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On the move: Glancing Backwards To Build a Future in English Studies



University of Deusto



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**On the Move: Glancing Backwards
To Build a Future in English Studies**

**Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz and
Jon Ortiz de Urbina Arruabarrena,
Editors**

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To Build a Future in English Studies**

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Universidad de Deusto
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Preface

These lines, therefore, will probably blend the weft of first purposes and speculations, with the warp of that experience afterwards, always bringing strange developments.

Walt Whitman, “A Backward Glance o’er Travel’d Roads”

Glancing backwards is probably one of the most common gestures in scholarly work. Some glance into the past for inspiration, relishing those voices that were able to capture thoughts almost beyond the reach of human language. Others try to grasp the truths that evaded their forebears and might have led earlier generations to reach wiser assumptions. As philosopher George Santayana famously put it, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Still others deem it necessary to enter into lively conversations with the precursors in the discipline in order to establish their particular position regarding the key landmarks in the field. Whether our glance is inspirational, condescending or more neutrally dialogical, or any combination of these and other possible stances, it is as if to bring “strange [and original] developments” into any area of the human and social sciences we needed to be aware of the efforts made earlier on in a similar direction.

Many of the contributions in *On the Move: Glancing Backwards to Build a Future in English Studies* depart from gestures such as retrieving a classic text by Sir Charles Sedley or Carson McCullers and finding new ways of delving into their genre or characterization; or remarking how certain ungrammatical constructions have quite often gone unnoticed—even in well-trodden literary texts—for a variety of reasons; or entangling oneself in profound contentions about the adequacy of approaching a particular text or linguistic problem by using certain analytical tools. In all cases, however, there is the intention of putting forth some views and notions that will help future scholars to tackle in a better light the kind of dilemmas that regularly emerge in literary, linguistic and cultural studies. It is a real pleasure to discover in these pages that English and American Studies in Spain are definitely “on the move” towards broader horizons and that, as Longfellow once explained, by rising on the so-called “wrecks” of the past, “something nobler we attain.”

This volume gathers together a highly diverse but fairly well-balanced selection of the papers and round tables presented at the 39th AEDEAN Conference, held at the University of Deusto in Bilbao on November 11-13, 2015. The diversity among the members of the Spanish Association for English and American Studies is well attested not only by the score of thematic panels around which specialists (well over two thousand) cluster but also by the fact that the organization has managed to recruit new blood these last two decades, thus producing great variety in its composition age-wise. In this sense, it is very gratifying to note that, besides the names of long-consecrated and widely-reputed scholars in linguistics and literary studies, the table of contents also lists younger and highly-talented researchers who guarantee a vigorous future for the association.

Meeting the challenge of putting this e-book together has been possible thanks to the tireless and invaluable collaboration of several collectives. To begin with, we would like to express our gratitude to the Executive Board of AEDEAN, who have been unwaveringly supportive of our efforts from the earliest stages in the organization of the conference up to the completion of this publication. Likewise, panel coordinators—assisted by anonymous

readers—have played a major role in the double-blind reviewing and editing process of the selected papers. Their intense dedication and respect for the deadlines have made our work so much easier. Our profound recognition also to the members of the Organizing Committee, especially Marian Castellanos, Javier Llorente, Asier Altuna and M^a Isabel Parrondo, without whom neither the conference nor this publication would have been possible. As participants in the conference well know, the event could only be brought to a successful ending thanks to the logistical assistance provided by UD student volunteers. Needless to say, our warmest appreciation goes to the authors of the contributions included in this e-book who, leaving aside other—at least equally urgent—tasks, were extremely generous and understanding in meeting all the requirements that the publication demanded.

The contents of the volume broadly follow the same blueprint that AEDEAN members are already familiar with in the e-books published in previous years. In this regard, we need to acknowledge the precious advice offered by former editors—Esther Álvarez and Alberto Lázaro, most notably—, as well as that of the AEDEAN Executive Board. The book opens with three inspiring essays by some of the plenary speakers invited to the conference. The contributions by professors Bartholomae, Pullum and Río demonstrate not only the excellence of their scholarship but also their ability to tailor its contents to multifarious audiences. The next two sections somehow represent the main body of the e-book—and the two main bodies of English and American studies in Spain—with nearly forty contributions on both literature and cultural studies (Part II) and language and linguistics (Part III). As noted above, there is a certain balance between the various areas of expertise encompassed in these pages, but it is also true that several of these areas—such as syntax, critical theory, language teaching or cultural studies—take the lion's share. What is most remarkable about these short academic pieces is that, in most cases, they manage to put across highly original and stimulating ideas about how research has been evolving lately in those different fields. The last section of the volume brings together the results of four research projects—in the form of round tables—dealing with such engaging topics as postcolonial crime fiction, forgotten texts by Anglo writers on the subject of the Spanish Civil War, the music produced by minority groups in the American West or tales of dissent by contemporary women writers. All things considered, it is hard to think of a potential reader schooled in English Studies who will not find something suitable to her/his interests and tastes in this volume.

One last word of gratitude must also be extended to all the participants—over 250—in the 39th AEDEAN Conference. We are all aware that attending conferences does not figure in our days among the most rewarding—financially or academically—activities that a scholar may decide to get involved in. And yet, the AEDEAN-Deusto conference last autumn turned into a priceless opportunity to view the richness and diversity that characterize the scholarship on English and American Studies in Spain. Debates in the conference rooms, questions posed to the plenary speakers and panel coordinators, informal exchanges during the coffee breaks, etc., all evinced that, despite what agencies and administrators may constantly tell us, there is still much to be gained from participating in these types of forums. No doubt, the fact that the annual AEDEAN Conference was being held for the first time in Bilbao and at the UD—both of which take pride in their harmonious combination of tradition and modernity—did provide some additional excitement to the occasion. But, as Walt Whitman concluded with regard to American poetry in the above-quoted essay, we could also easily agree that “the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung” in future AEDEAN conferences.

Aitor Ibarrola and Jon Ortiz de Urbina
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Part I.

Keynote Essays

Ordinary Language and the Teaching of Writing

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Abstract

The teaching of writing has been central to U.S. universities from the time of the first institutions to the present. What might justify the considerable investment of resources required to promote and manage the work of hundreds of thousands of student writers, semester to semester, year to year, generation to generation? Whose desires and needs are represented in these courses? This essay will present a representative student essay and use it to think about the issues and concerns, pedagogical and political, that converge in the composition classroom.

Keywords: composition, ordinary language, writing

1. Introduction

Let me begin with two brief passages from the work of one of the great contemporary North American ordinary language philosophers, Stanley Cavell. Cavell is a legendary and influential teacher, and a good friend of one of my great teachers, Richard Poirier. I'll have more to say about Poirier at the end of my article.

I want these two passages to serve as my epigraphs. (At this stage of my career, I am tempted to say that they serve as my "epitaphs." That is—I'm not sure that I have the time or the wit to think beyond them!)

I recognize words as mine when I see that I have to forgo them to use them. Pawn them and redeem them to own them. (103)

Stanley Cavell, *Philosophical Passages*

Meaning what one says becomes a matter of making one's sense present to oneself. This is the way I understand Wittgenstein's having described his later philosophy as an effort to "bring words back" to their everyday use, as though the words we use in philosophy, in any reflection about our concerns, are *away*. (xxxiii)

Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say*

I am very pleased to be back at the University of Deusto—and I'm pleased to be back in dear, once-dirty Bilbao, the sister city of my own dear, once-dirty hometown, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Not so very long ago, both cities were homes to the steel industry—los Altos Hornos. Now the tall ovens are cold, and the rivers are clean—the Nervión in Bilbao; the

Monongahela in Pittsburgh.

I have a great fondness for industrial cities (I grew up in Akron, Ohio, once the rubber capital of the world), and I'm pleased to have a connection to Pittsburgh and Bilbao, two great and emblematic centers of industry, cities that have successfully reinvented themselves while keeping their character and their core—buildings, people, landscapes—all tough, hard-working, sentimental, honest, sweet, and true.

2. Fall 1989

I first came to Deusto as a Fulbright Lecturer in American literature in 1982. I came back in 1989 for a year to teach Aitor Ibarrola's courses while he was in Pittsburgh working on his dissertation. And then I was *enchufado*, and I came back regularly on something like a sabbatical schedule—with my family for a year, just about every 6 years, up until today. I had the privilege of creating two courses for Deusto: a writing course—I believe it was one the first writing courses in a Spanish university after the death of Franco—, and a course in American literature and American Film.

Let me say a quick word about the writing course. At Deusto, I taught composition to a group of about 200 3rd Year students in *Filología Inglesa*. I kept these numbers a closely guarded secret back at home, in the US, where we were arguing to Deans and Provosts that a composition course could have no more than 20 students to be effective. I would have been a marked man had the word gotten out that I had proclaimed success in a composition course of 200!

The course I taught here in Deusto was one of the most interesting and successful writing courses I have ever taught. The students worked weekly, writing and revising what became a long autobiographical essay, one designed to help an American audience understand something about what it meant, at this point in time, to be shaped and formed here in the Basque Country, here in Bilbao. What were the expectations? What were the possibilities? What were the limits? What the alternatives?

As an opening move, I provided some brief readings from the current literature on writing and identity—I think I assigned Adrienne Rich's "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision." This was to help conceptualize the project. And, as a model for student writers, I assigned a brief example of American autobiography, I think it was an early chapter from Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory*. I wanted students to rely on narrative rather than argument, to explore rather than belabor an idea; I wanted them to write toward an unstated conclusion rather than to be captive to a topic sentence, controlled by a controlling idea. I taught students to read and edit each other's work; I read and commented on about 50 papers each week, which meant I got to everyone about once a month.

I was startled by my students' sense of history. Most essays began not with an account of the author (which is what I had learned to expect in Pgh: *I played football for Westinghouse High School; I drive a Camero; I listen to Guns and Roses; My friends and I drink Iron City beer at Gus's Tavern*); in Deusto, my students began with accounts of grandparents during and after the Civil War, of immigrants, *maketos* (apologies for the possible pejorative connotations) moving from Caceres to Bilbao, or of aunts and uncles who had spent time in Boise, Idaho.

And I was startled by how long and eloquent these essays became over the course of a semester. The institutions of higher education in Spain, as I understood them at the time, had pretty much asked its students to sit down and shut up and listen. I was providing a space, a motive, a form, an audience—an invitation to speak and to find what was on their minds. It

felt like something important was happening each week. And, in fact, I think it was.

I still have these essays; I can't bring myself to throw them away. Aitor and I tried to publish a collection of them with the Basque Studies series at Reno. We said, "In these student essays you can hear the next generation thinking about themselves and the legacy of the Basque country." The editors were interested. The manuscript was sent out for review. The reviewers said, "Wow, this is really interesting stuff." But, they said, the writing just isn't of the quality we expect from a journal; it is not very professional."

And, of course, that was the point. It *wasn't* professional. It was student writing, unauthorized writing, writing that was seeking to find an audience. Reno didn't publish the collection and, sadly, we gave up.

This has, historically, been the problem of writing and schooling. You can lead students to write, and to write with purpose and passion, you can hire teachers to manage that process, but a successful writing course requires a yet unfinished critical project—a teacher must learn how to value student writing (writing that is, by definition, unfinished) and to convince others of its value. Without a sense of value, there are no next steps—only rejection. *No, that's not it. That's not right. That is not what I want. That's not professional.*

3. Fall, 2010

It is Fall, 2010, and I'm headed toward the final weeks of a first year writing course, a course I've taught every Fall since 1973. I have received a paper I've read many times before, and I am preparing to teach it in class. I will distribute a copy, read it out loud, ask an opening question, and organize the discussion. If you have taught this course, you've received this paper. It is a standard theme. It is student writing—the writing produced from a certain well-defined (and over-determined) cultural and institutional space.

In this version, the student was asked to think about himself as a representative case and to write about the forces that shaped a young person's life here and now—in the U.S. at this moment in time. I'm happy to speak more about the context later, but for now let me say that the prompt was framed by a reading of Anthony Appiah's chapter, "Race, Culture, and Identity," in his book (with Amy Gutmann), *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*.

To think about audience, I asked my Pittsburgh students to consider my students in Bilbao, where, as I've said, I have taught off and on since 1982, and where my Bilbao students have written essays for a Pittsburgh audience considering the shaping forces, the "scripts" to use Anthony Appiah's terms, that circulate widely and powerfully in the Basque Country in the North of Spain.

The writer of this paper had come to college in Fall 2010 after serving in the Third Ranger Battalion as part of the US Army Special Operations Command. Although everyone in the class knew that he had been in the armed services, no one knew the details. This was the first and only personal essay I had assigned; his essay was eagerly anticipated and eagerly read. When it came time for class discussion, however, there was only one paragraph that seemed to command attention:

We were on a mission in Afghanistan, and while we were setting into position we began taking fire. This was not uncommon for Afghanistan, because the people there are much more aggressive than in Iraq. Usually the gun fights last only a few minutes, but this one lasted eight hours, during which we took three casualties. One casualty had a gunshot wound to the shoulder, and one had a gunshot wound to the foot. These two only spent a few days in the hospital. The third casualty, Martin Stephen Kraft,

had a gunshot wound to the leg which severed his femoral artery. This wound would ultimately lead to his death eight days later. This was by far the most difficult time of my life, but I think I have become a better man because of it. After learning to deal with pain that extreme, I can easily say that there is not a situation that I can't handle. Problems that seemed so difficult before are now easily solved. It is a horrible way to learn a lesson, but it is important to learn from every situation in life no matter how good or bad it is.

