolific, more tormented authors working towards the great American novel.

Despite belonging to the same field, in the 1940s and 1950s Asimov and Bradbury had very little contact. This is not so surprising considering that Asimov lived mainly in Boston and New York (he was born in Brooklyn), whereas Bradbury (an Illinois mid-Westerner) lived mainly in California. Despite their love of the science fiction trope of space exploration, both men shared a deep dislike of travelling, specially of flying, which might explain the distance they kept. Asimov mentions Bradbury twice in his autobiography, next to Theodore Sturgeon, to highlight the poetic quality of their prose. Bradbury's biography by Sam Welles, *The Bradbury Chronicles* (2005), just mentions Asimov once, presenting him as a young, fascinated attendant (like Bradbury) of the First World Science Fiction Convention, or WorldCon, held in 1939 in New York. In the non-fiction volume *Asimov on Science Fiction* readers can find a reprint of a brief article on Bradbury (which Asimov wrote for *TV Guide* on 12 January 1980 and which Welles uses as his source). In this article, Asimov describes Bradbury as "the apostle to the Gentiles, so to speak; science fiction's ambassador to the outside world. People who didn't read science fiction, and who were taken aback by its unfamiliar conventions and its rather specialized vocabulary, found they could read and understand Bradbury" (225). In his essay "On the Shoulders of Giants" (1980), included in *Zen*, Bradbury names Asimov as another type of ambassador: he was the author that children picked to entice their teachers into reading science fiction, the "gentle bomb" (75) which, according to Bradbury, unleashed the revolution that changed children's reading in the classroom and in the public library. The average American public library, Bradbury recalls, had no Edgar Rice Burroughs or L. Frank Baum until the early 1950s. It still had no Asimov, no Heinlein, no Van Vogt, and no Bradbury in the 1960s. This was so because teachers and librarians found all fantasy "dangerous. It is escapist. It is daydreaming. It has nothing to do with the world and the world's problems" (75).

Interestingly, Asimov and Bradbury have in common the good offices of editor Walter Bradbury (no relation). He was in charge of Doubleday's science fiction collection, launched in 1949 and the first one to publish hardback novels in this genre in the United States. 'Brad,' as he was known, invited Asimov to publish his first novel—*Pebble in the Sky* (1950)—and was also the editor who convinced Ray Bradbury that his many stories about Mars could be combined into a novel (in what is known in science-fiction circles as a fix-up): *The Martian Chronicles* (1950). The rest, as they say, is history.

Isaac Asimov: "A Passion for the Process of Writing"

I, Asimov is not the kind of autobiography that follows a detailed chronological order. When he decided to write it, Asimov had already published the volumes *In Memory Yet Green: The Autobiography of Isaac Asimov, 1920-1974* (1979) and *In Joy Still Felt: The Autobiography of Isaac Asimov, 1954-1978* (1980), which can be described as standard autobiographies. *I, Asimov* is, instead, a collection of 166 short pieces in which the author—then beginning to suffer from the health complaints that lead to his death in 1992—reminisces about family and friends, but also describes his craft. The volume was published posthumously, edited by Asimov's second wife, Janet.

One of the most interesting pieces is "Prolificity." Asimov published 504 books: 357 were original, 147 *editions or* annotated volumes. It must be noted that 280 of his published volumes were non-fiction, to which he devoted much more energy than to fiction. Publishing on average thirteen books a year, Asimov was indeed "the most prolific American author on record apparently" (201); his books, besides, ranged "over every division of the Dewey decimal system (according to one enthusiastic librarian). No one in history has written more books on more different subjects than I have" (201). Asimov declares that his constant consideration of what makes a writer really prolific led him to a simple conclusion: that kind of person must "have a passion for the process of writing" (201). He means by this not so much pleasure in "dreaming up plots" but love for "the actual operation of writing, the scratching of a pen across a blank piece of paper, the pounding of typewriter keys, the watching of words appear on the word-processor screen" (201) and for the triumphal feeling of having the finished product in their hands. This passion, he notes, is not a requirement to be a writer, great or otherwise, but specifically to be a *prolific* writer. The happy constant writer—the prolific writer—prefers writing to anything else and because of this he needs no discipline. As Asimov stresses, as a prolific writer he was himself "unseducible" (202), for no other activity appealed to him more (except, he grants, his young daughter Robyn's calls to play).

Another main feature of the prolific writer is his self-assurance: "He can't sit around doubting the quality of his writing. Rather, he has to *love* his own writing. I do" (204, original italics). In Asimov's view, the main obstacle to being prolific is trying to be "too literary in your writing:"

If you try to turn out a prose poem, that takes time, even for an accomplished prose poet like Ray Bradbury or Theodore Sturgeon.

I have therefore deliberately cultivated a very plain style, even a colloquial one, which can be turned out rapidly and with which very little can go wrong. Of course, some critics, with crania that are more bone than mind, interpret this as my having "no style." If anyone thinks, however, that it is easy to write with absolute clarity and no frills, I recommend that he try it. (204-205)

Asimov did have indeed a style of his own, certainly unappreciated by the critics, but knew that he would never be "a threat to the reign of the Bellows and Updikes" (296). He settled, therefore, on being praised "for the vast number of books I would publish and for the range of subjects I wrote about. It would be nice if the good quality of the books were also appreciated, but I had the feeling that no one would notice this; they would notice only the number" (296).

Isaac Asimov started writing, by his own account, at the age of eleven. His family—Jewish migrants from Russia—ran successively diverse candy stores in Brooklyn and the child Asimov was allowed to read but not to keep the pulp magazines they sold. The local library was his other source of reading material; his father, Asimov recalls, gave him a card hoping to rescue his son from the pulpish fiction he devoured. The boy never had any magazines or books of his property and this lack, combined with the urge to tell stories, led him to start producing his own writing. Unlike Bradbury, who mentions illustrious writers he copied from, Asimov stresses with no apologies that his main inspiration were the pulp short story writers. He read, nevertheless, all kinds of classics, which he always preferred to modern contemporary literary fiction.

As he started the long process of educating himself out of the poor Jewish community of his childhood—Asimov eventually earned a PhD in chemistry and was a tenured professor at Boston University Medical School—, Asimov started selling his first stories, insisting that his odd foreign-sounding name be kept. A key turning point was his introduction to the science-fiction fan circles of New York, specially the Futurians, in the late 1930s. This led to his meeting the leading writers of the time, among them names as important as Robert Heinlein, Frederick Pohl, or Lester del Rey. Asimov's career, however, was launched by John Campbell Jr., editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* (which he later renamed *Analog Science Fiction and Fact*) between 1937 and 1971. Campbell was, together with Horace Gold and Tony Boucher, a maker of many distinguished science-fiction careers and Isaac Asimov can be said to be his star product.

Between 1938 when he published his first short story ("Marooned Off Vesta," *Amazing Stories*) and 1950, when his first book (*I, Robot*) was issued, Asimov was essentially a short story writer. His breakthrough story—the one after which rejections ceased—was "Nightfall" (1941), suggested by Campbell's idea about a planet in which night would only come once in thousands of years. By then Asimov had already published his first robot stories,

started in 1940. In 1942, he published "Foundation," the first piece in the saga that would be later published as the trilogy *Foundation* (1951), *Foundation and Empire* (1952), and *Second Foundation* (1953). Also in the 1950s, following editor Horace Gold's challenge to write detective fiction—Asimov would later write many mysteries in the classic style practiced by Agatha Christie—he published his first robot novels, *The Caves of Steel* (1954) and *The Naked Sun* (1957), focused on the peculiar investigating pair composed by Earthman Elijah Baley and his Auroran robotic partner, R. Daneel Olivaw, "possibly the most popular character in all my writings" (168). In the meantime, Asimov discovered that he also had a remarkable talent as a science writer. *The Chemicals of Life* (1954) was his first nonfiction book for a general readership and it "opened the floodgates" (173) of his second career as a professional writer.

In "Farewell to Science Fiction" Asimov clarifies the reasons why he abandoned science fiction at the same time he gave up his unsuccessful scientific career to become a full-time writer. He claims that after his own favorite short story, "The Ugly Little Boy" (1958), he found himself "written out" (252). A number of factors converged into that process: his distancing from Campbell (under the influence by then of Ron L. Hubbard's Dianetics, the basis later for Scientology); his belief that Horace Gold's magazine *Fantasy & Science Fiction* was not the best possible market for his work; and his growing tired of writing novels. Asimov even returned a substantial $2000 advance to Doubleday, finding himself unable to complete his third robot novel, started in 1958.

There was another important factor at work. Writing non-fiction "was much easier and much more fun than writing fiction, so it was precisely the thing I ought to have done in switching from part-time to full-time writing. If I had tried to write *fiction* full-time, I would undoubtedly have broken down" (253, original italics). "Every other kind of writing is easier than science fiction," Asimov notes, for in that genre you need not only imagine "a futuristic social structure which is complex enough to be interesting in itself apart from the story" but also "a plot that only works within that social structure" (265). Beyond his tiredness with the demands of this double requirement, Asimov also found himself out of touch with the 1960s revolution in science fiction, brought on by the New Wave but also by the rise of TV sci-fi, which so damaged the magazine market. Whereas Bradbury navigated this transition with ease, Asimov believed that his time had passed.

This, as it turned out, was a misperception. During the 1960s and 1970s Asimov still was one of the 'Big Three,' together with Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke, selling steadily his 1950s fiction and finding himself selected for anthologies. As he wrote countless non-fiction volumes, he enjoyed the novelty of being paid again for short stories which he had sold to magazines with no expectations of further gain. Asimov did not abandon science fiction altogether, but with the exception of the novel *The Gods Themselves* (1972) and the novella *The Bicentennial Man* (1976), he published little. These two texts were winners of both the Nebula and the Hugo awards and showed that Asimov had not at all lost his touch. He did not, however, turn to science fiction again because of the praised he reaped, or because he felt the urge, but only because of the enormous pressure that Doubleday editors Betty Prashker and Hugh O'Neill put on him to write a new Foundation novel.

Up to this point, the early 1980s, Asimov had never been a best-selling author. His income was quite high but this was because he was constantly publishing new non-fiction books and his older science fiction was still selling well. Doubleday, though, were determined to get a new Asimov novel and in 1981 they offered an advance of $50000, ten times higher than the usual advance for his other books. He accepted and published in 1982 *Foundation's Edge*, his 282nd book and the first one to make it to the top of the *New York Times* best-selling list (it reached the twelfth position). Asimov attributes his unexpected success (though certainly expected by Doubleday) to the fact that "For over thirty years, generation after generation of science fiction readers had been reading the Foundation novels and had been clamoring for more. All of them, thirty years' worth of them, were now ready to jump at the book the instant it appeared" (468). His later novels—*The Robots of Dawn* (1983), *Robots and Empire* (1985), *Foundation and Earth* (1986) and *Prelude to Foundation* (1988)—did not sell so much, but Asimov found himself once more at the very top of the science fiction field. He was, besides, honored with the SFWA Grand Master Award by the SF & Fantasy Writers of America in 1987 (the same honor would go to Bradbury in 1989).

Asimov's access to best-sellerdom was never connected to audiovisual adaptation, even though his style of writing—which includes plenty of dramatized action with abundant dialogue—seems potentially good screen material. The few adaptations of his work that exist are either very minor TV episodes or movies that really have little to do with his work (like Alex Proyas's anti-Asimovian *I, Robot* (2004)). The main exception to this rule is Chris Columbus's 1999 version of Asimov's novella *The Bicentennial Man* (1976), with Robin Williams beautifully playing the increasingly humanized robot Andrew Martin.

Asimov's success depends, rather, on his having benefitted from the evolution of two key issues in his work. On the one hand, the Foundation series is an outstanding example of science fiction as future history. By his own account, his reading of Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1766-1788) inspired Asimov with the idea of telling "a story about the decline and fall of the Galactic Empire" (117). His editor John Campbell urged him to imagine that story at the largest possible scale, as Asimov did. Without the Foundation series, a great deal of the space opera we enjoy today (including the *Star Wars* saga) would never

have been produced. On the other hand, Asimov's robot stories have enormously benefited from the evolution of robotics (a word he invented) into one of the key branches of science in our times. Asimov described himself as a "technological optimist" (222) in the vein of Heinlein and Clarke, and his robot novels—like the rest of his production, he stresses—tends "to celebrate the triumph of technology rather than its disaster" (222).

Although Asimov's personal behavior would be questioned today because of his constant flirting, the evolution of gender issues may also help increase his readership. When Asimov stopped writing his third robot novel in 1958, he did so because that was a story about a woman who falls in love with a humaniform male robot; the times were not ripe for that type of plot and he abandoned it in frustration. In the 1980s, many things had changed and he could rescue his old 1950s idea for *The Robots of Dawn* (1983). Unlike Bradbury, who never quite managed to overcome his sexism in the representation of his female characters, Asimov did make an effort to extricate himself from his initial limitations. Psycho-roboticist Susan Calvin, the scientific hero of his earlier 1940s robot stories, is an underappreciated female character of great resilience and intelligence. Gladia Delmarre, the woman who falls in love with robot Jander in *The Robots of Dawn* (one of the first novels to consider what we now call robosexuality) also deserves more attention.

Asimov had no doubt a great ego, as he candidly acknowledged in *I, Asimov*, but he was never arrogant. He describes himself as a child prodigy that eventually found out he was no prodigy at all as a post-graduate student. Whenever someone asked him whether he had actually been a child prodigy—which, he says, happened "with disconcerting frequency" (2)—he would reply that "Yes, indeed, and I still am" (2). This gleeful childishness is part of his being a happy constant writer, and, arguably, the main feature he shares with Ray Bradbury, who described himself as "that special freak, the man with the child inside who remembers all" (39). I turn to him next.

Ray Bradbury's Zen in the Art of Writing: "A Great Surge of Delightful Passion"

In the essay that lends its title to the volume, "Zen in the Art of Writing" (1973), Bradbury defends the idea that there should be a connection between work, relaxation, and unthinkingness. By this he means that writers should develop a constant working method, based on producing a daily quantity of words. This should lead eventually to a relaxed attitude towards writing, which should allow creativity to flow without self-consciousness, "the enemy of all art, be it acting, writing, painting, or living itself, which is the greatest art of all" ("The Secret Mind," 87). This is another way of saying that the genuine writer is only interested in the process of writing: "It is a lie to write in such a way as to be rewarded by money in the commercial market. It is a lie to write in such a way as to be rewarded by fame offered you by some snobbish quasi-literary group in the intellectual gazettes" (104-105). Bradbury rejects the "dichotomy of 'literary' as opposed to 'commercial' writing" to defend "the Middle Way, the way to the creative process that is best for everyone and most conducive to producing stories that are agreeable to snobs and hacks alike" (113). Presumably, this is how he saw his own work.

Bradbury advises young authors to be, above all, resilient and pay little attention to rejections. In his own case, as soon as a story was turned down, he would immediately send it elsewhere, even to a radically different publication. This is because

I have always tried to write my own story. Give it a label if you wish, call it science fiction or fantasy or the mystery or the western. But, at heart, all good stories are the one kind of story, the story written by an individual man from his individual truth. That kind of story can be fitted into any magazine, be it the *Post* or *McCall's*, *Astounding Science-Fiction*, *Harper's Bazaar*, or T*he Atlantic*. (112)

From this point of view, the writer is always placed above the genre. Our critical practice, however, which insists on placing genre above the writer, has little use for genre-curious authors like Bradbury and, indeed, Asimov.

As Bradbury writes in another piece, tellingly titled "The Joy of Writing" (1973) he names zest and gusto as "the most important items in a writer's make-up" (1), bemoaning that these terms are not used as much as they should. For him, a writer should be, above all, "excited," "a thing of fevers and enthusiasms" (2). Accordingly, he describes his favorite writers—Dickens, Twain, Wolfe, Peacock, Shaw, Molière, Johnson, Wycherley, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dylan Thomas, and Pope—as authors who "knew fun in their work" (1) regardless of their personal circumstances. In "Drunk and in Charge of a Bicycle" (1980) he gently mocks the idea that "Writing is supposed to be difficult, agonizing, a dreadful exercise, a terrible occupation" (36), claiming that in his case there has been no anxiety at all. His stories "run up and bite me on the leg—I respond by writing down everything that goes on during the bite. When I finish, the idea lets go, and runs off" (36). Bradbury always wrote "in a great surge of delightful passion" ("Investing Dimes: *Fahrenheit 451*," 56).

The happy constant writer is in the grip of a compulsion to write. Bradbury does not comment on prolificness as Asimov does, but he declares instead rather dramatically that "If you did not write every day, the poisons would accumulate and you would begin to die, or act crazy, or both" ("Preface" xi). Writing, Bradbury argues is "survival" (xi), an act of creation which "reminds us that we *are* alive

and that it is a gift and a privilege, not a right" (x, original italics). Writing is also "continuous astonishment at what your deep well contains if you just haul off and shout down it" (xii). The pleasure that remains undertheorized in literary theory and criticism, then, is the wonder of self-revelation—the fact that authors write to know what is contained in their creative minds and would not be revealed in any other way.

Naturally, the mind's main input must be other texts. In "How to Keep and Feed a Muse" (1961), Bradbury advises aspiring authors to "Read poetry every day of your life" (26), which explains the often noted poetical quality of his prose. Prose in any genre—essays, short stories, novels—must also be consumed daily. A writer must read authors "who write the way you hope to write" (27) but also the others, to be "stimulated in directions you might not take for many years" (28). The Muse, or in plainer words creativity, must be fed, for which the writer must write daily, engaging in an apprenticeship of one or two decades until grammar and story construction "become part of the Subconscious, without restraining or distorting the Muse" (31).

This is how Bradbury describes his own maturing into a professional writer. In "Run Fast, Stand Still, or, the Thing at the Top of the Stairs, or, New Ghosts from Old Minds" (1986) he notes that he grew up "reading and loving the traditional ghost stories of Dickens, Lovecraft, Poe, and later, Kuttner, Bloch, and Clark Ashton Smith," either borrowed from the public library in his hometown Waukegan—fictionalized as Green Town in his stories—or read in the pulp magazines of his childhood. His first efforts, however, did not succeed because "I was so busy imitating" (8). The gift of a toy typewriter the Christmas when he was twelve, and a climactic encounter with circus artist Mr. Electrico, inspired Bradbury to write one thousand words a day from then onwards. For years, he reminisces, "Poe was looking over one shoulder, while Wells, Burroughs, and just about every writer in *Astounding [Science Fiction]* and *Weird Tales* looked over the other" (8-9). Bradbury trained himself to develop his own style by writing brief titles on a list, from which he would take inspiration to write his stories. Intriguingly, he usually started by writing "a long prose-poem-essay" on the chosen title; this would become a story as soon as a character "suddenly appeared and said, 'That's *me*'; or, 'That's an idea *I like*!' And the character would then finish the tale for me" (12, original italics).

Following mostly this method, ten years later, when he was twenty-two, Bradbury wrote "The Lake," which he credits with being his first "really fine story" (9). This was his third sale (to *Weird Tales*) but, like Asimov, Bradbury could only cease writing imitative fiction thanks to the mentorship of other authors, among whom he mentions his "loving friend" (10) Leigh Brackett, one of the main women science fiction authors, and Henry Kuttner. "He suggested authors—Katherine Anne Porter, John Collier, Eudora Welty—and books—*The Lost Weekend*, *One Man's Meat*, *Rain in the Doorway*—to be read and learned from" (17) and gave him the copy of *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson which would eventually inspire Bradbury to write novels as different as the realist, autobiographical *Dandelion Wine* (1957) and *The Martian Chronicles*. As happened in Asimov's case, the mentorship he enjoyed was closely connected with his activities as a young fan—in his case in the Science Fiction Society run by Forrest Ackerman—though Bradbury also credits his agent of many years, Don Congdon, and his wife Maggie as his greatest critics and supporters.

During his apprenticeship Bradbury wrote, he claims, a short story every week, not only because his Muse was kept well fed but also because the pulp magazine market, as Asimov also notes, offered limited rewards. Each story would bring in $20 to $40, a modest income that for years was added to Bradbury's even more modest job as a newspaper street vendor, the occupation he undertook after graduating from high school and while he educated himself at the Los Angeles Public Library (he never attended college). In 1944, he recalls, the sale of forty stories reported only $800. At a close friend's instigation, he decided to mail some stories to the "slicks"—the upmarket magazines—though he used the penname William Elliott, fearing that the "Manhattan editors might have seen the name Bradbury on the covers of *Weird Tales* and would be prejudiced against this 'pulp' writer" (44). As it turns out, they were not and in 1945 Bradbury could publish his first stories in classy publications such as *Charm*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Collier's*. Bradbury found himself not only quite rich—he earned an astonishing $1000 for the three pieces—but also on the road towards canonization. Editor Martha Foley listed the three stories in *The Best American Short Stories* (1946) and one of them appeared in Herschel Brickell's *O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories* (1947).

Bradbury kept since then a sort of dual career, consolidated on the science fiction side with the publication of *The Martian Chronicles*, a book to which I have already alluded. He was trying to publish his first short story collection but as his Doubleday editor, Brad, taught him this would work better if he had already published a novel. He signed, thus, at the same time the contract for *Chronicles* and the contract for *The Illustrated Man*, the books for which he got his first advance. Bradbury claims that a main turning point happened in Chicago. Changing trains on the way home from a later trip to New York, he found himself surrounded by a pioneering crowd of fans of *The Martian Chronicles*, an experience that was a life changer. Yet, clearly, popularity was not enough for Bradbury, who craved a higher sort of acknowledgement. A chance encounter with British expat author Christopher Isherwood in a Santa Monica bookshop ended with Bradbury forcing into Isherwood's hands a signed copy of *Chronicles*—also inscribed with his phone number. Isherwood did call a few days later to proclaim his enthusiasm and promise a review that would eventually call the attention of other illustrious expats, such as English philosopher Gerald Heard and author Aldous

Huxley. Bradbury claims that during tea with them these two men called him a real poet, the kind of high praise he was after.

Unlike Asimov, who stayed away from the cinema and TV screen all his life, Bradbury's increasing popularity led to other writing adventures, such as his work for the TV series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (seven scripts between 1956-1962), his collaboration as screenwriter with John Huston in the movie *Moby Dick* (1956), the founding with Alan Neal Hubbs of the Pandemonium Theatre (in 1964), *The Ray Bradbury Theatre* series (1985-1992) and a long etcetera. His fame also led to the critically acclaimed adaptation by François Truffaut of *Fahrenheit 451* in 1966, a film which Bradbury actually disliked. Unlike Asimov, who remained in Doubleday all his publishing life, Bradbury would leave the publishers in 1960. Upmarket Simon & Schuster published *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962)—an excellent horror novel and possibly his best work—but Bradbury later followed his editor Bob Gottlieb to equally prestigious Knopf. He ended his relationship with them in 1992, when he published *Green Shadows, White Whale*, the novel about the complicated time he spent in Ireland working with the often abusive John Huston, his former hero.

Already in the 21st century, Bradbury was awarded a Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters from the National Book Foundation (2002) and the National Medal of Arts (2004). He also received a Pulitzer Price special citation (2007). Beyond what all this meant to him as the underprivileged boy he once was and as the hard-working author that left his pulpish days behind, these honors acknowledge the whole field of American fantasy. They also signal a change in the way the fantastic is now perceived, no longer a sub-literature but an expression of the best feature human beings possess: our imagination.

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Dandelion Wine (1957, fix-up autobiographical novel)

Something Wicked This Way Comes (1962, novel)

I Sing The Body Electric (1969, short story collection)

Death Is a Lonely Business (1985, novel)

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William Wordsworth (1770-1850): una semblanza biográfica en conmemoración de los 250 años de su nacimiento

William Wordsworth, quien sería uno de los más grandes artífices de la poesía universal, nació el 7 de abril de 1770 en Cockermouth, una pequeña localidad del Lake District, paraje de inmensa belleza natural ubicado en el noroeste de Inglaterra, lindando con las tierras escocesas, "Fostered alike by beauty and by fear" (*Prelude* I: 306)[1]. Él y sus cuatro hermanos—entre los que se contaba Dorothy, la única mujer, compañera inseparable y fuente de inspiración constante para William, aparte de gran escritora—vieron perturbada lo que prometía ser una infancia de tintes casi idílicos con la temprana muerte de la madre, Ann, en 1778. Este hecho provocaría la separación de los hermanos, repartidos entre diversos hogares de parientes y amigos, lo que sería motivo para ellos de un sentimiento de añoranza por el vínculo roto con su círculo familiar más cercano y entrañable. En 1779, William sería enviado a la escuela pública de Hawkshead, una institución en la que el niño, gran amante de la Naturaleza, complementaría sus juegos y excursiones infantiles con un aprendizaje sólido de las disciplinas académicas, apoyado por el cariño de Hugh y Ann Tyson, con los cuales se alojaría durante los periodos escolares. Las vacaciones propiciaban la reunión de Wordsworth con algunos de sus hermanos, siempre anhelando reencontrarse de nuevo. Pero tales deseos se vieron frustrados por la muerte de John Wordsworth, el padre de la familia, en 1783. William quedaría a cargo de sus tíos, con los que su espíritu rebelde le granjearía más de un problema. En 1787, una vez finalizados sus estudios en Hawkshead, Wordsworth marcha a estudiar a Cambridge, concretamente a St John's College, donde se daría de bruces con un sistema de estudios obsoleto y anquilosado que le resultaría escasamente gratificante y atrayente. Sólo su amistad con algunos condiscípulos—como Robert Jones—, su incipiente cultivo de la poesía, y sus viajes vacacionales, mitigarían la nostalgia de la Región de los Lagos y aliviarían un tanto su desilusión y su sensación de estar perdiendo el tiempo en la universidad, encaminado hacia una carrera eclesiástica que no le seducía. Mientras tanto, Wordsworth comienza a publicar algunos poemas, y redacta composiciones prometedoras, como "An Evening Walk", escrito en 1789, que vería la luz más tarde, en 1793.

La toma de la Bastilla y el estallido de la Revolución Francesa supone para Wordsworth, lo mismo que para la mayoría de sus contemporáneos, un suceso crucial. Sin poder sustraerse a su pretensión de ser testigo de lo que estaba aconteciendo al otro lado del Canal de la Mancha, y pese a la rotunda oposición de su tío y tutor, William, acompañado por Robert Jones, inicia en 1790 un periplo a través de diversos lugares de Francia y de Suiza, contemplando atónito, aunque de lejos y velada por la niebla, la sublime inmensidad de los Alpes, que, curiosamente, cruzaría sin darse cuenta de ello. Este hecho paradójico marca una constante en la conceptualización poética de Wordsworth, en la que predomina más la imaginación y la rememoración de lo vivido que la experiencia vital puntual en sí, de acuerdo con su definición posterior de la poesía como "emotions recollected in tranquility" que brota de "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", ideas plasmadas en el manifiesto más relevante del Romanticismo inglés: el "Preface" a la edición de 1801 de las *Lyrical Ballads*.

Sea como fuere, tras la finalización de las vacaciones estivales, los jóvenes regresan a Inglaterra. Pero Wordsworth, después de una breve estancia en Londres tras abandonar Cambridge sin pena ni gloria, retorna a Francia en noviembre de 1791 para dejarse impregnar del espíritu revolucionario que divide a Europa en aquellos instantes. Según escribiría más tarde en *The Prelude*, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven" (X: 692-93). Entabla amistad con Michel Beaupuy, personaje que influiría notablemente en su formación, y reside en París y Orleáns. En esta ciudad conoce a la joven Annette Vallon, con la que tendría una hija, Caroline, nacida el 15 de diciembre de 1792.

Sin oficio ni beneficio, acuciado por su precaria situación económica, Wordsworth regresa a Inglaterra para hallar un medio de vida que le permitiera poder volver a Francia para casarse con Annette. Pero en 1793 se produce la ejecución de Luis XVI, lo que provoca el estallido de la guerra entre ambos países, lo que imposibilitaba incluso la correspondencia entre los ciudadanos de una y otra nación. Deprimido y sin dinero, William viaja a través de la llanura de Salisbury, en el sureste de Inglaterra, hasta adentrarse en Gales, donde escala el monte Snowdon. Admira por vez primera la Abadía de Tintern, que cinco años más tarde volvería a visitar y en cuyo entorno emplazaría su magnífico poema "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey", y compone "Salisbury Plain".

Son tiempos difíciles para los radicales británicos, simpatizantes de la Revolución en tierras galas, criticados, perseguidos y espiados por el gobierno inglés. Al igual que otros intelectuales radicales de su país, Wordsworth albergará sentimientos contrapuestos en lo concerniente a su afinidad revolucionaria—quebrantada por las espantosas noticias que le llegan acerca del "Terror"—y el amor a su patria, aparte de experimentar una considerable angustia por el destino de Annette y su hija. La represión política se intensifica en una Inglaterra opresiva. Pero no todos los acontecimientos son negativos: en 1794, Wordsworth consigue reunirse con su querida hermana Dorothy en Keswick y hereda 900 libras a la muerte de su amigo Raisley Calvert. Ese mismo año recibirá la noticia de la ejecución de Robespierre, y poco después entrará en contacto con el círculo del filósofo y escritor radical William Godwin—padre de Mary Shelley, autora

[1] Cito por la edición de 1805.

de *Frankenstein*—, de cuyo ideario de tintes jacobinos irá separándose cada vez más con el paso del tiempo, pero por el que en un principio se sentirá inspirado.

1795 enmarca el encuentro, crucial para la historia literaria del Romanticismo y de la poesía universal, entre Wordsworth y Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ambos, junto con Dorothy, sin la que no se puede entender a Wordsworth como persona y poeta, entablan una relación de amistad y colaboración que resultará en extremo fructífera para ambos artífices de la palabra, hasta que la disparidad de caracteres y los avatares de la vida acabarían por enturbiar su estrecho vínculo, pleno de entusiasmo y afecto en las primeras décadas de la relación. Wordsworth hace acopio de nuevos bríos para acometer su tarea artística, toda vez que por fin había logrado realizar su aspiración de establecer un hogar junto a su hermana, primero en Racedown (Dorset), más tarde en Alfoxden (Devon, donde Coleridge había nacido—concretamente, en Ottery St Mary—y donde residía en aquel momento) y luego en Dove Cottage (entonces conocido simplemente como Town End), Grasmere, ya en el tantas veces anhelado Lake District, al que Coleridge también terminaría trasladándose en busca de la unión intelectual y del afecto que no hallaba en su matrimonio con Sara Fricker, y tratando de paliar las consecuencias de su paulatina y destructiva adicción al opio.

Wordsworth, para el que el proceso de composición poética fue siempre un trabajo arduo, va pergeñando sus obras en los últimos años del siglo XVIII. En 1797 completa su pieza teatral *The Borderers*, que no tuvo mayor trascendencia, al igual que el resto de su irregular producción dramática, y esboza su primera versión de "The Ruined Cottage", donde muestra una constante de su ideario estético: la preocupación por los menesterosos y olvidados, por los personajes humildes, en lo que constituye una auténtica revolución en la percepción y plasmación de lo poético hasta aquel momento. Es preciso aclarar que, frente a la imagen inadecuada y convencional del poeta romántico que nos ha legado la tradición, Wordsworth, de profundas convicciones organicistas también en el plano textual, fue puliendo la mayoría de sus escritos a lo largo de su vida en una suerte de "work in progress", otorgando primacía al esfuerzo frente a la inspiración, acaso al contrario de lo que le sucedía a Coleridge, quien concedía mayor importancia al poder visionario sobre el que sustentaba los versos de su primera e inigualable etapa poética.

La complementariedad inicial de ambos escritores se prueba en la colaboración conjunta en el volumen esencial que lleva por título *Lyrical Ballads*, publicado de manera anónima en 1798, año de un frenético y lúcido proceso de composición poética. Coleridge se había encargado de subrayar las facultades sobrenaturales de la poesía en su aportación al poemario con su fascinante "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", mientras que los poemas de Wordsworth, con mucho los más numerosos de la obra, se enfocarían precisamente en mostrar de manera directa la influencia de la Naturaleza en el ser humano, reflejando la comunión intrínseca entre ambos, y centrándose principalmente en episodios y experiencias aparentemente sencillas, extraídas fundamentalmente de la sensación de formar parte de un todo, compuesto no solo por los elementos naturales, sino también por el acervo y la existencia cotidiana de los hombres y mujeres que poblaban la Región de los Lagos. Wordsworth es poeta de lo minucioso, del detalle aparentemente nimio, de la profundización en los estados de la mente y en los sentimientos humanos, tanto de dicha como de sufrimiento, en consonancia con la célebre frase del dramaturgo latino Terencio en su *Heautontimoruménos* (*El atormentador de sí* mismo): "Humanus sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto" ("Soy humano, y nada humano considero ajeno a mí"). Se trata de una auténtica estética de la compasión, despojado el término de sus connotaciones de rancio devocionario, atendiendo a su dimensión etimológica: *cum-passione*, que podríamos traducir libremente, prestando atención a su sentido profundo, como "sentir con el otro".

Esta elección temática y estética, de profunda raigambre moral, implica una honda revolución en el ámbito de la poesía, por mucho que ya viniera siendo preludiada por otros autores británicos dieciochescos por los que Wordsworth se deja influir, como es el caso de James Thomson. Se pone el énfasis de esta manera en una percepción más "democrática" de la poesía, según la cual todo ser humano debería tener acceso a ella y ser motivo o trasunto de la misma. Según defenderá en el ya aludido "Preface" a la segunda edición de las *Baladas líricas*, que vio la luz en enero de 1801, el poeta, investido si se quiere de una función casi sacerdotal, es para Wordsworth "a man speaking to men", al tiempo que le da preponderancia a la imaginación frente a la razón, según se puede deducir de poemas como el que lleva por título "The Tables Turned", en el que se incita a dejar de lado los libros para disfrutar de la belleza de la Naturaleza, un *leitmotiv* que convierte a Wordsworth en uno de los principales artífices de lo que hoy denominaríamos una "conciencia ecocrítica" desde postulados poéticos:

**Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?**

**The sun above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.**

**Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.**

**And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.**

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

La poesía ha de estar basada en la existencia y el lenguaje comunes, y, con toda su carga terapéutica, ha de proponerse como finalidad principal la de causar placer en el lector. Es difícil hacerse a la idea en nuestros días de la carga revolucionaria que estas opiniones supusieron en el contexto histórico y literario de la Inglaterra a caballo entre dos siglos: el XVIII y el XIX. De ahí que, con escasas excepciones, los críticos de la época reprobaran acerbamente las *Lyrical Ballads*, tanto por causas estéticas—a algunos les pareció absurdo, entre otros factores, que se les dedicaran poemas a los personajes humildes de una tierra olvidada, quizás sin tener en cuenta que fue en las proximidades del Lake District precisamente donde habían hallado eco en la Edad Media los romances y baladas fronterizas de Escocia e Inglaterra— como por razones políticas: a los miembros del "Establishment" les pareció peligroso que las personas sencillas, en el caso de que pudieran acceder a la lectura, tuvieran la posibilidad de disfrutar y aprender de la poesía, incontestable vehículo ideológico y cultural, hoy por desgracia anestesiado y sepultado por sistemas educativos imperantes y manipuladores.