When I asked the class, "What is it that makes this passage notable, remarkable?", the students wanted to talk about the quality of the sentences. The prose [they said] was calm, confident, understated; you felt the authority of the writer; there was, they said, the ring of truth. Someone mentioned Hemingway. The best sentence, by acclaim, was the one that named the central character: "The third casualty, Martin Stephen Kraft, had a gunshot wound to the leg which severed his femoral artery."

I asked what other sentences they could find that had a similar charge, that could only have been written by someone who was there, part of *this* story, with this expertise, immersed *here*, speaking from within this experience and, therefore, present on the page. And they pointed to the first sentence and the phrase, "setting into position," a phrase that is not an ordinary one. And they pointed to the sentence about the differences between firefights in Iraq and Afghanistan:

We were on a mission in Afghanistan, and while we were setting into position we began taking fire. This was not uncommon for Afghanistan, because the people there are much more aggressive than in Iraq. Usually the gun fights last only a few minutes, but this one lasted eight hours, during which we took three casualties. One casualty had a gunshot wound to the shoulder, and one had a gunshot wound to the foot. These two only spent a few days in the hospital. The third casualty, Martin Stephen Kraft, had a gunshot wound to the leg which severed his femoral artery. This wound would ultimately lead to his death eight days later.

No one wanted to talk about the sentences that followed, and these are the sentences I want to talk about today:

This was by far the most difficult time of my life, but I think I have become a better man because of it. After learning to deal with pain that extreme, I can easily say that there is not a situation that I can't handle. Problems that seemed so difficult before are now easily solved. It is a horrible way to learn a lesson, but it is important to learn from every situation in life no matter how good or bad it is.

These sentences are offered as the key to the narrative. But I wanted to teach my students to ask a different kind of question—not "what does this story say?", but what does it *do*? Not "what lesson can we learn" from this text, but "how might this text be revised?" I wanted to call attention to the drama enacted in the prose. I wanted to ask: What does it mean to be a writer in the midst of such sentences?

Cavell says: "Meaning what one says becomes a matter of making one's sense present to oneself." And he says: "I recognize words as mine when I see that I have to forgo them to use them. Pawn them and redeem them to own them." I wanted this writer to recognize these words as his and not his, and to take responsibility for this dilemma by revising them—by starting again to find what he might have to say from his experience in Afghanistan. But by that part of the paragraph, he is far from Afghanistan. He returned to the genre of the

classroom essay—where a writer must learn a lesson, where the lesson must be singular and where the lesson will celebrate what are ostensibly the shared values of the community. This is a story where an individual moment, or so the performance insists, speaks to the truth of the nation.

“I can easily say that there is not a situation I can’t handle.” The prose rests, in the end, on what can be easily said. In his wonderfully provocative book, *Several Short Sentences about Writing*, Verlyn Klinkenborg calls sentences like these, “volunteer sentences.” He says to his readers:

You may think a volunteer sentence is an inspired one
Simply because it volunteers.

This is one reason to abandon the idea of inspiration.
All the idea of inspiration will do
Is stop you from revising a volunteer sentence.
Only revision will tell you whether a sentence that
Offers itself is worth keeping.

...

The writer’s job isn’t accepting sentences.
The job is making them, word by word. (46-7)

My own formation as a teacher leads me to recall the work of I.A. Richards, who taught in a very different era (although his was also an era defined by war, World War I, which he understood to be a failure of language). When Richards, a great teacher, worried about student sentences, he worried about stock responses, set phrases that got in the way of what he imaged to be a direct and true encounter with the world.

In *Practical Criticism*, Richards said:

Ideas, handed to us by others or produced from within, are a beguiling substitute for actual experience in evoking and developing our responses. An idea—of soldiers for example—can stay the same through innumerable repetitions; our experience of actual soldiers may distressingly vary.

The idea, as a rule, presents one aspect; the actual things may present many. We can call up our idea by the mere use of a word. And even in the presence of the Army, it is by no means certain that what we perceive will not be as much our idea as the soldiers themselves. Since a response becomes firmer through exercise, it is clear that those among our responses that are early hitched to an idea, rather than to the actual particularities of the object, gain a great advantage in their struggle for survival. It behooves us, therefore, to consider very carefully what kinds of things these ideas are, how we come by them and to what extent they can be trusted. (233)

Let me go back to the essay on Afghanistan: The simplest thing to say of this moment in my student’s paper is that it marks a break from the previous sentences—there is a shift in tone and intent; the essay shifts from narrative to argument (an argument about a Lesson in Life). And at this moment the writer turns to a sentence that could be the key sentence in any number of essays telling any number of stories in any number of contexts and at many moments in history: My Parent’s Divorce (*I learned an important lesson*), My Automobile Accident (*I learned an important lesson*), My Summer Job, My Sports Injury, Not Making the Cut for the Student Musical, the End of a Romance. I learned a lesson and I’m a better man

because of it.

And this, I think, is why we teach writing. What we have here is a fundamental writing problem, one that belongs to every writer, not just beginners. And, to point to Cavell, it is a “philosophical” problem, a deep problem of words—of what they do and don’t do and how they mean or don’t mean what they say.

The problem has bearing on the education of this student as a writer. It has bearing on his education in general and, to put this in grand terms, it has bearing on the nation—its history and its future.

It would not have taken much for me, as a teacher, to make these sentences sound flat or thoughtless or even shocking for how distant and disconnected they seem from the event: “I think I have become a better man because of it.” “Problems that seemed so difficult before are now easily solved.” They can be voiced as flat or they can be voiced with mock profundity.

When voiced, these sentences seem far too eager to turn away from the experience of a firefight and the death of Martin Stephen Kraft—to stop thinking, to end recall, to keep the words *away*, to make the event trivial, to return to the comfort of the commonplace.

4. Fall, 1786

In the Fall of 1786, just a few years after the end of the Revolutionary War, where Pittsburgh served as the Western front, Hugh Henry Brackenridge persuaded the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to grant a charter for the Pittsburgh Academy, an institution in a town on the Western edge of the state (and of the nation, for that matter), at the head of the Ohio River, on the border of civilization, as the Commonwealth began to organize itself after the War of Independence.

Alluding to that war, Brackenridge (a poet and a novelist, as well as a lawyer and a statesman) said:

The door of Janus has been long open, presenting battle axes and all the armory of war. The literary education of our youth has been in the meantime neglected. It becomes us to reinstitute the arts of peace, and keep an equal pace with our sister states. I should rejoice to see Pennsylvania at all times able to produce mathematicians, philosophers, poets, historians, and statesmen, equal to any in the confederacy... Who knows what portions of the elementary fire may rest in this country; seminaries of learning will bring forth and kindle it to a blaze.

The Pittsburgh Academy became the University of Pittsburgh, my institution. I have just completed a history of English at the University of Pittsburgh, which you can find at my Department’s website. I’m not going to tell that story here, but I wanted to stop for a moment to think about the composition course as a national project—an American project. One with a long, and odd, and determined history.

The American university was founded on the assumption that one fundamental purpose of higher education was to improve student’s command of their native language. The new democracy, it was said, needed citizens who could argue in public spaces and who could make the best uses of what they heard or read. Oratory and the essay—these genres were central to the curriculum from the very beginning of the University in the US. And the US university remains relatively unique in the emphasis it puts on student writing. Every semester, every year, American students produce hundreds of thousands of weekly essays, and these are read and commented on, and evaluated by members of the faculty.

How odd this is! And how very American. In the evolution of the required, standard composition course, a “literary education” had little to do with literature (that is Literature with a capital L). The point was not to produce poets or novelists, but to train students to understand the problems and possibilities of language—including the problems and possibilities of propaganda and demagoguery, of thoughtless reaction. The point of the constant, weekly exercise—the weekly theme, for example, that was part of the college curriculum—was to insure our “political safety” (Miller 24).

In this odd configuration, and at this important national moment, the need for the weekly theme was like the need to keep and bear arms. Ordinary people, it was argued, must have access to the instruments of power and authority.

There is no consensus today over the right to bear arms. And there is no consensus over the design and administration of the composition course. In my talk today, I have been outlining an argument for *one* form of that course—a required course in Practical Criticism, a course that promotes a certain skepticism about common phrases and common assumptions, about meaning what we say and saying what we mean.

There are many who argue for a very different kind of course, one whose purpose is to make things simple—clear, direct, and sincere—a writing to serve the *clear* purposes of the nation—a kind of Donald Trump, Paul Ryan, Tea Party theory of writing. In such a course, you *can* mean what you say and say what you mean—and you must, the argument goes, if we are going to get on to more important things, if we are going to get beyond talk—if we are going to get the mission accomplished; if we are going to get the job done quickly and efficiently. We don’t have time to worry about truths or consequences.

5. Fall, 2010

Let me go back to the Afghanistan essay. There is an earlier passage in this student’s paper that suggests he was prepared to think about a more performative, complicated sense of identity and identification (or to think about the differences between character and caricature):

In a place like my unit, you worked very closely with the same people on a daily basis. I wanted to make friends with these people, so I tried acting like the guy who I thought was the coolest guy in high school. I actually talked like him and used his same mannerisms, but I found it got exhausting trying to be someone else. A funny thing happens when you go somewhere that nobody knows who you are. You can be absolutely whoever you want to be. If you want to act just like the coolest kid from your high school, you can do just that. But after trying out different identities, that is when you really figure what kind of person you want to become—your identity, so to speak. I don’t see “identity” as an ending point, but more as a path. Little things like tastes and feelings can all change on a daily basis, so I see identity as more of a path made up of certain beliefs that lead in a specific direction. Even though the traveler might change a little, he will still end up going the same way.

This paragraph is, among other things, a quiet homage, a thinking-through of a section from the assigned essay by Anthony Appiah, one that students had read in class. It was a passage we read over and over again for purposes of discussion, a passage the students wanted to take time with.

As used above, it is inflected, of course, by a young person’s desire for certainty—for the moment “when you really figure out who you are and become comfortable with it”—but I want to use the presence of this passage in the essay to say that the problem with the firefight

paragraph, as Appiah might read it, is the problem of creating the space on the page that would allow for multiple voices, several voices coming from a single source.

Here is Appiah: “We make up selves from a tool kit of options made available by our culture and society... We do make choices, but we don’t determine the options among which we choose (96). Later he refers to “scripts,” “narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their life stories.” Some of these are restrictive; some, he says, can be “glorious.” But we need to be wary of the tendency of collective identities to “go imperial.” And thus, he concludes:

It is crucial to remember always that we are not simply black or white or yellow or brown, gay or straight or bisexual, Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, or Confucian but that we are also brothers and sisters; parents and children; liberals, conservatives and leftists; teachers and lawyers and auto-makers and gardeners; fans of the Padres and the Bruins; amateurs of grunge rock and lovers of Wagner; movie buffs; MTV-holics, mystery-readers; surfers and singers; poets and pet-lovers; students and teachers; friends and lovers. (103-104)

And he advises: “live with fractured identities; engage in identity play; find solidarity, yes, but recognize contingency; and, above all, practice irony” (104). Appiah refers to this as a “banal postmodernism.” I’d prefer to refer to this post-modernism as *ordinary* or *everyday*.

Let me read the revised conclusion of the firefight paragraph. It was completed as a formal assignment three weeks after the first draft. Revision is a fundamental part of the course I teach, not something that is offered for extra credit. It is, in my department, how students learn to write. The point is not to correct a first draft but to take it on its next step. Our students learn to write by learning to work on their own writing, by revising:

The third casualty, Martin Stephen Kraft, had a gunshot wound to the leg which severed his femoral artery. This wound would ultimately lead to his death eight days later. We held an informal ceremony for him in Afghanistan; only the people who escorted his corpse home got to go to the funeral. The picture of the soldier kneeling in front of the boots and helmet of another soldier is a cool decoration until it’s you on a knee in front of your friend’s boots. [*In the margin, I wrote: “What if this paragraph ended end here? What would be lost? What would be gained?”*] As I stood up from in front of his memorial, I tried with all my might to hide that I was crying until I saw the entire formation of guys that I worked with in tears. Only two of the guys really stood out to me, my boss Taylor and my best friend Ray... You couldn’t defeat them at anything, and yet there they stand in tears. I have been mad at people and held grudges, but until this day, I can say with complete confidence that I have never known hate or misery. Today I find it difficult to get truly angry at someone, and I don’t think I’ve had any grudges since about three months after his death.

I admire this sentence: “The picture of the soldier kneeling in front of the boots and helmet of another soldier is a cool decoration until it’s you on a knee in front of your friend’s boots.” This is the sentence I would use to define the act (and the importance) of revision in student writing—and it is a sentence I would use to define revision as an act of ordinary language criticism, doing what you can with that which is available. The writer rejects (by deploying) the explanatory power of the standard image of the soldier kneeling in front of the boots and helmet of a fallen comrade. He has to forgo the language to use the language.

And at moments like this, the language shudders or fails, the writer is at a loss, which is why I find a particular force and appropriateness in the awkward use of the word “cool.”