En todo caso, las noticias acerca de las reseñas adversas de las *Lyrical Ballads* alcanzan a Wordsworth, Dorothy y Coleridge en Alemania, adonde habían viajado impulsados por este último para incrementar sus conocimientos acerca de la filosofía y la poesía germánica. En aquel invierno duro de 1798, en la ciudad de Goslar, con acento melancólico, William compone los primeros versos de lo que sería un gran poema autobiográfico, la primera simiente de *The Prelude*, que conocería tres versiones distintas: las de 1799, 1805, y 1850. Ya de vuelta en Inglaterra, y asentados en Dove Cottage, Wordsworth y su hermana llevan una existencia pacífica y en contacto con la Naturaleza, esa fuerza poderosa que une al ser humano con lo trascendente y que articula y vertebra una trinidad esencial de carácter eminentemente panteísta: "Man-Nature-God", pero no un Dios institucionalizado en este momento para Wordsworth, quien considera que el poeta es una mente que conversa sólo consigo misma y con la Naturaleza. Este proceso psicológico es esencial para el escritor británico, y se refleja en todo momento en sus obras, como por ejemplo en *Home at Grasmere*, composición cuya lectura debe complementarse con la de los diarios de Dorothy, de asombrosa belleza. No sería ocioso reiterar que tanto Wordsworth como Coleridge podrían definirse como dos de los primeros poetas con una conciencia ecológica moderna, una afirmación que se vería refrendada asimismo por los *Journals* de Dorothy, obliterados en este sentido.

1802 es un año de escritura casi febril para Wordsworth; entre otras obras, compondría los que se han dado en denominar "Lucy Poems", de extraordinaria belleza, serie a la que pertenecen los que comienzan con los versos "She dwelt among the untrodden ways" y "A slumber did my spirit seal". También redactaría versos imbuidos de indignación política, como el que lleva por título "London 1802", también llamado "Milton", en honor a uno de los más admirados e imitados artífices literarios de Wordsworth. En abril de aquel año se publica una nueva edición de las *Lyrical Ballads*, con el "Preface" ampliado y revisado. Poco después se proclamaría la Paz de Amiens, por la cual Francia e Inglaterra dejaban de estar en guerra. Por aquel entonces, William está enamorado de Mary Hutchinson, a la que conocía desde su etapa escolar en Hawkshead, y a la que hace una proposición matrimonial que sería aceptada. Mary sería motivo de inspiración de diversos poemas, entre otros, el titulado "She Was a Phantom of Delight", y de un intenso epistolario amoroso descubierto tardíamente. Wordsworth y Dorothy viajan a Francia para visitar a Annette y Caroline, a las que William pone al corriente de sus planes. Al sentimiento de júbilo que impregna al poeta por la proximidad de su hija dedica Wordsworth la asombrosa composición "It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free". Poco después de regresar a tierras británicas, William y Mary se casan en una sencilla ceremonia en sus queridos parajes lacustres.

El nacimiento del primer hijo de la pareja, John, llega casi al mismo tiempo que las noticias de un nuevo conflicto bélico entre Francia e Inglaterra. William, Dorothy y Coleridge, andariegos impenitentes, llevan a cabo un viaje por tierras de Escocia. Allí los dos hermanos conocerían al insigne Walter Scott, quien quedaría gratamente impresionado por los conocimientos y la sensibilidad poética de Wordsworth, con el que establecería una sólida relación epistolar y de amistad que duraría hasta la muerte del gran escritor escocés. Coleridge, por su parte, irá alejándose de forma gradual de los Wordsworth: inmerso en una profunda crisis familiar (separado de su esposa y desesperadamente enamorado de Sarah Hutchinson) y espiritual que cada vez le hace consumir más láudano, sus ideas poéticas y su conceptualización de la vida se van separando de manera paulatina de las propugnadas por William. En 1804, Coleridge se embarcará hacia Malta para tratar de mejorar su maltrecha salud y su atormentada mente, objetivo que no lograría. En ese mismo año, Wordsworth escribiría su extraordinaria oda "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood",

de temática panteísta análoga a “Tintern Abbey”, en la que se pone de manifiesto el paradójico aserto que ya aparece en “My Heart Leaps Up”: “The Child is Father of the Man”. Wordsworth concede una significación primordial a la infancia, ese instante vital, para él feliz y dichoso, en el que el ser humano está más próximo a la inocencia, aspecto influenciado por el neoplatonismo sobre el que ya había escrito el singular William Blake. Serán muchos los versos de Wordsworth dedicados a contrastar la sabiduría primigenia del niño frente a la infatuación adquirida y artificiosa de lo que llamamos “conocimiento” del adulto; véanse a este respecto poemas como “We Are Seven” o “Anecdote for Fathers”. En última instancia, el recuerdo, tan relevante para la poética de Wordsworth, puede hacernos retornar al instante “Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower”, el cual, si bien no puede ser recuperado en toda su plenitud, sí es susceptible de ser disfrutado mediante el ejercicio perceptivo de la memoria creativa. Así se pone de manifiesto en poemas como “To a Butterfly” o “I wandered lonely as a cloud”, donde el júbilo esencial de la voz poética contrarresta el tono más pesimista de composiciones como “The World Is Too Much with Us”.

No obstante, el relativo equilibrio de Wordsworth y su círculo se vio bruscamente interrumpido y sacudido por sucesos dolorosos, como la muerte en un naufragio de su hermano John, oficial de la Marina británica y asiduo visitante de Dove Cottage. Este luctuoso acontecimiento tiene lugar en 1805, año en el que Wordsworth completa la segunda versión de *The Prelude*, que, hasta su muerte, fue siempre conocido en el círculo familiar como “the poem to Coleridge”. Este regresaría de Malta en condiciones lamentables en 1806. Un año después, Wordsworth da a la imprenta sus *Poems in Two Volumes*, donde recoge la mayor parte de su producción poética desde 1802 hasta 1807. La obra será ridiculizada en numerosas reseñas literarias del momento. Aunque la situación económica no era la más halagüeña, William y su creciente familia dejarán Dove Cottage para instalarse en Allan Bank, una casa más grande situada también en Grasmere. Allí nacerá en 1810 su hijo William, el mismo año en el que tendrá lugar la ya largamente anunciada ruptura entre Wordsworth y Coleridge. A pesar de que se reconciliarían más tarde (en 1812), su relación nunca volvería a ser la que fue. Pero Wordsworth tuvo en el devenir de este lapso cronológico otras preocupaciones: la muerte temprana de sus hijos Thomas y Catherine (nacidos respectivamente en 1806 y 1808). Después de estos tristes sucesos y de un nuevo cambio de hogar, de Allan Bank a Rectory, siempre en Grasmere, el año de 1813 trae consigo el final de los problemas económicos de la familia: Wordsworth, después de muchos ruegos y esfuerzos para conseguir un cargo oficial, es elegido para desempeñar las tareas de alto funcionario (“Distributor of Stamps”) para el Distrito de Westmorland, un oficio de connotaciones políticas. Se traslada entonces a Rydal Mount, casa señorial que constituiría su hogar definitivo. Allí completaría su poema *The Excursion*, que sería publicado al año siguiente, prologado por un plan para escribir la que Wordsworth pretendía que fuera su obra magna: *The Recluse*, la cual nunca fue completada.

Pese a las continuas diatribas de sus detractores, Wordsworth no cejaba en su empeño poético, y en 1815 da a la imprenta la primera edición de sus poemas escogidos, acompañados por un prefacio. En estos tiempos el poeta realiza diversas visitas a Londres, ciudad a la que, sin ser de su completo gusto, dedicó un hermoso poema: “Composed Upon Westminster Bridge” (escrito el 3 de septiembre de 1802), una de las composiciones que acentúan el arte de Wordsworth en calidad de artífice supremo del soneto, aspecto que puede constatarse en obras posteriores como los *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, si bien menos inspirados que los de su periodo más fecundo e inspirado. Y son también estos años los que encuadran el giro político de Wordsworth hacia el conservadurismo, llegando a hacer campaña para los “Tories” en 1818, hecho que le granjeó el rechazo de los jóvenes poetas de la nueva generación romántica –Shelley, Byron, Hunt...—, quienes, sin embargo, siguieron admirándolo desde una perspectiva literaria y en los que influyó destacablemente.

No obstante, la producción poética de Wordsworth, salvo excepciones, irá perdiendo fuerza y vigor en este intervalo y hasta la fecha de su fallecimiento, haciéndose cada vez más convencional y formulaica; acaso su último gran poema sea la “Extempore Effusion” dedicada a la muerte del escritor escocés James Hogg, hermosa elegía escrita en 1835 en la que también lamenta la desaparición de otros grandes artífices de la escritura que le habían honrado con su amistad, como Coleridge, Walter Scott, Charles Lamb, George Crabbe y Felicia Hemans. Es hacia la década de 1820, paradójicamente, cuando comenzará a ser más apreciado por el público lector y por la crítica establecida, hasta llegar a convertirse en una figura aclamada e indiscutible en el ámbito artístico y literario de habla inglesa, proceso que culmina con la designación en 1843 como “Poet Laureate”, sustituyendo al recientemente fallecido Robert Southey, cuñado de Coleridge, otro de los nombres entroncados con lo que se ha dado en llamar “Lake Poets”—un término inspirado por la obra de Thomas de Quincey, amigo de los Wordsworth y posterior residente en Dove Cottage, *Recollections of the Lake Poets* (1839)—aglutinados todos ellos en torno a la figura de Wordsworth.

Los últimos años del poeta alternaron instantes de fervor viajero (visita diversos lugares de Europa: la cuenca del Rhin—con su amada hija Dora, nacida en 1804—, Escocia, Francia e Italia), poético (destacando la publicación de la secuencia de sonetos dedicados al río Duddon en 1820), y de labor editorial de su propia obra (con la publicación postrera de la “Collected Edition” de 1845 y la edición final en seis volúmenes de 1849-50), salpicados de acontecimientos trágicos y luctuosos, entre ellos la muerte de Dora en 1847 y la enfermedad degenerativa de su hermana Dorothy, aquejada de serios trastornos mentales que hoy identificaríamos con la enfermedad de Alzheimer. Convertido en una celebridad y visitado asiduamente por los personajes más conspicuos de la cultura británica—y americana, como es el caso de Ralph Waldo Emerson—del momento, William Wordsworth moriría el 23 de abril—fecha emblemática en términos litera-

rios—de 1850. En julio del mismo año, su esposa Mary publicaría la última versión de *The Prelude: Or, Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem*, la epopeya autobiográfica, el poema épico del yo, que Wordsworth legaría a la posteridad, monumento ineludible para conocer el pensamiento y el arte sublime de un poeta excelso e imprescindible, hoy considerado "a sort of national property", en palabras del excelente profesor y crítico Jonathan Bate, autor de la más reciente biografía del poeta hasta la fecha: *Radical Wordsworth: The Poet Who Changed the World* (2020).

Publicado en el año en el que se cumplen los 250 años del nacimiento de Wordsworth, el ejemplar estudio de Bate, exponente de profundidad y claridad—cualidades que, por desgracia y con loables excepciones, tanto se echan de menos en estos tiempos de teoría literaria abstrusa, ininteligible, convencional, oportunista y políticamente correcta: la que, por fortuna, queda más pronto que tarde relegada a los anaqueles del olvido—constituye la culminación de una serie de biografías sobre Wordsworth de destacable calidad, que han contribuido a afianzar, junto con los estudios académicos de carácter textual más sobresalientes, el prestigio y la notoriedad del gran poeta inglés. Se trata de una secuencia que comenzó justo un año después de la muerte de Wordsworth, con la biografía publicada por su sobrino Christopher en 1851, ejemplo, comprensiblemente, de corte casi hagiográfico y, podríamos decir, "oficialista" que ocultaba—como el propio *Prelude*—algunos de los secretos personales más significativos de la trayectoria vital del poeta, como la relación amorosa de Wordsworth con Annette Vallon, que daría el fruto de Caroline, la hija de la pareja. Sería el estudioso francés Émile Legouis el que la sacara a la luz en 1922; antes, en 1897, había explorado las claves de los años tempranos del poeta, sobre todo con relación a su estancia en Francia en el contexto de la Revolución.

Por otra parte, la primera biografía de carácter crítico, muy apreciable y con análisis certeros de la poesía de Wordsworth, sería la de Mary Moorman en dos volúmenes (1957, 1965); es el caso también de la de Stephen Gill, publicada en 1989, seguida de una segunda edición ampliada en 2000. De corte académico, la biografía de Gill lleva a cabo lecturas sagaces de la poesía de Wordsworth en consonancia con los acontecimientos destacados de la trayectoria existencial del gran artífice del verso.

La sugerente relación de "vidas paralelas" que se cruzan y se complementan, como es el caso de las de Wordsworth y Coleridge, acometida por Antonia S. Byatt en 1970 (reimpresa sin cambios en 1997) es de gran interés por aunar una exquisita sensibilidad crítica a la calidad narrativa que caracteriza a la magnífica novelista. Al igual que ella, Hunter Davies (1980, 2009), escritor prolífico, biógrafo oficial de The Beatles (1968), y natural del Lake District, donde reside habitualmente y del que ha escrito valiosas guías, en la reimpresión de su amena obra—de índole eminentemente divulgativa, con todas las connotaciones positivas que posee este vocablo—, aderezada de enjundiosas y deleitosas anécdotas, rechazó introducir nuevos datos biográficos relevantes, como el descubrimiento de varias cartas de Wordsworth y Mary Hutchinson, esencial para entender la profunda e intensa relación amorosa entre los esposos, aspecto que había sido obviado—sin duda por falta de evidencias—en favor de los supuestos indicios de incesto entre William y Dorothy, aspecto muy controvertido sobre el que tanto Juliet Barker (2000) como Kenneth R. Johnston (1998, 2000) han abundado, si bien es una cuestión que invita más a la especulación que a la concluyente certeza.

Con todo, son dos valiosas biografías; la de Barker sobresale por su énfasis en el ámbito doméstico del poeta, rodeado de su "harén particular", mujeres que lo adoraron y colaboraron con él sin imposición alguna por su parte, llevadas por un sentimiento compartido de entrañable afecto. Por otro lado, la biografía del profesor estadounidense Johnston, en su primera edición de 1998— *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy*—, fue muy criticada por los académicos británicos especialmente por la que se entendía como principal aportación biográfica a la figura de Wordsworth: el hecho de que habría sido espía al servicio de intereses revolucionarios. Johnston tuvo que retirar la palabra "Spy" del título de su obra en la segunda edición de esta, pues el Wordsworth que actuó como tal no fue el poeta, sino un pariente lejano. Sin embargo, dicho lapsus no empaña la que es una biografía modélica en lo que respecta a datos vitales concretos de la trayectoria de Wordsworth, sobre todo en lo referente a su estancia en Francia y su relación con Beaupuy y Annette Vallon, si bien solo cubre sus etapas de formación y culminación literaria, y apenas contiene, comparativamente hablando, análisis críticos de su poesía. Sea como fuere, puede decirse que Wordsworth ha tenido la fortuna de contar con destacables biógrafos en el ámbito de habla inglesa que han dado a conocer su vida y su obra de manera fidedigna y, en la mayoría de los casos, brillante, dando fe de la grandeza personal y literaria de uno de los más insignes poetas de la historia.

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My Antigone: Grief, Medical Humanities and the COVID-19 Pandemic

To my beautiful and heroic father

Personal statement I

My father died at 14:55 on May 2, 2017. We hadn't heard of COVID-19 then. We couldn't envisage a global pandemic at the time. But then, we had never imagined my father's death either.

We were at home—my father, my mother and I. It was a sunny and quiet afternoon, as if all the elements in the picture—the weather, the traffic on our busy street, the neighbours—had all concocted a secret plan to make that day, and that particular time, a peaceful one. Death should be a private and intimate occasion. And privacy and intimacy we did have. My father had what in Ireland is called "a good death." He fell into a calm sleep, but one which was by no means uniform. You only had to pay attention to the rhythm of his breathing to understand that my father's death would be a process. In the past I had read extensively, even published, on the theme of death as a process. In classical Greek tragedies the scene of the hero's death is frequently lengthy and happens in stages. In such texts, death is not divorced from the hero's life. On the contrary, it connects with it and facilitates their passage to the other world. This dignifies the character and defines them as special, able to stand pain and suffering with courage until their final silence. Their full stop. Their definite deadline.

In our contemporary Western societies, on the other hand, life and death exclude each other, the latter understood, as Fiona Macintosh has contended, as "the (literal) non-event" (1994, 25). But the Greeks knew better. How could death ever be a non-event? And so I came to understand my father's death scene as a process that started in an indefinite moment the previous night. Or maybe, to be more precise, when a tumour appeared in his lungs without his, or our, knowledge. "My father had forgotten me / in the excitement of dying," wrote Louise Glück (1985, 5) in "Metamorphosis"—the three-poem sequence devoted to the death of her father in her celebrated collection *The Triumph of Achilles*: "Like a child who will not eat, / he takes no notice of anything" (5). I am not sure whether my father had forgotten us in the process of dying—I bet he didn't—but he definitely was in a space of transition for the last hours of his life. As I held his hand and touched his face, I was also initiating my own journey through grief: "I know / intense love always leads to mourning," declares Glück in the same sequence (6). And so this essay starts. In that room, at that time, on that particular day, when my heroic and beautiful father died.

In Sophocles' *Antigone* the eponymous character disobeyed King Creon, who had decreed her brother Polynices should not be buried with honours but, instead, his corpse should be left to rot: "I will bury my brother. / If I am stoned to death / I will be with my brother," she announces firmly in Brendan Kennelly's version (2001, 10). Like the protagonist of Sophocles' tragedy, I would have broken any law to embrace the corpse of my beloved father. I would have traded my own life—and there is no hyperbole in this statement—to not have been deprived of the treasure that it was—and continues to be—to accompany him until the end.

COVID-19 and the Medical Humanities

The outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis caught the world unawares. As the pandemic started to wreak havoc, important questions flooded private and public realms around the globe. The answers were immediately sought in the field of the health sciences, the urgency of a vaccine made all the more critical as the numbers of casualties rose by the minute. As I write these words, we are immersed in the second wave of the pandemic and, although vaccines stand on the horizon as solid symbols of hope, we are still far from being in the post-pandemic phase. Cruel and challenging as this time is, the pandemic is also offering us a precious opportunity for research, reflection and analysis that should not be overlooked. However, for such reflective practice to be effective the conversation must be opened up to as many agents as possible. If the answers are sought exclusively in the realm of the biomedical sciences we run the risk of perpetuating the undesired separation between what C. P. Snow called "the two cultures," made of two groups of people, he specified, "comparable in intelligence" but "who had almost ceased to communicate at all" (1961, 2), namely the sciences, on the one hand, the world of literature and the arts, on the other.

Defining the medical humanities is a difficult task, as the field has significantly broadened its scope and reshaped its focus since its inception. Originally the marriage between the health sciences and the humanities consisted—to a

[1] This essay is written in the framework of the funded Research Project "Illness in the Age of Extinction: Anglophone Narratives of Personal and Planetary Degradation (2000-2020)." Reference number: PID2019-109565RB-I00/AEI/10.13039/501100011033. I want to express my gratitude to Clifton Evers for his critical reading of this essay.

greater or lesser degree—in helping doctors find the words to communicate a diagnosis of life-threatening illnesses to a patient. This instrumental use of the humanities is what Anne Whitehead and Angela Woods call the "first-wave or mainstream medical humanities," as opposed to the second-wave, or "critical medical humanities," which could be defined as "a series of intersections, exchanges and entanglements between the biomedical sciences, the arts and humanities, and the social sciences" (Whitehead and Woods 2016, 1). In short, the medical humanities is a multidisciplinary field of research that studies the literary, artistic, historical, social and cultural dimensions and representations of illness and health, across geographies and periods, proffering new perspectives, not necessarily contradictory to and indeed mostly complementary to those of the biomedical sciences. As COVID-19 is evidencing, a virus is never just a virus. Illness and health are multidimensional conditions that need to be addressed from a multiplicity of angles, ours—as scholars working in the humanities—amongst them.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic I have been observing two different approaches within the field of the medical humanities, both equally urgent and compelling: one analytical, one creative. On the former front, we have engaged in a critical reading of the so-called "literature of pandemic" to familiarise ourselves with previous accounts of real past and imagined future epidemics and plagues in order to understand our confusing present. Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Years* (1722), Albert Camus' *The Plague* (1947) and José Saramago's *Blindness* (1995) are amongst the books that have resonated strongly in these times of uncertainty, death and grief.

We are also analysing the impact—at both the social and individual level—of the continuous use of war metaphors in the media to refer to what is, basically, a health crisis. As Costanza Musu (2020) contends, war-time imagery is indeed persuasive: "It identifies an enemy (the virus), a strategy ('flatten the curve,' but also 'save the economy'), the front-line warriors (health-care personnel), the home-front (people isolating at home), the traitors and deserters (people breaking the social-distancing rules)." However, perceiving ourselves as soldiers in a conflict, rather than as citizens in a health emergency, may, she warns, awaken dangerous patriotic feelings—a "my-country-first attitude"—instead of inspiring a more desirable appeal to individual and social responsibility. Similarly, the sustained use of the term "field hospital"—a temporary structure, though built to endure a considerable time and often difficult conditions, frequently set up in a war zone to provide assistance and care to the wounded—to refer to the health facilities specifically built to treat COVID patients not only causes confusion but it contributes to strengthening war imagery that, in its turn, may spread fear. The ethical consequences of this obscuring use of terminology also need to be tackled, as evidenced when reading the poem "It Will Make a Fine Hospital," by Andrew Dimitri, a poet and medical doctor working for *Médecins Sans Frontières*, included in his collection *Winter in Northern Iraq* (2019, 32-33).[1] The first lines of the text describe a square ten kilometres from Mosul—the site of a massive land battle—where the humanitarian organisation was to build a hospital to treat those wounded in the course of battle. After mentioning the "overturned" and "burned" cars, the mines, the "chaotic tangle of / downed power lines" (32) and the "shattered remains of the surrounding houses" (33), the poetic persona concludes:

This square certainly saw some fighting.

But other than that,
it will make a fine hospital. (33)

Maybe the time has now come to construct alternative metaphors and a new vocabulary for our current context without the overshadowing of emergencies that exist in armed conflicts around the globe.

From our analytical—and activist—front we in the medical humanities are also addressing the gender dimension of the pandemic. Unfortunately, the history of women's health, in all times and places, is particularly rich in silenced or heavily edited episodes. Recent publications show that the coronavirus pandemic affects, and will continue to affect, men and women differently, both physically and socially (Lewis 2020; Wenham et al. 2020), although gender was not presented as a relevant category of analysis in most of the initial accounts of the crisis. It has also become evident that ethnicity and race are fundamental elements to understand the current times, both considered important risk factors for infection and death in the scientific literature on the topic. Although more studies are needed to investigate this issue, COVID-19 has impacted disproportionately on Black and Asian communities (Zse et al. 2020). Since there is strong evidence that the majority of infections are caused by sustained physical contact with someone who is infected, this huge impact can be partly attributed to the fact that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to share their household with multiple generations (Zse et al. 2020). In addition, race and ethnicity often intersect with low socioeconomic status, "which may increase the likelihood of living in overcrowded households" that will accelerate the spread of the virus (Zse et al. 2020). Racism and structural discrimination are contributing significantly to the social stigmatisation of migrants, ethnic and racial minorities as carriers of the infection, showing once more that pandemics are not as democratic as their global quality may indicate.

[2] The poem took second prize in the 2017 Hippocrates Prize for Poetry and Medicine and was chosen as a "Poem of the Week" in The Guardian (Rumens 2017).

Further reflection is also needed on the relationship of the degradation of the planet and climate change with the outbreak of pandemics such as this one. In his essay "The Ecology of Disease" Jim Robbins contends that human illnesses and the spread of pandemics are intimately connected with the environment and illustrates the different ways in which "disrupting an ecosystem can cause disease" (2012). The role of environmental factors—such as high levels of air pollution due to industrialisation—in the spread of the virus and its lethality is also the object of an important body of research papers. What all of them have in common is the hypothesis that air pollution can act "both as a carrier of the infection and as a worsening factor of the health impact of COVID-19" (Copat et al. 2020). Similarly, the disappearance and transformation of natural habitats is triggering a myriad of mental-health issues. New pathologies emerge as the damage to our planet intensifies and the medical establishment is increasingly facing the challenges of treating environmentally induced anxieties and fears. The special issue of *American Imago* on "Ecological Grief" focuses on some of these new pathologies, such as eco-grief (the negative emotional impact caused by the real or potential loss of ecosystems), pre-traumatic stress disorder (the fear and panic felt in the face of imagined catastrophic futures and large-scale environmental disasters) and solastalgia (the emotional instability caused by the disappearance and/or transformation of familiar landscapes and seascapes), to mention only a few (Craps 2020).

To further understand the discursive dimension of the crisis, attention should also be paid to the aesthetics of the coronavirus. For months we have been saturated by visual representations of the invisible infective agent, often presiding over the news, special reports and documentaries. Arguably, the artistic decisions behind these visual representations—choice of colours, size, humanisation and/or demonisation of the virus—will shed new light on our lived experience of the pandemic.

The above is not an exhaustive list of the varied problems that can be approached from the field of the critical medical humanities but it does show the complexity of COVID-19 as both a life-threatening disease and a discursive product. Beyond scholarly work, the field of the medical humanities also embraces the creative, here understood not just as a healing power but also as an active force in the construction of meaning. From the onset of the lockdowns lived all over the world last spring, national and international newspapers, cultural magazines and postings on social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram abounded in recommendations on how to make isolation more bearable. From these fronts of public information, fiction, live concerts from the homes of renowned singers and virtual visits to the best museums and art galleries in the world were presented as the lifeboats at our disposal to alleviate the physical and emotional consequences of our sudden loss of mobility and limited social and cultural contact. Whereas such initiatives run the risk of instrumentalising culture—that is, of turning it into a mere tool for entertainment—many of them have also contributed to a revaluation of literature and the arts as agents that have a lot to say in international conversations about this global crisis.

In his first online lecture since the COVID-19 outbreak, acclaimed Chinese writer Yan Lianke asked his students at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology: "What is the value of literature?" The question was not posed in a void, but was clearly contextualised within the current pandemic. In the face of the official records of the crisis in China, characterised by their triumphalist tone, Lianke problematises the "songs of victory […] echoing all around" while "[b]odies have not turned cold and people are still mourning." Challenging the "empty and hollow writers" that reproduce the single story of the government, he urges the writing community and the general population alike to note down their particular experiences of the present in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future. In other words: he is asking us to remember. For Lianke part of the value of literature lies in its ethical commitment: a writer, he contends, must be a witness (Lianke 2020).

Yan Lianke is not alone in his desire to preserve the memories of the times we are living through. Writing from Wuhan, the epicentre of the initial outbreak, Fang Fang, another well-known Chinese writer, started an online diary of the lockdown to document the emotional and mental impacts of isolation and to show the world what life was like at the very heart of the crisis.[2] Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020, and as it started to severely hit one country after another, there have been numerous initiatives to record how this precise historical moment is experienced by diverse communities and individuals. Former poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy and the Manchester Metropolitan University are leading *Write Where We Are Now*, a project that brings together poets from all over the world to reflect directly on the pandemic and their lives during lockdown. As can be read on their website, their aim is to create "a living record of what is happening as seen through poets' eyes" (Write Where We Are Now). In Ireland, the Arts Council launched its "COVID-19 Crisis Response Award" to fund writers and artists across disciplines to produce "new and original work during the period of COVID-19 isolation" (Arts Council of Ireland). As a result of this call, 334 writers and artists (from a total of 956 applications) from all over Ireland have been funded. Although the awards were meant to fund work

[2] Fang Fang's diaries soon got the attention of international publishing presses and have just been published in English and German translations by HarperCollins. On the reception of Fang's diaries in China, see Davidson.

produced during lockdown, presumably most of it will also be *about* this challenging period. Also in Ireland, University College Dublin Library launched *Poetry in Lockdown*, a call for poems about the pandemic that will soon be accessible in the Irish Poetry Reading Archive at UCD Special Collections (Poetry in Lockdown); and on June 1, RTÉ Radio 1 dedicated *The Poetry Programme* to "Poems in a Pandemic," which brought to the audience a selection of texts responding to lockdown, social distancing and self-isolation by Irish poets like Eiléan Ní Chuilleannáin, Jane Clarke, Keith Payne, Jessica Traynor and Adam Wyeth, to mention but a few (Poems in a Pandemic). In the USA, the first anthology of what we may already label as "COVID poetry" has just come out—*Together in a Sudden Strangeness: American Poets Respond to the Pandemic* (Quinn 2020)—and in Spain, poet Ben Clark launched his #Coronaversos on Twitter, an initiative to publish poetry about the current moment by anyone wanting to contribute.

The value of artistic records such as these should not be underestimated: on the one hand, the voices of artists and writers articulate an alternative perspective to that offered by the official—be it scientific or political—history of a given community; on the other, they prevent the erasure of events that may be too painful or too shameful to remember. In this sense, the COVID-19 crisis does not differ from previous historical episodes that have run the risk of being destined for complete oblivion were it not for the writers who struggled—artistically, institutionally, politically—to keep them alive through their work. Ultimately, artists and writers create a new language to bear witness. To understand. To heal. They offer us a badly needed kind of knowledge and, as Sian Ede states in her preface to *Signs and Humours: The Poetry of Medicine* (Greenlaw 2007), "[k]nowledge is power, allowing us to combat fear, as if we can collude with the physicians to see ourselves as fascinating physical specimens rather than helpless sufferers" (Ede 2007, 11).

A case study of the different ways in which the creative and the critical medical humanities can contribute to our understanding, even transformation, of how the COVID-19 pandemic is being experienced, individually as well as communally, is provided by grief, arguably one of the most pervasive emotions today. According to the *Dictionary of Psychology* of the American Psychological Association, grief is "the anguish experienced after significant loss, usually the death of a beloved person" (American Psychological Association). From the health sciences perspective, grief has been the object of pathologisation and a period of one to three years has been established as the average timespan needed to overcome bereavement. This "normal grief" differs from "complicated grief," which happens when "painful emotions are so long lasting and severe that you have trouble recovering from the loss and resuming your own life" (Mayo Clinic).

Useful as such definitions and taxonomies may be in determining when prolonged grief can be considered a mental health problem, they also pose fundamental questions: Why is a one-to-three-year period considered "normal" when facing major loss? What can "complicate" our grief? Does the occurrence of collective loss contribute to enhancing the experience of individual loss? Or, on the contrary, does personal grief cancel out our capacity to be moved by collective trauma? In the title poem of *The Triumph of Achilles* (1985, 16), Louise Glück intimates that Achilles, the great hero of the Trojan war, did not actually die when Paris shot a poisoned arrow into his heel, but rather his death occurred when he lost his beloved Patroclus in combat at the hands of Hector. Broken-hearted, he was then "a man already dead, a victim / of the part that loved, / the part that was mortal." In Glück, as well as in Homer, Achilles wept—for the Greeks, weeping, lamenting and grieving were by no means in conflict with the construction of heroic masculinity—and his personal grief overshadowed both the political and the communal: "What were the Greek ships on fire," Glück's Achilles wondered, "compared to this loss?" (16).

To further complicate our understanding and experience of grief, the American Psychological Association uses the term "disenfranchised grief," also called "hidden grief," to refer to the expressions of grief that "society (or some element of it) limits, does not expect, or may not allow a person to express," and among the examples included in this definition is the grief nurses feel for their patients. In "That Discomfort You're Feeling Is Grief," expert on grief David Kessler discusses another term within the semantic field of emotional pain: "anticipatory grief," defined as "that feeling we get about what the future holds when we're uncertain" (Berinato and Kessler 2020). For Kessler, this sort of emotional pain applies mainly to imagined futures and is therefore particularly apt to describe the anxieties of the present moment. We select from the information gathered on a daily basis about the virus and put together a potential narrative that is believed to be our imminent destiny. Anticipatory grief makes us fear that what is textually and/or visually represented about the pandemic will actually happen to us when we leave the safety of our homes. However, the lived experience of the COVID-19 pandemic is problematising all the scientific definitions of grief and the need for collective expressions of bereavement has become apparent. Again, literature and the arts can function as catalysts for this unprecedented accumulation of emotional discomfort and can offer creative responses to transform grief into healing.

On July 20, 2020 I saw on the news a photograph of Jihad Al-Suwaiti, a young Palestinian man who had climbed up a hospital wall to sit on the window ledge of the room where his mother was dying because of coronavirus.[3] Faced with the impossibility of physical

[4] His image went viral and the news was reported by mass media across the globe.

contact, he took action without breaking the law. Of all the news about death during the pandemic, this one stood out for me. It triggered yet another kind of grief that none of the terminology above could describe with any level of accuracy. It reactivated the grief experienced in 2017 by the death of my father and activated a good number of fundamental questions: How would it have been if my father's death had not occurred in May 2017 but in May 2020 instead? How would I have coped if he had died alone in a hospital room and not at home? What would have happened if I had not been allowed to touch him and be with him until his final end? Could I imagine such unimaginable pain?

Personal statement II

My father died at 14:55 on May 2, 2017. In language, our cultural detachment from death translates into euphemisms like "we lost our beloved." In her extraordinarily beautiful and moving poem "Lost" (2013), British poet Rebecca Goss describes her brief encounter with a friend who did not know her first baby-daughter had died because of a serious heart condition: "You know I lost my first child, don't you?" As soon as she had pronounced them, Goss realised the imprecision in her words: "As if one day, I could run from my house, screaming 'Found!' / Lift her for the whole road to see, shouting 'Here she is! Here she is! / She is here!'" (61).

My father died. We did not lose him. We did not leave him behind. I have never been uncomfortable with the word "death." My father died. But what does that really mean? From a purely scientific perspective his organs stopped functioning, his lungs became still, his blood stopped running through his veins. But death is an unfathomable mystery. In the face of it we have to put our hands up and surrender. We must grow out of the intellectual and let it happen. My father died. What does that mean? I will tell you what it means today. Sometimes I catch myself looking like him. I may be watching television or reading, or lost in thought, or queuing at the supermarket, or lecturing, or catching a wave in the sea he loved so much and, all of a sudden, I feel his face superimposed on mine. As soon as I realise what is going on, I look around to see if people notice and, of course, they don't. But this does not mean his face is not there. I feel my mouth metamorphose into his, and I feel I am making that characteristic gesture of his, when his upper lip was slightly tilted towards one side. And I feel that tilting too. I can even feel the mole on his right temple inhabiting my right temple. So much beauty. So much beauty. And then the past merges into the present. May 2017 connects with May 2020. And I hear a voice spelling a message, clear and loud. I don't really know where the voice comes from. But I know who it is. It is my Antigone. Oh yes, there she is. My Antigone. Answering all my questions. A presence I can't ignore. My Antigone. Determined to embrace the corpse of her beloved dead. Demanding her time to touch. Her time to grieve.

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LINGUISTICS | MONOGRÁFICO SOBRE LINGÜÍSTICA DE CORPUS

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The Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing: Challenge and Reward

The Coruña Corpus Project is born

The Coruña Corpus of English Scientific Writing did not still have a name when it was first conceived of only two years after the new century started. At that moment, in 2003, research groups in Spanish universities were bunches of people with similar interests more than administrative units and thus, there were no formal lists of members of a research group. However, already at that point, we considered the need to have a name (MuStE)[1] and to have an identity. Administrative regulations only came later.

During the academic year 2002-03 the two staff members, senior Isabel Moskowich and junior Begoña Crespo, often met with other people at Isabel's tiny office in the building the Faculty of Philology occupied then in one of the campuses of the University of A Coruña (Spain). The researchers that grouped together then had been trained in English Historical Linguistics and that was their main common interest. In fact, by 2002 there had been some doctoral theses on different aspects of the evolution of English, none of which went beyond the seventeenth century (Begoña Crespo dealt with semantic change in 2001 using the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts, Elena Alfaya explored some new possibilities of the fit-technique in a medieval poem, *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, Ana Montoya investigated the Paston Letters...). At this point, they all thought they were applying technology to philology to guarantee rigorous research.

Before that, in 2001 and in a sudden way, Isabel had become visually impaired. Doors seemed to be shut for a researcher who could not read but windows opened when the months of training and rehabilitation started. Rehabilitation for blind people includes computers and technology but most materials were not accessible yet as they were not in a machine-readable format that could turn that information into voice. After a couple of years and many meetings in that tiny office, the idea of doing something relating to machine-readable texts appeared in front of us. There is no way one can tell the precise day but at some point in 2003 the idea of compiling an electronic corpus became real.

The factors contributing to this, besides Isabel's need for technological support for simple daily activities, were various. One was an increasing interest of the junior researchers for periods in the History of English beyond the Middle Ages. Another relevant factor was the knowledge we had of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts (1991) and of other recently published or ongoing compilation projects such as the Lampeter Corpus of Early Modern English Tracts (Reiner et al. 1998), the Corpus of Early English Medical Writing (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1997) or the ARCHER, first constructed by Biber and Finegan in the 1990s (Biber et al. 1994).

We saw that these corpora were important collections of linguistic material for the study of the development of English, but we also detected that they left some empty spaces either in terms of their specificity or in terms of the periods covered. In fact, we observed that none of them addressed the systematisation of late Modern English scientific disciplines and that the Helsinki team (then starting the compilation of LMEMT) were focusing on medicine only and had (at that moment) no public intention to continue their previous endeavours up to the late Modern English period. Therefore, we thought it was worthwhile to investigate the development of scientific English in different disciplines, excluding medicine as the Helsinki team was working with it and considering that both projects could complement each other and offer a broad picture on the history of English scientific writing.

The idea was to investigate the evolution of English scientific discourse paying special attention to the late Modern English period as we confirmed it was an understudied period in the history of English. With that, we could both contribute to increase knowledge on that particular period and delve into the specific features of scientific writing. It was at this moment that we first believed compiling a corpus could be an interesting research line and Isabel Moskowich applied for external funding through the research project "Etiquetación electrónica de textos científico-técnicos en lengua inglesa entre los siglos XVI y XX: Coruña Corpus" (2003-2006). We also thought it could be a good idea to do some research on a specific variety of English as the language of science and the then junior researcher Begoña Crespo applied for some funding at the University of A Coruña to develop this general idea: "Lengua y ciencia: Corpus de textos científico-técnicos en lengua inglesa (ss. XVI-XVIII)." This project was funded from 2003 to 2005.

Where to start? Initial challenges

Once we decided it would be good to cover the development of scientific English for the lapse of time that other corpora had left blank, we had to face several challenges. Initial design tasks were carefully undertaken so as to avoid inconsistencies. We drew the picture of what we wanted to do by establishing our principles for corpus compilation, the criteria we would follow.

[1] This stands for Research Group on Corpus-based Multidimensional Studies in English. The adjective multidimensional refers here to the multiple perspectives and dimensions of language analysis that can be adopted and not to Biber's approach alone. Besides, the resulting acronym, MuStE, with its medieval shade, reflected the determination of the people in the group to carry out whatever task.

We would compile a series of subcorpora, each dealing with one discipline, covering the late Modern English period. The delimitation of this period was a matter of careful deliberation and, although in its first conceiving the Coruña Corpus would cover the period 1650-1900, this would later evolve and published versions of finished subcorpora actually cover the period 1700-1900 to ensure we were providing texts published after the effects of the foundation of the Royal Society and the scientific method were visible.

As we consider corpora as small-scale mirror images of the register, variety or state of the language it aims at reflecting, it was also necessary to decide at this moment about the size of both subcorpora in general and individual samples in particular. There was not a clear criterion on these issues at that moment. Some compilers were gathering *samples in toto* (especially short samples) or samples with an arbitrary number of words and Biber (1993) had indicated that 1000-word samples were enough to detect variation in a representative corpus. However, we concluded that so short samples were not appropriate for such a specific corpus as ours. At that moment, we decided to set the limit in around 10,000 words per sample (as we claimed as early as 2004 during the LModE Conference in Vigo and later published in a chapter in Pérez-Guerra *et al.* (2007)) and two samples per decade and subcorpus, so that there would be 200,000 words per century and discipline.

Discipline selection and the concept of science. On what grounds?

One of the first problems that we found was the selection of disciplines itself. We decided that we would not build a simple inventory of disciplines but rather resort to one that was internationally accepted. We had recently applied for funding and one of the pieces of information we had to provide was the project's UNESCO code. This led us to search for the whole catalogue of the fields of science and technology UNESCO had published in 1988 and we included its use for discipline selection.

Knowing the importance mathematics had acquired after the scientific revolution, we wanted to start our compilation with CEMaT (Corpus of English Mathematical Texts) but samples did not present enough written text so as to allow for linguistic studies. In fact, samples were full of figures, tables and formulae, especially in nineteenth-century works. That forced us to search for more and more texts so as to cover two 10,000-word samples per decade. Getting material was one of the main difficulties at the very beginning (more on this below) and, as finding texts was expensive and time-consuming and we lacked both sufficient funding and the necessary human resources, we decided to try with a different discipline. This is why, knowing that mathematics was behind all sciences from Newton onwards, Astronomy seemed to be a good choice. Nowadays, CEMaT has not been completed yet.

Discussions on the concept of science appeared again when reading early seventeenth-century texts on Astronomy, for instance, and we discovered that the contents there were not what we had expected. The theoretical debates were crucial for text selection depending on their contents. Finally, we decided to adopt an inclusive perspective, that is, to regard science as it was seen in every period. With this we avoided leaving aside certain texts that could be considered "scientific" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but not nowadays. This allowed the inclusion in CETA of samples where Astronomy and Astrology intermingle.[2]

Text-mining

Obtaining the samples was a challenging task, not only because finding the books and obtaining the permissions from the corresponding libraries and institutions was hard work but also because we needed to learn about the history of the discipline to be compiled in order to know what kind of problems scholars were facing at the time, which were the relevant names, if there existed any controversies, etc. Learning about the history of a particular science, however, requires learning about the history of science as such and this, in turn, required a deeper knowledge of the (external) history of English. Therefore, all this process consumed many hours of study accompanied by some research extending to late Middle English, to the period when some had claimed science started to appear in English.

In the early 2000s, when you wanted to read a book that was not at your own library, you could ask your librarian to use the interlibrary loan service. However, this did not apply, of course, to works in Special Collections and Archives such as those published between 1700 and 1900, the ones we needed. The answer often given by lending libraries was that the pages you wanted to read could be either microfilmed or photocopied and sent to you. But this was of little or no use as it was necessary to read the complete text in order to decide which extracts would be representative. This involved going to a particular library to access their collections and archives to know whether a particular work was valid.

[2] While looking for texts for CETA (Moskowich et al. 2012) we realised that we could not apply the UNESCO classification directly, as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had a different vision of science, a different taxonomy, to the one used nowadays, so we agreed to use the UNESCO classification of the fields of Science and Technology (1988) as a starting point rather than to follow it thoroughly.

Inés Lareo travelled to Berkeley and Berlin; Begoña Crespo and Isabel Moskowich travelled to London and Cambridge; Gonzalo Camiña stayed for some years in Cork and had the opportunity to revise some books there as well. Nuria Bello travelled to Edinburgh for the same purpose and other more recent members of the group (Mª José Esteve from Universitat Jaume I) also visited Glasgow. Although many texts are now available on the Internet in PDF format, as if the whole book had been photocopied or microfilmed, personal visits to libraries are still required: as late as 2019 Isabel visited the Special Collections and Archive section of the Library in the University of Liverpool and Luis Puente-Castelo took advantage of the collections at the University of Birmingham during his post-doc stay there.

Drawing from these experiences, we gradually came to the conclusion that our way of proceeding had to do with our concept of corpus compilation as it was much more than putting texts together. It required linguistic and computing skills but also historical and philological knowledge.

Creating a representative and balanced corpus

It is true that the two main virtues of a corpus are balance and representativeness. However, in the Coruña Corpus it was difficult to achieve both virtues at once: as explained above, it was our intention to compile corpora that could be mirrors of each disciplinary register at the period, but this made it difficult to achieve a balanced corpus on account of the different sociolinguistic variables used (mainly genre of the text and sex and geographical origin of the authors), as scientific writing was not that widespread at the moment.

The best examples of this were the obvious difficulties in the gathering of scientific writings by female authors. Generally speaking, during the late Modern period women were not allowed to learn about scientific issues and their "scientific activities" were mostly limited to those relating to everyday life in the household and anything that had to do with the female body: pregnancy, birth… Thus, it was not that surprising that it was so difficult to find published scientific texts authored by women dating back to the eighteenth century. Only a few privileged women could have access to learning scientific topics (Abir-Am & Outram 1987, Schiebinger 1987) and even fewer could write on that and publish their works under their own names (Herrero 2007). Add to this reality the complexity of mining (particularly eighteenth-century texts) we have already mentioned and you have a perfect storm of female invisibility. In any case, the few women whose works have been included in the subcorpora published so far do represent the reality of the period and, hence, make sure that the corpus reflects the social peculiarities of those times and that they are, indeed, representative.

However, we have made up for this problem by providing extensive information about each of the authors. It is a characteristic element of the Coruña Corpus since the beginning of the project (perhaps due to previous research and training) that both staff and students thought that language could not be studied in isolation from its users. Just as the socio-historical events in the English-speaking world may have affected the development of scientific English, we were sure that events in the individual lives of authors, especially all that was related to their training and education, may have an influence on their linguistic habits too.[3] We also thought that studying in Cambridge or in Dublin or reading such and such works had to have an impact on the linguistic habits of particular authors. On top of that, having information on their lives might be an asset in the depiction of the socio-external circumstances behind late Modern scientific English, interesting also for historians of science. This information is the one contained in the accompanying metadata files which have proved one of the wisest choices in our project.

XML format

The technical aspects of the corpus posed a dilemma, as we had the choice to take two diverging paths in our quest: the first and easier would mean to stick to the prevailing trend back in 2004, which implied transcribing originals into raw .txt samples and then rely on a search tool that would do its best to make searches based on the resulting .txt files; the second was more challenging and involved encoding the texts using the incipient eXtended Markup Language (XML), which meant a lot more work, but promised greater flexibility to further extend our range of possibilities when searching for diverse linguistic items in the samples.

In an act of sheer determination, we decided to follow the second path. But since XML was *terra incognita* for us, we wisely adhered to the existing text coding standard, the so-called Text Coding Initiative (TEI), so we would check the validity of our files against a pre-defined set of rules laid out in a document called *teixlite.dtd* (where *dtd* stands for Document Type Definition), which restricted the virtually unlimited, and often misleading, freedom offered by XML. Needless to say, no one in the research group knew how to code in XML, so Gonzalo Camiña

[3] At this point, we saw it was useful to have some knowledge of the Middle English period and the scriptoria: we knew one could identify the particular place where a particular scribe had acquired his writing abilities.

volunteered to self-teach the new language first and then train the rest of the team.

Once the mark-up language was set, typing the first corpus posed yet another obstacle, as many characters in the original books were rather uncommon and, for this reason, difficult to represent because everyday fonts did not include them. This is the case, for example, of the long <s>, <ſ> and ligatured <ct>, <c͡t> in eighteenth-century texts, along with various other graphic symbols present in many samples of the Coruña Corpus. This could only be solved by resorting to specific fonts provided by Unicode.org. In short, before we ever managed to transcribe a single line of our corpus, we had already committed to using three conventions: XML, TEI and Unicode at a moment when more experienced corpus compilers were adamant to .txt . But there's more.

Since we wished to provide extralinguistic information about our authors and samples, XML alone would not suffice to compile the corpus. Linking the samples with the data referring to authors such as sex, place of education and date of birth required yet another type of coding called eXtensible Stylesheet Language Transformations (XSLT), which basically modifies existing XML files. This is when we considered liaising with IrLab, a research group on Information Retrieval at UDC, for some advice and even some programming, please.

In the meantime, seeing that the resulting tagged samples were a pain to the eye, as XML tags scattered all over the texts made them difficult to understand and spotting errors in the code became even more difficult, we were compelled to beautify the way the samples appeared on screen by implementing a Cascade Style Sheet (CSS). Thus, users of our corpus could see "clean" and easy-to-read versions of the texts that respect the old-fashioned spelling paragraph structure of the original documents.

Our experience with early domain-specific texts in English showed us that variation would be better approached in microscopic studies. That is why the corpus was intentionally designed to be used for analyses that do not completely rely on automatic searches, counting and statistical tests, but for those that require close reading of texts, manual disambiguation and interpretation. Our aim and another of our challenges was to create a corpus that helped solving the philologist's dilemma (Rissanen 1989) as our experience with domain-specific early texts in English had taught us that the lack of standardisation was also a factor to be taken into account. However, as the application of a search engine could very much ease the task of searching, the creation of a corpus query tool was seen as necessary. Besides, since it was also our intention to render versions of late Modern English texts where, for instance, orthographic variation could be studied as well, we wanted to produce those special characters with Unicode and we also wanted a software able to deal with them. This "philological" desire gave as a result the need not to use plain text formats but something else as well as to design our own software able to manage, display and search such rich texts. At this point, we also wanted the tool to be able to select samples in our corpora by resorting to certain external and sociolinguistic variables, the ones in the metadata files accompanying each sample.

We were all happy and excited about the outcome of our technical decisions until the moment Javier Parapar, at that moment a pre-doc in Computing (from IrLab) and attending one of Isabel's PhD courses at the UDC and our first real programming expert, produced a first working version of the Coruña Corpus Tool (CCT). To our surprise, our first searches showed strange results. For example, the CCT interpreted math variables (A) as articles (a), while roman number one (I) magically became the first-person pronoun (I). Also, the tag <del></del> we used to delete text quoted by authors, and therefore not representative of their own language, ended up removing chunks of content that would make understanding texts easier. Fixing this took us a while, because apparently minimal changes required tweaking the whole corpus, text by text. Eventually, we devised a reasonable solution and laid out the editorial tags described in the editorial policy included in the manuals to all the subcorpora and also published later by Camiña and Lareo (2016). However, it has become a bone of contention among members of the research group, as some of them see editorial tags simply as a temporary solution till further XML tagging is implemented in the samples, which would in turn demand further work in the CCT. And then more work on the samples…and then…

The maturity of the Project

After this initial process of planning and design, the project advanced slowly but surely. Isabel Moskowich successfully applied for external funding in several public calls both by the Spanish and the Galician autonomous governments up to the present day (2020-2022),[4] as did Inés Lareo with her project "El Coruña Corpus: Compilación y análisis de textos de Astronomía. El uso de los predicados complejos en textos científico-técnicos en el período del inglés moderno," funded by the Provincial Government of A Coruña from 2006 to 2008.

In 2009, we finished our first subcorpus, CETA, the Corpus of English Texts on Astronomy and started working on possibilities for its publication, finally deciding on starting

[4] For the completion of these projects we had the opportunity to count on researchers from other universities as well: María-José Esteve-Ramos (UJI), Francisco Alonso Almeida (ULPG), Marina Dossena (U. Bergamo), Margarita Mele Marrero (ULL) and Andrew Hardie (U Lancaster).

our fruitful collaboration with John Benjamins, which would culminate in its publication in 2012 (Moskowich et al. 2012) together with a book (Moskowich and Crespo 2012).

At the same time, some of our students (who had become full part of the team) during the process of setting up the Coruña Corpus Project finished their dissertations in which they used the very corpora they were helping compile. Such is the case of Inés Lareo, Gonzalo Camiña, Iria Bello Viruega, Estefanía Sánchez Barreiro or Paula Lojo. MuStE is a dynamic group and new members joined it, such as Leida Maria Monaco, Luis Puente-Castelo or Anabella Barsaglini, some of which have since finished their dissertations as well.

However, even as things changed and results started to appear, the tiresome reality of compiling the corpus did not really change: The process still consisted in finding a huge amount of texts, selecting among those we deemed valid to achieve a representative set of texts, typing and XML marking each of them and then subjecting the texts to several rounds of careful revision so that any mistakes are corrected and the XML version is a faithful representation of the original. This is a task that the members of the team still take personal responsibility for, as the editorial decisions involved require careful consideration and a deep knowledge of the period and of the scientific register.

Most of this process remained (and still remains) the same throughout the project, but text mining became somewhat easier with the expansion of copyright-free online repositories such as Internet Archive, which allow us to check the suitability of potential texts before actually travelling to libraries to obtain them.

Expansion and popularisation

At the same time, the members of our team were travelling all over Europe presenting both the Corpus and their work on it in Conferences and Workshops such as Corpus Linguistics (Lancaster, Birmingham, Cardiff), CILC (from its first Conference in Murcia in 2009), ICAME, ISLE, etc., and also establishing working relationships with some of the best research groups on Corpus Linguistics during their doctorate stays in Universities such as Lancaster, Birmingham or Liverpool, among others.

Fruit of this effort, the Coruña Corpus became well-known among researchers as a very useful resource for the study of late Modern English scientific register and we had the pleasure to count with the contributions of scholars such as Douglas Biber, Bethany Gray, Joan C. Beal, Marina Dossena, Andrew Hardie, Pascual Cantos, David Banks, Stephania Degaetano-Ortlieb, María-Luisa Carrió Pastor, Katrin Menzel and Elke Teich in the different books we were publishing, for, after CETA (Moskowich et al. 2012), we finished and published the Corpus of English Texts on Philosophy (Moskowich et al. 2016a) together with its book (Moskowich et al. 2016b).

All throughout this project, a series of issues such as the concept of science and the differences among text-type, genre and register have remained as topics of discussion both within the group and in different fora and particular work addressing them has been produced by members of the team.

Currently the CC ...

Nowadays in 2020, the Coruña Corpus is a fully-fledged project, with a very important body of publications (https://www.udc.es/grupos/muste) and now both starting the compilation of its seventh subcorpus and working in the publication of its fourth, CELiST (Lareo et al. forthcoming). Even though we still follow the same principles that were set up in the old days, we, nevertheless, have introduced some new developments over the last five years.

Conscious of the necessity of providing value-for-money in the investments the public governments were making on us, from 2019 we decided to publish our corpora in open-access. After quite a lot of searching, we decided that the easiest path to follow was to publish them in our University's institutional repository (RUC) which we first did with the Corpus of History English Texts (CHET), (Moskowich et al. 2018) accessible at https://doi.org/10.17979/spudc.9788497497091.

We also held discussions with John Benjamins to reissue in open-access the corpora on astronomy and philosophy already published in CD-ROM, which they kindly agreed on, leading to the re-issue of CETA (Moskowich et al. 2019a, https://doi.org/10.17979/spudc.9788497497084) and CEPhiT (Moskowich et al. 2019b, https://doi.org/10.17979/spudc.9788497497077 as well as to the publication of new accompanying books for CHET (Moskowich et al, 2019c) and CELiST (Moskowich et al. forthcoming).

Some forked projects also appeared, leading to the first steps towards the development of two different POS-tagged versions of the Coruña Corpus, by Andrew Hardie at Lancaster University and Stephania Degaetano and colleagues at Universität Saarland.

The Coruña Corpus Tool received some upgrading as well, making it both more reliable and faster and allowing for the use of several subcorpora at once (Barsaglini and Valcarce 2020).

However, the old process of "discovering some difficulties-finding a solution-correcting all the corpora" still plagues our development. A good example of this is one of our main headaches at the moment: During the

compilation of the corpora on Chemistry and Linguistics we discovered that subindices were not recognised by the CCT and that some texts talked substantively about punctuation symbols, which the CCT (as many concordance programs) was coded to disregard. This led to a still ongoing search for a solution which would change the treatment of subindices so that H_2O is read as a single token by our tool, and which would offer an option to mark up those cases in which punctuation is used substantively and thus not to be ignored.

Such a cyclical rhythm of development is sometimes frustrating, but at the same time it is an integral part of our project. For, if the Coruña Corpus is a living project, it is precisely because it keeps offering such new challenges we have to face and overcome.

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CHELAR[1]

Developing and Exploiting the Corpus of Historical English Law Reports 1535-1999

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Over the past fifty years there has been a growing interest in legal language, as a result of developments in applied linguistics and social sciences (Bhatia 1987, 227; Fanego and Rodríguez-Puente 2019, 1-2). Initially, works devoted to the description of legal language were mostly based on the author's intuitions and on qualitative data (see, among others, Mellinkoff 1963). Nowadays, however, developments in corpus linguistics and the proliferation of general and specialized corpora, have enabled researchers to study legal discourse on the basis of naturally occurring data. This article describes the *Corpus of Historical English Law Reports 1535-1999* (CHELAR), and how its release has facilitated the understanding of English legal discourse.

CHELAR was developed by members of the research unit for *Variation, Linguistic Change and Gramaticalization* (VLCG) at the University of Santiago de Compostela. The unit has experience in corpus compilation, having been responsible for the elaboration of *A Corpus of Late Modern British and American English Prose* (COLMOBAENG; see Fanego 2012), as well as for the selection and edition of the British legal texts in version 3.2 of *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER; see López-Couso and Méndez-Naya 2012). Work on CHELAR began in 2011, and profited from the techniques we had employed for the treatment of the texts in ARCHER 3.2 (Rodríguez-Puente 2011, 101); its first version was released in 2016 (Rodríguez-Puente et al. 2016) as raw text files and with part-of-speech annotation (POS; see Fanego et al. 2017). The corpus was afterwards revised, and an amplified and enhanced version was made available in 2018 (Rodríguez-Puente et al. 2018). Besides raw and POS files, the latest version also contains files in TEI-XML format (Rodríguez-Puente et al. 2019).

CHELAR (463,326 words) is a specialized diachronic corpus consisting of law reports; these are records of judicial decisions which play a prominent role in the British Common Law system. Law reports "make up what is known in the English-derived common law system as case law" (Maley 1994, 13); ever since the establishment of the Common Law in England and Wales after the Norman Conquest, law reports became an integral part of the law by either setting legal precedents or interpreting legislation. The reports have thus a long history, from the earliest reports, known as *Yearbooks* (1268-1535), to the *Nominate Reports* (1535-1865) and the so-called *Law Reports*; the latter were published from 1865 onwards, once the *Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for England and Wales* (ICLR)[2] was established as the only authorized publisher of the official series of law reports (see Fanego et al. 2017, 56-60).

Despite the crucial role of law reports in the British legal system, research on their linguistic features is still scarce, largely due to the absence of appropriate materials for their study. CHELAR represents, therefore, an important contribution to the field, as it has enabled researchers to trace the development of the language of law reports over the course of their history.

Compiling and annotating linguistic corpora is a time-consuming process, which requires numerous decisions to confront the manifold problems encountered in the treatment of the texts, especially the earliest ones (see Rodríguez-Puente 2011, 104-113). The result is, however, gratifying. As corpus compilers, we became familiarized with the socio-cultural background represented in CHELAR, thus developing into what Flowerdew (2004, 16) calls "compiler-cum-analysts", who are able to offer a valuable interpretation of the data obtained. And since CHELAR is freely available to the research community, our knowledge of the language of law reports is also enhanced by the work of other colleagues.

Due to its recent release, research using CHELAR as a source of data is still scarce, but the work done to date already provides very interesting results. Law reports are a text type that has been described as "hybrid" (Šarčević 2000, 11): it possesses both a regulatory (prescriptive) and an informative (descriptive) function (for these labels, see Tiersma 1999, 139-141; Šarčević 2000, 11-12; Williams 2007[2005], 28-29), and this duality is reflected in the set of lexico-grammatical features which characterizes them. For this reason, the first studies using CHELAR have been aimed, on the one hand, at comparing the language of law reports with that of other formal and informal registers and, on the other, at exploring their linguistic development during a time-span of nearly five centuries.

One of the first studies making use of CHELAR is Biber and Gray (2019), who compare law reports with science research articles, newspaper articles and fictional texts between 1700 and 1999, in relation to two competing factors influencing historical change in written texts: *popularization*, the adoption of features typical of the colloquial language (Biber 1995; Biber and Finegan 1989, 1997), and *economy*, the tendency to compress information as a maximally efficient way of presenting it to specialized readers (Biber and Gray 2012, 2016). By analyzing a set of lexico-grammatical features in these four registers, Biber and Gray (2019, 166) conclude that law reports are more conservative and resistant to historical change than other written registers. They make less frequent use of colloquial innovations than the so-called popular registers, such as fiction and news, and lag behind academic writing in the adoption of innovations related to phrasal complexity. Biber and Gray (2019, 156, 166) also observe an increase of features traditionally associated with literate discourse, such as nominalizations, attributive adjectives, relative clauses and use of the passive voice, among others.

[2] See http://iclr.co.uk/

While Biber and Gray's (2019) investigation thus suggests some degree of stability and conservatism in law reports overall, Rodríguez-Puente's (2019) study of personal pronouns in CHELAR shows that the common assumption that legal texts are as a rule resistant to change needs to be qualified. Since law reports are a predominantly narrative text type, third person pronouns are very common in them. Yet, first and second person singular pronouns are also frequently attested, which indicates a degree of involvement not typical of the objective, impersonal style which would be expected from a legal document. Particularly relevant is the use of first person pronouns, very frequently employed to reproduce the judges' actual words, their reflections and opinions. First person pronouns increase significantly in frequency from the nineteenth century onwards, when third person pronouns begin to decrease. Rodríguez-Puente (2019) relates this development to an important external change, namely the progressive regulation of the production and publication of the law reports themselves. Thanks to stricter controls in the process of reporting, as well as improvements in recording techniques, the reports began to include verbatim reproductions of the words of the judges, "probably as an attempt to avoid potential misinterpretation arising from the use of third person narration" (Rodríguez-Puente 2019, 192). In this sense, Rodríguez-Puente (2019) concludes that the reports have adopted a more involved, subjective and (inter)personal style with the passing of time.

Rodríguez-Puente's (2019) findings are supported by the results presented in Rodríguez-Puente (2020a). In this case, the goal was to investigate variation between the active and the passive voice in law reports. Since law reports are written in a formal style, the expectation is that passives will predominate in them, as in other formal legal documents (see, among others, Hiltunen 1990, 76-77; Tiersma 1999, 74-77; Williams 2004, 2007[2005], 35-36). Rodríguez-Puente's analysis confirms that this is indeed the case overall, with passives predominating over actives from the mid-sixteenth century to the late twentieth century. Yet she also observes a notable drop in passives from the mid-nineteenth century, which becomes particularly significant from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. The decrease in frequency of passive forms coincides chronologically with the rise in prominence of first person pronouns; this confirms the finding in Rodríguez-Puente (2019) that the adoption of a more subjective and (inter)personal style is interrelated with the regulation of the production of the reports that followed upon the establishment of the *Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for England and Wales* as the only authorized publisher. In the same study (2020a), Rodríguez-Puente analyzes other features also encoding subjectivity, affect and personal viewpoint, such as private verbs (e.g., *believe*, *decide*, *think*) and direct questions, in order to check how they have evolved in law reports. Results show that both features grow in frequency from the nineteenth century onwards, and this again ties in with the parallel increase of first person pronouns and the decrease of passive verb forms.

Among other morphosyntactic features which have already been investigated on the basis of data retrieved from CHELAR we could mention here the variation between the derivational suffixes *-ity* and *-ness* and the concessive subordinators *notwithstanding* and *(al)though*. Rodríguez-Puente (2020b) analyzed the distribution of *-ity* and *-ness* during Early Modern English, in seventeen different registers and several corpora; results indicate that over the period examined the usage of *-ity* and *-ness* in law reports resembles that of other formal documents, such as statutes and public letters, rather than the usage in informal or speech-related documents like private letters and personal diaries. In turn, Blanco-García (2018, forthcoming) discusses the marking of concession in CHELAR, with special reference to the marginal subordinator *notwithstanding* as compared to *although* and *though*; it has been pointed out (Rissanen 2002) that, in its prepositional use (e.g., *notwithstanding some objections*), *notwithstanding* has a strong connection with officialese and bureaucratic jargon, and the evidence from law reports confirms that this applies as well to its use as a clause subordinator. Overall, the research conducted so far shows that CHELAR, though too small for the analysis of low-frequency phenomena, can be fruitfully employed for investigating the development across time of numerous lexical, morphosyntactic and discoursal features. As has been shown here, the corpus can provide interesting insights into diachronic developments over a span of five centuries, as also into the differences between the language of law reports, on the one hand, and that of other genres and other kinds of legal documents, on the other. By making CHELAR freely available, we hope to encourage other researchers to broaden our knowledge of the language of this specific type of document from a wide variety of perspectives.

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SUNCODAC

A corpus of online forums in higher education

Introduction

The corpus of online discussions described in this paper emerged from an essentially pedagogical idea. In 2014, as lecturers in charge of an undergraduate translation course, we came to the realization that class debates focusing too narrowly on the product of a translation task were clearly missing important aspects of the learning process. We decided to slow down the collective decision-making and bring some of those aspects back to the surface by moving part of the interaction online and turning it into a written, asynchronous discussion. The Moodle forum tool proved ideal for this purpose and the activity became a regular component of the course.

After two editions of the course with this new development, we also became aware that, as students put forth their proposals and tried to account for their translation decisions, they were not only learning about translation procedures and quality criteria from one another. They were also honing their language skills to provide feedback, make suggestions and level criticism at others, while at the same time paying due attention to their addressees' face needs, choosing the right kind of evidence to argue for a specific alternative, and so on. In short, they were also becoming more efficient language users and were collectively adjusting a genre they were unfamiliar with to their own communication needs. We were witnesses to this process through the gradually accumulating body of posts over the course of each four-month term. The idea of storing and preparing these valuable materials for systematic analysis took form at that point and, with modest resources, SUNCODAC became a reality.

Rationale for SUNCODAC

The Internet and the NTs have become a core component of our personal and professional lives. One area in which this is especially true is in the world of higher education. University has changed. Roles have been redefined: teachers have become facilitators and, for students, the emphasis is now on the collaborative construction of knowledge, often online. New computer-mediated genres are evolving to carry out these activities, which demand new socio-pragmatic skills, including the ability to project an appropriate online self and frame criticism in an appropriate manner. Learning how to interact online in academic contexts frequently starts at the undergraduate level, often in increasingly multicultural settings and in a language other than the students' mother tongue. However, for students involved in academic discussions, interacting online through a second language clearly places extra constraints that are worth exploring through samples of authentic communicative events. SUNCODAC seeks to open a new window into this new reality, which will undoubtedly become increasingly important in the future.

The Santiago UNiversity Corpus Of Discussions in Academic Contexts (SUNCODAC) contains student forum discussions compiled over a four-year period in the context of a translation course at the University of Santiago de Compostela. Participants in the events include both local and exchange students, using Spanish and English as *linguae francae* to collaborate in the construction of an optimal translation. The data in SUNCODAC are representative of a very popular type of computer-mediated communication in today's higher education, which is bound to play an even more important role in the increasingly online university. Although there is a long tradition of research into computer-mediated communication (CMC) in academic contexts, much of this comes from the ranks of education specialists, whereas linguists have paid scant attention to the kind of language used in this type of events so far. We will start this short introduction to the project by reviewing some of the existing literature on the topic, before going on to describe the activity and the participants in the SUNCODAC forums and present its current holdings. We will then provide a detailed account of the compilation process, paying attention to some of the difficulties encountered, and describe the corpus web-based interface. We will finish by briefly summarising some of the research that we have conducted on the SUNCODAC data so far, to give an idea of their potential for research.

Previous research into the language of discussion

Discussion forums (DFs) constitute collaborative learning spaces that foster the development of learning communities or communities of inquiry (Rourke & al. 1999). The collaborative learning experiences propitiated by discussion forums represent a radical departure from unidirectional forms of learning. Rather than the traditional transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, what we have is a situation where meaning is collectively constructed by the participants, students interacting with other students and with their teachers. One advantage of DFs over more fleeting forms of verbal discussion (for example, chats) is that, being asynchronous, they foster a culture of reflection that is conducive to a deeper, more meaningful and lasting form of learning (Ho & Swan 2007). In the area of Foreign Language Teaching in particular, forums have also been claimed to be an effective tool in the acquisition of the language, also contributing, in passing, to the improvement of communication skills and the learning of contents (Montero et al. 2007).