What other word could you use in this sentence if the sentence is moving toward a word like “decoration”? “Cool” is marked as simultaneously ironic and sincere. And the work done by this sentence is why, if I had complete editorial control (which I did not), I would have cut the paragraph from this point on. The writing that follows is initially rough, at least at the beginning (the passages about Ray), but then it becomes smooth and set, comfortable again in a context where comfort is not necessary of value. These sentences volunteer themselves. They are drawn from the available stock—from the tool kit marked “lessons on life.”

This, I think, is one of the things a writing course can do—it can provoke and then call attention to moments like this. A revision like this one is a way of making sense present, where sense is always a matter of struggle or contention. I do not expect a student writer to reinvent the narrative of war, to do what our very best writers struggle to do. And I don’t insist that the problem in the essay is the problem of American foreign policy, a willed blindness. I don’t use the essay to comment on US politics. This is a writing course. I don’t teach submission; I teach revision. I’m interested in what students can do with sentences; I don’t require a pledge of allegiance or a forced confession; I don’t give a lecture on politics; and I don’t tell people how to vote.

It is a writing course. When students can hear themselves, see themselves and find themselves uncomfortably present in the language that is readily available to them as writers, they discover (or they are pointed toward) occasions for revision. They make changes. The changes are small and limited, as they are in the example I’ve provided. The direction is out of my control, but the act of revision is not. And the changes, however they may fall, mark a moment in a writer’s education.

Which is to say: Criticism doesn’t belong just to leather coated graduate students; and its occasions are not always Literary, with a capital L. And its ends are always, necessarily, contingent, short-lived, and unpredictable. In that sense, the course I taught followed the example set by Anthony Appiah, whose work I admire (and teach) because it insists that a critical consideration of culture and identity is a matter of ordinary language and, as such, it is available to the practice and the representation of our everyday lives. It is available to auto-makers and gardeners; fans of the San Diego Padres and the Boston Bruins y los del Athletic de Bilbao.

6. Closing Remarks: Fall, 1973

I’ve taught a first-year, required composition course just about every year of my teaching career since 1973. This has essentially been my life’s work—I’ve made a career developing and promoting a pedagogy of critical revision—critical revision, not *fixing* a paper but working on one.

I would argue that this is how our best writers have always learned to write—by learning to get in the way of their very best sentences, by struggling to find some form of assertion to make the language, no matter how fleetingly or tentatively, one’s own device.

I first learned to think about this as a young graduate student at Rutgers University in New Jersey in 1969, avoiding the war in Vietnam. I learned it from a great teacher, Richard Poirier, who was the first teacher I had who insisted that I revise what I had written.

Here is Poirier in an essay titled, “What is English Studies; and If We Know What That is, Why do We Teach it.” It is from his brilliant book, *The Performing Self*. This book set me on the path that became my career. (Note: When Poirier uses the word “literary,” you should hear “literary” with a small L, and not a capital L. He is writing from inside the pedagogical traditions I have been tracing in this essay. He is not promoting Great Books and

Eternal Values; he is proposing a course in the close study of students' reading and students' writing—as performance.)

Poirier said:

Literary study might well consist of such “lessons” in how to meet and to know words under different kinds of social and historical stress. The point would be that any given expression in words has to be confronted as if it were meant pointedly, personally for you, meant as a violation, pleasurable or otherwise, of the self you'd put together before this shape of words entered into it and before the self in turn, with all its biases, cautions, histories, moved reciprocally back into those words. Literary study should show how, in this engagement, words can sicken and befoul, heal and uplift us, and how precarious and momentary each such induced state can be. A class can watch how words suddenly get snatched from our possession and are so recast that we don't want to possess them anymore. This active way of responding to language and to the structures of imagination that are made from it is not, alas, what goes on in the classrooms of our colleges and universities. (72)

“An active way of responding to language and to the structures of imagination that are made from it.” What better place to do this than the required composition course? What better place to ask just this kind of question; what better pedagogy than to write in the margins of a student essay: “where are *you* in this language? Where are you now, right now, at this point in time?” And the answer can only come through work with sentences. In practice. In revision. Students have to learn to read these sentences. Over and over again. To read them for the complexity and the difficulty they enact. They need to revise them and then to move on. And then they need to start again. The way we all do, when we are writing at our best.

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English Grammar and English Literature

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Abstract

In the English-speaking countries you can earn a degree in English literature despite knowing almost nothing about the language as such. You scarcely need to know what nouns or verbs are. Worse, although some educated people have a degree of familiarity with English grammar, their acquaintance with it reflects what was understood more than 200 years ago. Hardly anything about the way English grammar is presented to the general public has changed since Lindley Murray's million-selling grammar of English in 1795.

The problem with this is not simply that modes of presentation and terminology are old-fashioned: they are, but that hardly matters. Nor is it crucial that English has changed a little since 1795: the minor changes that have taken place are relatively unimportant. The problem I address is that the content of the descriptions presented is empirically mistaken, in numerous ways and on fundamental points.

Over the last two centuries, while biology experienced a complete revolution in its methods and conception of its subject matter, the study of grammatical structure has simply stagnated: it has remained the way it was before Darwin was even born, and its mistaken analyses are still taught all over the world. I select (out of many) just four areas in which traditional presentations of English grammar are hopelessly mistaken: (i) The basic definitions of the lexical ("part-of-speech") categories like noun, verb, etc., are naive and confused nonsense. (ii) The syntax of infinitival complements has been misunderstood and the form to that marks infinitivals misanalysed. (iii) The traditional conception of prepositions is utterly misguided, and has contributed to a situation where every published dictionary gives the wrong categorization for most prepositions. (iv) A common prejudice leads most usage authorities to make false claims about what sort of antecedent is suitable for the pronoun *they*.

I use literary examples as well as linguistic arguments to support my claims about these matters. I then briefly consider how and why the study of English grammar suffered this fate, and conclude with a few remarks about why and how the situation might be remedied.

Keywords: English grammar, descriptive mistakes, methodological stagnation, grammatical structures

1. Introduction

It is worrying (at least, it worries me) that many people who hold degrees in English literature from universities in the English-speaking world, or even hold professorships in English departments, know essentially nothing about the grammar of the language.

Naturally, they imagine that they are well versed in grammar: they believe they know

about commas and semicolons, and how to avoid dangling participles and split infinitives; they may be able to tell an adverb from an adjective, and spot whether a verb agrees with its subject; and they typically think sort of thing is all there is. They consequently feel empowered to critique the usage of others, whether in correcting student work or in commenting on a colleague's prose or in writing letters of conservative outrage to *The Daily Telegraph*.

But grammar education in the anglophone countries fell into a deep trough a long time ago. Not even the most basic concepts are being understood or taught in a form that is anywhere close to the truth.

The linguistics profession might be charged with at least some responsibility for the state of things. Theoretical linguistics over the last century has been increasingly concerned to emphasize its scientific character and sever its ties to the humanities. Its over-hyped scientific aspirations seem almost deliberately designed to hold humanities academics at arm's length. I see little point in such distancing, especially when no real scientific gains seem to be emerging from work in the kind of theoretical syntax produced by generative grammarians. And combined with an internalist conception of grammatical knowledge that explicitly affirms that the notion of sharing a grammar is incoherent, it seems to be almost wilfully cutting itself off from relevance or even intelligibility to the concerns of most people interested in language. I will not explore this matter further here, but merely note my disagreement with the scientific isolationism of some modern linguistics.

1.1 Three clarifications

I should make three things clear before I go on. The first is that the language I am referring to as English is one dialect in a large cluster of dialects and varieties, a dialect with a rather special status: Standard English. What makes it special is that through a complex of accidents on a global scale it happens to be in use for all sorts of serious purposes (governmental, journalistic, literary, commercial, etc.) all over the world. This is not because it is better than other dialects or easier to understand; it is just well connected sociologically. It actually comes close to being a global lingua franca.

Standard English is the language described in *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002, henceforth *CGEL*). Other dialects can be referred to as nonstandard, but keep in mind that for me that is not a derogatory term. Other dialects are not *substandard*, but they are not Standard English, and they are different, sometimes interestingly so. They will generally be irrelevant to what I say here.

Some of my examples will come from the American variety of Standard English, partly because the majority of my career as a grammarian was spent in the USA and partly because the prevalence of false beliefs about grammar seems to be much deeper and more serious there—though things are almost as bad in the UK, and in other UK-influenced parts of the anglophone world such as Australia.

The second thing I need to make clear is that when I talk about ignorance of grammar I am not talking about accidental errors by native speakers. I am not interested (at least here) in critiquing the speaking or writing of literature professors, literary critics, usage advisors, or anyone else. Native speakers mostly write grammatical sentences, and when a distinguished professor uses a construction, that is *prima facie* evidence that the construction is grammatical. Of course, a distinguished professor can (like anybody else) make unintentional slips in either writing or speech, so the evidence of usage must be regarded as defeasible, and analytical inferences based on it will be tentative; but that is the position that any scientific

hypothesis is in. The fact remains that, *ceteris paribus*, we have to take the facts of how native English speakers use their language as evidence bearing on what that language is like.

Although I am not interested in fingering alleged errors of usage made by distinguished professors, it may sometimes appear otherwise when I apparently use *ad hominem* arguments. I sometimes draw evidence from a person's own writing to show that what they say about usage should not be taken seriously. But this will typically be because I am paying the person the compliment of presupposing that their usage is **correct**. If you are a competent native speaker then your own writing should be counted as a source of evidence about your language, and if it shows features that you criticize others for, then that undercuts your criticism.

The third thing I want to note before I go on is that I draw a distinction between two kinds of ignorance about grammar. One involves acceptance of poor descriptions of genuine facts; the other involves a belief in fictional rules suggesting a misconception of what the facts are.

2. Bad analyses

There has been a 200-year tradition of uncritical acceptance of bad analyses of English: descriptions of the facts that are clearly inadequate by any sensible standard. Most of these bad analyses have been presupposed and widely taught since the 18th century—English grammar has been an extraordinarily conservative field. In these cases the atheoretical view of the subject matter is broadly correct but false beliefs are held about how that subject matter should be described. The remedy is to replace the bad descriptions with better ones.

But the other kind of ignorance is more like a belief in ghosts. It is extremely common for educated people to exhibit a naive faith in the validity and importance of rules that not only fail to hold for the language but never did hold. They are not so much wrong descriptions of English; they are more like descriptions of a language that never existed. I will speak of **ghost rules** in this case. Ghost rules need to be debunked as irrational nonsense: linguists have to try to convince people, on the basis of evidence, that some of the rules they believe in are fictions, and belief in them should be completely abandoned.

In what follows I will briefly review three areas in which traditional analyses treat the subject matter wrongly and should long ago have been abandoned. The first concerns the elementary definitions traditionally given for classes of words like noun or verb; the second involves the analysis of the infinitival marker *to*; and the third concerns the misclassification of prepositions. After that I shall turn to a brief consideration of some notable ghost rules.

2.1 Defining lexical categories

The “parts of speech”—the classes into which words have to be divided for purposes of grammatical analysis—have traditionally been defined in terms of fuzzy meaning-based notions: almost everyone with an education in English has had some contact with the idea that nouns are naming words, verbs are action words, adjectives are describing words, and so on. These definitions, though universally trusted, have simply no hope of success. It is really quite surprising that anyone ever thought they did.

Let's begin with nouns and verbs. Nouns are claimed to be names of **things**; verbs are said to be words for something that happens or an action that someone performs. Now, what is the nature of fire? Unquestionably, fire **happens**: it is a process of rapid oxidation producing radiant heat. Things burn up and are destroyed in the fire process. Yet *fire* is a

noun, not a verb: we can talk about one fire or two fires, or about a fire's cause.

Next, consider adjectives, which are commonly held to be “describing words.” When we say that something stinks, we are certainly using the word *stinks* to give a description, but of course *stinks* is a verb, not an adjective. When we describe someone as an idiot, the word *idiot* is clearly used as a description. But of course *idiot* is a noun, not an adjective.

The lesson is that we cannot first catalogue the world's contents to identify the things that exist, the events or processes that take place, and the qualities possessed by the things, and then put the label “noun” on the words that name things, and “verb” on the words that pick out processes, and “adjective” on the words that identify qualities. Definitions of grammatical notions have to rest on grammar, not on vague aspects of naive metaphysics.

The alternative to defining nouns as thing-naming words is to define them in terms of grammatical notions. They are (to summarize very briefly) the words that have plain and genitive case forms, and singular and plural number forms, which are found as heads of the phrases that function as subjects and objects in transitive clauses.

Likewise, verbs are words that have present and past tense forms, and past participles and gerund-participles, and are heads of the phrases that function as predicates in clauses.