The characteristic language of DFs is a hybrid of features of both written and spoken language. For Biber & Conrad (2009), for instance, "e-forum postings

tend to follow the traditional rules for grammar and punctuation found in written texts" (p. 194), while also including spoken language features, like a tendency to employ short sentences and a preponderance of verbs and adverbs over nouns and adjectives, which reflects a focus on the expression of actions and emotions. DFs also contain conversational elements, like the occasional ellipsis, illustrating the quick interactive nature of these exchanges. Nonstandard punctuation is also occasionally used to overcome the natural limitations of the written language to express feelings and attitudes. In this respect, while it is frequently assumed that the expression of emotions is indeed more difficult in CMC than in face-to-face interaction, studies like Derks et al. (2008) conclude that emotions are more frequently and more intensely expressed online through a variety of cues (Vandegriff 2013), including uppercase letters, asterisks, emoticons, punctuation marks or letter repetitions, which enhance the verbal content of the message.

Some research has been conducted into the internal organization of DFs and related genres (e.g., listserv group messages). Herring (1996), for instance, observes the existence of a series of recurrent macrosegments in the messages sent to two academic mailing lists, including elements characteristic of traditional letter writing like salutations and signatures.

In the same study, Herring (1996) also finds the existence of gender differences in the messages. Characteristic male/female styles observed in face-to-face interaction tend to be reproduced in academic electronic discussions, with males showing a more assertive style and one that focuses on propositional content, while females focus on expressing alignment and creating rapport (see also Guiller & Durndell 2006). Interestingly, Herring discovers that the relative dominance (number of participants) of one of the genders in a forum may result in the minority gender adapting to the communicative style of the majority group, with women behaving more assertively in male-dominated forums and vice versa.

Student discussion forums, like CMC in general, may be described as "hyperpersonal" (Walther 1996), which means that an enhanced effort to reinforce interpersonal bonds with partners is frequently observed to compensate for the inherent interactional limitations of the medium. In these student forums, participants have been observed to deploy various "social presence" markers (Rourke et al. 1999), including manifestations of affection like emoticons, humour, self-disclosures, etc., dramatizations of the interaction, like quoting others' posts or expressing (dis)agreement, and expressions seeking to reinforce group cohesion like vocatives, greetings, group references, among others, all of them critical to online learning (Swan & Shih 2005). While participants have enough time to ponder about the content, structure and correctness of the language employed, forums still retain a certain dialogic character, and a flavour of improvisation and informality, which are missing in other forms of academic communication (Ho & Swan 2007, p. 5).

The context: a group translation task

SUNCODAC contains the Moodle-based discussions generated in an undergraduate translation course at the University of Santiago de Compostela over a four-year period, from 2014 to 2017. The context of the activity is a blended English-into-Spanish translation course, where the forum provides a natural complement to face-to-face learning. Most participants are second-year English majors, for whom this is a compulsory module, but there is also a small contingent of students majoring in other languages. The module is also very popular among exchange students, mostly Erasmus and, especially, a large component of Chinese exchange students.

Usually every other week, one of the classes consists in a teacher-led face-to-face discussion of the translation of a set text, which students have been asked to previously prepare as homework. This is then followed during the same week by an online forum discussion of one or several different passages of the same text, this time using the forum tool in the Moodle-based university's virtual learning environment. The aim is for students to work together towards an optimal translation of the set text excerpts. Each individual thread (1 per discussed passage) is led by one student who volunteers as a "moderator" and whose role is, first, to upload a draft translation of the text and, second, to produce a final revised version after reading the comments and incorporating the most significant suggestions for improvement made by classmates in the forum. Each individual thread would therefore consist of the following components in chronological order:

1. Lecturers' instructions. A single opening post by the lecturers with the source text's set excerpt, the moderator's name, basic participation instructions and deadlines.

2. Moderator's first translation. A single post containing the moderator's suggested translation of the set excerpt.

3. Peer feedback. This is the core of the discussion and consists in a long, chronologically organized list of posts by the moderator's classmates, where they identify problems in the draft translation, make comments and suggestions for improvement and discuss the suitability of different translation solutions.

4. Moderator's improved version and summary of discussion. This is usually one single post with the moderator's final improved version, plus a summary of the discussion's highlights and a general response to classmates' most significant and/or repeated comments and suggestions.

5. Lecturers' concluding remarks, with their assessment and appraisal of the activity. This is a

single post where one of the lecturers summarizes the most significant aspects of the discussion, in terms of their pedagogical value, and singles out a small number of individual contributions as possible models. Important aspects that might have been overlooked in the discussion are also identified and suggestions for improvement made, regarding both the moderators' work and their classmates' contribution to the task.

Data collection and preparation

As said at the start, the compilation of materials for SUNCODAC began retroactively in 2016, when the forum discussions which had been held in the two previous academic years were downloaded from the Moodle platform and stored as running text. No specific language had been set for the activity and most participants opted for Spanish. A few students, however, chose to use English or even Galician. A decision was then made to add two more years of interactions setting English as mandatory for the activity, so that comparisons could be made with a situation where the *lingua franca* was non-native for the majority of the participants. Written consent to use the materials for research purposes was obtained from the students at the end of each of these two additional years, but it was too late at this stage to contact the participants in the first two editions. This is arguably not a major issue in SUNCODAC, as these texts do not contain sensitive information that might compromise the participants' public face, should their identities be accidentally revealed and, moreover, the texts were to be fully anonymized and personal references were to be replaced with user codes.

Initially, the forum posts were saved into a database, with each message as a single record. The texts were pasted into a memo field, which resulted in the loss of certain font style features such as boldface, italics or the occasional use of colours. These are, in any case, recoverable from the stored text files. No other aspects of the layout or style were changed, and no grammatical and spelling errors were edited. The relevant metadata regarding information about the user (sex and first language) and about the post (date and time, language used, thread, and message type) were put into separate fields. These were to be used as filter variables to explore the collection.

While this initial system proved fruitful for the analysis of some structural features and regularities across the collection, its limitations for most corpus analysis procedures were soon apparent. Assistance was therefore hired to turn the database into a format more clearly compatible with concordance tools and flexible enough to permit enriching the annotation as needed. The Extensible Markup Language (XML) is widely used for the encoding of texts in electronic form and is specifically used in the *Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange*, issued and updated regularly by the TEI Consortium to standardize procedures (Text Encoding Initiative Consortium, 2020). It was therefore the obvious choice for our corpus.

The current version of SUNCODAC consists of 29 XML files, each containing the full set of posts (or messages) generated during the discussion of a specific source text. Whenever the activity involved two, or occasionally even three, different excerpts of a set text, a separate thread was used for each, which means that there may exist more than one thread for a single text in a given year. The grouping of the individual messages in a thread has been kept in the corpus by means of delimiting tags. Thus, the tags <message> and </message> wrap each individual post, with all the relevant metadata (author's sex and L1, type of message, etc.) encoded in the header. The tags <thread> and </thread> keep together, in chronological order, all the posts focusing on a specific excerpt, starting with the initial proposal by the forum moderator and ending with the lecturer's final remarks. Finally, the tags <topic> and </topic> delimit the full set of messages related to a particular translation task including all threads produced in the discussion of a given text in a given year. The label pair <thread>-</thread> —and its corresponding field in the online search tool— allows reconstructing full discussions in the "browsing" mode of SUNCODAC (more on the tool interface below).

Two sets of tags used in the body of messages are worth commenting on. These refer to 1) the identification of major sections in the "peer feedback" posts, the core of the discussions, and 2) the references to other participants, whose names have been replaced by codes to preserve anonymity.

As for the identification of the major sections of the messages, the first exploratory analyses revealed a rather stable pattern in the peer feedback messages. In essence, in these posts the core critical component may be preceded and/or followed by generally shorter chunks fulfilling mainly interpersonal functions. The tags <section> and </section> are used to mark the limits of these text segments. An *attribute* "type" is associated to this tag, with six possible *values*, as follows. The value *proposal* identifies the core of the message, which contains a detailed list of problems and suggestions for improvement; the *pre-proposal* section includes elements like an overall assessment of the translation, of the relative difficulty of the task, congratulations or a preview of criticism; the *post-proposal* mirrors the pre-proposal section with similar content; and finally the *opening* and *closing* sections are of an epistolary nature and contain, respectively, a salutation and various farewell expressions. These section tags with the related attribute-value pair allow for searches to be refined by narrowing the scope down to a specific part of a message.

With regard to personal references, as pointed out above, message authorship and references to other participants have been anonymized by replacing students' names with 5-digit codes (first two digits specify year of participation,

next three are a combination of the student's name and surname initials). This allows tracking individual participants in the forums, for example, if one wishes to browse or search all contributions by a given student or to focus attention on a group of students by selecting the desired user ID's. Since participant codes are also searchable character chains, it is also possible to keep track of references to a given student by other participants in their posts, which may be useful, for instance, to identify the role or relative prestige of a given individual in the group. The tags <R> and </R> have been used to wrap these references. The associated "type" attribute has four possible values in order to identify four types of address forms or personal references: *name* (e.g. "María José"), name+*surname* (e.g. "María José Pérez"), *familiar* variant or nickname (e.g. "Majo") or *initials* (e.g. M.J.). Labels can be displayed by moving the mouse over the 5-digit participant code. This "type" attribute for names may provide an indication, for instance, of the relative degree of familiarity that the author of a message wishes to project with other participants in the forum.

Corpus holdings

SUNCODAC contains 61 full forum discussions (threads) held over the period 2014-2017, totalling slightly under 600,000 words in 3,305 messages. 2 instructors and 520 students contributed to the corpus: 73.8% were native Spanish/Galician speakers (including both instructors), 14.6% were Chinese speakers, 4.8% were native English speakers, and 6.73% made up a miscellaneous group of students with different language backgrounds and nationalities, principally, French, Italian and German. The distribution of participants, by sex and language background per year, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Number of participants per year, by sex and L1.

	Native speakers of Spanish / Galician	Non native speakers of Spanish / Galician			Total
		L1 English	L1 Chinesse	L1 Other	
2014					
Female	59	3	15	5	82
Male	22	0	5	0	27
Total	81	3	20	5	109
2015					
Female	71	6	26	7	110
Male	20	6	10	2	38
Total	91	12	36	9	148
2016					
Female	73	3	4	9	89
Male	28	1	2	1	32
Total	101	4	6	10	121
2017					
Female	92	5	11	9	117
Male	19	1	3	2	25
Total	111	6	14	11	142
Whole CORPUS					
Female	295	17	56	30	398
Male	89	8	20	5	122
Total	384	25	76	35	520

The corpus contains 1,521 messages in Spanish, which amount to 232,440 words, or 40.5% of the total. English was used in 1,665 messages totalling 322,834 words, or 56.2% of the corpus. Galician was used in a small set of 119 messages (18,547 words) which account for the remaining 3.2%. The number of female participants was more than triple that of males, and they contributed the largest share of the posts, with 2,478 messages (428,303 word) as compared to 783 messages (130,051 words) sent by males. A similar imbalance in the distribution of participants across language backgrounds results in rather unequal contributions from each subgroup. Despite their comparatively low number, however, foreign students produced a sizeable number of messages: 513 in Spanish (57,719 words) and 257 in English (35,678 words). The calculation of normalized frequencies (per million words) has been implemented in the SUNCODAC tool to facilitate the comparison of subgroups.

Corpus interface

Figure 1 The SUNCODAC interface

The current version of the SUNCODAC user interface is that shown in Figure 1. The query tool allows for three types of search. The search type *Words* returns all occurrences of the word or word sequence (up to a maximum of five words) typed in the search box (Text). The search can be done in the whole corpus or in a subset of texts delimited by selecting the relevant values for other fields in the search screen. With the option *Words prox.* we can look at words in the vicinity of other words (at a maximum distance of ten words between two search terms). For either of these two search types, the user can choose from three different output formats (Result type): 1) *Simple frequency*, showing the number of occurrences of the search term per total number of words in a defined subcorpus; 2) *Full frequencies*, with the number of occurrences broken down by year, individual user, sex, L1 and L1 by sex; and 3) *KWIC*, a list of concordance lines which can be sorted (Sorting) by a combination of criteria including up to two preceding or following words.

A third search type, *Browsing*, retrieves whole texts. Combined with the relevant filters, it may be particularly useful, for example, to collect all the posts written by a given participant or a specific group, e.g. to describe individual or group style features. It is also possible to reconstruct entire threads (by combining values of the Source text and Thread fields), from the opening lecturers' post containing the source text on which the discussion is based to their final comments.

As shown in Figure 1, metadata for each of the posts in the corpus correspond to fields in the search screen, with user-friendly dropdown menus containing the relevant values for each variable. The list of available variables includes, for example, date, user's ID code, sex and mother tongue, message type (moderator's initial draft, peer feedback, moderator's final summary and lecturer's final comments), and main language used in the post. Searches may also be narrowed down to a particular section of feedback messages, or to a specific discussion (thread).

Current Research in SUNCODAC

In this section, we provide a short account of the results of the research that we have conducted so far on the SUNCODAC data, in order to illustrate the research value and potential of the tool.

Characteristic lexico-grammatical features (Fernández Polo & Cal Varela 2017)

A preliminary exploration of word and word-combination frequencies of a 940-post sample (>160,000 words) of the Spanish sub-corpus was conducted to identify the most salient lexico-grammatical features in the genre, which turn out to be quite revealing as to the object of discussion and the kind of discoursal functions performed by participants in the event. The word-frequency analysis showed the existence of three highly recurrent lexical subsets: 1) words designating text components (*traducción*, *frase*, *texto*, *palabra*); 2) cause and contrast conjunctions, used to construct arguments and to confront the different translation options; 3) words with a strong interpersonal meaning, including personal pronouns and determiners (*yo*, *tu*, *mi*), group references (*compañeros*), salutations and closing words, and hedging verbs (*creo*, *pienso*). The analysis of lexical bundles (2-4 n-grams) yields very similar categories: 1) references to text chunks (*mi/tu/la traducción*), 2) text-structuring elements (*en primer lugar*, *en cuanto a*, *en el caso de*, *con respecto a la*, *en la primera frase*) and expressions used to connect or contrast ideas (*ya que, en lugar de*, *en vez de*), 3) hedges and expressions of agreement (*me parece que*, *creo que*, *de acuerdo con*) and, in general, 4) expressions which serve to acknowledge the collaborative nature of the activity (*algunos de mis compañeros*), and compliment the moderator's work, in sum, to construct social presence and enhance group cohesion. Interestingly, this interpersonal dimension of the forums evolves during the course, peaking towards the middle of the period and levelling off towards the end, when interpersonal relationships have become consolidated.

Characteristic generic structure in the feedback posts (Fernández Polo & Cal Varela 2018)

In another study, we describe the characteristic internal structure of students' feedback posts in the forums. The materials consisted of a stratified sample of 240-posts from the Spanish sub-corpus, representing the three variables of sex (male/female), nativeness (native/non-native) and course period (beginning/middle/end). Up to twelve rhetorical moves were identified, some more central than others in terms of both relative location and frequency. Feedback posts show an onion-like structure, with a core, compulsory move containing the main proposal, the student's criticisms and suggestions for improvement. The outer layers consist of a series of "epistolary moves", consisting of salutations, thanksgiving and farewell. The middle layers include two segments immediately surrounding the core move (containing the actual proposal) which herald and close the central criticism, including expressions of praise and self-abasement intended to mitigate and cushion the negative impact of the criticism and suggestions in the central move, and a miscellaneous move containing comments on the development of the activity. The structural complexity of the posts evolves over the time span of the four-month course, peaking in mid-term before slightly dropping off towards the end of the period. Interestingly, non-native speakers seem to lead the trend in this evolution, with native speakers paradoxically imitating their patterns. Non-native speakers' posts remain comparatively more complex throughout the period and show more elaborate politeness. Contrary to previous studies (Herring 1996, Guiller & Durndell 2006), only minor gender differences were observed, with female posts exhibiting comparatively more elaborate manifestations of praise.

Attenuating criticism (Cal Varela & Fernández Polo 2020)

Students show sensitiveness towards their peers by using language that pre-emptively attenuates and mitigates the potential negative impact of their criticism. The nature of attenuation in the forums was explored in the same stratified 240-post sample of feedback posts in the Spanish sub-corpus already used for the purposes of a previous study. The analysis focused on the attenuating strategies employed in the move or section that immediately precedes and announces the core of the criticism. Students' relative effort to attenuate their criticism was measured on three dimensions: 1) presence/absence of the preview of criticism section in the post, 2) relative recurrence of the same attenuating strategy and 3) relative combination of different strategies in a single move. As for the first dimension, a significant increase is observed throughout the period in the number of posts containing this segment, an evolution that is more marked in males than in females. Intensity by repetition of the same strategy in a single move also seems to increase with time, suggesting that students become increasingly aware of the need to step up interpersonal work. Multiple or reiterated attenuators occur more frequently in native Spanish students' posts than in non-native students', probably reflecting the latter's more limited language competence. Attenuation effort as measured by the combination of different attenuating strategies in a single move also shows a significant increase over time, an evolution that is more marked in native Spanish students. Interestingly, while their attenuating strategies are less elaborate, non-native students' attenuation patterns not only show a comparative stability over time but seem to be serving as models for the more numerous group of local Spanish students, who seem to start the term rather tentatively, without a clear idea of how to elaborate their posts, imitating NNSs and eventually surpassing their models. It is the smaller group of native males who show greater readiness to evolve and imitate other models. Contrary to expectations, they also use attenuation more frequently and more intensely than females throughout the period.

A look at closings (Fernández Polo 2020)

In conversations, closing formulae behave as a sort of healing balm to mitigate the interpersonal strains generated by the exchange and the effect of departure.

In this study, we analyse the closing formulae in the feedback posts of part of the English sub-corpus (885 posts, 16 conversations). Almost 60 percent of the messages contained a closing section, with one or a combination of: farewell (*regards*, *bye*, *see you*), thanksgiving, well-wishing (*have a nice evening*, *good luck*), phatic expressions (*congratulations*, *hope this helps*) and sender's name. A clear preference is observed for formal expressions, particularly, *best/kind regards* over other informal formulae like *see you* or *cheers*. On the other hand, students infuse informality into their closings by means of paralinguistic features characteristic of CMC, notably exclamation marks, while the incidence of emoticons is comparatively low, probably reflecting medium restrictions. In general, closings are rather idiolectal, with individuals showing a preference for one or two "favourite" forms, which they constantly repeat. Reflecting the fact that the vast majority of participants are not native English speakers, non-standard forms (e.g. *see you on class, man*; *I hope to help*) and combinations of forms (*Bye and regards*; *Thanks and a greeting*) occur fairly frequently. The observed relative formality of the closings is also, arguably, characteristically non-native (Pérez Savater 2012). The analysis also shows some minor gender differences, with females using closings slightly more often than males and showing a slightly more marked preference for "simpler" (one-element) formats. As regards national differences, local Spanish students tend to use closings more often than exchange students but the latter's closings would be rather more elaborate, probably reflecting underlying cultural differences (Lorenzo-Dus & Bou-Franch 2013).

Final remarks and a quick look ahead

SUNCODAC is unfinished work. No new texts will be added to the collection, as the genre represented here is very specific and the current holdings suffice for the exploration of typical features. There is, however, significant room for new developments in terms of annotation and further improvement and expansion of functions in the interface. Part-of-speech tagging and marking of specific features such as references to sources of evidence or authority, instances of code-switching, etc. would certainly enrich the possibilities of the search tool. Research needs will dictate the path to follow. In its present state of development, the tool already offers a sharp view of a genre which is bound to play an increasingly important role in academic contexts, most particularly in higher education. Further work on annotation along TEI guidelines might also ensure it becomes a fitting piece in the colourful mosaic of CMC text types for which the pool of available materials will no doubt keep growing.

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Some Challenges behind the Compilation of the Salamanca Corpus: the Wiltshire Dialect as a Case Study

1. Introduction

Launched in 2011, *The Salamanca Corpus* (SC) (www.thesalamancacorpus.com) is the first digital repository of English dialect texts written between 1500 and 1950. As is well known, it comprises literary and non-literary documents, mostly literary dialects and dialect literature,[1] along with glossaries and word lists, some of which remain unpublished. Texts are thus classified according to text-type (i.e. DL, LD, glossaries), time period (i.e. 1500-1699, 1700-1799, 1800-1950), and dialects represented (e.g. Lancashire, Sussex, Wiltshire), which are in turn arranged into dialect areas: North, West Midlands, East Midlands, South (see further García-Bermejo Giner 2012). Unlike other corpora, the SC is conceived as an ongoing archive of dialect material that may help us reconstruct and recover the linguistic history of regional varieties of English, one which still awaits much investigation as it remains largely fragmentary with regard to the Early and Late Modern English periods. In this sense, the compilation of the SC is undertaken with a primarily linguistic aim, seeking to bridge some of the many gaps that exist in the phonological, lexical, spelling and morphosyntactic histories of English dialects. Yet the corpus likewise provides new insights into the history of dialect writing in England as it offers literary materials produced by secondary writers and representative of popular genres that are otherwise hard to access. In fact, Honeybone and Maguire (2020, 7) have recently underscored its validity for both linguistic and literary research, noting that it "is a remarkable resource for finding dialect writing texts up till around 1950 from all over England."

Because distinct in scope and type of language documented, the criteria behind the SC are not entirely akin to those of other linguistic corpora designed to answer crucial questions about historical variation and change, and that mainly respond to Schneider's (2013) requirements for texts to be acceptable for variationist purposes: proximity to speech, reasonable size, variety in terms of extralinguistic correlates, etc. (see the corpora described in this issue or the *Corpus Resource Database*). Rather, the compilation of the SC considers more closely Hickey's (2010, 8-11) textual parameters to validate historical material as a source to investigate non-standard varieties of English. They include: (a) degree of vernacularity (i.e. high or low); (b) text-internal scope (i.e. complete or partial); (c) author (i.e. insider, intermediate, outsider); (d) language of the text (i.e. intrinsic or extrinsic to author); (e) approach to language (i.e. entirely representational, as in DL, or construed, as with LD); (f) approach to content (e.g. satirical); (g) chronological perspective (Hickey 2010, 10). The SC fulfils this set of criteria, taking them into account for an adequate linguistic reading of the data. As such, the corpus offers varying degrees of vernacularity in accordance with each one of the literary representations considered: high levels in DL, for example. This allows us to scrutinise large numbers of vernacular features to make sense of the early history of a dialect, while tracking changes in the way it is recreated in different literary text-types. Also, and in order to examine attitudes towards and ideas about a dialect, the SC has texts written by insiders (e.g. Edward Slow (1841-1925), a native of Wiltshire who wrote in his native dialect), intermediate authors (e.g. Clara Louisa Antrobus (1846-1919), who was born in Lincolnshire and raised in Cheshire, writing both in the Cheshire and Lancashire dialects) and outsiders such as Juliana Horatia Ewing (1841-1885), who was born in Sheffield and wrote stories in the Wiltshire dialect. In this regard, the corpus provides instances of dialect intrinsic and extrinsic to the author, the latter of which "may well be unreliable," as Hickey (2010, 9) explains. This seems to account for Schneider's (2013, 61) contention that literary dialect is an example of "hypothetical, imagined speech" that bears "no association with a real-life speech event, but the fictitious utterance is intended to be characteristic of its—frequently also fictitious—speaker." Even though Schneider's categorisation does seem to exclude DL, he has not been alone in regarding such instances of written dialect as inadequate, or at least imperfect, to explore historical variation and change.

The issue of unreliability in the sense of inauthentic speech (see Coupland 2003) has been a major pitfall behind the use of literary representations of dialect to explore the linguistic past, and one of the major problems faced by the SC in its overall endeavour to improve our knowledge of older dialectal speech. This is because, following from Schneider's (2013) discussion, literary language, besides distant from actual speech, "normally display[s] categorical, invariant usage and fail[s] to reflect natural speech behavior and associated processes" (59). The default assumption of this widely accepted claim is that the dialect reproduced in literature is unnatural and static, with little room for variation (if at all), which makes it naturally unsuitable for linguistic purposes. Although it is far too obvious that literature does not and cannot represent real speech, such a rigid categorisation fails to account, on the one hand, for clear speech variability in some literary representations, including the works of well-known authors such as Elizabeth Gaskell (see Melchers

[1] Shorrocks (1996, 386) coined the term literary dialect (LD) to refer to "the representation of non-standard speech in literature that is otherwise written in standard English. . .and aimed at a general readership." Dialect literature (DL) is employed to refer "to works composed wholly (sometimes partly) in a non-standard dialect, and aimed essentially, though not exclusively, at a non-standard-dialect-speaking readership" (386). See Honeybone and Maguire (2020, 5), however, who argue that this useful and widely accepted terminological distinction remains somewhat "simplistic." Indeed, Shorrocks (1996, 386) himself clarifies that "it is not absolute."

2011) and Charles Dickens (see Wales 2017). On the other hand, it neglects other important concerns in the study of variation and change, which can benefit from literary sources. For example, common inconsistencies in the representation are potential evidence of the degree of salience of specific features that writers consciously choose to represent (see Ruano-García 2020), whilst the repertoires of forms documented may signal dialect enregisterment and indexicality, both of which play a remarkable role in linguistic change (see Beal 2019; Schintu forthcoming). In this vein, Schneider and Wagner (2006, 86) conclude that "literary dialect is a category in its own right which deserves analysis and observation and which may stimulate some fruitful thinking," especially because it "becomes interesting as a primary window in language variation and change of earlier periods, when no other, more authentic evidence is available" (48). Indeed, it provides valuable guidance to advance our knowledge of some linguistic traits (see García-Bermejo Giner 1999, 2008, 2013; Melchers 2010; Sánchez-García 1999, 2012; among others).

In line with Schneider and Wagner's (2006) claim above, another important challenge behind the compilation of the SC relates to its representativeness concerning the varieties and time periods that it covers. Ambitious though it certainly is in both regards, the SC hardly meets either of them as successfully as we would desire. This is largely due to the scarcity of material representative of some regional varieties and time periods, which is the prime reason underlying the traditionally obscure histories of English dialects. Thus, our selection of texts does not follow random criteria, but is made according to the availability of material, which is in turn dependent on the literary practices of each period and dialect documented. The long-standing literary pedigree of northern counties such as Yorkshire and Lancashire enables us to find many documents representative of these varieties. Others such as Essex, Buckinghamshire and Wiltshire provide us with comparatively fewer vernacular writings, making it certainly more complex to retrieve historical data from these dialects. In fact, southern varieties are under-represented in the Late Modern English section of the SC, with Cornwall exhibiting the largest number of texts (16) followed by Somerset (9) and Devonshire (7), while Berkshire and the Isle of Wight are the least represented, with 3 and 2 texts each.[2] This naturally prevents us from gaining representative insight into the language of these varieties, thereby impeding that findings can be generalised confidently, and that the samples scrutinised may be taken to include the "full range of variability" (Biber 1993, 243) of southern dialects. Recently, our compilation has started to consider minor forms of dialect writing such as pantomimes in an attempt to overcome the problem of representativeness. They are even harder to access than the texts already included in the corpus, yet they are promising with regard to the dialect they preserve (see Ruano-García 2021).

Considering the challenges so far described, this paper reports on the varieties that are poorly represented in the corpus by taking the Wiltshire dialect as a preliminary case study. We draw on two examples of DL and LD written in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the aim of illustrating, firstly, what such "inauthentic" recreations of Wiltshire English can tell us about the dialect on the levels of phonology and syntax. Attention is paid, on the one hand, to /w/-insertion (e.g. *cwoold* 'cold', *mwore* 'more'), and the realisations of the FACE diphthong (e.g. *neam* 'name', *zaay* 'say'). On the other hand, we look at two features that have been reported to be in complementary distribution in south-western dialects, namely periphrastic *do* (1) and non-standard verbal *-s* (2):[3]

(1) It* do *take me such a time to mind any thing, sir

(2) I* thinks *some of 'em bothered she too

Secondly, we seek to determine to what extent the evidence now provided by the SC can be generalised as characteristic of nineteenth-century Wiltshire speech, and whether further materials would be needed to corroborate our findings.

The following section describes the Wiltshire texts available in the SC at the time of writing (October 2020). In Section 3, we provide some methodological considerations and analyse the selected data, examining phonological issues first. Section 4 offers some conclusions in the framework of the challenges outlined in this paper.

2. The representation of the Wiltshire dialect in the SC

At present, the SC has 463 literary texts, 54.4% of which are representative of northern dialects. Table 1 shows that representations of southern dialects amount to c.24% of the material, most of which were published during the Late Modern English period, especially in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century.

[2] García-Bermejo Giner (2018, 58) shows that the representation of southern Englishes in the English Dialect Dictionary (1896-1905) (EDD) is also small if compared with northern dialects. Her survey indicates that Cornwall and Devonshire are the best represented with 67 and 52 texts each, while Berkshire (3) and Hampshire (4) rank last.

[3] Instances of these two features are marked in italics in the examples provided.

Table 1. Distribution of texts in the SC: dialect areas

	Southern	Northern	East Midlands	West Midlands
1500–1699	16	91	2	1
1700–1799	6	26	3	7
1800–1950	89	135	37	50
Total	111	252	42	58

As already noted, recreations of the Cornwall, Somerset and Devonshire dialects are the most numerous, with 32 texts in total, whereas those representative of Berkshire and the Isle of Wight are largely under-represented. Likewise, representations of the Wiltshire dialect are documented in just four texts: two are instances of DL and two represent examples of LD. While the SC has an early LD representation of the dialect that dates from 1636 (the anonymous masque *The King and Queenes Entertainement at Richmond*), most of the texts were published in the late nineteenth century. Of course, this makes it hard to examine the peculiarities of the dialect over time, which is further complicated by the fact that the three other texts were written within a period of less than 30 years. They comprise: Juliana Horatia Ewing's novel *Jan of the Windmill: A Story of the Plains* (1876) (LD) together with Edward Slow's *The Fifth Series of Wiltshire Rhymes and Tales in the Wiltshire Dialect* (1894) and *The Wiltshire Moonraker's Edition of the West Country Rhymes* (1903), both of which are cases of DL. Wakelin (1986, 181) stresses that Slow was "the most notable of all Wiltshire dialect writers", and indeed Slow himself noted in the preface to *The Wiltshire Moonrakers* (1903) that "Whatever little merit my various publications may possess, Reviewers and Philologists are agreed they are fair specimens of our good Old County Dialect". In the following sections we seek to determine to what extent they can be taken as "fair specimens" of the dialect.[4]

3. Data and analysis

3.1. Methodological remarks

The present analysis is based on Juliana Horatia Ewing's novel written in 1876 and one of Slow's short stories published in *The Fifth Series of Wiltshire Rhymes and Tales in the Wiltshire Dialect* (1894) and entitled "Zackerier Chaabeakin, an his visit ta Warminster ta zee tha Prince of Wailes". As displayed in Table 2, the analysis is based on c.8,000 words.[5] Even though this is a very small sample, it may suffice for the purposes of this article.

Table 2. Sample.

Type of representation	Text	N words
LD	Ewing (1876)	3,547
DL	Slow (1894)	4,381
Total		7,928

We are considering one example of LD and another of DL because they will enable us to determine whether the dialect recreated is comparable in linguistic terms in different types of representation. We seek to validate the usefulness of our data, for which purpose we should ascertain whether the phonological and syntactic features selected are represented similarly in texts with different degrees of vernacularity, written by different authors who approach the dialect as an insider / outsider, and in which the dialect is intrinsic / extrinsic to the writer. That is, we should conclude about the reliability of our findings on the basis of texts that, regardless of their approach to language, etc., offer a realistic (not a real) picture of the Wiltshire dialect.

[4] Ewing learnt the Wiltshire dialect "by the aid of a friend, who procured copies for her of Wiltshire Tales and A Glossary of Wiltshire Words and Phrases, both by J.Y. Akermann", as her sister Horatia K.F. Eden explained in Juliana Horatia Ewing and her Books (1896).

[5] These texts are not comparable in terms of size: Ewing (1876) has some 82,500 words and Slow (1894) contains c.4,400. For this reason, we have selected random samples from Ewing's novel, which amount to c.3,500 words in total.

3.2. Phonology

This survey looks at a selection of two features, namely /w/-insertion and the realisation of the FACE diphthong. While both of them have been recorded in the Wiltshire dialect, /w/-insertion seems to have been employed in dialect speech more widely, as we explain below.

3.2.1. /w/-insertion

/w/-insertion (e.g. *cwoold* 'cold', *mwore* 'more') has been attested in south-western dialects. Wakelin (1986) and Hickey (2010) report that it is found rather sporadically today, but it was a common feature in earlier dialect writing from the dialects of Dorset and Wiltshire, especially in southern districts, as well as adjacent areas in Hampshire. /w/-insertion refers to the development of /w/ in contexts in which a back vowel is preceded by a consonant, often in initial position. Dobson (1968: 997) explains that such formation can be traced back to the late ME period, with examples documented in the Kentish text *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (1340): *buones* 'bones' and *guo* 'go'. Apparently, as Wright (1905, 57) describes, the development of /w/ was due to "a falling diphthong having become a rising diphthong", a process that was "chiefly confined to the south Midl. s. & sw. dialects when the preceding consonant is a labial" (58). Wakelin (1986, 33) notes that "/w/ may be lost before /u/, but added initially of after a preceding c. before long back Vs", thereby suggesting that /w/-insertion was not restricted to phonological contexts with a preceding labial consonant. This is supported by Edward Kite's translation of the *Song of Solomon* (1860) into the Wiltshire dialect as well as by the SC. On the one hand, Kite reports that: "[i]n Wiltshire a similar difference is to be found not only in distinct localities but even in the same village: as *rwoad, rawd*, for *road*; *dwoor, dur, door*; *zart, zoort, sort*; and so on". On the other, the SC has examples such as *bwoy* 'boy', *mwore* 'more' and *stwones* 'stones' suggesting that /w/ developed after consonants other than a liquid.

Even though the frequency of this feature is not particularly pronounced, its distribution in the two types of representation considered points that it was not a distinctive peculiarity of the Wiltshire dialect in the case of LD. By contrast, DL relied on /w/-insertion on a more frequent basis in accordance with the expected degree of vernacularity of Slow's story. While this may speak against Ewing's representation as a useful specimen to investigate the Wiltshire dialect, we have seen that /w/-insertion was a feature of other southern dialects, and this makes it reasonable to assume that neither Ewing nor her target readers associated *bwoy* and *mwore* with Wiltshire alone. It seems safe to surmise that there was indeed awareness of this feature amongst outsiders, though to a lesser degree than in the case of native audiences whom Slow addressed. Such is not the case of the FACE diphthong.

Table 3. /w/-insertion

/w/-insertion (N=53; NF /1,000 = 6.7)						
Examples	DL			LD		
	N types	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)	N types	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)
bwoy, cwoold mwore, stwones	14	46	10.5	5	7	2

3.2.2. FACE diphthong

As is known, this lexical set comprises words that derive from either ME /a:/ or ME /ai, ei/. Both of them are realised as the long mophthong [e:] in southwestern varieties, although Wakelin (1986, 27) underlines that "the dialects of some locs. differentiate between the reflexes of ME ɑ̄ and ME *ai, ei*, thus giving /aɪ/ as far as W. as E. Cornwall, with some concentration in Wilts, Dorset and Hants." As can be seen from Table 4, the SC data attest to such distinction, with respellings either pointing to [e:] (e.g. <ea> in *neam* 'name', *zeam* 'same') or to [ai] in cases such as *plaain* 'plain' and *thaay* 'thy'. Although both are employed to a very similar extent, it is worth noting, firstly, that instances of <ea> are far more varied than those with <(a)ai, (a)ay>, which amount to just six examples that are recurrently used. Secondly, it is somewhat striking that this feature does not get at all represented in LD. This could encourage us to assume that FACE was not at all salient to outsiders, at least to Ewing, who regularly represents the vowel sound of related items according to standard patterns: *name*, *place*.

Table 4. FACE diphthong

FACE (N=138; NF /1,000 = 17.3)								
Spellings	Examples	DL			LD			
		N types	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)	N types	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)
<ea>	*mead, neam, pleace, sheakin, zeam, teable*	24	51	11.6	0	0	0
<aai, aay>	*plaain, zaay(d, –s, –ing)*	2	49	11.2	0	0	0
<ai, ay>	*thay, haighty*	2	24	5.5	0	0	0
<ai>	*straingers , Wailes*	2	14	3.2	0	0	0

The *EDD*, however, records this set of respellings as common resources to represent FACE words in the dialects of Somerset, Wiltshire and the neighbouring Berkshire. Interestingly, Barzillai Lowsley's prefatory remarks to his *Glossary of Berkshire Words and Phrases* (1888) notes that in this dialect, "[i]n words where the letter *a* is given the sound *aay* there is also sometimes a sub-division of the word into two syllables as follows: 'Game' is pronounced both *gaayme* and *ge-um*; 'shame' both as *shaayme* and *she-um*; 'name', both *naayme* and *ne-um*; 'face' is both *vaayce* and *ve-us*. The two pronunciations are equally common" (2). One may thus assume that words respelt <aay> in Wiltshire representations such as Slow's (1894) might evoke the pronunciation of FACE words in the transitional area between Wiltshire and Berkshire; the sample is not big enough for generalisation, though. Further data would also be necessary to gain some clearer insight to corroborate the findings concerning the non-natives' perception of this feature.

3.3. Syntax: Periphrastic do and non-standard verbal -s

Periphrastic *do* and non-standard verbal *-s* have been classified as two of the hallmarks of traditional south-western English dialects (Ihalainen 1994; Wagner 2007, 2012; de Both 2019). Ihalainen (1994, 225) explains that periphrastic *do* basically refers to the use of unstressed *do* in affirmative declarative sentences, whereas non-standard verbal *-s*, which he labels as universal *-s*, includes present-tense verbs that are inflected in contexts other than in the third person singular, as in:

(3) He **da** *make them (cited in Ihalainen 1994, 228)*

(4) They **makes** *them (cited in Ihalainen 1994, 214)*

Evidence from Johnson (1755) and Coote (1788) suggest that periphrastic *do* fell into disuse during the course of the eighteenth century, although dialects preserved such forms well into the twentieth century, as the *Survey of English Dialects* (1962-1971) (*SED*) confirms. Similarly, the *SED* records non-standard *-s* in many dialects. This is a feature that has been amply documented in non-standard Englishes, as well as extensively discussed on the basis of modern and historical data (see de Both 2019, 9-12 and references therein for a discussion of this feature, its development and distribution).

Filppula et al. (2008, 55-59) offer a detailed account of the possible origins of unstressed *do* in positive declaratives, considering the causative and Celtic hypotheses, and concluding that language contact with Celtic "must be taken into account as a likely contributory factor" (59). They support the view that periphrastic *do* originated in south-western varieties of ME, a geographical distribution that, as they point out, "has been stable over long periods of time" (59). As noted, there is evidence recorded by the *SED* showing that unstressed *do* was common in the twentieth century, especially in a focal area stretching from West Wiltshire to East Somerset, being likewise attested in Cornwall, Dorset, and Gloucestershire. Klemola (2018, 274) explains that "West Wiltshire/ East Somerset form the focal area of periphrastic DO usage, and, indeed, in the light of historical documents, periphrastic DO seems to have originated in just this

[6] "This sound is also registered in strangers where it may, however, perhaps be due rather to an [i]-glide between ME a and the following /ndZ/)" (cf. Wakelin 1986, 27) and SED (VIII.2.10.).

area." Earlier accounts support mid-twentieth-century findings. Wright (1905, 297), for example, remarks that it was "in gen[eral] use in the south-western dialects," while more precise evidence for its distribution in Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Somerset can be found in nineteenth-century descriptions of these dialects (see Klemola 2018, 262). To these can be added Wiltshire, where Dartnell and Goddard (1893, xix) explain that "[t]he periphrastic tenses are often used in S. Wilts., as 'I do mind un,' but in N. Wilts. the rule is to employ the simple tenses instead, merely altering the person, as 'I minds un.'." The Wiltshire distribution of such "periphrastic tenses" is further corroborated by Ellis (1889). Even though his unprecedented dialect survey does not explicitly consider unstressed *do* as an object of enquiry, Ellis comments on such forms as characteristic of Wiltshire and other neighbouring dialects. He notes that "the periphrastic form *I do go* for the simple *I go*" is one of the grammatical constructions that "strikes a stranger most" (1889, 43). Ellis records isolated examples that showcase this grammatical peculiarity:

(5) it will not kill a chap being because ye* do *laugh at him, I* do *allot him, it is not likely (44)

(6) her would tell ye where her found this ere drunken beast as her* do *call her husband (45)

He also documents the following instance of the "simple tenses" or non-standard verbal -s, which Dartnell and Goddard (1873) described for the North of the county:

(7) it isnt no odds to I, nor nobody else as I* knows *of (44)

As we can see, then, periphrastic *do* is a widely documented feature, which was used in Wiltshire both in the 1800s and later in time. Also, the available evidence from the period indicates that non-standard *-s* was present in the dialect. As we seek to demonstrate here, evidence from the SC substantiates nineteenth-century reports, with examples that provide more detailed insight into the usage of these constructions. To our knowledge, there is little beyond the descriptive comments and isolated explanatory cases recorded at the time, and certainly no body of historical data that may tell us if periphrastic *do* was constrained by the linguistic factors described in the literature, and whether it coexisted (and how) with non-standard verbal *-s*.

Ihalainen (1994) identifies two distinctions between periphrastic and lexical/auxiliary *do* drawing on the evidence furnished by nineteenth-century reports. On the one hand, he notes that periphrastic *do* is usually spelt <da> "to distinguish it from the true verb *do*" (225). On the other, he stresses that it is uninflected with third-person singular subjects in sentences such as (3) above. De Both (2019, 2) goes further than this, and refers to type of subject and lexical verb, as well as to verbal aspect as constraints behind the use of periphrastic *do*, constraints which also apply to non-standard verbal *-s*. Her analysis builds on the FRED corpus and supplements earlier studies such as Klemola (2018) (based on the *SED*). On a general level, de Both (2019) finds that in south-western dialects unstressed *do* is in complementary distribution with nonstandard *-s*, the former favouring the habitual verbal aspect and often patterning with relative pronouns and noun phrases, whereas the latter favours the punctual verbal aspect and has some preference for similar subject types. She notes that "no definitive conclusions can be drawn" (26) from her dataset as regards the effect of subject type, though. Concerning Wiltshire, de Both's findings reveal that both features are "almost in complementary distribution" (20), as evidenced by speakers who use them; this is also the case in Somerset. Neither Wiltshire nor Somerset favour nonstandard verbal *-s*, but this feature is not absent. Because Klemola (2018) and de Both (2019) look at mid-twentieth-century data, it would not be rare to assume that similar patterns would be found in the dialect during the last quarter of the 1800s. In what follows, we analyse the SC Wiltshire data in the framework of these constraints, focusing on subject type, grammatical person and type of verb.

Our data shows that unstressed *do* patterns with different types of subject (singular and plural), including (personal) pronouns (8a-b) as well noun phrases (9a-b):

(8a) It* do *take me such a time to mind any thing (LD)

(8b) zom* da *zay thay can goo back ta Garge tha vust (DL ['some say they can go back to George the First']

(9a) Women* does *make such a caddle about things (LD)

(9b) zom voke* da *pride therzelves mainly bout treacin back their antickety (DL) ['some folk pride themselves mainly on tracking back their antiquity']

Table 5 displays that periphrastic constructions occur more frequently with personal pronouns and noun phrases both in DL and LD, while the effects of grammatical person and number suggest that it was more often used in first- and third-person singular contexts along with third-person plural person. Despite the very small number of occurrences documented in the corpus, the findings would go some way to shedding historical light on the fact that "all third-person singular contexts and the first- and third-plural contexts favour periphrastic DO" (de Both 2019, 25). In first-person singular contexts, however, *do* was comparatively less frequent in the mid-twentieth-century, which is not the case in our sample. In line with Ihalainen's (1994) observation above, the SC witnesses to uninflected *do* in third-person singular contexts (e.g. (8a)), although, as (9a) shows, it is worth noting that the inflected form *does* is found with plural subjects in a couple of examples used in LD.

Table 5. Distribution of periphrastic do

periphrastic *do* (N = 33; NF / 1,000 = 4.2)					
Factor		DL		LD	
	Category	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)
subject type	*personal pn*	16	3.6	7	2
	pronoun	3	0.7	0	0
	relative pn	0	0	0	0
	NP	5	1.1	2	0.6
person number	*1 SG*	10	2.3	2	0.6
	2 SG	2	0.4	1	0.3
	3 SG (m)	4	0.9	0	0
	3 SG (f)	0	0	2	0.6
	3 SG (n)	0	0	2	0.6
	1 PL	2	0.4	0	0
	2 PL	0	0	0	0
	3 PL	6	1.4	2	0.6
Total		*24*	*5.5*	*9*	*2.5*

The attestation of periphrastic *do* is less pronounced if compared to non-standard verbal *-s*. As shown in Table 6, the SC supports nineteenth-century reports and modern studies showing that both features co-existed in Wiltshire. Yet, our data seem to contradict the mid-twentieth-century distribution of both features: cases of non-standard *-s* occur more often than unstressed *do*, even if we do not consider third-person singular contexts, which pattern with *-s* following the standard concord.

Table 6. Distribution of non-standard verbal -s.

non-standard verbal -s (N = 89; NF / 1,000 = 11.2)					
Factor		DL		LD	
	Category	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)	N tokens	NF (/1,000w)
subject type	*personal pn*	35	7.9	49	13.8
	pronoun	0	0	0	0
	relative pn	1	0.2	2	0.6
	NP	1	0.2	1	0.3
person number	*1 SG*	29	6.6	24	6.8
	2 SG	0	0	14	3.9
	1 PL	5	1.1	2	0.6
	2 PL	1	0.2	0	0
	3 PL	2	0.5	12	3.4
Total		*37*	*8.4*	*52*	*14.6*

While the sample indicates that in DL both features are used with relatively comparable frequencies, LD shows clear preference for non-standard *-s*. One may think that, in light of Dartnell and Goddard's (1873) remark above, the rendition of the dialect in LD corresponds with the variety once employed in the North of the county, but there is nothing else in the representation that may provide strong support for this assumption. It is more likely that, as already noted, the dialect was extrinsic to Juliana Horatia Ewing. As an outsider, she may have relied more extensively on a feature that was also employed in other varieties, one that she possibly found meaningful to authenticate the recreation of Wiltshire and provide it with an easily recognisable regional taste.

De Both (2019, 25) shows that "nonstandard verbal *-s* is favoured by all […] categories except second-person subjects. It seems that second-person contexts generally do not favour these dialectal features, whereas first- and third-person plural contexts do." Taken together, in the SC data, non-standard *-s* patterns with personal pronouns on a more frequent basis, and, like periphrastic *do*, it is used especially in first-person singular and third-person plural contexts, as well as in second-person singular subjects in the case of LD; thus:

(10) if thee* minds *pigs as well as 'ee* draas *'em (LD) [if you take care of pigs as well as you draw them]

(11) I* veels *as merry an proud as tha Prince a Wailes hisself (DL) [I feel as merry and proud as the Prince of Wales himself]

The tokens of lexical verbs used with unstressed *do* and non-standard *-s* are displayed in Table 7, excluding those forms used with verbal *-s* in third-person singular contexts. As expected, the set of verbs used with periphrastic *do* is smaller than in the case of non-standard *-s*, with 20 different verbs in the former and 35 in the latter.

Table 7. Lexical verbs used with non-standard -s

Lexical verbs	periphrastic *do* (N = 33)		Lexical verbs	non-standard verbal -s (N = 89)	
	NL	LD		NL	LD
say	4	3	*say*	21	4
think	2	1	*know*	2	16
go	2		*go*	4	1
know	2		*call*		4
take	1	1	*take*	2	1
feel	2		*like*		3
pride	2		*think*	1	1
begin		1	*mind*	1	1
bring	1		*ask*		1
call	1		*begin*	1	
get		1	*bother*		1
keep	1		*cry*		1
light	1		*draw*		1
live	1		*fall*		1
make		1	*feel*	1	
meet	1		*find*		1
read	1		*get*	1	
seem		1	*grind*		1
speer 'ask'	1		*holler*		1
want	1		*hope*		1
			live	1	
			make		1
			move	1	
			play		1
			reckon	1	
			rob		1
			see		1
			speak		1
			stand		1
			stop		1
			summon	1	
			sweep		1
			try		1
			want		1
			wonder		1

Some of them are used with an important degree of frequency in both constructions, *say*, *know*, *go*, and *think* ranking amongst the most common in the sample. There is a clear preference for *say*, though such a tendency must be taken cautiously as this verb commonly appears in narrative contexts both in the case of unstressed *do* and nonstandard *-s*, in DL and LD:

(12) "Lar Zue,"* zaays *I, "beant she a veelin ooman ta think on ess like this here." (DL)
["Lor, Sue", I say, "isn't she a feeling woman to think of us like this?"]

Such uses have been qualified as formulaic by Peitsara (2002, 221) and Pietsch (2005, 222), who notes that "it is difficult to find evidence for such a tendency apart from examples with formulaic *says* or similar equivalents." Despite this important caveat, our findings are largely in accordance with de Both's (2019). On the one hand, the SC shows that both features occur with short monosyllabic verbs. On the other, it seems that in the late 1800s, unstressed *do* and non-standard *-s* also favoured verbs of mostly Germanic origin; exceptions are *bother* and *summon*, which, according to *OED*, are of obscure and French origin, respectively. Likewise, our results indicate that some of the frequently occurring verbs are stative cognitive (e.g. *know*, *think*) and intransitive verbs (e.g. *go*).

4. Concluding remarks

The following remarks follow from the short discussion of these features:

1. Firstly, the Wiltshire representations available at the SC offer a glimpse into phonological features that have been reported as characteristic of the dialect both in LModE and beyond. Limited though the dataset is, such evidence should not be categorically neglected in view of the lack of a historical dialect phonological database, and because the findings may tell us about localised nuanced realisations of FACE in cases such as *plaain*, *zaayd*;

2. Secondly, the SC provides corroborating evidence that periphrastic *do* and non-standard verbal *-s* were indeed used in nineteenth-century Wiltshire English. The sample has suggested, on the one hand, that the former was apparently less common than non-standard *-s*, which was clearly favoured in LD. On the other hand, our results point to the fact that neither subject type nor grammatical person were decisive constraints in the use of either one or the other, as examples suggest that both features pattern with different types of subject in different contexts. Taken together, however, the data seem to indicate that there was some preference for personal pronouns in first-person singular and third-person plural contexts, as recent studies of mid-twentieth-century data have also found. Also, the analysis has revealed that both features pattern with a large number of short verbs of Germanic origin;

3. Thirdly, it seems clear that the SC data cannot be taken as either conclusive or generalisable for a number of reasons. First and foremost, because the sample is too small, what we have examined here is but a blurred snapshot of what Wiltshire English may have been like by the time it was represented. Also, the different approaches taken to the dialect by the authors considered may have distorted Ewing's recreation from the outside. This is especially noteworthy in the fact that FACE does not get represented by her, as well as in the varying degrees of frequency of periphrastic *do* and non-standard *-s*. In this regard, our results clearly speak against their distribution only a few decades later: as noted, other surveys have strongly argued for Wiltshire as the locus of periphrastic *do* in the South-West of England;

4. Finally, and despite the limitations of our dataset as well as the under-representation of Wiltshire in the SC, the corpus offers opportunities to explore new avenues in fields like Late Modern dialect syntax. For the first time, isolated contemporary records on features like those we have discussed here can be supplemented with a body of historical data which may allow us to explore such constructions through the lens of constraints described for modern dialects. We expect that further materials will allow us to draw robust (and reliable) conclusions, while showing that, with the necessary care, such data can provide a missing link in the fragmented database of Late Modern English dialect variation and change.

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BOOK REVIEWS

BEATRIZ VALVERDE
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Viajes con mi cura: las andanzas de Graham Greene por España y Portugal

Carlos Villar Flor
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Carlos Villar Flor, profesor de la Universidad de la Rioja, doctor en Filología inglesa por la Universidad de Oviedo y estudioso de la obra del escritor británico Graham Greene (1904-1991), nos presenta en *Viajes con mi cura. Las andanzas de Graham Greene por España y Portugal* un riguroso análisis de los diversos viajes que el autor inglés realizó por España de 1976 a 1989 de la mano del padre Leopoldo Durán, amigo entrañable de Greene en sus últimos años y especialista a su vez en su obra. Además, Villar Flor examina la influencia que las andanzas descritas tuvieron en Greene en la última etapa de su vida, así como en su obra, concretamente en la novela *Monseñor Quijote*, publicada en 1982, y en la versión cinematográfica homónima realizada para la televisión británica en 1985. La lectura de *Viajes con mi cura*, finalmente, arroja luz sobre la figura del mismo Leopoldo Durán y su relación con el escritor inglés: en este trabajo, a diferencia de la visión un tanto abstracta y a veces idealizada del sacerdote que presentan distintos biógrafos de Greene, la figura de Durán se perfila "como un ser humano con sus luces y sus sombras, virtudes y defectos" (5).

Cualquier estudioso de la vida y la obra de Greene podría cuestionar la necesidad de publicar un análisis de los viajes estivales del autor por España, teniendo en cuenta que el mismo Leopoldo Durán se encargó de dar fe de sus periplos ibéricos con Greene en 1994 en su libro *Graham Greene: Friend and Brother* (*Graham Greene: amigo y hermano* en la versión publicada en español en 1996). Sin embargo, tras una lectura atenta del libro de Durán se puede concluir que el sacerdote no realiza una crónica detallada de estos viajes. Más importante aún, como afirma el propio Villar Flor, "el análisis textual de la cronología viajera contenida en *Amigo y hermano*, incluso sin apoyo de fuentes complementarias, revela contradicciones internas y errores de datación" (2). *Viajes con mi cura* nos ofrece una certera reconstrucción de los viajes que Greene y Durán hicieron juntos durante esos años, dando información detallada y contrastada de cada periplo. Para ello, Villar Flor lleva a cabo una ardua tarea de investigación documental en bibliotecas especializadas de universidades como Oxford, Georgetown o Boston College, cotejando la información conservada en los diarios manuscritos del padre Durán en los que anotaba información sobre sus encuentros perso-

nales y sus conversaciones telefónicas con Greene, con el relato finalmente publicado en *Graham Greene: amigo y hermano*. Asimismo, para completar —y a veces corregir— la versión de los hechos que Durán publica en su libro, Villar Flor acude a otras fuentes, tales como la correspondencia de Durán tanto con Greene como con personas cercanas al autor inglés, los propios diarios de viaje de Greene o incluso testimonios personales de los acompañantes que tuvieron en sus periplos vacacionales.

En el primer capítulo del libro, "El cura que invitó a Greene: la vida de Leopoldo Durán hasta 1975", Villar Flor comienza a esbozar una semblanza de Durán, haciendo un somero repaso de su vida hasta el momento en el que el sacerdote español conoce personalmente a Greene en Londres en agosto de 1975.

El segundo capítulo del libro, "Los viajes: día a día", es el más extenso y se centra en relatar cada jornada de los quince viajes estivales que Greene hizo por España y Portugal acompañado por Durán desde 1976 a 1989. Cada periplo se detalla siguiendo una estructura similar: primero se relatan los preliminares del viaje; en segundo lugar, se dan detalles del itinerario concreto que siguen cada verano. Se sigue con una sección llamada anecdotario, centrándose en quién los acompañaba, las diversas personas con las que tenían contacto, las anécdotas que les ocurrieron y los principales temas de conversación entre los amigos viajeros. Finalmente, encontramos una sección en la que Villar Flor ofrece unas últimas notas a modo de conclusión de la narración de cada viaje. La relación de estas andanzas nos da la oportunidad de contemplar a Greene desde una perspectiva humana inusitada y permite que la figura de Durán, su compañero de viaje, cobre vida. Al mismo tiempo, vemos cómo en los distintos viajes nace y va tomando forma *Monseñor Quijote*, la novela de Greene que tiene su germen en sus viajes por la España de finales de los 70 y principios de los 80.

El tercer capítulo, "Los años de amistad con Greene (1976-1991)", se centra en analizar la evolución de la amistad de Durán con el autor inglés en sus últimos 25 años de vida. Asimismo, conocemos datos de la vida profesional y personal de Durán durante este periodo de tiempo que nos servirán para seguir conociendo los entresijos de la personalidad del sacerdote gallego.

En el cuarto capítulo, "Tras la pista de Murrieta: Decadencia y caída de la Fundación Graham Greene", se narra uno de los hechos más desconocidos de las experiencias de Greene en España de la mano de Durán: la exigua existencia de la Fundación Graham Greene, presentada en sociedad el 23 de julio de 1988 y disuelta tan solo un año después, en julio de 1989. Se relata en este capítulo la génesis de la idea de la Fundación, así como su desarrollo efectivo en conjunción con Vicente Cebrián, conde de Creixell y dueño en aquel momento de las bodegas Marqués de Murrieta —uno de los caldos que los viajeros consumían frecuentemente durante estos viajes. Asimismo, se analiza el papel de Durán y su toma de decisiones en todo el proceso, lo cual ayuda al lector, al mismo tiempo que conoce la historia, a profundizar en la personalidad del sacerdote.

Los dos últimos capítulos del libro, "Contar o no contar: la elaboración de *Amigo y hermano*" y "Los últimos años de Leopoldo Durán", completan por un lado el relato de la amistad entre Durán y Greene y la génesis de su relato escrito: *Graham Greene: amigo y hermano*. Además, el capítulo de cierre nos ofrece un somero recorrido por los últimos años de la vida de Leopoldo Durán tras la muerte de Greene en 1991.

En suma, *Viajes con mi cura* ofrece un rico y esclarecedor análisis de las experiencias de Greene y su amigo Durán en su peregrinar por España, así como de diversos rasgos de la contradictoria personalidad tanto del autor inglés como de su compañero de viaje. Al lector no iniciado en el tema, el libro le permite obtener un relato de los viajes que resulta informativo al tiempo que entretenido. Por otro lado, a los especialistas en Greene, el estudio de Villar Flor ofrece una versión contrastada documentalmente de las experiencias del escritor inglés en nuestro país en sus últimos años que permite tener una visión más profunda de la condición humana de sus protagonistas, Graham Greene y Leopoldo Durán.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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An Introduction to English Phonology

April McMahon

Second edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020, 194 pp. ISBN 978 1 4744 6368 3 (hardback); ISBN 978 1 4744 6370 6 (webready PDF); ISBN 978 1 4744 6369 0 (paperback); ISBN 978 1 4744 6371 3 (epub)

The work here reviewed is a very welcome second edition of McMahon's extremely popular course in English phonology, first published in 2002. The rewritten preface addressed to colleagues is this time preceded by another addressed to students, in keeping with the modern trends in education, which now show more interest in and respect for students' needs in the learning environment. The author tells students how she became fascinated by the sounds of language and explains that much of her book "... focuses on unpacking your internal knowledge and figuring out how to describe and use it" (ix).

The work contains the original ten chapters, but has been expanded, particularly chapter 8, dealing with variation, where more attention is paid to different accents, and chapter 10, where there is a whole new section on intonation. This new edition has benefited from the author's testing of the material at the Universities of Edinburgh and Kent and, of course, from comments that she has received over the years.

The exercises at the end of each chapter have been supplemented in the new edition with topics for discussion to enable students to recapitulate thoroughly on what they have learned and apply their newly acquired knowledge actively. For example, to assist in their understanding of the differences between phonetics and phonology, students are asked to think of additional general abstract categories other than the latter, together with specific instantiations or realizations of these (24). It is suggested that the semantic classification of words into superordinates and hyponyms may help students to understand the concept of the phoneme and its subvariants.

The recommendations for reading, which follow the exercises and discussion topics at the end of each chapter, have been brought up to date and extended where necessary (for example, Zsiga 2013 is a welcome addition) and there are now references to online resources. Additionally, in this new edition, important terminology, such as *obstruent*, *intrusive /r/*, *nasalised* and *invariance of meaning*, now appear in bold in the text and are listed in a glossary at the end of the book (149-75).

All chapters in this publication attempt to explain abstract concepts in concrete terms, which makes it a boon for the uninitiated. For example, the theory of the phoneme is approached by comparing allophones to different types

of letters, like *a* and *A*-, which have different shapes and will show many personal differences in handwriting, but will all be recognizable as belonging to a single type and, in turn, can be seen to be realizations of the abstract grapheme, which we may label <a> (18).

The crystal-clear, phonological description of English consonants with details of their articulation in chapter 3, which remains largely unchanged from the first edition of the book, is followed in chapter 4 by a number of examples of the distribution of consonantal allophones. Once again, the hallmark of this chapter is clarity. Rather than reiterate the rule for aspiration of English /p, t, k/ that is found in so many traditional textbooks, namely that they are aspirated before stressed syllables, McMahon makes the more accurate and simple statement that they are aspirated word-initially (41-42). In this same chapter, recourse is had to distinctive features to write phonological rules. Distinctive Feature Theory can be a nightmare for students if not explained carefully, but McMahon's step-by-step approach simplifies the whole quagmire and leads smoothly into an explanation of natural classes (50-51).

Chapter 5 takes us to the phonemic level of analysis. The criteria for the assignment of sounds to phonemic status are discussed and the author, as expected, outlines the problems posed by /ŋ/ and /h/ in English, which, despite being in complementary, or rather defective, distribution, cannot be considered allophones because of their lack of phonetic similarity. A related problem is posed in exercise 4, which invites students to explain the difficulty presented by initial /ŋg/ for native English speakers, while exercise 5, in the same vein, also deals with phonotactics and asks readers about the possible pronunciation(s) of the neologism *zhuzh*.

In the section on neutralization, McMahon touches on the fact that for many speakers of General American the words *Mary*, *merry* and *marry* are homophones (65). Unfortunately, the explanation is uncharacteristically confusing. The author makes it look as if the diphthong in FACE would be the underlying pronunciation of *Mary*—which, admittedly, it could be—but, as Wells (1982: 42) explains, this is a minority pronunciation, the usual realization having the DRESS or sometimes the SQUARE vowel.

Among the bibliography following the exercises in chapter 5 there are surprisingly publications on Optimality Theory, which I would have deemed a little advanced for McMahon's introduction to her subject, even though it might be considered necessary to mention in the chapter itself, as the author does (67-68), the existence of the theory and the fact that it operates on the basis of constraints.

Chapter 6 introduces the terminology for describing vowels and explains why the descriptive terminology must needs be different to that used for consonants. Length is usefully dealt with in this chapter, rather than in a chapter of its own or in one covering all the suprasegmentals together, as it sometimes is, because some differences of length are phonological in the vowels of English and, in this respect, length is not strictly part of the prosody of the language, but rather more a segmental phenomenon.

Despite the overall lucidity and accuracy of the explanation, it would have been better in exercise 3 (83) to avoid reference to "the first and second elements" of diphthongs, which gives the false impression that diphthongs are composed of two parts rather than articulated as vowel-glides.

In chapter 7, the vowels of British and American English are classified and compared, along with those of some other major varieties, such as New Zealand and Scottish English, and we are wisely reminded in a comment inserted into this new edition that Scots, as opposed to Scottish English, is an independent Germanic language, although closely related to English (88). McMahon points out the usefulness of resorting to John Wells' lexical sets (81), as expounded in his major 1982 publication, in comparing different accents of English. For up-to-date information on the linguistic situation in Scotland, reference is appropriately made among the recommendations for reading to Robert Millar's excellent 2018 publication. Surprisingly, there is hardly any space devoted to varieties of Australian English. On the other hand, the Scottish Vowel Length Rule is handled competently, though there is no mention of Aitken, the scholar to whom it is attributed, or Aitken's Law (Collinge 1985, 3-6), either in the text or the recommended reading.

In chapter 8, having explained what an accent actually is and how different accents arise, the author points out a number of systemic differences among the main varieties of English. This is followed by some realizational distinctions, e.g. clear, dark and vocoid /l/, [ɹ] as an allophone of /t/ in parts of northern England, and affrication of final plosives in Merseyside. Most of this information is well articulated, though it is probably a little optimistic to say that the Northumbrian burrh (voiced uvular fricative) "is quite commonly found" (106) (though I have no accurate information on this claim).

Under the distributional differences listed, it comes as a surprise to see the assertion that in Standard Southern British English "only lax vowels are permitted in unstressed syllables, so that /ɪ/ appears in *happy*" (108), that is, instead of a tense vowel. This is plainly not true. Note, for example, Lindsey (2019, 32), who emphasizes that "/ɪ/ is no longer recommendable in these contexts", where it is now considered old-fashioned and the FLEECE vowel has taken over—A *happ*Y vowel, [i], in fact never existed.

The new section on more recent accents of English contains, among other things, notes on the multiethnolect called Multicultural London English. But here reference to medial /l/-vocalization is correct for *million*, but not for *building*—where the consonant is not medial (111).

Somewhat debatable is the notion that has circulated in recent years that use of schwa in the articles, *a* and

the, before a vowel among young Hackney speakers is a new feature (111-12). Sue Fox in her unpublished PhD dissertation suggests that the attrition of the allomorphy of both articles is a diffusing innovation from within the ethnic minority community (Britain 2007, 104). However, just how recent the phenomenon is remains a moot point. Dickens (1994 [1837-39], 491) seems to have been aware of it, as there is at least one instance in the speech of Mr. Bumble in *Oliver Twist*: "...the law is a ass—a idiot".

Chapter 9 is largely the same as in the first edition, except for the odd additional clarification and an extra exercise based on historical phonology. The major theories of the syllable are explained well, though it should have been mentioned earlier that *hilly* (122 and 123) and *very* (124), if divided according to Onset Maximalism leave short stressed vowels stranded in open syllables. This problem is explained later with reference to the words *bottle* and *syllable* (124-25), so the above-mentioned words on pages 122-24 should at least bear some kind of "see below" marking.

In view of the fact that so many scholars and students of English use the *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, one would expect to see in this chapter some allusion to Wells' (1990) account of English syllabification, which claims that allophony provides evidence for the location of syllable boundaries. Admittedly, this linear analysis, which maximizes both the onsets and codas of stressed syllables, runs into issues regarding the phonetic correlates of morpheme boundaries, but it is at least a practical proposal, avoiding, as it does, the more abstract arguments adduced by non-linear models, such as government phonology.

The final chapter, chapter 10, takes us beyond the syllable to the word and the foot via an exposition of stress rules for English, and lastly provides some notes on intonation, absent from the first edition. All the stress placement "rules" or tendencies with the attendant metrical trees are expressed in McMahon's crystal-clear fashion, though the stress-timed v. syllable-timed dichotomy (136) could have been brought up to date in view of recent research (Dellwo 2010), and more emphasis could have been placed on the trochaic patterning of English metre (Leech 1969, ch.7).

The section on intonation is very general and includes the inaccurate statement that "In English [...] questions typically have raised pitch towards the end of the sentence ..." (144), failing to separate WH- questions from the YES-NO type and point out that the former are frequently articulated on a falling tune and that the rise in such cases is more marked and may give the impression of over-inquisitiveness (among other implications). Due attention is given to the recent rise of uptalk (146-47).

All in all, "An Introduction to English Phonology" gives an excellent, concise overview of the subject and is a must for all teachers and students involved in the teaching of English in higher education.

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BOOK REVIEWS

EVA M. PÉREZ RODRÍGUEZ
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From Victorianism to the Second World War: A Brief History of English Literature between 1830 and 1950

Carlos Villar Flor

Logroño: Siníndice, 2019, 203 pp.
ISBN: 978-84-15924-15-9

In this volume the author, university lecturer and fiction writer Carlos Villar Flor, has singled out roughly one hundred and twenty years, from the Victorian movement starting in the 1830s to the end of the Second World War in 1945 (1950 in the book's subtitle) as the timespan covered by his "Brief History of English Literature." Such a chronological interval makes the volume unusual, since the customary approach is that manuals focus either on the whole history of English literature (from *Beowulf* and other Old English texts to Postmodernism and beyond); or to more or less arbitrary "centennial" partitions (the "Long" eighteenth century, the twentieth century, etc.); or to period-focused studies (i.e. Romanticism, the Renaissance, etc.). This is confirmed by the author's "Further Reading" section at the back of the book. Villar Flor's manual, therefore, does not compete with comparable previous ones. "General history" of English literature books such as Sanders (2004), Peck & Coyle (2002) or Alexander (2000) are more wide-ranging in their survey of literary periods, genres, authors and their *oeuvres*, additional materials, hints for further study, etc. And period-specific titles are by definition more comprehensive and detailed. Palgrave Macmillan's *Key Concepts: Literature* series applies an updated cross-discipline approach. More traditional in outlook, but equally popular, the *Cambridge Companions to Literature and Classics* series comprises four hundred and seven titles. Oxford University Press produces its *Handbooks of Literature*; Wiley-Blackwell publishes series of *Literature Handbooks* and *Guides to Literature*… The list is by no means extensive. Admittedly, it is hard to bring a novelty element to the field.