The situation with adjectives is worse. The traditional descriptions say that an adjective is a word that modifies or qualifies or describes a noun. Nothing about these vague semantic relationships is made very clear, but what is supposed to be entailed is that the underlined words in [1] are all “adjectives”:

- [1]
- a. the *archbishop*
 - b. an *elephant*
 - c. my *bicycle*
 - d. this *book*
 - e. that *idiot*
 - f. all *migrants*
 - g. some *girls*
 - h. every *indication*
 - i. staff *members*
 - j. several *miles*
 - k. Edinburgh *weather*
 - l. plutonium *bomb*

The most basic confusion here is the idea that a class of words like the adjectives should be defined in terms of some kind of modification function, so that (i) if something modifies a noun (in almost any sense) it counts as an adjective and (ii) if something is an adjective it modifies a noun. But neither (i) nor (ii) makes any descriptive sense. To believe (i) is to believe that *Edinburgh*, *plutonium*, and every other noun in the language is also an adjective (or can be). And (ii) entails that [2] contains no adjectives:

- [2] *It is unfair that the idle rich are so much happier than the humble poor.*

Yet every dictionary agrees that *unfair*, *idle*, *rich*, *happy*, *humble*, and *poor* are typical adjectives. In [2] there are no nouns at all for any of these adjectives to modify. The definition makes no sense.

Much more could be said; but for now, suffice it to say that the traditional definitions of the “parts of speech” (now known as lexical categories) make no descriptive sense, and the

fact that they have been repeated in so many books for so long is an indication that neither the writers nor the readers of these books have been paying any serious attention to what they say.

2.2 Infinitival *to*

Traditional grammar has adopted the practice of saying that *to be* is the infinitive of the copular verb, and *to do* is the infinitive of the verb *do*, and so on. This is incompatible with the way the language works. The sequence *to do* clearly consists of two words that function independently. In a sentence like *I was asked to do it* they appear together, but in *They made me do it* we see only *do*, and in *I didn't want to* we see only *to*. *To be* and *to do* are not words; they are word sequences, and not at all analogous to the one-word infinitive forms of Latin or Spanish.

English actually has no form that is appropriately called the infinitive. English verbs have a plain form that is used in a multiplicity of constructions including imperative clauses (*Be there*), subordinate subjunctive clauses (*It is vital that you be there*), a few relic main clause subjunctive clauses (*Be that as it may*), and bare infinitival clauses (*You should be there*), as well as *to*-infinitival clauses (*You ought to be there*).

Because there is no infinitive word form, and *to be* is a sequence of words, there is no sense in which anything is “split” in the construction traditionally known as the split infinitive: a sentence like *I want to really understand the subject* has an adverb positioned immediately before the verb in a verb phrase that is preceded by infinitival *to*, but nothing has been split.

A verb phrase is a phrase headed by a verb, such as *understand the subject*. Infinitival *to* can attach as a marker to a VP that has its verb in the plain form, forming a larger VP, *to understand the subject*. Adverbs such as *really*, and other modifiers, can similarly attach to a VP, forming VPs such as *really understand the subject*. There is no reason why *to* cannot attach to this latter kind of VP, forming a VP like *to really understand the subject*. There is no splitting here, just prefixation of the marker *to* onto the beginning of a VP that has a preverbal modifier. If the syntax of English didn't allow that, people would not be saying *to really understand the subject*, or *to just stand there doing nothing*, or *to at least try it*. Yet people have been using phrases of exactly this sort for centuries.

To what category does infinitival *to* belong? Most dictionaries call it a preposition, but they are wrong. There is a preposition spelled *to*, of course; but where preposition phrases with *to* are encountered, infinitival clauses with *to* often cannot be substituted, and vice versa (in the following examples I use the asterisk to mark an ungrammatical string of words):

- [3] a. *We persuaded him to reconsider the proposal.*
b. **We persuaded him to the basement.*
- [4] a. *I tried to be magnanimous.*
b. **I tried to large sums of money.*
- [5] a. **Harold wanted to a larger city.*
b. *Harold wanted to live in a larger city.*
- [6] a. **The actors didn't always stick to be audible.*
b. *The actors didn't always stick to the script.*

About 700 years ago, infinitivals may have been correctly analysed as preposition phrases; but not anymore.

So if infinitival *to* is not a preposition, what is it? One view is that it is a peculiar kind of subordinator, marking certain tenseless clauses as subordinate to an item in the immediately containing clause. But it is an odd subordinator, because it occurs after the subject instead of before:

[7] *I have arranged for you to be picked up at the airport.*

Infinitival *to* actually has just the properties one would expect of the plain form of a defective auxiliary verb with no other forms. That's a rather odd idea, but it fits the facts. For example, the construction known as Post-Auxiliary Ellipsis demands an auxiliary verb, not a lexical verb, before the ellipsis site; and infinitival *to* satisfies the requirement:

- [8] a. **You told me to keep working on it, so I kept ___.*
 b. *You told me to keep working on it, so I did ___.*
 c. *You told me to keep working on it, so I will ___.*
 d. *You told me to keep working on it, so I have ___.*
 e. *You told me to keep working on it, so I am ___.*
 f. *You told me to keep working on it, so I'm going to ___.*

English grammar is still giving us surprises!

2.3 Misclassifying prepositions

Traditional grammar has maintained a definition of “preposition” that might be appropriate for Latin but is indefensible for English: prepositions are defined as words prefixed to nouns. The first inaccuracy in this is that the reference to nouns should be a reference to noun phrases. The tradition neglects that point, treating the other elements of a noun phrase as if they were transparent satellite words that can be ignored and only the noun matters. But the second inaccuracy is that the definition (as reinterpreted) leads to a word like *after* being assigned to three different categories. This is absurd, but unfortunately it is exactly what all published English dictionaries do.

In *soon after our quarrel* the word *after* is treated as a preposition. But in *soon after we quarrelled* the following material is not a noun phrase but a clause, and “conjunction” is the term used for words that introduce clauses, so *after* has to be assigned to the “conjunction” class as well. And sometimes *after* is not followed by any closely associated constituent: in *We quarrelled soon after* the word *after* (modified by *ever*) modifies the verb by specifying that the happy life followed a certain contextually-designated time point in the narrative, so it has to be called an adverb.

Nesfield (1900: 41) asserts that “A Preposition must not be confounded with an Adverb, though the two words are often identical in form.” How is the student to avoid confounding these allegedly separate words of identical form and identical meaning? According to Nesfield, “The only way to distinguish them is to look to the *work that each of them does*.” When it “affects” two elements it is a Preposition, and when it affects only one it is an Adverb.

It should be completely obvious that this is a mistake: the meaning of the word is the same in each case; so is the spelling; so is the pronunciation; so is the syntactic distribution of the phrase that *after* forms. Otto Jespersen (1924) cogently questioned the wisdom of any such analysis, and saw clearly what should replace the traditional analysis. And he was only

elaborating views that emerged nearly two centuries before. Kirkby (1746) complains: “we have several instances of the same word being used at one time as a conjunction and at another time as a preposition.” John Hunter (1784) argued in much more detail, in a paper presented to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in its first year, that neither conjunctions nor adverbs were in all cases usefully distinguished from prepositions in English (or in Latin and Greek). He stressed that classifications were being based on the “merely *accidental*” differences in what constituent (if any) happened to follow the word. The rational analysis is to treat *after* as simply a preposition governing (optionally) a complement that can be either a noun phrase or a clause.

After we quarrelled is treated by traditional grammar as an “adverbial clause” that is introduced by the “subordinating conjunction” *after*. But it is not a clause at all. It is a preposition-phrase, just like *after our quarrel*.

There are many prepositions in English that accept either clauses or preposition-phrases as complements, rather than just noun phrases: *after*, *before*, *except*, *given*, *since*,) etc. Others take only clause complements, never noun phrase complements: *although*, *because*, *lest*, *though*, etc. And with some of them (*after*, *before*, and *since*) the complement is optional, so they can appear alone.

It should not take 250 years for observations as simple and convincing as those of Kirkby and Hunter to gain currency. Yet that is what happened. The first systematic descriptive grammar of English to adopt a reanalysis of English prepositions that recognized the possibility of non-NP complements came more than two centuries later, in *CGEL* (published in 2002)

3. Prescriptivist poppycock

Let me now turn to the problem of belief in ghost rules. My section title is a phrase coined by Heidi Harley on Language Log (<http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll>). It implies two things: first, that ghost rules are poppycock (i.e., silliness), and second, that the silliness involves what linguists refer to as **prescriptivism**.

Calling a rule a ghost rule means that although some people may be in fear of it, it doesn’t really exist: it is not a genuine constraint on grammatical structure in the language, and it never was at any earlier stage in history. The alleged rule is a fiction, with no credentials that should lead us to respect it.

And to call a rule prescriptive is to say that it is not meant as what the philosopher John Searle would call a **constitutive** rule, one that aims to provide part of the definition of the language system (like saying that the verb in English precedes its object or other complement—a statement that no one disputes). Instead it is explicitly **regulative**: it aims to settle a dispute on some thorny point by ruling one way or the other, or to convey a stipulation about how you ought to use the language.

For example, prescriptive usage advisors often warn quite sternly against using the passive voice, and criticize writers who do use it. They often do not know what they are talking about, and cannot tell a passive from an active (see Pullum 2014), but the intent is clear. Where a constitutive rule would state that a passive clause has a head verb in participial form (usually the past participle) and may have a preposition-phrase complement in which the head is the preposition *by*, a prescriptivist says things much more comparable to George Orwell’s “Never use the passive if you can use the active” (from the 1946 essay “Politics and the English language”). He’s not trying to acquaint you with the principles of clause structure in English; he’s telling you how to behave.

Prescriptive rules are usually associated with judgmental attitudes: prose that violates prescriptive rules tends to be regarded (by the sort of people who favour the rules in question) not just as amusingly eccentric or unfortunately incomprehensible, but as deserving of a socially-tinged contempt. The examples that follow should make all of this clear. They are (i) the so-called “splitting” of infinitives; (ii) the ban on *which* in restrictive relative clauses; (iii) the strange belief that a pronoun cannot have a genitive antecedent; (iv) the similarly strange myth that prepositions should not be separated from the phrases that are understood as their complements; and (v) the prejudice against linking *they* to an antecedent that is syntactically singular.

3.1 Splitting infinitives

People still, after more than a century of silliness, regularly write letters to UK newspapers lamenting the placement of a verb phrase modifier between the infinitival complement-marking word *to* and the plain-form verb that is the head of the infinitival VP. People who have done hardly any study of English grammar usually think that such modifier placement is an error. Yet none of them ever seem to have looked at either the evidence of literature or the actual statements in serious books on usage and grammar.

The construction in question can be found in some of the earliest English literature, such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (14th century). There are examples from literature in every subsequent century. Even Ambrose Bierce, one of the fiercest prescriptivists ever (see Freeman 2009), did not think the split infinitive was ungrammatical or ever had been. And he was right. It was never ungrammatical, and no serious description of the language ever said it was. Even highly conservative usage manuals acknowledge this. The *New York Times Style Manual*, for example, says:

split infinitives are accepted by grammarians but irritate many readers. When a graceful alternative exists, avoid the construction: *to show the difference clearly* is better than *clearly show the difference*. (Do not use the artificial *clearly to show the difference*.) When the split is unavoidable, accept it: *He was obliged to more than double the price*.

Yet we find clumsy, desperate attempts to avoid splitting infinitives in many magazines and books. This is from *The Economist*:

...a bill that would force any NGO receiving cash from abroad publicly to label itself a “foreign agent.”

The adverb *publicly* is supposed to modify the verb *label*, but placed where it is, it could be modifying *abroad* or *receiving*.

Mindful of the prejudice that says they should avoid putting an adverb after *to*, some writers misguidedly avoid it even when there is no infinitival construction. Here is one example:

Living, as she had since she was fifteen, on the edges of so many other people’s lives, she had become used not to talking much herself, as if to talk was to thrust herself into the limelight, into the centre of attention in lives that she depended upon for sustenance and thus could not afford to alienate by the wrong sort of behaviour. (Joanna Trollope, *Next of Kin*, p. 26)

The phrase *not talking much* is a **gerund-participial** clause. The *used to* construction involves the preposition *to*, not the infinitival marker (which never takes the *-ing* of the gerund participial on the following head verb). Joanna Trollope intended to write *she had become used to not talking much herself*, but lost faith, thinking that *to not* could never be grammatical (because *to not talk* would be a split infinitive). As a result she seems to have been panicked into writing something completely ungrammatical.

What a tragedy that delusions about grammar should trammel and mislead even fine novelists like Joanna Trollope!

3.2 Restrictive *which*

Some time in the 19th century, or perhaps even earlier, grammarians began to wonder if there should not be more regularity about the distribution of words introducing relative clauses. The way the language had evolved, *which* was used for either restrictive relatives (the kind without the commas) or nonrestrictive relatives (the kind with the commas), but *that* was hardly ever used in nonrestrictives (I use the “??” prefix to signal strangeness or extreme rarity):

- [9] a. *The city which I visited was attractive.* [restrictive]
 b. *Bilbao, which is in the Basque Country, is attractive.* [nonrestrictive]
- [10] a. *The city that I visited was attractive.* [restrictive]
 b. *??Bilbao, that is in the Basque Country, is attractive.* [nonrestrictive]

Grammarians who perhaps had too much time on their hands and were too keen on tidiness began to wonder whether it might be a good idea to ordain that *which* should always and only be used in nonrestrictives while *that* should always and only be used in restrictives. It makes little sense to regulate a natural language in this sort of way: it is like suggesting that perhaps rivers with an even number of letters in their names should always and only flow east, and rivers with an odd number of letters in their names should always and only flow west. But it appealed to some, and at the end of the 19th century Henry and Frank Fowler, building on a few suggestions in earlier works, made an explicit case for reforming English relative clauses (Fowler and Fowler 1906).