Two features require clarification in Villar Flor's intentions, as stated in his foreword. One concerns the use of "English literature" in the title, as opposed to his avowal to cover the "creative literature written in the United Kingdom" (5) and, further, the inclusion of some Irish authors. We are thus led to understand "English literature" in its broad sense, referring to the literature

produced in the British Isles in their main language (i.e. eschewing other official ones and regional dialects). The second, more contentious query, is related to his target readership, "advanced students of English as a foreign language who have had very little or no exposure to the British classics" (5). However, a few lines below, Villar Flor's university lecturer approach is revealed. Not only is "every English Studies undergraduate" (5) targeted, but "the periodisation of this book is, as suggested, mostly determined by the academic syllabus" (6). Only that it was not suggested. The author further trusts that those undergraduates will "manage to pass an English Literature course" (6) after perusing his work.

None of this is coincidental, since *From Victorianism to the Second World War* is the mandatory work of reference for the English literature course taught by Villar Flor at the University of La Rioja, a course which resumes where a prior one (Old English to Romanticism) leaves off. The book's chapters—1. An introduction to the Victorian period; 2. An overview of the early Victorian novel; 3. Victorian poetry; 4. Late Victorian fiction; 5. Literary Modernism; 6. Through the Thirties to the War—coincide word for word with the course syllabus (that is, the unspecified "academic syllabus" mentioned in the foreword, minus the inclusion of drama and a final unit on contemporary literature). Had it been made clear from the start that this is to be regarded as a students' handbook for a particular degree subject, several of the shortcomings mentioned below might have been averted. But as it happens, the effect of these vague references to "students," "a course" or "the syllabus" is evocative of Schrödinger's cat: the book both is and is not an academic manual.

The volume's unusual timespan is thus accounted for; but taken at face value, Villar Flor's rationale for the literary period covered is his tenet that "only by being acquainted with" the literature of that period "will we be in a position to begin to understand who we are, and what we (dis)believe, today" (6). Only die-hard New Critics would dispute that heartfelt principle. It is indeed much less prosaic than the mere chronological ordering of some curriculum, and perhaps it should have been brought home to the student reader more forcefully and frequently throughout the volume: we understand social classes and their dynamics today partly thanks to Carlyle, Dickens, Bentham, Mill, Morris… among others. Humanity's current feeling of faithlessness and dystopia has revitalised the works of Hardy, Arnold, Huxley, Orwell, Conrad… These authors are rarely absent from the preferential display tables in English-language bookshops, perhaps because locating the inception of our twenty-first century malaises in Victorianism, the quintessential period of soulless mechanisation and spiritual crisis, rings a sympathetic bell with readers today. Villar Flor hits the mark in this respect, perhaps a sign of his long-standing vocation as a writer of poetry and fiction in his own right. The author offers a well-argued emphasis on the transition from the self-assurance of Victorian Britain, the "workshop of the world," whose figures for industrial production and financial circulation are staggering (14-17); to the angst around the turn of the century, harbinger of the Great War that was coming (89, 101, 115); to the crisis of individual and national identity that followed the two World Wars (123-129).

Villar Flor adheres to the "traditional canon" in his selection of authors and works, on the basis of "time and the consensus of generations of readers" (5). Nothing censurable here; the volume reads as a fast-paced overview of the main literary manifestations in Britain and Ireland in the period in question, without stretching the selection criteria to include or expunge authors on grounds of race, gender, language, etc. There are however a few rather glaring omissions or too hasty accounts of authors or works. An example is Henry James, covered in fourteen lines, despite his immense contribution to the shift from an omniscient narrator to the reflection, of necessity imperfect, of the emotional and mental processes of characters (Lodge 2003, 49). By contrast, William Butler, who could be argued to occupy a lesser place in the development of English literature than Henry James, is given almost twice the space. James is indeed grouped with others in a dismissively termed "Other transitional writers" section, but even Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling are examined in more depth.

Arthur Conan Doyle by contrast is detailed over four pages (105-108), including an illustration and a textbox containing his "canon," something which is not done for any other author in the book. Similarly, an "outline of [Modernist poetry's] distinctive features" (153) is offered, summarising most of the aspects surveyed in the chapter, but this overview is again not done anywhere else in the manual. Inexplicably, *A Room with a View* is not mentioned among E. M. Forster's works (135). In generic terms, drama has been left out entirely. If arguably there is not much Victorian drama of relevance, the same cannot be said for the turn of the century, with Arthur Wing Pinero, J. M. Barrie and, more relevantly, George Bernard Shaw. No account is given for the removal, other than a hypothetical inclusion in a subsequent revision of the volume (5).

Bearing in mind that the non-specialist student is the primary target user of this manual, certain terms might require a definition or explanation; by way of a selection one might mention "implied author" (137), "philistinism" (95), "eugenics" (29), or "Comte" without a first name (55); neither is there a brief account of how his humanitarian, positivist religion seduced George Eliot (Dolin 2005, 171-174). There are actually very scarce critical references, although a section at the back of the book provides a useful list of titles for "Further Reading" partitioned according to the literary movements covered. Villar Flor has done away entirely with parenthetic references, other than to specify the extraction of (not all) the fragments. Considering that one of the areas which persistently baffle English Studies undergraduates is the formatting and editorial side of academic writing, the author perhaps should have provided a valuable example

of how to quote from and reference his secondary bibliographic sources. As it happens, there is no list of Works Cited or Selected Bibliography, either.

It might be argued that the criticisms proffered so far are a matter of editorial choice, or academic taste; and the argument would hold. The following are, however, shortcomings that detract from the quality of the volume. Rather surprisingly, for instance, there is no Table of Contents, perhaps a nod to the self-revelatory name of the publishing house: Siníndice (Spanish for NoContentsTable). It is an important exclusion or oversight, whichever applies. All kinds of reader would benefit from the bird's-eye view of the manual that the contents list supplies. An index at the end would also be welcome, since despite the volume's brevity, it is packed with authors' names, literary and critical terms, period and style labels, etc.

The appendices to the chapters are useful and illustrative, but inconsistently formatted and titled, and hardly contextualised at all. Fame, as in "famous passages" (57) or "famous quotes" (121), is a debatable and subjective label; it begs the question what makes them famous, what is the student supposed to do with them. The appendices to some chapters contain "famous passages" (57), others simply "fragments" (30), and chapter 3 on "Victorian Poetry" no appendix at all. Admittedly, several examples of Victorian verse are analysed in the chapter, but nevertheless the effect is of a system that has not been sufficiently refined. The appendix to chapter 5 contains poems from the Modernist period and fragments from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (155-157). The novel's fragments have been (very) briefly annotated, but nothing is given for the poems, despite their complexity. A list of the most relevant novels from 1930 to 1949 is given as an appendix to chapter 6 (196-197), and the question arises as to why a similar list has not been appended to the rest of the chapters.

One of the volume's assets, its conciseness, is also occasionally its shortcoming, when the condensed style of the author detracts from the clarity of the content. As an example, "Conrad's skepticism extended to language itself: in his fiction language is unreliable, words seem untrustworthy" (113). Or the more bewildering reference to the bourgeois writers of the Thirties who "looked to working class or rural people as the embodiment of vigour, libido or cultural alternative" (180). Villar Flor seems confident in his handling of the literary material, so much so that these opaque references are likely the result of his knowledge of the subject matter; but they unfortunately do not translate directly onto the printed page. Occasionally prior knowledge of the works the author is discussing is required in order to understand the cryptic or excessively reduced argument; "Victorian fiction," for example, is said to "[draw] on some amount of fairy-tale inspiration: thus, *Jane Eyre* recreates the tale of Cinderella, and *Wuthering Heights* the story of Beauty and the Beast" (36). The reader needs a much more comprehensive account of the wide-ranging features of both novels, and the clarification that those fairy-tale elements account for a minute fraction of their complexity. Over-reduction also clouds the statement that the *Bildungsroman* "genre usually conveys a mixture of idealism and realism and a mild vision of society by which life is made more exciting and dramatic" (40). The summaries of George Eliot's novels (55-56) are vague in a similar way. There is no concluding section, summing-up of the contents of the manual, or an afterword; it ends abruptly on a reference to the "Orwell myth" (195).

More serious issues of content also stand out, which cannot be construed as typos or the result of over-condensed writing. Samuel Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa are described as "servant girls chased by their masters" (40), but that only applies to Pamela. It is actually the affluent social standing of Clarissa Harlowe's family that tragically impedes her free choice of a prospective husband. Also, Charles Darwin did not affirm that man is descended from apes (26), but that men and apes both descend from a common ancestor (Zimmer 2015, n.p.). This is less appealing as a popular myth and as ammunition for Bible-bashers, but more fitting with the scientific record. One further, more recent myth is likewise echoed by Villar Flor, again not entirely correctly: "In the summer of 1940" the author affirms, "came 'the darkest hour'; Britain was fighting the Axis alone, resisting Hitler heroically" (129). The "Britain stood alone" myth admittedly enjoys tremendous staying power and resurfaces whenever Britain faces a major crisis (e.g. currently Brexit). Yet in 1940 far from standing alone, Britain counted on the military assistance and colossal sacrifice made by Polish, French, Belgian, Norwegian, Canadian, etc. infantrymen and pilots, not to mention the vast numbers of troops coming from countries belonging to the British Empire, in particular India, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia (Donnelly 1999, 91-96).

In general, the volume would have benefitted from a more thorough proofreading, in order to correct the numerous format inconsistencies and typos, and the occasional syntactic or spelling error. To quote a selection, the following should be amended in future editions: *The Wealth of the Nations* [*sic*], (28) the Toldpuddle [*sic*] Martyrs (18), "Victorian Britain was an age of contrasts" (23), or the attribution of the Abdication Crisis to Edward VII instead of Edward VIII (187). Regarding format mistakes, there is much variation in the formatting of fragments; random unrequired hyphens; font size disparities; the inconsistent use of round and straight, single and double quotation marks and apostrophes; and also the unsystematic alternation between inverted commas and italics for the notation of key phrases or foreign terms (*laissez-faire* for example appears with (28, 38) and without (51) italics). There is no consistent rendering of prose quotes as run-in with the surrounding text or indented ones, as the examples on pages 168 (indented, 42 words) and 185 (run-in, 48 words) show. The same applies to poetry quotes longer than two lines, sometimes run in and the verses separated by strokes, sometimes indented.

Among the book's positives the different sections of historical context merit recognition, providing illustrative backgrounds to the works produced in each period. Notably good passages are Aestheticism (96-101)—in particular Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde, explained with clarity and concision—and Modernism (chapter 5, 123-65), which make for very compelling reading. The analysis of Modernism in particular reveals the author's flair for the movement; this chapter is actually the longest in the book. Detailed with commendable ease is the Modernists' exploration of the evanescent, discontinuous human experience and of an individual's thinking and emotional processes, which challenged any received ideas of rationality and sequential time (Habib 2011, 194-95). Villar Flor has included portraits of numerous authors and other related illustrations, since as he affirms it is useful to "read their faces before reading their works" (6). That is an endearing notion, and with the exception of the pixelated photo of Ivy Compton-Burnett (174), chapter 6 "Through the Sixties to the War" is particularly attractive in its selection of images. As a "brief history of English literature," *From Victorianism to the Second World War* does not supply much novelty in terms of contents, approach, or presentation, but it does deliver what the title and the foreword profess, "brief" being the functional word. The volume makes swift, agile and informative reading, always a good thing, and very especially so for the readers it seems to be addressing.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Ex-Centric Souths: (Re) Imagining Southern Centers and Peripheries

Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis (ed.)
Valencia: Universidad de Valencia (Biblioteca Javier Coy de Estudios Norteamericanos, n.º 161), 2019, 240 pp. ISBN: 978-84-9134-548-0

In literary texts it may seem that, starting with the early writings by European settlers, "the American South has been characterized as a rural region, one in which the pace of the agricultural life largely dictated the mores of civilization and its literature" (Guinn 2000, 1). Recent studies have shown that this characterization is too simplistic and the study of Southern fiction, written since the 19th century, needs to take into consideration the traumas of slavery, the Civil War, Jim Crow and segregation. To do that, the study of fiction might need to work interdisciplinary together with Transnational American Studies, as Bone argues (2018, 1-2). In her introduction to the volume under discussion, Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis reflects on this issue and observes that "there have always been many Souths, overlapping and/or contradicting each other" (13), so her book aims at shedding some light on new routes to explore diverse Southern identities and realities. *Ex-Centric Souths: (Re)Imagining Southern Centers and Peripheries* is published by the University of Valencia as part of the prestigious collection Javier Coy's Library on North-American Studies, in which Niewiadomska-Flis already published her book *The Southern Mystique: Food, Gender and Houses in Sothern Fiction and Films* in 2012, a work that explored myths and representations concerning southern womanhood. In her latest volume, Niewiadomska-Flis interrogates the Southern imaginary and addresses fragmentation, misrepresentations, and distortions in different texts, bringing to the fore voices that have been darkened.

Ex-Centric Souths contains a total of eleven contributions and is divided in four parts. The first one is "Transnational South: The Caribbean Connection" and deals with cultural and literary relationships between the Southern states and countries in the Caribbean Sea. For example, in the first chapter, "Imagining the South Through the Caribbean: Spatial Narratives of Liberty in the Novels of Holcombe and Livermore" (35-52), Deniz Bozkurt-Pekar studies two opposite representations of the South by antebellum writers, namely Livermore's *Zoë* and Holcombe's *The Free Flag of Cuba*. The former employs the motif of a shipwreck in the Caribbean to tackle the "peculiar institution" and calls for revolution, whereas the latter is a pro-slavery novel that depicts black slaves as happy and submissive characters in their sugar plantations. In Chapter 2, "Migrant Bodies and the Transnational South: Dissecting Colonial Presence in Ana Lydia Vega's 'Encancaranublado'" (53-76), Paula Barba Guerrero ponders how the South turns into a utopian destination for migrants, since it mirrors an American dream that will be contradicted upon arrival. Her chapter studies Caribbean Diaspora narratives—particularly the short story collection *Encancaranublado*

y otros cuentos de naufragio by Puerto Rican writer Ana Lydia Vega—and chronicles the misadventures of Caribbean migrants to the American South, as well as their traumatic experiences as the Other, an alterity that is not assimilated into the normative Southern space. Part 1 closes with "Un-grounding Identity, Re-Thinking Connections in Erna Brodber's *Louisiana*" (77-96), a chapter by Sofia Gkertzou that discusses the mentioned novel's structure, which blends poetry and folktales from the South and Jamaica. This contribution emphasizes the Jamaican author's achievement at portraying a multiplicity of black voices, producing the effect of crossed texts and creating a multi-perspective narrative that replaces the more traditional and chronological ones.

The second part, titled "Transcending the Southern Sense of Place," leaves aside the Caribbean and begins with Julia Sattler's contribution. In "Hot Hot Heat: The U.S. South in Benedict Andrews's Production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*" (97-114), she analyzes the Australian director's version of Tennessee Williams's play, which was performed at the Young Vic in London in 2014 and starred Gillian Anderson. Interestingly, all characters were played by British actors in American Southern accents and the contemporary stage design allowed the audience to engage in the play and take part in Blanche's descent into madness, underlining the image of the South as a place of passion, anger, and frailty. This is followed by Irina Kudriavtseva's "Revisiting the Southern Home Places: Insider/Outsider Dialectic in Southern Short Fiction" (115-134). Chapter 5 takes a close look at short stories by four writers—Peter Taylor, Flannery O'Connor, Eudora Welty, and Bobbie Ann Mason. In their four different scenarios of leaving and coming back to the South, the protagonists see this region as both home and a strange land. The return to the American South works as a starting point to explore regional identity and to underline that the connection to your familiar environment is re-established in spite of distance and time.

In "A Mythical Interpretation of the Southern Gothic in Cormac McCarthy's Fiction" (135-146), Szymon Wnuk focuses on three novels—*Outer Dark*, *Blood Meridian* and *The Road*—and argues that they feature characteristic themes of the Southern Gothic genre, such as grotesque characters, scenes of cruel violence, social transgressions and an atmosphere of utter decay. These novels are imbued with mythical and biblical themes and can be read as the characters' progression from the South to the Southwest and, eventually, to a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The notion of the grotesque is approached, too, by Elisa Coria in Chapter 7, "Between Radiance and Darkness: The South as Grotesque in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*" (147-164). This scholar surveys the use of space in Carson McCullers's novel, stressing its depiction of the South as a region marked by poverty, decadence, violence, and loneliness that turns into a gothic nightmare revealing what is often repressed, unspoken of, and forgotten, since the protagonists are outcasts who represent what the old idealized South is not. In her thought-provoking chapter, Coria concludes that "McCullers's South emerges, in its provincialism, racism, and opposition to change, as a gothic prison, old, rotten and decaying, mired in routine, and where alterity can be controlled and normalized" (159).

The third and last part in Niewiadomska-Flis's volume is "The Southern Urge to Tell," which comprises four more contributions. In Chapter 8, "Revisiting *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*: Carson McCullers's 'Ironic Parable of Fascism'" (165-180), Constante González Groba steers away from Coria's article and centers on the figure of Singer, a deaf-mute character that is the ideal confidant for the protagonists. Next, Michal Choinski leaves fiction aside and delves into social autobiographies in "'But why?': Racial Guilt and the Southern Paradox in Willie Morris's *North Toward Home* and Lillian Smith's *Killers of the Dream*" (181-194). This chapter points out how these autobiographies tackle growing up in the racially segregated South. Choinski comments on the way that Morris and Smith turn to autobiographical writing to explore a new perspective on the issues they took for granted as children, i.e., they write to liberate themselves from the shocking racist episodes that shaped their identities as Southerners.

Moving on to Film Studies, Marie Liénard-Yeterian writes about Charles Laughton's 1955 adaptation of Davis Grubb's 1953 novel in "*The Night of the Hunter*: The Storied South on Screen" (195-210). She argues, quite convincingly, that the film asks the question whether to tell or not to tell secrets and displays every protagonist haunted by a story, even the Preacher played by Robert Mitchum is obsessed with his cellmate's treasure and will not rest until the children tell him where the money is hidden. In the last pages of Chapter 10, Liénard-Yeterian contrasts the novel and the film and criticizes the Hollywood ending, because "the fairyland atmosphere results in a supernatural element that redeems the decadent South suggested through Preacher's character, the South created by the screen version remains one of gentility and morality" (208). The final chapter analyzes four different travel guides from the Southern states and is titled "Advertising the Deep South in 2018: An Analysis of Destination Image Through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia Travel Guides" (211-230). Its author, Giuliano Santangeli Valenzani, explains that tourism has become a key industry for the South in the twenty-first century, with millions of visitors in search of leisure, historical landmarks, and natural landscapes. They seem to be interested in the history of the Civil Rights movement, and the booklets analyzed in this chapter show that allusions to the Confederacy and the Civil War are left out of travel guides to avoid potential conflicts with tourists.

On the whole, *Ex-Centric Souths: (Re)Imagining Southern Centers and Peripheries* is a valuable addition to the Javier Coy's Library on North-American Studies as it considers different representations of the South and ponders its complex presence in novels, short fiction,

autobiographies, film, and even tourist booklets. The volume includes three outstanding contributions by Wnuk, Coria, and Liénard-Yeterian on, respectively, Cormac McCarthy's Southern Gothic, the Grotesque in McCullers's novel and *The Night of the Hunter*, which take previous studies as a starting point and offer thought-provoking insight. Nevertheless, this reviewer feels that Niewiadomska-Flis's volume may not be very cohesive or unified, given the diverse topics and works it covers and the absence of a guiding thread, apart from the aforementioned notion of the co-existence of many Souths. It may lack some contributions dealing with African American perspectives on Southern fiction—for example, neo-slave narratives like Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*—since quite often Black writers "tunnel through the history of slavery to explore different possibilities for existence, resistance, and survival in the cultured hell of the South" (Harris 2009, 62). Additionally, Niewiadomska-Flis's book may be expanded to include chapters observing the interesting contributions to Southern fiction by some contemporary Dixie writers, such as Harry Crews, Ron Rash, and Chris Offutt, among many others included in the volume *Still in Print: The Southern Novel Today*. As expressed in this book, which also featured essays by international scholars, "what makes the narratives of new Southern writers essentially different is the reclaiming of forgotten, or hidden, historical events, the claiming of ignored events in the present" (Gretlund 2010, 10).

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Ex-Centric Souths: (Re) Imagining Southern Centers and Peripheries

Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis (ed.)
Valencia: Universitat de València (Biblioteca Javier Coy de Estudios Norteamericanos, n.º 161), 2019, 240 pp. ISBN: 978-84-9134-548-0

Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis, the editor of this volume, starts her introduction by stating that the US South is, and has always been, a product of the imagination. On top of that, this imagined South is not a single monolithic notion; rather, there are many Souths, different from one another. For example, the North has long imagined the South as its opposed and barbarous Other, while for Southerners there continues to be a sense of belonging and attachment to the—for them—exceptionalist region. Niewiadomska-Flis, then, presents the volume as an attempt to continue imagining the South, in particular in ways which debunk essentialised notions of the region. This volume is thus organised around three parts: "Transnational South: the Caribbean Connection", "Transcending the Southern Sense of Place", and "The Southern Urge to Tell." The volume is an attempt to amalgamate and enlarge the vision of important voices on New Southern Studies, such as those of Larry J. Griffin and Barbara Ladd, following the transnational and postcolonial turn and through the perspective of many European scholars from different institutions. The articles included in this volume maintain the focus on the imagination anticipated in the introduction, thus drifting away from simply political and historicist approaches. To this end, they are centred on exploring the fictional representation of the US South, considering fiction an essential actor in the perception of the area and in its very conceptual and emotional existence.

Part I examines several texts which allow for a reconsideration of the South as part of a broader region including the Caribbean basin. From a postcolonial point of view, these two areas, which are separated by the barriers of nation-states, in fact share a larger history of dispossession, marked most notably although not exclusively by the traumatic memory of slavery. In the first chapter of this section—"Imagining the South Through the Caribbean: Spatial Narratives of Liberty in the Novels of Holcombe and Livermore"—Deniz Bozkurt-Pekar invokes Immanuel Wallerstein's conception of an "extended Caribbean" in order to argue that the novels she analyses show, despite their different approaches regarding the meanings of liberty, the historical connection of these two areas in relation to the slave-holders' activity. Elizabeth Dorcas Livermore's *Zöe; or the Quadroon's Triumph: A Tale for the Times* offers, according to Bozkurt-Pekar, an alternative narrative of the South/North dichotomy by implying that it is the values from the Caribbean—epitomised in the Haitian revolution—from which the South should learn in order to transcend its slave-holding character. Differently, Lucy Holcombe Pickens's *The Free Flag of Cuba or The*

Martyrdom of Lopez: A Tale of the Liberating Expedition of 1851 implies that the possibility for a strong Union lies in the North's embrace of filibusterism and, therefore, slavery in the Caribbean. In "Migrant Bodies and the Transnational South: Dissecting Colonial Presence in Ana Lydia Vega's 'Encarcaranublado'", Paula Barba Guerrero explores how the mythical construct of the South, even if not representing all of its inhabitants, continues reproducing itself. While internal mobility may serve as the best way to contest such monolithic racist and old-fashioned connotations of the region, such social imaginaries act most cruelly against those who move unwillingly: economic migrants from its neighbouring Caribbean. As such, Puerto Rican Ana Lydia Vega's short story "Encarcaranublado" depicts three Caribbean migrants from different nations who, having absorbed the social imaginaries of the US South, assimilate their own Otherness and aim to imitate traditionally Southern practices of discrimination against one another in order to gain a privileged position within the new nation. The message that Vega's story aims to transmit, in Barba Guerrero's view, is that such "inherited colonial mindsets" (63) in the end act against the Other's own integrity, as upon the migrants' arrival at the American vessel that saves them from shipwreck, they are homogenised with the same politics of alterity that they had previously enacted in their boat. The next chapter by Sofia Gkertzou—"Un-grounding Identity, Re-thinking Connections in Erna Brodber's *Louisiana*"—examines a work which seeks to explore the cultural relationship between the Caribbean and African America. Erna Brodber's *Louisiana*, according to Gkertzou, employs a hybrid genre (half fiction, half anthropology) in order to depict a multiplicity of black characters from different places who offer their personal perspectives and who, even though having gone through similar experiences of oppression, maintain heterogenous identities which resist uniform homogenisation—a cliché in the representation of black characters.

Part II of the volume explores the "Southern Sense of Place," an endemic concept to the region which, nonetheless, becomes expanded by the authors contributing to this section. In "Hot Hot Heat: The US South in Benedict Andrews's Production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*" Julia Sattler explores the presence of American theatre in the London stage to conclude that the South is "a place that cannot be fixed, that is forever twisting, turning, fleeting" (112). Particularly, Benedict Andrews's 2014 version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* released by the Young Vic theatre in London does not change the play's setting—as described by the characters' words—but the stage design becomes closer to the contemporary audience's understanding of newness and decay, thus making them engage with the particular struggles of the original play dealing with the loss of the Old South. In her chapter "Revisiting Southern Home Places: Insider/Outsider Dialectic in Southern Short Fiction", Irina Kudriavtseva examines four short stories dealing with homecoming to tackle the stereotypes of the South promoted from outside the area, particularly by Southerners who have been away for a long time. Kudriavtseva concludes that the stories she analyses restore the humanity and complexity of Southern individuals through the depiction of liminal and initially prejudiced characters and their eventual "renewed sense of self" (123). Szymon Wnuk argues in "A Mythical Interpretation of the Southern Gothic in Cormac McCarthy's Fiction" for a reconsideration or expansion of the Southern Gothic genre to make it inclusive of more writers and styles. In particular, Wnuk analyses Cormac McCarthy's novels and suggests that they include a mythical Biblical component not usually explored in this author, thus situating certain aspects of his works outside the Southern realm. To finish this part, in "Between Radiance and Darkness: The South as Grotesque in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*", Elisa Coria examines Carson McCullers' *oeuvre*, in particular *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, to identify how its grotesque features, rather than pointing to oppressive elements, destabilise the myth of the American Dream and propose alternatives such as the rejection of gender and social class.

Part III of this volume, the final one, explores how Southern authors (and even publicists, as per the last chapter) have struggled and sometimes managed to explain themselves and their region. Continuing with McCullers's previously explored novel, Constante González Groba's article—"Revisiting *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*: Carson McCullers's 'Ironic Parable of Fascism'"—deals with the author's portrayal of the ideological confluence between Nazism and Jim Crow Segregation. Through an analysis of McCullers's *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* as, in McCullers's words, "a parable of fascism", González Groba concludes that the novel's references to fascist logic evidence how alienation, loneliness, and uncertainty can easily derive into blind faith for God-like leadership. McCullers demonstrates that totalitarianisms can repeat themselves in different contexts across the modern world because of how often this world "creates anxious and isolated individuals" (177). Michał Choiński examines two so-called Southern social autobiographies in his article "'But Why?': Racial Guilt and the Southern Paradox in Willie Morris's *North Towards Home* and Lillian Smith's *Killers of the Dream*." Choiński defines the genre as the staging of the narrative voice's gradual rejection of Southern racist ideologies and explains that these two novels are good examples of epiphanic narratives unveiling, through the use of idiom, the multiple existing Souths which the dominant ideology has managed to supress. The next chapter—"*The Night of the Hunter*: The Storied South on Screen" by Marie Liénard-Yeterian—examines Charles Laughton's cinematic adaptation of David Grubb's novel *The Night of the Hunter* focusing on aspects relating to storytelling. The film manages to portray the importance of storytelling in the novel through a technique of "tell and show", as a narrative and testimonial voice accompanies the events, together with the inclusion of many acts of storytelling and singing performed by the characters themselves, which blur the reality and the imagination concerning the South. To finish with, in "Advertising the Deep South in 2018: An Analysis of Destination Image Through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and

Georgia Travel Guides" Giuliano Santangeli Valenziani offers an interesting analysis of the images of the South promoted by travel digital brochures (which the author calls "inspiration guides"). He concludes that, through a combination of image and texts, the four guides under scrutiny convey an image of local colour characterised by rusticity, timelessness, anti-modernity, (selective) historicity, and picturesqueness. On top of that, references to the Civil War are scarce in comparison with the big presence of information regarding the quest for Civil Rights. Furthermore, the guides seem to be addressed to whites because of their over-representation in the pictures featuring tourists.

In conclusion, this volume tackles issues so heterogeneous and diverse that it turns into a good overview for anyone interested in accessing a non-mythologised vision of the US South and its culture. Most chapters aim to show the contradictions and misunderstandings endemic to the Southern myth, many times expressed in literature and films through the use of the grotesque. As such, while acknowledging the historical influence of white supremacy and conservatism in the area, the authors contributing to this volume also show the other side of the coin, namely that such values, which are often employed to define Southerners in essentialised ways, turn out not to be so monolithic and stable. The experience of migrants, racialised subjects, and African-Americans is also included in some chapters (though there is a clear white predominance in the objects of analysis), thus offering multiple perspectives of the Southern experience, as it cannot be homogenised. In turn, even the idea of an extended South is transmitted, not only including the Caribbean area (as the history of slavery and the plantation ties the two regions together) but also by making the Southern experience transcend its borders, as it conflates with larger experiences of modernity and modernisation. In conclusion, this volume is valuable because it is complete and complex: it offers the possibility to cross-read its several articles in order to obtain a non-essentialised vision of how this area is at the same time exceptionalist and universal.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Final Girls, Feminism and Popular Culture

Katarzyna Paszkiewicz and Stacy Rusnak

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Building on their previous article, "Revisiting the Final Girl: Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards" (2017), in *Final Girls, Feminism and Popular Culture* Katarzyna Paszkiewicz and Stacy Rusnak compile a wide-ranging set of contributions that critically engage with Carol J. Clover's foundational theorization of this famous slasher trope. In Clover's amply referenced 1987 work "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film," she describes the Final Girl as the survivor who faces the death of her peers while being victimized herself; she becomes "abject terror personified" and "looks death in the face," yet "also finds the strength to either stay the killer long enough to be rescued…, or to kill him herself…" (1987, 201). In addition, she is described as "boyish," set apart from the other female figures owing to her "smartness, gravity, competence, in mechanical and other practical matters, and sexual reluctance," aligning her with "the very boys she fears or rejects, not to speak of the killer himself" and becoming a figure of identification for the presumed majority of male spectators of the horror genre (1987, 204). For Clover, this ambiguous status led to the conclusion that "[t]o applaud the Final Girl as a feminist development" was a "form of wishful thinking' (1987, 214). While Clover (2015) later qualified some of her initial analyses and widened her original corpus of films, many have been the scholars that have critically engaged with her work to provide a more nuanced definition of the ubiquitous trope (see, for instance, Nowell 2011). As for the pervasiveness of the Final Girl, recent studies show that she has escaped the confinement of the slasher and is present in many other genres, while famous sites of popular culture discussion have provided fora devoted to this particular character, acknowledging her recognisability among consumers of popular media (e.g. *WatchMojo Troped*).

As part of this expanding body of work on the relevance of the Final Girl, the present volume is especially illuminating. In particular, it poses three relevant research questions which it then comprehensibly answers: "What is the sociocultural context that facilitated the remarkable proliferation of the Final Girls? What kinds of stories are told in these narratives and can they help us make sense of feminism? What is the media's and literature's role in the reconsiderations of Carol J. Clover's term of 30 years ago and how does this term continue to inform our understanding of popular culture?" (vii). One of the greatest achievements of this volume is, in fact, how the answers come from different perspectives, spanning from theories of genre, posthumanism, gender, sexuality and race, to identification and spectatorship. This allows for varied approaches and conclusions, while still providing unity, as contributions respond to Clover's ground-breaking essay. Another strength is the far-reaching spectrum of sources it analyses, even if there are some noteworthy omissions, for instance, the film *Final Girl* (2015, Canada/USA, dir. Tyler Shields), which is only mentioned in the introduction and fails to receive proper attention, or the self-referential *The Cabin in the Woods* (2011, USA, dir. Drew Goddard). Finally, the contextualization of the Final Girl

avoids simplistic reductions to "past" and "present" feminisms, rejecting the idea of overcoming, and instead emphasising the continuity of feminist history to highlight past "mistakes" or assumptions that might reappear in a different form, and thus contributing to better understand our present (post)feminist context (Hollows 2000, 34).

In their introduction, Paszkiewicz and Rusnak discuss Clover's original thesis and set the tone for the rest of the volume. According to the editors, the contributions wish to "demonstrate the horror film's potential for ideological renewal and reinvention, while posing questions about the resilience and versatility of Clover's model," paying particular attention to the intersections of race and gender (8). Thus the whole volume stresses the "differences and continuities" between the 1970s and 1980s slashers and female protagonists across different genres to "rethink the negotiated meanings of gender, politics and power" and assess "how these stories contribute to remaking cultural imaginaries" (9). Their conclusion is that Clover's Final Girl cannot be uncritically celebrated or that present-day cultural products do not inevitably subvert gender, sexual or racial ideologies, but rather that they contradictorily provide "new models for rethinking femininity, female empowerment and female agency while at the same time often remaining firmly embedded in a white, heterosexual hegemonic masculinity," hence serving to fruitfully interrogate "just how far we have (or have not) come to imagining an equitable society" (16). And it is precisely what their volume does: it places value on cultural items as ideological products that reflect the movements of history and that serve to understand ourselves and our world better.

Part I: From Slasher Films to Slasher TV Series

In the second chapter, Isabel Clúa examines Wes Craven's influential *Scream* franchise (1996–2011) and compares it to its television adaptation (2015–present, USA, Netflix). Placing her research at the crossroads of "the transformation of audiovisual consumption, the updating of the slasher subgenre and developments in feminism in the last 30 years" (46), Clúa aptly demonstrates that behind its apparent progressiveness, the television show supposes a regression from the subversion in terms of sex and gender that Craven's original series meant. Addressing aspects such as sexuality, sorority and motherhood, it becomes clear for Clúa that the "series addresses in a disturbing way aspects such as the empowerment of female protagonists […], or the relationship of friendship and mentorship with other women" (48-9).

Chapter 3 addresses another series, *Scream Queens* (2015–2017, USA, FOX). Peter Marra's contribution revolves around the notion that normativity determines who lives and who dies in a slasher. For Marra, the original Final Girl challenged normativity and was rewarded with survival, yet the show reflects the changes in LGBT culture by complicating the positions between "normative and non-normative positions" and blurring the lines "between LGBT identities and normative positions" (64-5), which he supports by proving the existence of varied non-normative Final Subjects in the series.

Part II: The Final Girl(s) in Horror Films

Moving away from American media, Rebecca Willoughby's contribution on *High Tension* (2003, France, dir. Alexandre Aja) redefines Clover's concept, stressing the duality of the Final Girl as both heroine and villain, for the protagonist's liminality (determined by her violence, but also her sexuality) places her as the monstrous Other, thus questioning the relationship of the Final Girl to heteronormativity (81). Willoughby's analysis of the use of a "fluid" point of identification in the film is particularly useful to understand the tensions between a non-normative perspective and the heterosexual gaze the film still endorses (83, 89).

Isabel Pinedo's contribution also exposes Clover's theoretical and empirical limitations in her discussion of Jordan Peele's film *Get Out* (2017, Unites States). Her chapter effectively examines the formal elements of the film, the context of the Black Lives Matter movement which it references, the director's own definition of his work as a "black film," and how it can be read as "an intervention against anti-black racism through the prism of critical race theory" (96). She proves how the film constructs "black subjectivity and agency, … promotes black subjectivity, and the extent to which this is framed as a political identity" (96), while appropriating and subverting slasher and torture porn tropes, including the Final Girl.

Through the lens of fourth-wave feminism, Stacy Rusnak evinces how Robert Mitchell's *It Follows* (2015) more explicitly addresses the racial, sexual and class tensions that existed in the original slashers, subverting traditional associations between blackness and danger (121) and exposing the ways in which women's bodies are understood as expendable commodities (124). Rusnak convincingly relates these updates of the traditional slasher to contemporary oppression in America and to movements of protest and subversion, such as Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter and #MeToo.

Like the Final Girl, the witch is a character loaded with readings of female empowerment and abject femininity. Victoria Madden's exploration of the witch in American Gothic tradition enables the reader to

connect past and present, and to better understand how the protagonist of *The Witch* (2015, USA, dir. Robert Eggers) diverges from Clover's Final Girl by not returning to patriarchal control in her alignment with the "monster" or villain, as well as the ways in which the film addresses the complex portrayals "of female sexuality and agency in an allegedly 'postfeminist' age that nonetheless often recalls the sexual politics of the Puritan era" (136).

Part III: The Final Girl(s) beyond the Horror Genre

Sara Martín also provides an insightful discussion of *The Hunger Games* trilogy (Suzanne Collins) by connecting it with America's Puritan and patriarchal legacy, but also contextualising it in contemporary post-feminism (160-1). For Martín, Katniss Everdeen is a Final Girl that becomes an abject monster by her own acts of violence (168). Avoiding simplistic narratives of female empowerment, Martín proves the inherent trauma that the Final Girl is subject to (161), which would echo the author's own admission that she was writing a work on the effects of war and PTSD.

M. Isabel Santaulària i Capdevila focuses her chapter on two novels that describe a bleak future, Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2010) and M.R. Carey's *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2014). Santaulària questions whether these dystopian narratives "that rely on the posthuman body for the characterization of the heroines can create new genders that defy patriarchal constraints on the female body and, in this sense, redefine the parameters of Clover's Final Girl" (174). In her understanding, both female protagonists become "final Final Girls," a transition from humanity to something different (187). Her conclusions also expose the limitations of these "deviant bodies" to lead the post-human world they will inhabit, evincing the endurance of patriarchal structures of constraint.

Andrea Ruthven's reading of *Ms. Marvel* (Wilson 2014–2019) as a direct descendant of the Final Girl provides a compelling discussion on the "postfeminist and neoliberal discourses surrounding women's empowerment and agency" in the figure of the heroine or Super Girl, and how Ms Marvel is both a product of and a challenge to them (206), especially as her race and her Muslim beliefs question received stereotypes of feminist white saviours (203).

Part IV: Ways of Seeing: The Final Girl(s) and Spectatorship

Delving into the very popular *Resident Evil* franchise, Steven Rybin rejects previous readings of Alice as pure abstraction and vindicates the appreciative gaze placed on Alice's physicality and how empathy as a narrative context is built around her as the series advances (215). As the Final Girl who is still standing at the end of the narrative, the "pleasure the viewer takes in watching Jovovich's Alice defeat Umbrella is ultimately a pleasure in physicality over abstraction, incarnated […] performance over inhuman, corporate manipulation of data" (216).

In the following chapter, Angie Fazekas and Dan Vena turn to Catherine Hardwicke's *Twilight* (2008), its filmic text and fandom, to argue that "the new wave of horror cinema (re-)locates female subjectivity at the center of the horror genre, and, in turn, positions the new horror heroine as a point of identification for the more centralized female viewer and fan" (231). Providing a reading of the film that brings it closer to its Gothic precursors, their analysis of fan reactions vindicates some of Hardwick's most controversial cinematic choices. It is a worthy contribution, although one that departs from the general focus of the volume and lacks a discussion of the Final Girl trope.

Katarzyna Paszkiewicz concludes the book with a chapter on *The Final Girls* (2015, USA, dir. Todd Strauss-Schulson) that summarizes many of the points argued in the volume. Paszkiewicz convincingly contends that this self-reflexive slasher emphasizes the "importance of looking forward, and also of looking (and feeling) back at the past, to address the newly visible, but always existent, injustices against women," recalling Clover's original victimized Final Girl, while advancing the genre by a hybrid narrative that borrows from Hollywood maternal melodramas (265). In this sense, her analysis of the mother-daughter bond is especially significant.

In conclusion, *Final Girls, Feminism and Popular Culture* fulfils its promise of providing a multidisciplinary and intersectional approach to the Final Girl trope. Each chapter's unique approach and discussion of widely different genres ensures its relevance for scholars interested in media, gender and reception studies, while its understanding of feminism as an organic continuum helps to both illuminate and question the achievements of our current socio-political context.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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The Plays of Margaret Drabble. A Critical Edition

José Francisco Fernández (ed.)

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The Plays of Margaret Drabble, a Critical Edition is the first study of the two plays written by this British novelist. In this volume, we are before the outstanding work of five scholars who open a new field before us: the plays of Margaret Drabble, the British novelist. Before focusing on the work edited by Fernández, we would like to dedicate a few lines to Margaret Drabble. The main references which we readers find in a fast search regarding Drabble are her novels. As Cronan claims, "Margaret Drabble is a novelist because she is a woman. Had she been a man, she would no doubt have been an actor, since she did more acting than writing as an undergraduate at Cambridge in the fifties" (Cronan,1989:1). After studying at the University of Cambridge, she joined the Royal Shakespeare Company in plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Cymbeline*, to move later from acting to writing, due to the fact that "women had never been shut off from the materials of fiction. A pencil and a piece of paper… all human life was there" (Cronan, 1989:1). Author of nine novels, two biographies, several screenplays, stories and literary books and editor of books on literary subjects so relevant as the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Hannay, 1987:129), "Drabble's novels are studies of human nature with the emphasis on feminine nature" (Hardin, 1973:274), strong women who focus on their desires and fight for what they would like to achieve. It is her "mediating and often equivocal position between the traditional and the modern which makes her an important voice in contemporary fiction and links het to other writers of her generation…It is this authenticity of voice which draws readers to her works" (Creighton, 2019:4). And it is in this world of narrative and feminine concerns, where we discover two short plays, *Laura* and *Birds of Paradise*, which embrace the same interests, women who are "notable for their resiliency and endurance" (Hardin, 1973:274) and, as a consistent theme, who try to achieve their self-definition (Beards, 1973).

Moving to Fernández's book, it is divided in two different parts: first, the editor presents the readers with two short plays, which are followed by six articles which refer critically to them.

The first play, *Laura*, is a 55 minutes drama which was shown on Granada TV in 1964. It recounts a specific day in the life of a mother, Laura, who suffers from postnatal depression. Through her words and through the events presented to the reader / audience, we observe the struggle of a mother who reflects about maternity and the life of mothers from a new point of view. This is a modern voice, far away from those which praise maternity, as the author is able to transmit the solitude and sacrifices of a mother.

Bird of Paradise, the second play, was a production of the National Theatre in 1969. It is again a modern play in both staging and topic, as the author develops three different areas on stage to show how being a successful female entrepreneur affects the relationships between men and women. In this specific play, how it interferes

in the life of wife and husband, for it is, as one the characters points out, "a woman in a men's world" (p. 68). Additionally, there is also a dialogue between the first feminist ideas and those of the current generation.

The second part of the book is composed of six articles on the author and her plays, written by five scholars, including the editor of the volume. The first article, entitled "The Presence of the Theater in the Life of the Novelist", written by the editor of the book, draws the background of Drabble, starting with her parents, and presents the facts and ideas which later would influence her work: Methodism, equality, and the importance placed on personal effort or education. Besides, Fernández refers to the composition of her first plays at a very young age, her acting at university, her desire to be an actress and the beginnings of her acting career, which was definitely interrupted by her pregnancy, a fact which moved her to writing. According to Fernández, Drabble became "a sharp analyst of social mores and a keen observer of the changing ideological climate of Britain during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s" (p. 81). On the other hand, Fernández also explains the process of the composition of the plays, both commissioned and "first published in this volume" (p. 81).

Regarding the second article "*Laura*: Historical Context", also written by the editor, Fernández gives voice to Drabble who explains that both Laura and her share the fact of being educated women who find themselves in a position which does not fulfil them. This situation was that of a whole generation of women who had attended university but "found themselves doing the same job of housework and child care as the girls who had left school" (p. 91), a way of life which clashes with their expectations. Along with this, Fernández explains in depth the meaning of the different characters which appear in the play, by linking them to the social circumstances of the British society of the times, and provides us with a hint of hope when he claims that Laura is able to assert herself.

The third article, "*Bird of Paradise*: Historical Context", written by Betsabé Navarro, begins with a previously unpublished quote by Drabble, in which she shows her uneasiness about this play, and "sets out the complex picture behind Drabble's only venture into the world of theater" (p. 100). Navarro deepens on the social and political situation of the times and the social advances in terms of feminism, women rights, the access of women to the market, homosexuality and fashion (as it is the world where the main character develops her business), which took place along the first six decades of the 20th century. Moreover, another important topic which Navarro develops is the opposition between the first feminism and the one of the sixties. Based on all these aspects, the scholar explains the fight against the social constructs which working women must face and how these new times and circumstances are shown in the play.

The fourth article, written by Ángela Rivera Izquierdo and entitled "The Plays and Early Novels. Intersections", reviews the first novels of Drabble, those of the 1960s, together with the two plays gathered in this book, as all of them share the same concerns, topics and narrative strategy. This way, we are informed that although Drabble is considered a feminist novelist, a "cautious novelist" (p.117) or a "novelist of maternity" (p.122), according to different critics, Drabble claims that her work is nothing but a depiction of the daily life of many women in those days, and she considers herself a realist more than a feminist. From this point of view about the situation of women, Rivera explains the characterization and actions of the protagonists of these first novels, giving voice to Drabble herself sometimes.

With reference to the fifth article, "Margaret Drabble and British Drama of the Late 1950s and the 1960s", by Germán Asensio Peral, the author places the plays of Drabble in their time. According to Asensio, the theatre in the middle of the 20th century was a continuation of the previous literary tradition. Nevertheless, the new world and the new generation needed new forms of art, being these the motor of social change. The year 1954 was a turning point, for it was the year of the production of *Look Back in Ager*, by John Osborne, what gave rise to a new trend in playwriting launching the "most vital period since the Elizabethan Age" (p.135). Asensio, on the other hand, explains how a new type of drama develops: plays portraying real life, with people speaking colloquially who had everyday problems. It was against this backdrop that Drabble wrote her two plays, developing a new distinctive voice, since in her plays she was able to show the evolution of women in those ten years which had passed since Osbourne's turning-point play.

"Margaret Drabble's *Laura* and Television in Britain in the 1960s" by Verónica Membrive Pérez closes this part of the book, focusing on the expansion of television and its relationship with drama. As stated by the scholar, the radio had outshined the growth of TV, but in the 1950s, the latter developed due to the change in the lifestyle. From its creation, the BBC had broadcasted plays as "theatre was supposed to give a veneer of high culture to a medium which was populist by nature" (p. 149). Membrive depicts the type of theatre shown on TV and the constant need for plays for different programmes such as *The Armchair Theatre*, *The Wednesday Play* or *It's a Woman's World*, for which Drabble was asked to write *Laura*, as a second episode out of 4. Curiously, this series was intended for women, but the playwrights were all men but Drabble, what led to stereotypical women, being Laura the only "real character" (p.154) among them. To finish the article, the scholar studies *Laura*, its plot, features and symbols.

As a conclusion, we must say that this is a careful and sound edition, exemplarily full of quotes and ideas, which offers a deep insight on the two plays written by the novelist, accompanied by the depiction of the times in which they were written and the literary trends of the moment. We must underline the richness of this book, thanks to the insertion of some unpublished comments made by Drabble, which she sent to the editor, José Francisco Fernández.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Siembra solo palabras

Cheran. Edición bilingüe de Isabel Alonso Breto

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Poetas de distintas lenguas han comentado repetidas veces que escribir poesía es lo mismo que asomarse a una lengua que no se domina del todo. Otros conciben el lenguaje poético como un registro universal, aunque extranjero, una especie de lengua pre-babélica a la que cada poeta se acerca con idéntica menesterosidad. Por su propia expresión inefable, la poesía es el género más difícil de traducir a otra lengua. Cuando se trata de verter lenguas minoritarias que requieren de una tercera como puente entre el texto original y la traducción, esta dificultad se vuelve casi insalvable. Paradójicamente, tales obstáculos no hacen sino confirmar la propia naturaleza elusiva de la poesía, y convierten a la traducción en su mejor aliada: la más frágil, a la vez que la más necesaria.

Sin traducciones como la que la editorial Navona ha publicado al cuidado de Isabel Alonso Breto, muchos no nos habríamos acercado a Rudhramoorthy Cheran (Alaveddy, Sri Lanka, 1960). Hablamos de un poeta de capital importancia para comprender la tragedia del pueblo tamil, sin menoscabo de su papel como voz renovadora de la poesía en esa lengua que empieza siendo intimista y directa, a la vez que visionaria: "Cuando sople el viento, / en la vereda de bambú de la orilla del río / un fuego se prenderá. / Y también, / llegará hasta tu casa." Como afirma Sasha Ebeling en el prólogo a la edición, "Cheran es un poeta cuya circunstancia resultó ser la de testigo de la guerra de Sri Lanka. Pero no fue la guerra lo que lo convirtió en poeta." Al igual que en el caso de Char, Ajmátova, Blandiana y tantos otros, la de Cheran es la historia del poeta que se atreve a tomar la pluma en nombre de un pueblo entero en tiempos de necesidad, y se dirige a él no desde el púlpito ni el estrado solemnes, sino desde el fragor de la ciudad ocupada: "Son las mismas tiendas, calles, / y atascos que en todas partes. / Solo que la gente nunca nos mira."

La apuesta de la editorial Navona es absolutamente singular, por varios motivos. Aparte del más evidente de presentar a un poeta desconocido en nuestra lengua, aunque muy reconocido en el mundo anglosajón (vive en Canadá desde hace décadas, y la presente antología recoge y enriquece la publicada en 2012 en inglés con el título *A Second Sunrise*), *Siembra solo palabras* incluye los poemas originales en la lengua tamil, a pesar de que la traductora parta de las versiones inglesas, como acertadamente explica en el epílogo. La decisión del editor, sin duda arriesgada, cobra todo su sentido cuando nos asomamos al poema que da título a la antología en inglés, "Un segundo amanecer;" como se explica en la nota a pie de página, en 1981 se cometió un acto calificado como genocidio cultural, consistente en la destrucción deliberada de la biblioteca de Jaffna, insignia de la cultura tamil, con más de noventa mil libros y manuscritos en esa lengua.

Los significados de la expresión "un segundo amanecer" se multiplican a la luz de este hecho funesto: el yo poético que divisa desde lejos el resplandor de la biblioteca en llamas cree, erróneamente, que está amaneciendo de nuevo; pero el poema en sí conforma además la esperanza de renacer de esa cultura amenazada de muerte, esperanza a cuyo servicio el poeta ha tenido que renunciar a las imágenes de agua de su poesía temprana (lluvia, mar) por el fuego de la destrucción. Por todo ello, considero que la inclusión de los poemas en esos caracteres extraños para la mayoría de los lectores del mundo hispano no es anecdótica: se trata de una verdadera declaración de apoyo a la cultura arrasada y reproduce, en sus símbolos ininteligibles, toda la aflicción de no poder ser comprendida en su palabra original salvo por una minoría dispersa por el mundo. Así, la inaprensible naturaleza de la poesía se manifiesta en su

sentido último, ineludiblemente ligada a un destino colectivo del que, después de poetas como Celan, pensábamos que no tendríamos que volver a tener noticias.

El título de la antología en español, "Siembra solo palabras," está tomado del último verso del poema "Paisajes fundidos." Reproduciendo el formato de la poesía tamil tradicional y su cadencia musical, se compone de una serie de fragmentos que combinan elementos simbólicos del paisaje (desierto, bosque, lago), escenarios del encuentro del poeta con la amada, para confluir en un deseo de disolución personal, de nuevo presidido por las llamas:

Cuando un fuego plateado se convirtió en marea
que huyó veloz,
cercenando los paisajes,
no pudo destrozar tus huellas
y te encolerizas,

Cheran.

Arroja bien lejos las huellas, la voz.
Siembra solo palabras.

Esa inmolación buscada que no se produce, puesto que no es posible huir del dolor, constituye el principal gesto poético del libro: que no quede nada de mí, pide el poeta, salvo la palabra. Más aún: la palabra que se ha de sembrar; la mera posibilidad al alcance de un renacer, una fecundación que únicamente ella (la poesía) es capaz de ejecutar en esta fusión entre el legado cultural milenario amenazado y las formas expresivas de un presente incierto.

Idéntica salida al dilema de cómo escribir después de la aniquilación propone el hermoso poema titulado "Palabras supervivientes," en el que leemos:

Mi camino,
que señalan ráfagas de nieve
no es el camino del lenguaje.
[…]
Sin embargo,
cuando alguien recuerda
que el mar es inolvidable,
las palabras saltan en todas las direcciones.

Poema que recuerda curiosamente, en un contexto muy distinto, a los siguientes versos del Nobel sueco Tomas Tranströmer en la versión del traductor Roberto Mascaró[1] (y cuya afinidad semántica, que no temática, remite a esa noción de la poesía como un único lenguaje):

Cansado de todos los que llegan con palabras, palabras,
pero no lenguaje,
parto hacia la isla cubierta de nieve.
Lo salvaje no tiene palabras.
¡Las páginas no escritas se ensanchan en todas direcciones!

La intensidad de estos poemas en los que aflora, implícita y explícitamente, el Apocalipsis, no eclipsa la presencia de otro Cheran, lúdico y apasionado, en composiciones como "Al besar a una mujer con gafas en verano." En la conclusión a este poema de sugerente erotismo, el poeta se permite bromear abiertamente, fiel a su verdadera disposición de carácter:

Alguna vez hubo un tiempo
en que me hacía preguntas
sobre cómo besar a mujeres con gafas,
pero en este momento, no.

En diversas entrevistas, Cheran ha manifestado que solamente escribe poesía en lengua tamil, mientras que para el resto de su producción literaria (teatro y libros de memorias) emplea el inglés. Esta decisión, que más bien parece un imperativo expresivo, es coherente con sus palabras: "la imaginación literaria está muy por delante de las dimensiones sociológicas y políticas que sirven para explicar el genocidio." En efecto, el compromiso del poeta es en primer lugar con su poesía, y sólo a través de ésta puede abordar cualquier causa política, por noble o justa que sea, con el rigor de la "imaginación literaria," mucho más efectivo que el del reportaje periodístico o cualquier otro. Para ello, por razones obvias, no puede haber otra lengua que la materna: la más próxima al hueso, acaso la única que guarda relación con esa otra (la poética) de cuyo común origen los distintos pueblos no guardan recuerdo.

Respecto a la traducción, en su epílogo afirma Isabel Alonso Breto haber trabajado con traducciones del inglés previamente aprobadas por el autor, así como en estrecho contacto con él. Adelantándose a posibles objeciones, explica con mucho oficio: "Al traducir he sido consciente de que no trabajaba sobre el original […] Por esa razón he intentado ser lo más fiel posible a la versión inglesa (mi original, que es en realidad un mediador), con el objetivo de evitar en la medida de lo posible un excesivo desvío de significados, un distanciamiento innecesario de la traducción al castellano desde la lengua tamil del original. Temo que ello pueda redundar en algunos versos y estrofas que adolezcan de falta de precisión poética." El acercamiento respetuoso a ese texto "mediador" da como resultado una traducción de tono sostenido, al tiempo que permite atis-

[1] El poeta uruguayo Roberto Mascaró se exilió en Suecia huyendo de la dictadura militar de su país. Asumió su decisión de traducir al español la poesía de Tranströmer como una manera de empezar a integrarse en su tierra de acogida: otro ejemplo de cómo la palabra poética responde ante circunstancias históricas convulsas.

bar una voz consistente que se filtra sin estridencias por las líneas de su nuevo idioma.

Al margen de algunos versos y giros excesivamente largos y de algunas decisiones de puntuación un tanto ambiguas (deudoras de esa misma ambigüedad en la versión inglesa) se puede afirmar, por tanto, que la traducción de Isabel Alonso Breto consigue que los poemas discurran con fluidez en español. Hasta donde quien esto escribe puede intuir, los poemas que nos llegan con más belleza deben sonar igualmente bellos en el original, y aquellos (muy pocos) en los que el peso de lo lírico queda hasta cierto punto velado por la urgencia del mensaje, probablemente se acuse lo mismo en los textos de partida.

En conjunto, la valentía de Alonso Breto al enfrentarse a esta modalidad de traducción de poesía, la más inaccesible de todas, parece trascender los versos del propio Cheran cuando afirma: "Este poema no puede / acabar de escribirse," puesto que la traducción en sí es una tarea que tampoco termina nunca, y que varía según cada lector/traductor. Las palabras del poeta y traductor Juan Manuel Rodríguez Tobal, aun cuando referidas a la traducción de lenguas clásicas, ilustran apropiadamente esta circunstancia: "del mismo modo que cada tiempo construye su tradición, también cada tiempo necesita su traducción, porque traducir no es respetar el original sino re-producirlo, producirlo de nuevo. Y esto significa que el poema traducido, aunque viene del original, no deber ser considerado nunca un poema subalterno, sino […] un nuevo punto de partida, no de llegada, que hace válido el poema para el lector presente, y esa validez es—creo—lo que certifica que el original permanece en él."

Bienvenidas sean, pues, aventuras complejas e inconclusas como la que este libro nos ofrece, único (por las razones aducidas) en el ya de por sí complejo y extraño mundo de la traducción de poesía.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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debbie tucker green. Critical Perspectives

Siân Adiseshiah and Jacqueline Bolton (eds.)

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debbie tucker green. Critical perspectives, edited by Siân Adiseshiah and Jacqueline Bolton, is the first volume devoted entirely to the work of playwright debbie tucker green and offers a highly valuable contribution to the field of Black British theatre. This ambitious collection aims at providing a multiplicity of frameworks from which to examine debbie tucker green's production, reflecting a diverse range of theories, from affect theory to ethical philosophy, Black feminism, postcolonialism or musicology, among others. debbie tucker green's plays have received increasing attention in academia and the press alike in the last few years. Her unique style, defined by the editors of the volume as a "potent fusion of experimental aesthetics, piercing politics, and an affective economy of cruelty" (3) has left few indifferent and has significantly changed the British theatrical scene. In spite of her visibility, with the exception of a number of individual articles and book chapters, no single volume had been devoted to her work. This is, without doubt, one of the strengths of this volume, which covers her plays between 2000 and 2017 and, hence, offers a full and detailed picture of her career as a playwright.

Following an introduction and preview of the structure in which the editors situate debbie tucker green's work, the book is divided into two parts: "Dramaturgies of Resistance" and "Affective Encounters". In the first chapter of the first section, "Black Rage: Diasporic Empathy and Ritual in debbie tucker green's *hang*", Michael Pearce focuses his analysis of *hang* on Black rage in close relation to race. According to Pearce, the fact that most reviewers overlooked race as a central theme in the play echoes the invisibility of institutional racism in Britain, which was called to our attention through the Macpherson report, released after the murder of Stephen Lawrence. By focusing on the Black aesthetics of the play, expressed in the tropes of rage and ritual, Pearce seeks to establish a connection regarding the topic of racism between both shores of the Atlantic. Pearce further places tucker green within the tradition of the Black Arts movement, highlighting the social function of rage as a form of activism to interrogate the racism of the criminal justice system. Pearce's chapter is followed by Trish Reid's "'What about the Burn Their Bra Bitches?': debbie tucker green as the Willfully Emotional Subject", in which she draws on Sara Ahmed's theory of willfulness and emotion to explore tucker green's practices of resistance both on and off the stage. Along the lines of Michael Pearce's chapter, Reid similarly identifies anger, and adds other emotions such as pain, present in her female characters, to advance her argument about the ethico-political possibilities of tucker green's work. Interestingly, willfulness, Reis contends, is not only present at the character level in her plays or aesthetically through her rejection of realism or the use of a "heightened demonic speech" which "inevitably brings white middle-class audience members into an encounter with failure" (59); Reis also explains how debbie tucker green herself embodies this willfulness at the personal level. Her refusal to discuss her work or even the choice of spelling her name with lower case letters, a strategy that Deirdre Osborne elsewhere in

this volume refers to as the "right to opacity", following Édouard Glissant's coinage of the term, similarly draws attention to tucker green as a willful playwright. Siân Adiseshiah and Jacqueline Bolton's "debbie tucker green and (the Dialectics of) Dispossession: Reframing the Ethical Encounter" takes a different approach to the recurrent tendency of reading tucker green's work as eliciting empathy between audience members and characters to offer a reading of *dirty butterfly* and *hang* through the framework of dispossession, as theorised by Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou. Dispossession, they contend, works at two levels: the dispossession of the characters in terms of the marginal position they occupy as victims of violence and dispossession understood as the loss of traditional conceptions of subjectivity which, taken together, according to the authors, result "in a demand for a different form of relationality" (86). Harry Derbyshire and Loveday Hodson follow with chapter four in which they examine *hang* and *truth and reconciliation* from a human rights perspective. Although tucker green's plays have previously been approached from this framework, Derbyshire and Hodson's study is innovative in its focus on the playwright's portrayal of the agency of the victims and the humanisation of their perpetrators, something which results in higher levels of self-awareness and reflection in the audience. Along the lines of Pearce's analysis in chapter one, Lynette Goddard's chapter, "'I'm a Black Woman. I Write Black Characters': Black Mothers, the Police, and Social Justice in *random* and *hang*", similarly centers on race by offering an analysis of Black mothers through the lens of Black feminism and drawing connections with the Stephen Lawrence case and, specifically with Doreen Lawrence, Stephen Lawrence's mother. Contrary to many academic publications and reviews of tucker green's plays which place her along the mainstream tradition of contemporary playwrights such as Sara Kane or Harold Pinter, Goddard further problematises the tendency of evaluating Black British plays against a white canon. Following Goddard's argument, Lucy Tyler's "'Almost, but Not Quite': Reading debbie tucker green's Dramaturgy inside British Playwriting Studies" reads tucker green's work, using a postcolonial critical lens, as a counter-discourse to what she refers to as the hegemonic British playwrighting guides. As such, Tyler contends debbie tucker green's plays can be more appropriately examined using Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, as they blend elements from the classical tradition with Black transatlantic influences, thus creating, in Bhabha's terms, a third space which, according to Tyler, underscores "the politics of race" (146). Part one closes with "Yarns and Yearnings: Story-Layering, Signifyin', and debbie tucker green's Black-Feminist Anger" by Elaine Aston. Along with Michael Pearce and Lynette Goddard, Aston similarly reads tucker green's work from the perspective of Black culture. To this aim, she focuses on form, language and Black feminist commitment through Tricia Rose's study of rap, Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s ideas about the difference between signifying and signification, and María Lugones's reflections on Black anger, respectively.

Part two

Part two includes seven chapters which revolve around tucker green's aesthetics and language, especially in relation to rhythm, musicality or the use of silences. This section opens with Maggie Inchley's "sticking in the throat/keyword bitch: aesthetic discharge in debbie tucker green's *stoning mary* and *hang*" which follows the playwright's preference for using lowercase letters in the titles of her plays. In this chapter Inchley looks at the discomfort generated by debbie tucker green aesthetics, especially her distinct use of language through which she expresses gendered and racialised stories of pain and which she describes as a "sticking in the throat process" with transformative potential (172). On their part, chapters ten and eleven bring an innovative approach to a widely examined aspect of tucker green's work, which is that of rhythm, temporality and musicality. Although earlier studies of tucker green's work had started to pay attention to some of the formal characteristics shaping her work, such as the use of silences, these two chapters offer a more developed theoretical framework through which to examine her unique style. David Ian Rabey's chapter, "Jumping to (and Away from) Conclusions: Rhythm and Temporality in debbie tucker green's Drama" draws on Eilon Morris's study of rhythm in *Rhythm in Acting and Performance* (2017) to analyse the ways in which rhythm and temporality are deployed both formally and thematically by the characters in *hang*, *lament* and *a profoundly affectionate passionate devotion to someone (-noun)* through physical movement, the use of active silences or spoken words. Through these rhythmic strategies, characters contest and "often depict an interrogation of, and challenge to, an externally applied pressure" (197) and, at the same time, prompt audience members to interrogate "the fictional dramatic events onstage and, potentially, of non-fictional social processes beyond the theatre" (196). Chapter eleven, titled "Trading Voice and Voicing Trades: Musicality in debbie tucker green's *trade*" follows Rabey's line of enquiry and places emphasis on the "vocal arrangements" of *trade* using musicality as a framework. In this chapter, Lea Sawyers understands musicality as three-fold in *trade*: musicality as voice physicality, musicality as word motifs and musicality as relational subjectivity, all of them contributing to a process of meaning-making in the play that expands beyond Western frameworks. In chapter twelve, "'Hearing Voices' and Performing the Mind in debbie tucker green's Dramatic-Poetics", Deirdre Osborne's decolonising project draws attention to tucker green's aesthetics by looking specifically at the ways language reflects the characters' thoughts through a unique style, discernible both on the page and in live performance, which she refers to as "performing the mind" (234) and which, according to her, has crucial implications for it transcends the Cartesian body-mind binary. Chapter thirteen, entitled "Cartographies of Silence in debbie tucker green's *truth* and *reconciliation*" and written by Elisabeth Massana takes inspiration from Adrienne Rich's book of the same title and adds to a body

of scholarship which has focused on the use of silences in debbie tucker green' work. In this chapter, Massana examines the use of this technique from a feminist lens and explores it as a site of oppression but also as a resistance strategy. Silences, for Massana, become a space of in-betweeness in *truth and reconciliation*, holding the possibility of activating the spectator's ethical response to the play. Interestingly, the author also coins a new type of silence present in tucker green's plays in this chapter, referred to by the author as "(distr)active". This type of silence appears whenever characters seem to be discussing what on the surface seems irrelevant for the argument of the play but which points to "the power structures and hierarchies that shape characters" (264). "debbie tucker green and the Work of Mourning" is Sam Haddow's contribution to this collection. In this chapter, Haddow draws on Jacques Derrida's work on mourning to unpack the ways in which the singularity of grief, expressed by tucker green's characters in four of her plays, is transferred to the audience for them to interpret and, as a result, is turned into an act of mourning. Izzy Rabey's "Reflections on *hang*: Izzy Rabey in Conversation with Siân Adiseshiah and Jacqueline Bolton" closes this brilliant volume. Here, Izzy Rabey, the director of tucker green's premier of *hang* (2015) at The Other Room in Cardiff discusses the process of producing this play in this specific location in relation to casting, the rehearsal process or the audience response.

One of the main accomplishments of *debbie tucker green. Critical Perspectives* is to bring together a multiplicity of approaches which fills in a methodological vacuum in contemporary scholarship focusing on Black playwrighting in Britain. All in all, this is a timely and relevant volume in the field of Black British theatre which provides a myriad of vantage points from which to look not only at tucker green's work, but also, I contend, more broadly, to account for the new directions in which Black British drama is moving and to pave the way for future research in the field.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Tras la muerte de don Juan. Escritos sobre España

Sylvia Townsend Warner

Edición, traducción y notas de Fernando Galván. Madrid: Cátedra (Biblioteca del Siglo XX), 2019, 510 pp. ISBN: 978-84-376-3972-7

En estas dos primeras décadas del siglo XXI ha venido produciéndose en nuestro entorno la publicación de escritos de autores de lengua inglesa relacionados con la imagen de España en general y con el tema de la Guerra Civil española en particular. Ya recogí en las páginas de *Nexus* (2019.2: 60-62) noticia de la aparición de *Invierno en Castilla y otros poemas* de John Dos Passos, editado por Eulalia Piñero, y es pertinente aludir aquí a la reedición de obras fundamentales acerca del tema en cuestión como, por ejemplo, *Homenaje a Cataluña* de George Orwell, precedido por un magnífico prólogo de Miquel Berga (2011). Por otra parte, la colección "Armas y Letras" de Amarú Ediciones (Salamanca), bajo la dirección de Antonio Rodríguez Celada, realiza desde hace años una encomiable labor de edición de textos inéditos—una decena hasta la fecha—de considerable interés que subrayan el esfuerzo por recuperar la memoria histórica desde una perspectiva rigurosa y de extraordinario valor documental, alejada de la corrección política oportunista y circunstancial al uso. La colección incluye títulos de escritores concretos, como es el caso, entre otros, de Katharine Atholl (2016)—editada precisamente por Fernando Galván—y Frank Pitcairn (2012)—editado por Alberto Lázaro, texto al que dediqué una reseña (Ballesteros González 2013)—, al tiempo que ha sacado a la luz volúmenes que analizan el papel de la prensa británica en la contienda (Celada, González de la Aleja y Pastor 2013) y, más concretamente, sobre la mirada femenina acerca del conflicto bélico en la esfera periodística (Pastor y González de la Aleja 2018). La editorial salmantina también publicó una obra dedicada a conmemorar el 70 aniversario de las Brigadas Internacionales (Celada, Pastor y López Alonso, eds. 2007). Estos títulos se complementan con los de Gabriel Insausti (2010) sobre escritores británicos en la Guerra Civil, y con las obras precedentes en el tiempo, y por lo tanto pioneras, de Aránzazu Usandizaga acerca de las escritoras en el ámbito de la Guerra Civil: la edición de una valiosa antología de textos de mujeres extranjeras en la contienda fratricida (2000), y un libro sobre intelectuales extranjeras en dicho contexto (2007).