Unfortunately, some English teachers took the Fowler recommendation to be an established rule, and taught it as such. The myth that *which* was never correct in restrictive relatives slowly gained currency, particularly in America, and by the late 20th century copy editors all over the USA were busily changing relative *which* to *that* whenever there was no comma before it. They continue to waste time in this way, causing bafflement when they occasionally have to deal with British authors (for in Britain the Fowlerian rule never really made much headway).

3.3 Genitive antecedents

Louis Menand is a professor of English literature at Harvard who firmly believes that it is a “solecism” (a grammatical error) for a personal pronoun to have a noun phrase in the genitive case as its antecedent. In correspondence with Arnold Zwicky (see Zwicky’s Language Log post at <http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language-log/archives/000048.html> and earlier posts linked there) Menand staunchly maintained that this is so, even despite the fact that plenty of

counter-examples could be found in his own book *The Metaphysical Club*. The claim is that a sentence like *Einstein's discoveries made him famous* is ungrammatical if *him* is taken to refer back to the noun denoting Einstein, and likewise that all of these sentences from *The Metaphysical Club* are ungrammatical:

[11] *in a phrase that became the city's name for itself* (Menard 7)

Dr. Holmes's views on political issues therefore tended to be reflexive: he took his cues from his own instincts (7)

Emerson's reaction, when Holmes showed him the essay, is choice (25)

Brown's apotheosis marked the final stage in the radicalization of Northern opinion. He became, for many Americans, ... (28)

Wendell Holmes's riot control skills were not tested. Still he had, at the highest point of prewar contention... (31)

Holmes's account of his first wound was written, probably two years after the battle in which it occurred, in a diary he kept during the war. (Menard 38)

What can one say about a professor of literature who cannot even believe that his own well-formed sentences are well-formed?

3.4 Preposition stranding

Possibly the hoariest and most ridiculous of all the myths about English is that prepositions must not be used in contexts where they are separated from their complements, as in:

[12] a. *the place they took me to* b. *I wonder what he was looking at.*

This is a ghost rule that John Dryden invented out of thin air. It has never been a true generalization in the whole history of English that prepositions could not be left behind in the verb phrase in this way. Linguists refer to the phenomenon as **preposition stranding**.

And there cannot be any doubt about whether Standard English has preposition stranding. Take the language used by Lady Bracknell, surely Oscar Wilde's great epitome of intimidatingly pedantic upper-class standard Britishness. She strands prepositions at least three times in the 18,000 words of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895):

[13] Lady Bracknell's preposition stranding:
 a. *A very good age to be married at.*
 b. *What did he die of?*
 c. *I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to?*

Interestingly, the first strands the preposition of an adjunct rather than a complement (often this is characteristic of more informal style, as in *Which days of the week can you visit on?*).

The pompous and pedantic Standard English that Wilde puts into the mouth of Lady Bracknell in perhaps the most ingenious and delightful of English stage comedies should be

recognized for what it is: clear and convincing evidence that preposition stranding was and is fully grammatical.

3.5 Singular *they*

According to William Strunk, who was a professor of English at Cornell in 1918 when he self-published a booklet called *The Elements of Style* containing guidelines for student writers:

They. A common inaccuracy is the use of the plural pronoun when the antecedent is a distributive expression such as *each, each one, everybody, every one, many a man*, which, though implying more than one person, requires the pronoun to be in the singular. Similar to this, but with even less justification, is the use of the plural pronoun with the antecedent *anybody, any one, somebody, some one*, the intention being either to avoid the awkward “he or she,” or to avoid committing oneself to either. Some bashful speakers even say, “A friend of mine told me that they, etc.”

But again, as we seek evidence that this holds for English as spoken and written by its expert users, problems emerge. In this case we can turn again to Oscar Wilde’s character Lady Bracknell:

[14] *It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.*

E.B. White revised Strunk’s booklet 50 years after it was first published, and he retains the prohibitory injunction. Yet there are instances of *they* with a syntactically singular antecedent in his own writing:

[15] *‘But somebody taught you, didn’t they?’* [Character in *Charlotte’s Web*]

He is following a long tradition. The use of *they/their/them* with syntactically singular antecedents goes back as far as Shakespeare and even Chaucer. It is commonplace in the work of Jane Austen. She puts singular *they* into the mouths of people from all walks of life. I suppose someone could try to maintain that this shows only that the novelist knew some people engaged in this practice conversationally; so let me just exhibit a few examples in the narrator’s voice in novels by Austen. The examples (in which I keep spelling features of Austen’s time like spelling *everybody* as *every body*) are taken, and much abbreviated, from the far fuller listing that Henry Churchyard has painstakingly compiled at <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/austhlis.html>.

[16] Examples from *Emma*:

*was still unwilling to admit ...that there would be the smallest difficulty in **every body**’s returning into their proper place the next morning.*

*ready to advise **every body** to come and sit down, and not to heat themselves.*

*...it would be quite a pity that **any one** who so well knew how to teach, should not have their powers in exercise again*

[17] Examples from *Mansfield Park*:

*Nobody meant to be unkind, but **nobody** put themselves out of their way to secure her comfort.*

***every one** concerned in the going was forward in expressing their ready concurrence **the only one out of the nine** not tolerably satisfied with their lot*

*that favouring something which **every body** who shuts their eyes while they look, or their understandings while they reason, feels the comfort of.*

*Every body around [Fanny Price] was gay and busy, prosperous and important; **each** had their object of interest, their part, their dress, their favourite scene, their friends and confederates*

***Every body** began to have their vexation.*

*she found **everybody** requiring something they had not ...Everybody had a part either too long or too short; **nobody** would attend as they ought; **nobody** would remember on which side they were to come in...*

***everybody** being as perfectly complying and without a choice as on such occasions they always are*

***Nobody** was in their right place, nothing was done as it ought to be.*

***every body** had their due importance*

***nobody** could command attention when they spoke.*

*It had been a miserable party, **each of the three** believing themselves most miserable.*

*I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore **every body**, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest.*

***every one** may be at liberty to fix their own*

***nobody** minds having what is too good for them*

[18] Examples from *Persuasion*:

*she felt that were **any young person**, in similar circumstances, to apply to her for counsel, they would never receive any of such certain immediate wretchedness, such uncertain future good.*

*Elizabeth ... indignantly answered for **each party**'s perfectly knowing their situation.*

***Every body** has their taste in noises*

[19] Examples from *Pride and Prejudice*:

***every body** was pleased to think how much they had always disliked Mr. Darcy before they had known any thing of the matter.*

Every body began to find out that they had always distrusted the appearance of his goodness.

Each felt for the other, and of course for themselves

[20] Examples from *Sense and Sensibility*:

each of them was busy in arranging their particular concerns, and endeavouring, by placing around them books and other possessions, to form themselves a home.

she was a great wonderer, as *every one* must be who takes a very lively interest in all the comings and goings of all their acquaintance.

every body had a right to be equally positive in their opinion, and to repeat it over and over again as often as they liked.

each found their reward

each felt their own error

Many other authors could be mined in a similar way for evidence of their use of *they* with singular antecedents.

To sum up briefly, the notion that singular-antecedent uses of *they* are ungrammatical, illogical or uncharacteristic of good Standard English writing is ridiculous.

4. Conclusions

What I have tried to do here is to exhibit, very briefly, a few ways in which the educated general public's grasp of even elementary parts of English grammar (I'm not concerned here with more technical syntactic analysis) is in a terrible state. Myths are given widespread credence; readily available evidence is ignored; long-discredited edicts are treated as gospel truths. This is not a happy situation.

One part of the solution would be for students doing literature degrees, and for the professors teaching them, to commit at least a small amount of time to developing an acquaintance with grammatical analysis of the relevant language—not so much the arid outer reaches of theoretical linguistics, but just the elementary and uncontroversially established general properties of English and of language in general.

Mark Liberman of the University of Pennsylvania, co-founder of Language Log, has estimated that the number of linguists on the payrolls of universities in the USA is sufficient that, if the labour force could somehow be spread out equitably across the country's universities and colleges, there would be enough teaching academics to enroll every undergraduate taking any kind of a degree in any subject in at least one linguistics course. I think the same might be true for the UK. This should be a goal to aim for, especially when the degree subject is literature.

People study English literature mainly because they love the artistry that the best of the diverse users of the English language have created in that medium. In pointing out they would profit by knowing something technical about language, I do not aim to be saying anything more controversial than that a jewellery expert would do well to know something of geology and metallurgy.

All those who are serious about the study of literature should know at least the

elementary structural principles of the language in which it is composed—enough that they will not be so ready to believe in the myths, legends, misconceptions, and empirical errors of which I have given a few examples above.

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Reinterpreting the American West from an Urban Literary Perspective: Contemporary Reno Writing

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Abstract

Traditionally western American literature has been exclusively identified with proximity to the land and rural settings. However, this restrictive notion of western writing has been questioned in the last few decades by a growing number of authors who have vindicated the urban quality of the New West. It is argued that not only large cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Houston or Las Vegas have attracted the attention of contemporary writers, but also smaller urban centers, for example, Reno, “the biggest little city,” have recently become the setting of insightful postfrontier writing. The present essay explores contemporary Reno literature, written both by local authors (Willy Vlautin, Tupelo Hassman, Claire Vaye Watkins,...) and temporary residents (for instance, Bernardo Atxaga and Javi Cillero), as a major example of the consolidation of the urban perspective in recent western American writing.¹

Keywords: Western American literature, urban writing, Reno, postfrontier West

1. Introduction: Cities in Western American Literature

The city has been often viewed in American culture as a source of corruption and despair, as a negative influence from Europe and as a departure from an ideal rural past. Certainly, an important number of American intellectuals in the 18th and 19th centuries (including several canonical writers such as Cooper, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe or Melville), showed their distrust of the city, following Thomas Jefferson’s legendary anti-urbanism ideas. Some scholars, for example, Morton and Lucia White, authors of the seminal study *The Intellectual Versus the City* (1962), have even talked about a “powerful tradition of anti-urbanism in the history of American thought” (2-3), emphasizing a dominant negative perspective of the city in American culture. The city has been distrusted and even feared in relation to its rural alternative and the urban expansion of the country has been associated with the loss of a pastoral, innocent, natural world. This prejudice towards the city and the nostalgia for a romanticized, supposedly simpler America became particularly notorious with the extension of urban culture in the early twentieth-century. In fact, in 1920, according to the US census, the majority of

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Americans was declared for the first time as living in urban areas. Only two years later, Lewis Mumford (one of the most prominent critics of the American urban realm), made his well-known statement that “in building our cities we deflowered a wilderness” (3).

This negative response to the city has certainly not disappeared in contemporary American culture and the increasing materialism of urban life has also contributed to the consolidation of the stereotyped notion of the city as a source of corruption, chaos and alienation. However, rather than talking about an extended prejudice against the city in American culture, it would probably be more accurate to use the term “ambivalence” when exploring the representation of city life by American writers. The city has not only been mistrusted and depicted as a hostile setting, but has also been celebrated as a space for opportunity, as an alternative place for those fleeing from rural poverty and social discrimination, and as the ideal site for personal independence and self-realization. As a matter of fact, some scholars have described American anti-urbanism as a myth and have insisted on the dual image of the city, as a place of both danger and opportunity (Bauman et al., 1-29). In classic American literature, for example, Leo Marx has argued that “the bias of American intellectuals against ‘the city’ is more apparent than real” (1981, 79), stressing that “the pastoral impulse enacted in these typical American fictions seldom is rewarded with success” (1981, 75). Other scholars, like Warren I. Susman, have denied the persistence of an anti-urban image in American culture, emphasizing instead the image of the city as a challenge: “If they found that the city as it exists was full of problems, these very problems have been accepted as challenges, necessary challenges to them as men, Christians, and as Americans” (1973, 271). Similarly, Graham Clarke has remarked, “if the American city has been consistently denigrated as the site of so much that is associated with the negative aspects of American culture, it has equally been associated with the celebration of all that is potent and possible” (1997, 30). In fact, some classic American authors openly praised the virtues of the city, rejecting romanticized views of country life. For example, Whitman, in his “Letters from a Traveling Bachelor” (1849) already stated that “isolated country life [...] encourages avarice and a singular sort of egotism” and “no matter what moralists and metaphysicians may teach, out of cities the human race does not expand and improvise so well morally, intellectually, or physically.”

Despite this intellectual ambivalence towards the city, the increasing urbanization of America has certainly contributed to making prejudice against city life a recurrent element in America culture. We may even regard the closing of the frontier as a turning point in America’s view of the city. As Richard Lehan has claimed, “the close of the frontier ended a way of life, locking America into an urban destiny, into urban powers” (1998, 193). This association between the end of the frontier and the development of urban identity in America may explain the persistence of a traditional misleading and stereotyped view in American literature: the identification of western writing almost exclusively with rural settings. It is true that western American literature has usually privileged rural environments and nature-identified protagonists, revealing distrust of the city. As a matter of fact, the urban realm has been often portrayed by western American authors as a hostile setting. Nevertheless, new western or postfrontier literature has gradually shown more interest for urban lives. After all, by 1880 the West beyond the Great Plains was already the most urbanized region in the United States (White 1991, 391). And nowadays, according to the 2010 US census, the West contains nine of the ten most densely populated urbanized areas, with seven of those in California.