Las obras que aquí me ocupan se insertan en cierto modo, y en un primer nivel de lectura, en esta última línea, si bien van mucho más allá, pues, aunque *Escritos sobre España* constituye una muestra de impresiones de su autora, Sylvia Townsend Warner, basadas en diversas experiencias de la Guerra Civil española, *La muerte de don Juan* es una narración centrada en el célebre y controvertido mito del burlador de Sevilla a partir de *Don Giovanni*, la ópera de

Mozart. Cuando redacta estos textos, Townsend Warner se halla plenamente inmersa en una defensa a ultranza de la República española en el fragor de la contienda, llevando a cabo una semblanza original e innovadora del personaje de don Juan tras su muerte, a quien convierte en "el fascista del texto". Autora de siete novelas y de centenares de cuentos, recogidos en catorce volúmenes en el transcurso de su azarosa existencia, además de ocho poemarios y otros escritos de carácter misceláneo, entre los que se cuentan traducciones del francés y artículos periodísticos, Townsend Warner (1893-1978) alcanzó destacable fama por parte de la crítica y el público lector tanto en el Reino Unido del que era originaria como en los Estados Unidos, principalmente en los años veinte y treinta, manteniéndose en las décadas de los cuarenta y cincuenta, a partir de las cuales comenzó a declinar su prestigio, volviendo a ser leída y estudiada en tiempos recientes. En su condición de mujer, lesbiana y comunista, no tuvo fácil obtener reconocimiento de su valía como escritora, a lo que sin duda contribuirá la edición y traducción de su obra entre el público lector en lengua española por parte de Fernando Galván, quien explora con maestría las diferentes etapas de la trayectoria vital y literaria de la autora, exponente, con matices, de las tendencias estéticas del Modernismo.

Se pueden debatir sin duda diferentes aspectos de la figura y la escritura de Sylvia Townsend, pero de lo que no cabe duda es de que, según se pone de manifiesto en el fascinante recorrido biográfico que lleva a cabo el profesor Galván, fue una persona apasionada, nada convencional, de intenso carácter y profundas convicciones políticas, entregada a aquellas causas en las que creía firmemente y a las que permaneció fiel, pese a que las personas más queridas y admiradas a su alrededor fueran cambiando de manera de pensar y sentir con el paso del tiempo. En este sentido, el lector puede sacar sus propias conclusiones sobre si algunos de estos rasgos no podrían encubrir en el fondo una cierta falta de flexibilidad para adaptar los presupuestos ideológicos a la evolución del devenir de los hechos históricos; por poner un ejemplo que se me antoja significativo, la autora nunca renegó de sus simpatías por el estalinismo y mostró su apoyo a la actuación de la Unión Soviética en la cruenta represión de los levantamientos de Hungría y Checoslovaquia en 1968. Como señala Fernando Galván, citando a Maud Ellmann, "estamos ante una escritora que puede comulgar políticamente y sin el menor atisbo de duda con el totalitarismo estalinista, a la vez que escribe novelas 'que se mueven en la dirección opuesta, cuestionando certezas políticas y morales'" (116).

Sea como fuere, Townsend Warner fue coherente con su línea de pensamiento y su defensa a ultranza de los derechos civiles y valores sociales que ya se pone de manifiesto en su compromiso con la República española, implicándose en el respaldo personal y político a la causa republicana, y desplazándose incluso a España en 1936 y 1937, viajes que constituyen el fundamento de los textos presentados en el volumen que reseño, especialmente los *Escritos sobre España*, inspirados directamente en vivencias concretas que dejaron una profunda huella en la imaginación y el afianzamiento de la conciencia política en la autora. Estampas impresionistas y poemas generalmente derivados de lugares concretos—Portbou, Barcelona, Benicasim, Cerbère—dan fe de la capacidad de Sylvia Townsend para captar y describir instantes y personajes. Valgan como ilustración las siguientes estrofas de "Viaje a Barcelona":

Los campos sin color están en verdad pálidos.
Los hombres se mueven por ellos como nubes.
Las viviendas como mortajas de cáñamo
envuelven la miseria con grave dignidad.

Pálido es aquel país tal que país de huesos.
Seco está el lecho del río.
La oscuridad nos cubre,
amenaza con la fertilidad que trae la tormenta. (477)

Y con frecuencia surge la admiración por las gentes humildes de los pueblos y ciudades visitados, y por quienes combaten por la causa republicana, como puede observarse en textos como "Vi España", "Lo que dijo el soldado", "Soldados y hoces" y "Custodiados por el pueblo". Desafiando con sarcasmo y dureza a los sublevados, o a quienes los apoyaron, en escritos como "Con los nacionales" y "Un rojo clavel", la escritora se identifica plenamente con la lucha de los republicanos en el poema representativo "Portbou":

Soy el olor
de todos los vientos de España.
Soy el hedor en las narices
de los hombres de España.
He ocupado el sitio
del incienso en el entierro,
he usurpado el aroma
de la rosa arrancada para la novia,
soy el perfume de las coronas de flores
ofrendadas a los héroes
que las contemplan e inspiran.
Yo animo a los corazones,
yo renuevo las mentes,
yo fortalezco la ira resuelta
de los que luchan por España. (475-76)

La descripción concisa y directa, casi como una punzada, que presentan estos escritos se sustenta en el periplo biográfico de la autora, que, proveniente de una familia inglesa acomodada que le proporcionó una educación elitista en Harrow, deviene en observadora de las desigualdades de una sociedad jerarquizada e injusta, proceso que culmina en una toma de conciencia política que la lleva a afiliarse al Partido Comunista británico, tomando forma concreta en el activismo político que eclosiona en la Guerra Civil española. Dicho activismo continuaría a lo largo de su trayectoria vital, jalonada por los convulsos

acontecimientos del siglo XX, entre los que destaca la II Guerra Mundial y sus consecuencias, dando lugar a un mundo ideológicamente escindido en el que Sylvia Townsend mostró su apasionamiento al defender aquellas causas en las que creía mediante la escritura y la acción política específica.

Por otra parte, entre la prolífica producción literaria de la autora, *Tras la muerte de don Juan*, publicada en 1938, quinta novela que compuso tras *Lolly Willowes* (1926), *Mr Fortune's Maggot* (1927), *The True Heart* (1929) y *Summer Will Show* (1936), supone un hito en su trayectoria, más allá de su ya de por sí innovadora aproximación al mito de don Juan dotado de connotaciones políticas, objeto de debate entre los críticos, según quintaesencia Galván, que recoge la opinión al respecto de la propia Townsend Warner, quien a su vez revelaría a Nancy Cunard que la narración constituye "una parábola, si te gusta la palabra, o una alegoría si prefieres, de la química política de la guerra española, con el don Juan—más de Molière que de Mozart—convirtiéndose en el fascista del texto" (83). Quizás sea la obra más modernista de una escritora a la que se catalogó de tal, dada la época en la que vivió y su relación con otros ilustres artífices de la pluma del momento que abrazaron dicha estética, como la propia Virginia Woolf. Según destaca Galván, en consonancia con la opinión de David James, en la novela Townsend se sirve de las técnicas modernistas de la distancia emocional, el alejamiento y la impersonalidad, evitando en todo momento la intrusión autorial, y la intervención en sus personajes, utilizando el estilo indirecto libre (82).

En fin, estas breves líneas no pueden hacer honor al logro que supone el volumen que reseño, que no solo es el ya de por sí importante de dar a conocer por primera vez obras de Sylvia Townsend Warner en lengua española, que además versan sobre—o se inspiran en—España; la cuidada edición de Fernando Galván, acompañada de una impecable traducción—que muestra una vez más su elevado dominio de dicho arte—es a todas luces encomiable. La introducción a las obras, tan extensa como enjundiosa, acompañada por abundantes notas aclaratorias relevantes para todo tipo de lector, constituye un paradigma de lo que cualquier estudio preliminar de una obra literaria debe ser: claro, erudito sin las estridencias ni la verborrea ininteligibles propias de teorías que quedarán caducas y trasnochadas en un número escaso de años, poniendo de manifiesto que la teoría literaria es un instrumento inestimable para entender a los autores y los textos, pero no un fin en sí mismo, salvo que legítimamente se enseñe como asignatura, o se practique por sí misma. Por otro lado, el estudio resulta ser profundamente revelador con respecto a los aspectos biográficos y el escrupuloso y perceptivo análisis de las obras en cuestión, propiciando el interés de los lectores por los textos en sí y por la autora de los mismos. Se agradece encarecidamente que Fernando Galván envuelva al lector en una crónica tan sugestiva y absorbente que se lee por momentos—y no es un aserto hiperbólico—como una buena novela (por ejemplo, el relato de la relación amorosa de Townsend y Valentine Ackland, que subyace en todo momento al devenir personal y emocional de la autora británica, es absolutamente impagable), complementando de manera magistral los textos editados. En definitiva, se trata de un volumen esencial para conocer a una escritora nunca publicada hasta ahora en español y que todavía, pese a los estudios recientes, precisa de mayor análisis y valoración en términos generales. Con *Tras la muerte de don Juan. Escritos sobre España*, Cátedra añade un libro imprescindible a su excelente colección "Biblioteca Cátedra del siglo XX".

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Glocal Narratives of Resilience

Ana María Fraile-Marcos (ed.)

New York: Routledge, 2020, 217 pp.
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In his article "Fictions of Resilience" Michael Basseler explains that "[i]n the final decade of the last millennium, sociologist Ulrich Beck claimed a new paradigm for Western societies, the paradigm of the risk society" (2019, 169). This risk society has exposed the vulnerability of humanity but it has equally evinced its capacity to thrive in the face of adversity and danger. Precisely as a reaction to the tumultuous realities of the risk societies, the concept of resilience has recently emerged as a new "ethics of responsibility" (Evans and Reid 2014, 6) anchored in the intrinsic ability of individuals to respond to multiple crises. Indeed, though "to resile" literally means to pull back, in current discourse, as Basseler illustrates, it "serves as a metaphor for the capability of individuals and communities [...] to overcome and recuperate from extreme stress" (2019, 169-170). This capacity to bounce back for recovery marks the establishing of resilience as a tool that facilitates a "response-ability" (Haraway 2016). Besides, since there is no possibility to escape from such trouble, it also serves to (re)consider new strategies that may allow humanity to endure and fight back within the risk society. Resilience is, thus, infused with the ethics of response-ability because it entails the capacity to face and respond to troubles, while simultaneously contemplates the acceptance of being accountable for one's actions.

Truthfully, the fact that we have been left with no choice other than to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway 2016) determines a new path in the field of humanities that promotes a shift away from the trauma paradigm toward a recent, post-trauma paradigm that manifests itself most vividly in the concept of resilience. Among the potential meanings and possibilities of trauma, resilience is being praised as the quality that individuals, communities, and societies must hold in order to endure and thrive in the present world of ubiquitous risk and ongoing crisis.

Yet, despite the interest in resilience in the social sciences, the concept has not been applied thoroughly to the field of humanities. In order to fill this gap, and taking into consideration the aforesaid shift towards a post-trauma model that crystallizes in the resilience pattern, Ana María Fraile-Marcos has edited a volume titled *Glocal Narratives of Resilience*, published in the prestigious Routledge publishing house, that takes on the interest in resilience as a global phenomenon and links it to the study of cultural and literary studies. The result is a pioneer book that offers a fresh and invigorating reading of resilience from a glocal perspective. In this way, Fraile-Marcos continues a path that she initiated with her previous edited volume *Literature and the Glocal City: Reshaping the English Canadian Imagery*, also published by Routledge in 2014. Yet, in this new book, Fraile-Marcos and the rest of the contributors widen the scope of the Canadian imagery to draw attention "to a catalogue of cultural narratives currently emerging all over the world and characterized by challenging the sense of polarity between the concrete place and abstract space, the local, and the global, while staging the resilience discourse that has become a global phenomenon" (9), as Fraile-Marcos herself describes in the introduction to the volume. The book unfolds a tapestry of cultural and literal narratives that engage with different processes of resilience from India, America, Europe and beyond: the Middle East, Japan, Vietnam, and Malaysia. To this attractive and glocal perspective, it is also worth highlighting that the book originally "brings together the Anglophone and

the Spanish literary and cultural traditions, thereby underlining the multidirectional responses and effects of resilience narratives in these heterogeneous and distinct cultural contexts" (10) and, I would add, making the collection a genuine glocal product in itself.

Glocal Narratives of Resilience opens with three chapters that focus on different understandings of resilience practiced by Indigenous American narratives. In the first one, entitled "The Two Row Wampum-Covenant Chain Treaty and Trans-Systemic Resilience", Daniel Coleman draws on the dialogic interplay between Western and Indigenous knowledge ecologies that read the core of resilience applied to both the Canadian settler State and Indigenous self-determination. Coleman's expertise in Indigenous thought and the origins of Canada as a nation of settlers adopts the trans-systemic approach from Aboriginal thinkers to (re)interpret the Two Row-Covenant Chain agreement that the Six Nations reached with European settlers and with Canada and the US. According to Coleman, this agreement reveals the importance of resilience as a feasible way to recuperate the "power of single Systems of thought". It proves that the "trans-systemic awareness enhances creative as opposed to subaltern resilience" (Coleman 35) and allows Indigeneity solidarity to "still persist" (Coleman 25) and to foster a better understanding of the chains of a disgraced history of dispossession.

Susie O'Brien's second chapter on "Decolonial Resilience in Thomas King's *The Back of the Turtle*"persists in the celebration of the potential of resilient Indigenous narratives as a form of critique of official discourses on Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. In her reading of King's latest novel through the lens of resilience, O'Brien exposes the conflicting dialogue between Indigenous ways of knowing through orality and storytelling and the pervasive Western neoliberal capitalist ecology of knowledge. By Listening and understanding the Indigenous stories in favor of Western capitalist thought, the novel impels us to acknowledge First Nations' capacity of resilience and to recognize "settlers own participation in stories about colonialism, as beneficiaries of ongoing practices of cultural, political and economic displacement" (O'Brien 51). In tune with this politics of visibility, Daniel Escandell-Montiel's chapter on video game narratives also aims to offer different identity-building approaches that invite new representations of Indigeneity and their culture in the didactic, instructive, and widespread culture of video games.

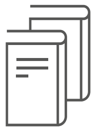
In chapter 4 Miriam Borham-Puyal explores the intimate relationship between individual and collective resilience. In "Between Vulnerability and Resilience: Exploring Motherhood in Emma Donoghue's *Room*" she delves into the ontological fissures of maternity, examined through the lens of resilience, to study how the alluring potential of the narrative allows for the survival of the protagonist's self with an eye to securing her child's well-being. The mother's ontological drive relies on her ability to cultivate modes of resilience that revolve around her sense of maternal protection. In the end, the author contends, this resilient motherhood that Donoghue's novel proposes surfaces as one of "the strongest coping mechanisms any human can develop" (Borham-Puyal 86). The representation of women's vulnerability is also at the core of Jorge Diego-Sánchez's next chapter. In his essay on resilience and healing in contemporary narratives in Indian women's writing, Diego-Sánchez focuses on the nature of writing as a prospective pivotal mechanism that assembles resilient modes of fighting against the control of women through both psychological and physical violence. The resilient nature that the women exhibit by means of writing "entails a key feminist transformative practice that elicits empathy and holds the potential for social, and not just individual change" (Diego-Sánchez 100), which, at large, is in tune with the glocal reading of resilience the whole volume upholds.

In chapter 6 María Jesús Hernáez-Lerena analyzes the way comic books participate in the paradigm of resilience and apply it to the problems of homeless people in their search for a home. The characters that people these narratives tell their reality as homeless individuals to showcase a mode of resilience that promotes empathy and asks for a social change. Kit Dobson's chapter picks up on the relationship between individual and collective resilience and adds questions of time to it in order to explore different ways of expressing resilience in Ruth Pzeki's novel *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013). By exploring issues of the past and present that shape up the resilient ethos of our time, the novel conjures up the possibility of using literature to "telling ourselves into resilient beings" in a future in which we may be able "of becoming time beings" (Dobson 133). The intricacies between past, present, and future also inform Juan Carlos Cruz-Suárez's eighth chapter on the Spanish novel *Soldados de Salamina* by Javier Cercas. The story deals with historical memory but Cruz-Suárez proposes to read the novel as a resilience work that invites the possibility of overcoming the Spanish historical crisis and to foster the reconstruction of a future of respect and reconciliation. Ana María Fraile-Marcos and Francisca Noguerol's next chapter also deals with the relationship between memory and resilience. Both authors present an analysis of some critical dystopias written in Spanish that, as cultural manifestations against resignation and acquiescence, appear as examples of narratives able to revisit memory as an act of resilience. In so doing, these dystopias use this reinterpretation of memory to rise as "cultural agents" that may be able to "reinvent politics" (Fraile-Marcos and Noguerol 159).

The last three chapters link the resilience ethos to the figures of the migrant and the refugee. In another vivid example of the glocal nature of the resilience paradigm, Eva Darias-Beautell studies Madeleine Thien's transnational and global novel *Certainty* (2006) and defends that it establishes a dichotomy between the subject of subaltern resilience and the subject of creative resilience. Darias-Beautell examines the distinction between these two modes of resilience to show how the novel brings forth

a balanced resilient attitude that serves as a necessary tool to overcome different forms of violence "at the level of personal, social and collective processes" (Darias-Beautell 178). In Chapter 11 Sara Casco-Solís studies Rawi Hage's 2008 novel *Cockroach* through the lens of the resilience of migrants that wind up posing an open critique to a neoliberal system unable to read the main character of the novel as other than a vulnerable subject. Hage's story, Casco-Solís concludes, turns into a glocal resilient metaphor because it "demonstrates how literary fiction constitutes an important tool for interrogating the challenges of the precarious, globalized world we inhabit" (Casco-Solís 190). In tune with Casco-Solís' view and to close the volume, Aritha van Herk's twelfth Chapter focuses on Kim Thuy's migrant novel *Ru* (2012). According to the Canadian scholar, Thuy's complicated and multilayered narrative recounts the traumatic journey of a migrant that builds up a hopeful resilience mode of representation that challenges the either triumphalist or defeatist immigrant writing strategy to embrace and enact a renewal of human agency.

All in all, Ana María Fraile-Marcos's volume *Glocal Narratives of Resilience* constitutes an outstanding, modern, and valuable contribution to the field of literary studies for it spearheads a line of research in the humanities that picks up the cultural legacy of the current post-trauma paradigm and propels the study of resilience beyond hegemonic Western thinking. In so doing, the volume establishes resilience thinking as a glocal phenomenon that serves to read and react to the multiple dangers that this risk society faces globally. Thus, the book is a fresh and suggestive exercise that helps us question and rethink established ideas of resistance and survival in the discipline of humanities by means of proposing the multifaceted nature of resilience as an original critical lens through which we can grapple with the maladies of the present in search of a better future.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Borders and Border-Crossings in the Contemporary Short Story in English

Barbara Korte and Laura Mª Lojo Rodríguez (eds.)
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 289 pp.
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In recent years, multiple and distinct disciplines have reflected on the issue of borders. In literature, the short story has been particularly responsive to borders, thanks to its self-reflexivity and border-sensitive form. What distinguishes *Borders and Border Crossings in the Contemporary British Short Story* is the urgency of the issues reflected in its essays. The collection's outlook on the short story form offers a fresh contribution to studies on British culture, highlighting existing boundaries and divisions in the 21st century Britain following Brexit and the so-called refugee crisis. Of special importance to the volume is the dialogue between nation and representation; namely, who gets to speak for whom; whose presence is normalized in the media; and whose voice is absent from narratives of British history. Besides problematizing geographical borders, the collection draws our attention to the many different boundaries that structure our world, such as class, citizenship, normalized perception, and hegemonic concepts of what human civilization is and is not. With the central premise that short stories can mirror and cross borders, the four parts of the collection, "Geopolitics and Grievable Lives", "Ethnicities and Liminal Identities", "Animal Encounters and Metamorphic Bodies", and "The Short Story Borders and Intermediality", invoke discourses of immigration and theories by Butler (normativity), Paul Ricoeur (memory and forgetting), Bakhtin (the chronotope), Kristeva (the abject), Foucault (heterotopia), Bhabha (liminality) and Mark Fisher (the weird and the eerie) among other theories.

In the introductory chapter, the editors Barbara Korte and Lara Mª Lojo Rodríguez reiterate Frank O'Connor's view in *The Lonely Voice* that the short story captures the voices and experiences of those on the margins of the dominant narratives of their time, those political and postcolonial subjects in states of liminality and transition and on psychosocial thresholds. Part I, "Geopolitics and Grievable Lives", comprises 6 chapters that explore the limits of nationality and (un)belonging and examine the racial discourses surrounding free movement and border control. They emphasize the agency of migrant characters and the crisis of identity that results from their transitory status marginalization. In chapter 2, co-editor Barbara Korte, focuses on three short stories by Zadie Smith and highlights how they portray the anti-immigration discourse and the deterioration of ethnic and racial relations. For Korte, Smith's crossing of the boundaries between journalism and fiction indicates her

will to challenge the bordering processes that conform our world. The following essay analyzes *Breach*, *Refugee Tales I* and *Refugee Tales II*, three short story collections that focus on issues related to UK immigration policies such as the externalization of its borders and the practice of indefinite detention. Kristian Shaw celebrates the collections for their focus on refugees as political subjects and highlights the creative resistance of refugees who struggle to forge new forms of belonging despite their liminal state and the hostile environment they live in. Olumide Popoola's *Breach* appears in chapter 4 as well. With an eye on Judith Butler's "grievable lives", Stephanie Bender examines two short stories from this collection and criticizes the normative representation of refugees in the media, which maintains the global hierarchy of power. The article reinforces the idea that alternative narratives challenge the borders between valuable and unvaluable lives and transgress the boundaries of normatively perceived reality. The uncanny is at the heart of Anne Enright's "The Hotel", analyzed in "Global Travel and In/Voluntary Border Crossing: Anne Enright's 'The Hotel'". The article mentions the surprise announcement of the US travel ban which transformed legitimate travelers into illegal immigrants overnight. In her critical analysis of the short story's anonymous protagonist, Ann-Marie Einhaus emphasizes the fluidity of the line between voluntary and involuntary movement. Chapter 6 ends with a focus on the border and global conflict. "A Permeable Fortress: European Tales of Global Conflict" argues that, far from fixed and static, borders are "historically contingent" and "politically charged" (98), and those who cross them bring their histories and experiences of injustices with them. Discussing the permeability of the European border and the global conflicts seeping into Europe, Ulrike Zimmermann, rather coincidentally[1], refers to a cholera epidemic and a plague that appear in two of the stories.

Focusing on the cultural space which "reproduces the ideology which produced it" (134), the three essays that make up Part II, "Ethnicities and Liminal Identities", emphasize the centrality of politics in British identity and further the discussion of in-betweenness, dislocation, (un)belonging, and ever-present racism. "Stranded in a Border Zone: Traumatic Liminality in Black British Short Stories" focuses on three short stories by contemporary Black British writers and criticizes the depoliticizing dynamics hidden in blind celebration of liminal spaces. In this opening chapter, Jorge Sacido Romero cites the criticisms that Homi Bhabha's liminality received on account of ignoring the mentally stressful situation of, and the challenges faced by postcolonial minorities. Chapter 8 tackles the politics of belonging and hybrid identities. Contributed by Laura Mª Lojo Rodríguez, one of the volume's co-editors, "Border Experiences and Liminal Identities in Andrea Levy's Short Stories" highlights "the gap between the history taught at school and experience of memory" (145) with respect to the Jamaican Diaspora in the United Kingdom in Andrea Levy's *Six Stories & An Essay*. Lojo Rodríguez offers her reflection on British national identity and racism in two of the stories that appear in Levy's collection. Part II ends with Nomei Preira Ares's focus on the issue of dress in "A Pair of Jeans". Her reading of Qaisra Shahraz's story focuses on the sartorial performativity of identity.

The essays in Part III, "Animal Encounters and Metamorphic Bodies", extend the attention the volume pays to the border by focusing on the epistemological divide between the human and the animal. A post-anthropocentric approach is taken both in Chapter 10 and the following chapter in their reading of Sarah Hall's "Bees" and "Mrs. Fox". They analyze the border between human animals and animals from topographical, symbolic, temporal, epistemological, and textual perspectives. Hinting at the limits of humanity, Christiane Hansen attributes liminality à la Achilles and Bergmann to the story's setting, characters, and narrative framework and believes that Hall's model "alludes to and diverges from the anthropocentrism allegorical mode" (177). In Chapter 11, Julia Ditter invokes Irigaray's "nocturnal luminosity" to read Sarah Hall's rejection of the epistemological border between the human and nonhuman world as an attempt to challenge the post-enlightenment separation of the two. In Chapter 12, Thomas Knowles offers another take on border crossing. He hints at the Kafkaesque quality of reality generated by the disregard of humans for the horrors of climate change, reflected in how we carry on with our lives. He draws on Mark Fisher, Mièville, and Scovell to comment on the weird and eerie elements and ecological currents in China Mièville's fiction. The uncanniness of The Fens reflected in Jon McGregor's and Daisy Johnson's short stories is the focus of Ailsa Cox's essay in Chapter 13. Cox too hints at eeriness and the brimming over of the limits of realism at the heart of a climate change that has precipitated threatening rising sea levels in The Fens.

The crossing of boundaries between distinct artistic genres is the subject of the essays in the final part of the collection, "The Short Story, Borders and Intermediality". In Chapter 14, Peter Kalu draws on Iser's distinction between "the text" and "literary work" to underline the transformative power of literature in crossing borders. Putting forth an examination of race, identity, history, and creativity in his own short story "The Keeper of Books", he argues that literature can offer a new perspective on crossing borders when it dissolves the gap between reader and author. Closing the collection, Carmen Laura Rallo focuses on the threshold and explores the interartistic

[1] At the time of writing this review, the Covid-19 pandemic is still raging on.

dialogue between music and the short story in *Fanfare: Four-teen Stories on a Musical Theme*. With their emphasis on the temporal as well as spatial nature of the threshold, Victor Turner's anthropological take on liminality and Clair Drewery's literary application of the "liminal trope" to the short story help to establish the framework of analysis for "Liminal Encounters Between Literature and Music in Contemporary British Women's Short Stories".

In the midst of a global pandemic, few books could be more timely than *Borders and Border Crossings in the Contemporary British Short Story.* The collection provides us with a frame of reference to reflect on borders in our globalized world. I read the collection's diverse approaches to borders as an effort to transgress the boundaries of our current epistemology and worldview.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Harrison Ford: Masculinity and Stardom in Hollywood

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As its title indicates, *Harrison Ford: Masculinity and Stardom in Hollywood* is a volume at the crossroads between Masculinities Studies and Star Studies intended to assess the key aspects conditioning Ford's public persona. Masculinities Studies, a discipline started in the 1970s by pro-feminist US, UK, and Australian scholars mainly in the fields of Sociology and Psychology, intends to examine men from a critical perspective that considers how the diverse masculinities connect with patriarchy, either as its representative hegemonic masculinity or as its alternatives. In Ford's case, therefore, the doubt that emerges is to what extent his masculinity is, a word often used in the text, a throwback to previous times and thus a more classical model or a modernized, updated version unafraid to display a "manly vulnerability" (86). Star Studies, initiated by Richard Dyer's seminal volumes *Stars* (1979) and *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (1986) allows the author, Virginia Luzón-Aguado, to examine the features that compose Harrison Ford's stardom from a rigorous academic perspective that, at the same time, need not conceal her passionate interest in this iconic male star.

Known for his roles as Han Solo and Indiana Jones, Harrison Ford (Chicago, 1942) has a long career started in 1966. Luzón-Aguado's study approaches it chronologically after an introductory chapter in which she considers the theoretical framework required to analyse any male star beyond Ford's specific case. The following four chapters comment on Ford's career offering simultaneously a detailed reading of his films and a theorization of the main factors in each period of the Hollywood star's trajectory. Thus, Chapter 2 presents a reading of Ford's beginnings by stressing the star's self-presentation as a self-made man who managed to land the iconic role of Han Solo in *Star Wars* after a spell self-employed as a self-taught, proficient carpenter. Self-made manhood, a staple of American masculinity since the end of the US Civil War, as sociologist Michael S. Kimmel explains in *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, lent Ford the charisma required to consolidate his "brand" in the second phase of his career, covered by Chapter 3 and focused in the 1980s, when he first played action-adventure hero Indiana Jones (Ford is currently involved in the fifth instalment in the series). In the 1990s the more mature Ford became, as Chapter 4 claims, Hollywood's favourite father (and even US President in *Air Force One*) until his aging process put an end to this period of his extensive career, limiting both his appeal as action hero and romantic lead. Chapter 5 considers Ford's transformation from star to character actor, and "guest star," once Ford hit sixty and he stopped being offered leading roles.

The portrait of Harrison Ford that emerges from Luzón-Aguado's volume is very complete and at the same

time necessarily incomplete since she is dealing with a living man whose career as an actor is not yet over. The volume includes references to forty-four films by Ford, with extensive analyses of most of them, but ends with *42*, a film released in 2013. *Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens* (2015) in which Han Solo's narrative arc, started in 1977, reaches its end is not commented on, nor is *The Age of Adaline* (2015), which offers an intriguing comment on the actor's aging, or other significant films like *Blade Runner 2049* (2017). This limitation, however, is the only one worth noting in an otherwise extremely insightful volume that is critical of the actor and of the quality of some of his less accomplished films whenever it is required. This is by no means a study that simply celebrates the star and the man but a full deconstruction of the reasons why Ford has appealed to audiences along his career.

It is frequently noted that the difference between actors and stars is that whereas actors play roles, stars only play themselves. Ford has the reputation of being a star rather than an actor (he only has an Academy Award nomination, in 1986, for his leading role in *Witness*) but Luzón-Aguado makes two points of importance in that sense: first, Ford's acting skills are often neglected because his films, from action to melodrama, are not the type that attract awards; second, Ford's star persona is in constant tension with what audiences are willing to accept from him (as it is common, however, for most stars closely connected with iconic roles). Obviously, as an actor Ford is less accomplished than other major names from his generation, such as Al Pacino (b. 1940) or Robert de Niro (b. 1943) but it is clear that he is vastly superior to the likes of Sylvester Stallone (b. 1946) or Arnold Schwarzenegger (b. 1947). At the same time, whenever he has taken risks to step out of the roles connected with his brand, as in *Blade Runner* or *The Mosquito Coast*, his fans have responded with indifference or even with hostility.

Luzón-Aguado's study is perhaps strongest at subtly pointing out this discord between star and audience, and at signposting the turning points in Ford's career in relation to the social and cultural background. Ford captured the hearts of audiences with Han Solo, a man characterized by his reluctance to participate in the revolt against an evil Empire who ends up accepting his heroic role and there seems to be a similar reluctance all along Ford's career to play the role of star. His avoidance of social media, his decision to live in his secluded Wyoming ranch far from Hollywood glamour, and his discomfort with celebrity suggest that this is a man at odds, if only partially, with his own stardom. Luzón-Aguado highlights how Ford has tried to present himself in his private life as an average man, from denying his sexiness to describing his lifestyle as modest, without realizing how his good looks and his wealth make him necessarily exceptional.

As for what Ford projects as a star, Luzón-Aguado's analysis stresses how he connects with a certain nostalgia for wholesome male stars such as Gary Cooper. As she argues, Ford needn't display an "aggressive sexuality in order to assert his male mystique" (5), which makes his "brand of masculinity" somewhat "paradoxical" (5). His image, she adds, is "a powerful amalgam of tradition and modernity" which "accounts for much of his crossover appeal" (5). Ford, the author stresses, has (or had in his prime) the rare quality of being liked by men, women, and children as mate, lover, and father. Ford's strongest point is that he can appear to be "strong and tough yet also tender, loving and not afraid of displaying his vulnerability" (28). Indeed, whenever Ford shows his naked body this is to highlight this vulnerability not to display an overbearing masculinity.

Simultaneously, though, there is a less positive quality in Ford's personality that has prevented him from being a new Errol Flynn or Clark Gable. This is manifested not only in his reputation as a distant, inaccessible celebrity but also in his defence of hardly defensible roles, such as that of the father that drags his family to his dark utopia in *The Mosquito Coast*. The man who has embodied for many a sense of decency, reliability, and fundamental honesty also often appears to be somehow aloof, either because of his "trademark taciturnity" (97) or because of a personal gruffness that started colouring some of his roles from *Six Days, Seven Nights* onward, most visibly in the failed *Random Hearts*. Luzón-Aguado carefully avoids the more gossipy side of stardom but the deep life crises that led to Ford's costly divorce in 2000 from his second wife, Melissa Mathison, also signalled a certain divorce from his fans, many of whom naively believed in the total correspondence between the reliable family man he played in his 1990s films and the private man behind the star. Ford's exposure to the tabloids at that time made him an even more reclusive star, accentuating his gruffness and aloofness.

In her conclusions Luzón-Aguado writes that she has attempted to "unveil the 'fictional truth' behind the Harrison Ford persona" (279). She succeeds thoroughly in demonstrating the complexity of the triangular connection between the man, the star, and the roles, showing how audience demands limit key choices. As Ford's case shows, stardom does not spring from personal decisions nor does it guarantee personal power, which is why this American actor has often presented himself as a public servant, as Luzón-Aguado emphasizes. Her method to deconstruct Ford proves to be extremely productive not only to understand this enormously relevant yet rather elusive male star but also to be followed in the analysis of other men with similar star appeal. Actors like Ford, with a long career and iconic roles, are an index of the changes connected with masculinity in each decade and, as Luzón-Aguado shows, this is the most important reason why we need to pay attention to how their "fictional truth" is built.

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