Postfrontier authors have challenged stereotypical assumptions about westernness, bringing increasing attention to a neglected area of western American literature, the city landscape as a fundamental feature of the New West. As Neil Campbell has written, “the

presence of the urban has been another aspect hidden within the stories of the U.S. West, a lost dimension buried below its mythic landscapes and heroic action narratives” (2013, 165). The emergence of this urban perspective has enriched contemporary western writing, putting an end to restrictive notions of western literature. In fact, in 2015 the theme of the 50th Western Literature Association Conference (Reno, Nevada) was “Visual Cultures of the Urban West.”

Western authors who use urban settings for their stories tend to portray the city as both captivating and threatening, though there is often a particular emphasis on the harsh and seamy side of the city. Among those writers who have contributed to the new visibility of western urban writing we may include some of the leading authors of contemporary American literature, such as Larry McMurtry, Joan Didion, Raymond Carver, Ishmael Reed, Jonathan Franzen, and Sherman Alexie. The growing success achieved by some of these representations of the complexity of modern western cities has even consolidated several subgenres of western urban novels, such as the Los Angeles novel or the San Francisco novel (both of them already popular in the 1930s), and created new subgenres, for instance, the Las Vegas novel. In fact, the increasing visibility of Las Vegas fiction has given birth to the mistaken and stereotyped notion that Nevada literature consists only of novels set in Las Vegas. This city is recurrently portrayed as the home of greed, corruption, and excess, as a place full of criminals, gamblers, prostitutes, and visitors abusing legal or illegal drugs. Books such as Hunter S. Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971), Nicholas Pileggi’s *Casino: Love and Honor in Las Vegas* (1995), Mario Puzo’s *The Last Don* (1996), Larry McMurtry’s *The Desert Rose* (1983), or John O’Brien’s *Leaving Las Vegas* (1990) have played an important role in the extension of the archetypal portrait of Las Vegas as a “sin city,” not to mention the myriad of popular novels exploiting the sordid image of Las Vegas. This overemphasis on the seamy side of Las Vegas has obscured not only other literary approaches to Las Vegas (usually more realistic and complex), but also other contemporary literary portraits of Nevada. Certainly, Nevada literature has been often underestimated in the critical realm (Glotfelty 2008, xxvii). This prejudice against Nevada literature may also be linked to the extended negative image of the state and its traditional association with divorce, gambling, crime, prostitution and easy money. This image is not only related to the neon myth of Las Vegas, but also to Reno, the largest city in Nevada until 1953 and a place with a history deeply connected to decadence and diversion. Certainly, since the mid-fifties, Reno has been eclipsed by the overwhelming social and cultural popularity of Las Vegas. However, in the literary realm Reno has undergone a major “renovation” and although some authors still employ Reno as a suitable setting for melodramatic tales exploiting the sin image of the city, it may be argued that contemporary Reno writing exemplifies the maturation and growing recognition of urban literature set in the American West.

2. Reno and Its Literary Portraits

2.1 A Few Notes on Reno’s First Literary “Flowering”

Reno’s origins in 1868 are linked to the expansion of the railway. It prospered as a supply and shipping center for the mining boom in nearby areas. Reno was not too different from other urban communities on the mining frontier “with its [...] saloons prostitutes, opium and gambling clubs” (Moehring 2014, 1). However, in the early twentieth century, Reno gained notoriety as a “sin city” due to its permissive laws regarding gambling and, above all, divorce. These laws brought many financial benefits to the city and an increasing number of tourists,

though they also damaged Reno's public image. For some observers, Reno was "a modern amalgamation of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Hell" (quoted by Laxalt 1977, 89) or simply "the divorce capital of the world." Precisely, the divorce industry inspired the first literary "flowering" in Reno, consisting basically of simplistic poems, short stories, and novels exploiting the divorce theme, and including often melodramatic plots and unrealistic characters. This mediocre writing is exemplified by books such as Lilyan Stratton's *Reno: A Book of Short Stories* (1921), Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.'s *Reno* (1929), John Hamlin's *Whirlpool of Reno* (1931) and Faith Baldwin's *Temporary Address: Reno* (1941), to name just a few titles.

For most of the twentieth-century most writing about Reno stressed the topics of vice, gambling, and divorce as the basis of the Reno lifestyle. Possibly the two major exceptions were Walter Van Tilburg Clark's novel *The City of Trembling Leaves* (1945) and Arthur Miller's "The Misfits" (1957), originally a short story which later became a well-known movie directed by John Huston, and starring Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe and Montgomery Clift. Clark's novel is a "bildungsroman" dealing with the ordinary lives of Reno residents in a place presented as "a city of adolescence" (Clark 1984, 12). And Arthur Miller's "The Misfits," focuses on the displaced, on the disconnected, on those who never fit in. It is a story where Reno is portrayed as an ambiguous and contradictory place, a paradise both for divorces and for quick marriages. Reno appears in the story as a city full of contact zones between the Old and the New West, as epitomized by the statue honoring a family of pioneers placed in front of the court building used to deal with quick divorces. The contradictory nature of the city is also symbolized in the story by the famous neon arch welcoming its visitors: "WELCOME TO RENO THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD." This iconic landmark of the city (originally built in 1926) not only features the city's motto, but also illustrates perfectly the duality and ambiguity of the place. On the one hand, it alludes to the small town and local scale connotations of the city, but on the other hand it suggests its remarkable potential as a place for growth, modernity, and opportunity.

2.2 "Renovating" Reno Fiction from a Local Perspective²

After years of stereotypical and recurrent novels focused on divorce and gambling, towards the end of the twentieth century, Reno writing, as most urban literature set in the American West, experienced a revival, as demands for writing authentically conveying the urban experience in the West increased. It is worth noting the increasing recognition achieved by local authors who have been offering more realistic approaches to Reno, departing from the overused clichés about the city, often popularized in novels and short stories written by temporary visitors. Thus, several authors have successfully portrayed the multicultural condition of Reno, illustrating the transformation of the traditional western imaginary and the growing visibility of minority cultures in the American West. For example, Basque-American Robert Laxalt, the most distinguished Nevada author since the mid-twentieth century, employs Reno as the fictional setting of the last sections of *Child of the Holy Ghost* (1992). In this novel he offers a remarkable portrait of the city in the early twentieth century, employing a realistic perspective to describe its class and ethnic distinctions and, in particular, its wide range of temptations for young sheepherders. Laxalt's daughter, Monique Urza, a native of

² Some parts of this section on contemporary Reno fiction, for example, the ones on Willy Vlautin's novels and on Hassman's *Girlchild*, appeared earlier and in a somewhat different and more extended version in my book *New Literary Portraits of the American West: Contemporary Nevada Fiction* (2014).

Reno herself, also sets her novel *The Deep Blue Memory* (1993) partially in Reno, though the main emphasis of the book is on the search for identity of different generations of a Basque-American family, not on the city itself. Another Reno native, Verita Black Prothro, has portrayed skillfully Reno's small African-American community in her story "Porched Suitcases" (2001). Multicultural Reno also plays a prominent role in Emma Sepúlveda's *From Border Crossings to Campaign Trail: Chronicle of a Latina in Politics* (1998), a powerful example of autobiography as activism. In this memoir Sepúlveda, born in Argentina, raised in Chile and resident in Reno, departs from traditional views of Reno as a "sin city," presenting this place as a "white-faced, red-necked" city where at the beginning she feels like "a Latina extra inserted into a movie script for comic relief" (1998, 80).

Apart from this multicultural dimension of Reno writing, it should be noted that in the last decade several remarkable novels and short stories set in Reno have achieved national or even international recognition. Such is the case, in particular, of Willy Vlautin's renowned novels *The Motel Life* (2006) and *Northline* (2008). Vlautin, a Reno native, is also the lead-singer and songwriter of Portland alt-country band *Richmond Fontaine*. Although his last two novels, *Lean on Pete* (2010) and *The Free* (2014), are not set in Reno, Vlautin's early recognition as a writer is largely based on his compelling portraits of this city in his first two novels. Both *The Motel Life* and *Northline* depart from stereotypical tourist views about Reno, revealing the darker reality behind the neon myth.

The Motel Life should be regarded as a powerful example of realistic fiction on "the intimacies of place" (to use Christine Berberich, Neil Campbell and Robert Hudson's terminology in *Affective Landscapes in Literature, Art and Everyday Life*, 2015) and, in particular, on contemporary Reno life. The novel, adapted into a film in 2012,³ shows two orphaned brothers (Jerry and Frank Flannigan) struggling with poverty and almost homelessness in downtown Reno and its surrounding areas during the early 1990s. Vlautin focuses on the issue of class and its role in the American West. The recent recession seems to have brought increasing attention by readers, writers, and scholars towards the economic hardships of working classes in the American West. However, issues of social class and poverty have always been prominent for some western American authors. In fact, any reader familiar with John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* may point out several common elements between this novella and Vlautin's novel. Other literary influences, such as Charles Bukowski, John Fante, or Raymond Carver, may be found in *The Motel Life*, but possibly its most obvious antecedent is *Of Mice and Men* (1937). For example, as in Steinbeck's novella, the two main characters in *The Motel Life* flee from loneliness through a common bond of loyalty where one of them (Jerry, who has killed a boy while driving drunk) depends on the other (his brother Frank, who is also the narrator of the novel). Similarly, as it happens in *Of Mice and Men*, one of the protagonists in *The Motel Life* (Frank) invents stories to provide the other (Jerry) with imaginary escape from a general atmosphere of fatalism. The end of Vlautin's novel is not too different from that of Steinbeck's book, but *The Motel Life* seems to offer a more optimistic message, rejecting determinism and vindicating hope. After all, as Frank Flannigan says at the end of the novel, "hope, it's better than having nothing at all" (Vlautin 2006, 206).

In *The Motel Life* Reno becomes its own character, a city portrayed from an ambivalent perspective. On the one hand, Reno seems to act as a negativist city, as a doomed

³ The film, directed and produced by brothers Alan and Gabe Polsky, premiered at the Rome Film Festival in 2012 where it won the Audience Award, Best Screenplay, Best Editing, and the Critics Award.

place that works against the personal development of the main protagonists. For example, the stereotypical association between gambling and the city is highlighted to explain the luckless existence of the Flannigans, as shown by Frank's remarks on his father's gambling addiction: "I always think that if we didn't live in Reno, he probably would have never gambled. Then maybe everything would have been different" (Vlautin 2006, 126). However, the main characters seem to identify themselves with the city, even if they are conscious of its shortcomings and unable to explain the reasons for such identification. As the protagonist of one of the bedtime stories invented by Frank Flannigan for his brother says, "*we all know this town is a shithole. But it's my shithole*" (Vlautin 2006, 66). This ambivalent attitude towards Reno is shared by Willy Vlautin himself, who in a lecture at the University of the Basque Country in 2014 stated the following: "I fell in love with Reno in the bars and I found my voice as a writer. [...] For good or bad, I was born in the right city" ("A Writer's Life in the American West").

In the novel, Reno works as a site of conflicted loyalties with its main characters struggling to leave the city, but feeling disorientated and helpless when they temporarily leave Reno. The city provides them with a sense of local identity and therefore when they are not in Reno, they feel confused and alienated. In fact, their behavior may be defined as an example of "postwestern displacement" (Lombardi 2013, 147). The Flannigan brothers long to embrace traditional American mobility in order to leave behind their luckless existence. Nevertheless, when adverse circumstances force them to move beyond city limits, they do not seem to profit from the experience of mobility. For example, it is worth mentioning the uneasiness of the Flannigans with the wilderness when on their way towards Montana they reject a potential future life for them in the woods: "Horrible things happen in the woods, believe me. How about those families that get murdered out in the woods? Bears, rodents, snakes, and more bugs than anywhere else in the world, crazed Vietnam vets, hillbillies" (Vlautin 2006, 20).

In *The Motel Life* Vlautin departs from one-dimensional approaches to Reno, choosing instead to underline its complex and multiple meanings. As a matter of fact, in the novel, the Reno motels illustrate the possibility of going beyond the traditional dichotomy between attachment to a place and mobility because these motels can also epitomize a resident mentality. As Frank Flannigan states in the novel, "most aren't even real motels anymore. Once they were new and held vacationers and honeymooners from all over the country, and now they barely survive as residential" (Vlautin 2006, 112). Similarly, the ambiguity of the novel extends to its road tragedy ingredients. The protagonists are constantly on the move, but they do not manage to break away from Reno, either physically or spiritually. In general, the novel illustrates an ambivalent approach towards Reno and its culture where centripetal and centrifugal forces share a hybrid space.

Vlautin's second novel, *Northline* is another realistic and gloomy portrait of urban Nevada with Las Vegas and, above all, Reno as its major settings. Its main protagonist is Allison Johnson, a young pregnant waitress who leaves Las Vegas in order to escape from her abusive boyfriend, gives her baby up for adoption and struggles to make a new life for herself in Reno. Allison has to deal with many handicaps, including alcohol dependence, poverty, family dysfunction, and low self-esteem, but her willingness to overcome adversity and to make connections with other troubled people in Reno certainly captivates the reader.

As it happens in *The Motel Life*, the main characters in *Northline* desperately search to escape from their desolate existence as slum-dwellers. Allegedly, they live in "the entertainment capital of the world," but they are not tourists in Las Vegas. Instead, they are working-class residents facing the grit beneath the glitz of this city. In Vlautin's novel the

dream of the West is replaced by the dream of the North and the traditional association in frontier mythology between mobility and regeneration is called into question. Allison Johnson's journey to Reno, only 440 miles northwards from Las Vegas, will not provide her with an instant solution to her economic and spiritual desolation. As a matter of fact, Vlautin refuses to idealize Reno in *Northline*. He may be a Reno native, but he does not glorify his hometown, choosing instead to offer a realistic portrait of the place and its residents, even if this means to reveal its bleak side.

Northline also illustrates some of the archetypal prejudices towards Reno, related to particular aesthetic approaches ("most people think this is an ugly town," Vlautin 2008, 191) or to the small size of this city ("there aren't much to it if I remember right ... What a shit hole that place is," Vlautin 2008, 97). However, the novel also reveals the potential attraction of this city due to its local and small-scale dimension, particularly when compared to Las Vegas. In fact, in Vlautin's novel we may see how Allison is able to take pleasure in her time in Reno, despite some tragic experiences there.

Vlautin's interest in exploring contemporary Reno geography is shared by other recent Nevada writers, who have played a fundamental role in "renovating" Reno writing. For example, we should definitely mention Claire Vaye Watkins's insightful book, *Battleborn* (2012), winner of The Story Prize. The book consists of ten short stories set in Reno and other Nevada cities, where Watkins offers an insightful approach to female subjectivity against the backdrop of the peculiar Nevada history. Their main characters often face loneliness, and physical and spiritual desolation, though at the end of some of these stories there also seems to be a place for hope. One of the most interesting stories is possibly the opening story of the book, "Ghosts, Cowboys," a brilliant coming-of-age story set in Reno, where Watkins combines a historical approach to the city and its founders with an autobiographical immersion into private memories (the author's father, Paul Watkins, was one of Charles Manson's followers). In her stories Watkins brilliantly evokes a sense of place, stressing in particular the interaction between her main characters and some iconic Reno places, such as casinos ("A casino can make an average man lovely. The lights are dim, the ceiling low and mirrored. The machines light his face from below in a soft sweet blue," Watkins 2012, 19) or Basque restaurants ("One Picon Punch will make you buy another. Two is too many. That night we had three each," Watkins 2012, 19).

Watkins's short stories and, above all, Vlautin's novels exemplify the increasing visibility of Reno fiction centered on class issues and written by young Nevada-raised authors. They are often coming-of-age stories where their protagonists fight for survival in the midst of economic limitations, problematic social integration, and family dysfunction. Three interesting examples of this kind of new fiction set in Reno and written by insiders are Brad Summerhill's *Gambler's Quartet* (2010), Ben Rogers's *The Flamer* (2012), and, above all, Tupelo Hassman's *Girlchild* (2012). This last novel became a *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice and is one the most remarkable fictional approaches to modern Reno of the present decade. Its setting is a trailer park on the outskirts of Reno, called in the novel Calle de las Flores and located "just north of Reno and just south of nowhere" (Hassman 2012, 6). The Calle resembles the Reno suburb of Sun Valley where Tupelo Hassman was raised in the 1980s. Its glamorous Spanish name, planned to evoke "the romance of the Old West" (Hassman 2012, 6), contrasts sharply with the living conditions of its inhabitants and epitomizes the failed promises of the West. The trailer park seems to work as a symbol of traditional American mobility, individualism, and freedom from the constraints of community life. Nevertheless, in most cases the mobile home means economic limitations (the inability to buy a house), commitment to a community consisting basically of down-and-out residents,

and very limited mobility. As Nancy Cook has remarked, “the only real mobility is downward” (2011, 221).

Girlchild may be regarded as an attempt to give a voice to the underdog of the New West and, in particular, to those women who are victims of poverty and abuse in an extremely materialistic society. It is a “bildungsroman” where its female protagonist struggles to escape from the inherent limitations of being a poor girl living in a ghetto.⁴ In this novel class and poverty seem to acquire a deterministic dimension for the main character and narrator, the adolescent Rory Hendrix. She displays her ambivalent feelings towards her community, longing to break away from a subculture that condemns her to poverty, teenage pregnancy, and family dysfunction, but also vindicating her bonds with her community. It is worth noting Hassman’s compelling portrait of the relationship of Rory both with her mother and with her grandmother, all of them victims of abuse, neglect, and misery in the outskirts of Reno. This city is not blamed for their plight. Nevertheless, the original association of this city with freedom and a new beginning (due to its archetypal popularity as “the divorce capital of the world”), is soon overshadowed in the novel by the narrator’s emphasis on the gritty dimension of this city. Particularly remarkable is her comparison of the natural beauty of Lake Tahoe, a picturesque resort located about an hour’s drive from Reno, and the ugliness of this city, a bleak place devoid of anything valuable: “nothing grows here. Instead of wildlife all we’ve got is nightlife. Reno is just like Tahoe, only without anything beautiful” (Hassman 2011, 23). And this criticism of Reno is also justified by the city’s commitment to materialism as exemplified by “gamblers, prostitutes, and tourists so focused on their own thin dimes they can’t spare one red cent for each other” (Hassman 2011, 23). Therefore, the old proud description of Reno as “the biggest little city in the world” is replaced in the novel by “THE BIGGEST LITTLE SHITTY IN THE WORLD” (Hassman 2011, 23).

2.3 The Outsider’s Literary Point of View on Reno in the Twenty-First Century: Two Basque Examples

Writing on Reno published in the last two decades testifies to the consolidation of a compelling urban perspective in western American literature. Local authors have started to challenge the dominant excess and vice image of Reno popularized by temporary visitors. Most of these new authors have portrayed characters living on the margins and trying to overcome family dysfunction and serious social and economic handicaps. The gradual maturation and diversity of Nevada and, in particular, Reno fiction is not only demonstrated by the success of these local authors, but also by the increasingly insightful and complex approaches offered by recent temporary residents who have departed from the stereotypes on the sin and vice elements traditionally associated with Nevada. To name just but two writers, we may mention two Basque authors, Bernardo Atxaga and Javi Cillero, who have contributed to the increasingly transnational and multicultural dimension of the literary approaches to this city. For example, Bernardo Atxaga, beyond any doubt the best-known contemporary Basque author, in his acclaimed *Nevadako egunak* (2013), translated into Spanish as *Días de Nevada* (2014) and awarded the prestigious Euskadi Prize for Literature, focuses on his personal recollections of his visit to Reno (2007-2008) to explore the interaction between his immersion into Reno life and his memories from the Basque Country. Atxaga goes beyond traditional Reno mythology to offer his own perspective of the city, a

⁴ In fact, Hassman’s novel often reminds the reader of Sandra Cisneros’s *The House of Mango Street* (1984), even from a formal point of view, because both novels consist of a series of vignettes where the narrator chronicles the life of her community and her own coming-of-age process.

view that, for instance, emphasizes the city's silence as one of the most notorious features of Reno: "Reno beti dago isil-isilik. Kasinoak eraikuntza estankoak dira, dena moketa barrutik, eta ez da hotsik hedatzen joko-makinen edo jantokien esparrutik harago. Kaleetan, Virginia Street nagusian bertan, ez da trafikoa nabarmentzen. Ezta 80 zenbakia daraman autobidean ere, edota 395ean. Iduri luke kaleak eta autobideak berak ere moketaz estalista daudela, edota jendea, autoak, kamioiak, gordean ibiltzen direla. Iluntzen duenean, isiltasuna—isiltasuna dagoelako inpresio subjektiboa—areagotu egiten da" (Atxaga 2013, 11).⁵ Atxaga's book becomes the chronicle of his adjustment to a city that provides him with a series of iconic motifs: the casinos, the movie *The Misfits*, or an urban landscape bounded by the nearby desert and mountains. However, Atxaga offers in the book his own interpretation of these archetypal images and cannot avoid focusing on other themes such as the impact on the city of such events as "the War Against Terror," Obama's electoral campaign, the economic recession, or the hunt for a sexual rapist and murderer.

Similarly, Javi Cillero has published two books set in Reno. The first one, *Uztailaren lauan, Renon* (The Fourth of July in Reno, 1999), is a solid play which won the City of San Sebastián Prize in the category of best theatrical work in Basque. His second book set in Reno is a more remarkable volume, a collection of short stories originally published in Basque as *Ero hiria* (2006). The book has been translated into Spanish as *Ciudad de locos* (2010) and into English as *Hollywood and I and Mad City* (2014). In these stories Cillero plays with parallel action, flashbacks and different points of view to portray a city that acquires multiple and often contradictory meanings for both its inhabitants and visitors. Cillero rejects a one-dimensional view of the city and offers a variety of perspectives on the city. Thus, for some of his characters, Reno is a boring city ("nothing happens in Reno; everything is very slow here," 305; "Reno doesn't have much to offer me," Cillero 2014, 238; "what can you do in Reno after five in the afternoon?" 257) or even a decadent place ("it looks dirty now. The place has got worse," Cillero 2014, 291), but for others it is a surprising city ("strange things like that happen all the time in Reno," Cillero 2014, 231), with a potential for opportunities ("anything is possible. There are more than twenty-four hours a day in Reno." Cillero 2014, 269). Some characters even emphasize the remarkable appeal of the city's landmarks ("Reno casino rooms are unbeatable. Cheap and cheerful. They make you feel like a child." Cillero 2014, 279) and even the beauty of the place ("You can see the city lights from the hill over the university. It's like a postcard." Cillero 2014, 285). Despite this multiplicity of perspectives on the city, a general sense of alienation and loss pervades most of these stories and Cillero emphasizes the inability of most of his characters to fit in this city. The recurrent references to the movie *The Misfits* certainly serve to illustrate the dominant feeling of misplacement that seems to affect the main characters in these stories. Ironically, these characters do not have to face social or economic marginalization, as the ones in Vlautin's novels or in Hassman's *Girlchild*, but they belong to the academia (most of them are university professors) and this intellectual "cover" only contributes to increasing their desperation (Cano 2006).

⁵ This quotation belongs to the original Basque edition of the book because *Nevadako egunak* has not been translated into English yet. Please find below the Spanish version of the above passage:

"Siempre hay silencio en Reno, incluso de día. Los casinos son edificios estancos, cubiertos por dentro con moqueta, y ningún sonido cunde más allá de las salas donde se alinean las máquinas tragaperras y las mesas de juego. Tampoco se hace notar el tráfico de la calle más transitada, Virginia Street, o el de las autovías que cruzan la ciudad, la 80 y la 395, como si también ellas estuvieran enmoquetadas o como si los coches, los camiones, circularan en secreto. Cuando anochece, el silencio, lo que subjetivamente se siente como tal, se hace aún más profundo." (Atxaga 2014, 9).

Both Atxaga's *Nevadako egunak* and Cillero's *Hollywood and I and Mad City* exemplify Reno's power to engage the imagination of a transnational audience and illustrate the vast potential of the outsider's point of view in the literary portraits of this city. After all, as Mikhail Bakhtin has claimed, "in the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly" (1986, 7).

3. Conclusion

To conclude this essay, it may be stated that we should reject a dual model of thinking about Reno's imagery because successful literary portraits of this city have been written in the last few decades both by insiders and outsiders, reconciling the image used to attract tourists with the reality of living in "the biggest little city in the world." As Edward Soja has observed, "we must realize that both the views from above and from below can be restrictive and revealing, [...] necessary but wholly insufficient" (1996, 314). So, a proper literary approach to Reno should involve both views, with neither inherently privileged, but with the recognition that so far this city has depended too much on a series of sensational and impressionistic images popularized by outsiders. Fortunately, contemporary literature on Reno, as most recent writing on western American cities, has vindicated a heterogeneous approach, paying more attention to the complexity of the urban dimension of the American West, to the city as a lived space (following Henry Lefebvre's terminology in *The Production of Space*, 1991), simultaneously real and imagined. The city becomes in these works a hybrid or third space (to use Homi Bhabha's terms in *The Location of Culture*, 1994, or Edward Soja's ones in *Thirdspace*, 1996), where the main emphasis lies on the interaction between urban dwellers and their environments.

Most of the titles mentioned here illustrate the consolidation of urban topics and settings in contemporary western American literature, with Reno writing as a major example. Today there is a national and international audience for writing dealing with the urban West. The flourishing of quality fiction about the urban West, as epitomized by contemporary Reno writing, has certainly enriched significantly our understanding of the postfrontier West. In fact, contemporary Reno literature illustrates the complex interaction between place and writing in the American West, contributing to the end of traditional scholarly prejudices against western American literature.

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Part II.

Literature and Cultural Studies

Reinventing Female Fashion. From Victorian Apparel to Steampunk Expression of the Self

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Abstract

Female steampunk fashion has developed to a point in which it is not just a reinterpretation of the Victorian past, but something totally new that has enabled the twenty-first-century woman to externalise her inner self and her true identity. The following lines focus on the transition from Victorian to Steampunk fashion and the new implications coming from the reinterpretation of the various elements used for feminine appearance. Several cultural productions of the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries will be used as examples of my main arguments, paying particular attention to the character of Mina Harker as represented in Stoker's masterpiece *Dracula* (1897) and in Norrington's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003). To support my arguments with a relevant theoretical framework, I will address several works by experts in the field of gender and cultural studies. Foucaultian notions about control over female bodies will also be relevant in my paper, as well as Butlerian ideas about the construction of gender identity. Since steampunk is set in a retro-futuristic world, some of Braidotti's notions about the post-human will be also discussed.

Keywords: steampunk, fashion, identity, gender, Victorian, *Dracula*, *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*

Aristotle said that “the aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things but their inward significance” (384-322). For many scholars, fashion is a work of art. Thus, it is usually used as a means of expression of inner feelings and ideas. This argument can be supported by the fact that as time goes by, fashion changes and adapts to the current era, being tightly related to the habits and customs of each period.

This essay provides several examples proving that Victorian outfit not only is an essential part of steampunk apparel but also that the different pieces of clothing used by the members of this subculture have been modified to adapt to modern days and the new woman living in the twenty-first century. These pages include quotes and ideas from scholars dealing with Victorian female fashion, such as Helene E. Roberts, as well as statements from specialists in the steampunk movement like Brigid Cherry and Maria Mellins. Similarly, Foucaultian notions about control and Butlerian ideas on identity are used to support my arguments. Since technology is vital for the members of this movement, Rossi Braidotti's reflections on the post-human also become relevant.

Helene E. Roberts argues that “garments ... signal to the world the role that the wearer may be expected to play and remind the wearer of the responsibilities of that role, its constraints and limitations” (1977, 554). Following this idea, the fact that Victorian women usually wore tight corsets that barely let them breathe implied the ideal woman was expected “to suffer and be still” (Ellis 73 qtd. in Roberts 556) (Figure 1: Victorian underwear). About

this, William Makepeace Thackeray also talked about the “exquisite slave” (Roberts 1977, 554), an idea central to Roberts in her essay of the same name and that can be related directly to Foucaultian concepts of dominance and submission (Foucault 1991; Storr 1970; Roberts 1977). The use of the corset showed others the self-control of the woman wearing it, being considered a means of control on the part of others who in a way “forced” her to wear it if she wanted to dress in the latest fashion.



Figure 1: Victorian underwear

Fortunately, the introduction of new materials and the advancements in the field of fashion have been useful to change the significance of the use of the garments that were typical of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Brigid Cherry and Maria Mellins, in their comparison between cyberpunk and steampunk, argue that the ending “punk” is highly relevant in the explanation of the general ideas behind steampunk:

The suffix -punk works ... as a signifier of fictional styles that juxtapose gritty, downbeat, low-life punk attitudes with cyberspace and cybernetics, extreme gore and biotechnology respectively. Similarly, the genre of fiction that melds anachronistic technology onto Victorian fantasy has been referred to as *steampunk* Ultimately, this has resulted in the emergence of subcultural activities and identities that are not only an unusual response to a literary genre, but renegotiate the meaning of punk. (Cherry and Mellins 2011, 6)

These scholars define steampunk as a subculture that emerges as a counter-culture that has come to influence every aspect of the steampunk life and identity. This power is so high that it is not just a matter of fashion anymore but a way of life. In fact, in “Negotiating the Punk in Steampunk,” Cherry and Mellins refer to the classification of steampunks made by John W. Schouten and James H. McAlexander (1995) and Ted Polhemus (1996) arguing that there are different types of steampunks according to their degree of involvement in the movement:

Hardcore members who are high in subcultural capital and adopt a full-time and/or particularly active performative identity; softcore members who, whilst still active and dedicated members of the community, do not necessarily have the time, commitment or skills to participate full-time; and non-members who style surf (Polhemus 1996) and dabble in the style on an ad hoc basis. (Cherry and Mellins 2011, 9)

Thus, the steampunk community is a cultural movement that does not only focus on a single aspect but on the various representations that this trend can take as the following chart shows (Figure 2). However, this table, together with this description included in Cherry and Mellins’s article shows that apparel is not the only thing that differentiates steampunks from

other groups. It is more a way of life, a specific way of looking at the world surrounding them.

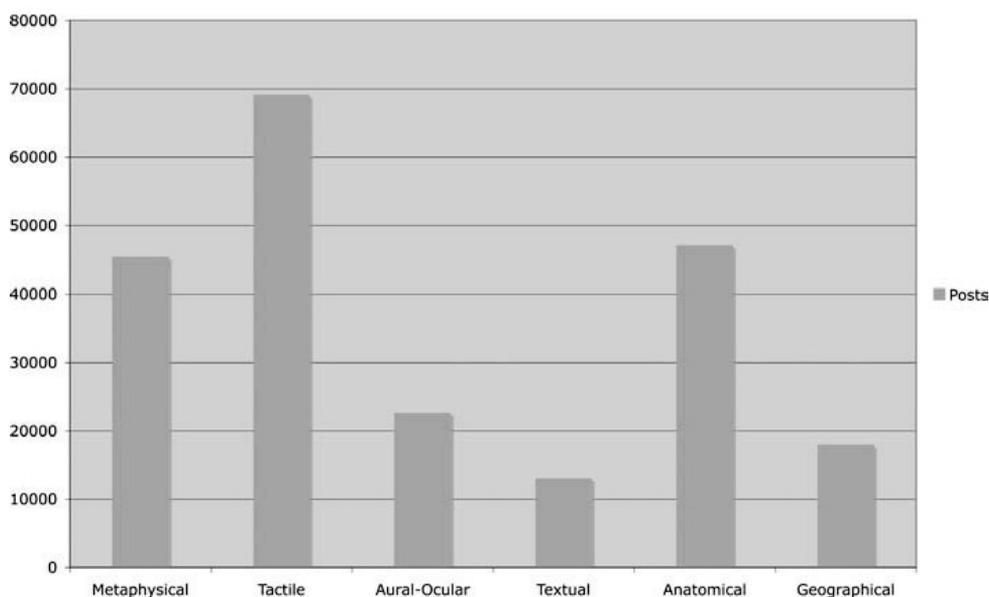


Figure 2: Forum discussion by activity and interest

Steampunks reproduce Victorian fashion adding some ornaments belonging to our contemporary culture. In the case of women, these changes tend to show the features of the new woman that forms part of this movement. Nineteenth-century style, in the same way as steampunk fashion, is innovative as it arises as a consequence of a dress reform (Kunzle 1977; Roberts 1977). Christine Feldman-Barret states that “distinguishing oneself from mainstream society continues to be attractive to those looking for an alternative youth (or adult) identity” (Feldman-Barrett 2013). Thus, this is the main point in common between Victorian and steampunk fashion. In *Sartor Resartus* (1986), Thomas Carlyle states that “clothes were not mere aesthetic ornament, but emblems of society’s hierarchy and symbols of the spirit” (Roberts 1977, 554). These two ideas point to the same fact: physical appearance is a representation of the inner-self and the cultural influences around us.

For steampunks, fashion becomes a means of distinguishing themselves from “normal” society, a way of reclaiming their view of past times as relevant in the world they inhabit. This relates to Butlerian notions of identity as an artificial construct (Butler 1990, 9–10); Judith Butler argues that the conventional binary division between gender is not valid since gender and, consequently, gender identity are built by the influence of cultural elements surrounding the subject (1990, 15). Contemporary cultural productions also portray this idea, especially those including graphic depictions of these characters, such as comic books, movies and TV series. About this, José J. Rodríguez Moreno detects a change in the representation of women in comic books as time passes by (Rodríguez Moreno 2011). The same happens with their portrayal in all the other cultural representations.

In fact, the representation of, for example, the character of Mina Murray varies incredibly from the “more Victorian” adaptation of Coppola’s *Dracula* to Norrington’s *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. Moreover, the representation of this character in

Moore's graphic novel this movie is adapted from is more similar to the Victorian one than to her steampunk version, as these pictures show (Figure 3). In these images, the facial expression is not the sole indicator of Mina's personality and strength but her clothes and apparel show the intrinsic value of her character and maturity.



Figure 3: Representations of Mina

The garments she is wearing in *Dracula* are clearly those that someone innocent and discreet would wear. The colours are not striking, and she wears many layers of clothes (the jacket, the blouse, and most probably, a corset under the dress to fit her waist, as it was fashionable in the period).

Clothing defined the role of each sex. Men were serious (they wore dark colours and little ornamentation), women were frivolous (they wore light pastel colours, ribbons, lace, and bows); men were active (their clothes allowed them movement), women inactive (their clothes inhibited movement); men were strong (their clothes emphasized broad chests and shoulders, and a softly rounded silhouette); men were aggressive (their clothing had sharp definite lined and a clearly defined silhouette), women were submissive (their silhouette was indefinite, their clothing constricting) (Roberts 1977, 555).

Victorian female fashion clearly relates to the idea of the angel in the house, submissive and inactive. These garments put particular emphasis on those parts that could be attractive to men as woman's breast, waist and bottom as these photographs prove (Figure 4). This particular focus on the female body can imply a sexualization of a non-sexual subject. As aforementioned, women were supposed to hide and repress their sexual instincts, so they had to look like innocent beings. However, this emphasis on parts that can be attractive to men transmits an idea of awareness of the importance men gives to these parts. Moreover, since the corset made it tough for women to breathe (Taddeo 2014), they had "to breathe from the upper part of the chest" (Roberts 1977, 558), oversexualizing the female body again, drawing men's attention to that part of their anatomies.



Figure 4: Victorian fashion

In fact, one of the practices of that period was extremely controversial, as it is also nowadays. Although some scholars, such as Kunzle, consider tight-lacing a low-class fashion, others, like Roberts, state that it was common practice in the Victorian era. However, there is evidence of the existence of this tendency in all social classes. The first picture below is an example of the results of extreme tight-lacing, which shows a woman with an incredibly small waist in her underwear. This is achieved using this technique of tight-lacing, which can parallel to the Chinese traditional custom of tying women's feet. A woman slowly reduces the size of her waist by lacing her corset more and more, until they get to a waist size of forty-three or forty-five centimetres (Roberts 1977, 558). This fashion had horrible consequences for health, such as the ones shown in this image (Figure 5) because it “was designed to change the configurations of the body to accord more closely with the feminine ideal of the small waist which haunted the period” (Roberts 1977, 558).

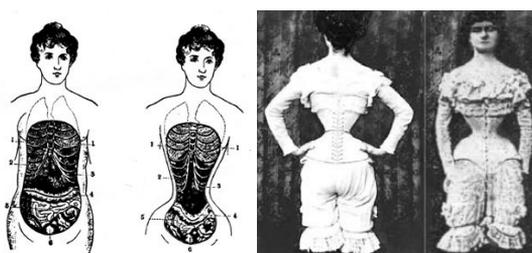


Figure 5: Tight-lacing

Although Kunzle argues that this fashion was not as widespread as Roberts states and that it was typical of lower classes (Kunzle 1977), it is doubtful since, apparently, there were many advertisements of corsets, even for babies. I reproduce some of these advertisements here. According to Roberts, the fact that women agreed to follow this fashion was another sign of their “willingness to bear suffering, either physical or mental,” which “was intrinsic to the notion of the ideal woman ... that had been taught that submissiveness and pain were related” (1977, 558). Moreover, the fact that some of the advertisements shown below were addressed to mothers means that this “masochistic” attitude was transmitted from the cradle, from mothers to daughters. There were even corsets for pregnant women and babies (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Advertisements

Roberts understands Victorian fashion as a means to “mold female behaviour to the role of the ‘exquisite slave’” (Roberts 1977, 557). Naturally, the use of these garments implied a certain discipline to endure suffering. Their materials were extremely

uncomfortable, and the pressure provoked by those tight corsets even caused some cases of asphyxia. In this same article, she lists the drawbacks of these pieces of clothing.

The sleeves ... were set so low over the shoulder and so tightly encased the arm that it was virtually impossible to raise the arm to shoulder height or make an aggressive or threatening gesture. Skirts also inhibited movement.... the floor long petticoats ... made rapid movement of legs difficult.... the crinoline, or cage, ... transformed women into *caged birds* surrounded by hoops of steel.... the light material of the crinoline posed the very real danger of inflammability.... the crinoline ... was replaced by the tied-back skirt and train. The new fashion gave ample assurance of immobile submission, a reminder to men of their own superior mobility and to women of the restraint and passivity supposedly inherent in their sex. (Roberts 1977).

In these lines, Roberts compares the use of crinolines with turning women into caged birds. This image was just a metaphor for women's corsets and lives. Women were apparently free, but they had to live imprisoned, not only in their homes but their clothes. These had been designed to prevent them from escaping from their obligations, and that made them hide their inner-self and true identity, pretending to be happy with this situation. As Foucault states in his *Discipline and Punish*, before the disappearance of torture, the body "was the major target of ... repression" (Foucault 1991); thus, the use of the corset can be considered a more subtle means of social oppression or self-imposed torture.

One drawback that Robert's article does not mention is that women used to need one or more people to help them in the arduous tasks of dressing up, as these images show (Figure 7). The corset was tied so tightly that someone was required even to push with her feet to the wearer's back to tighten the corset. The crinoline was sometimes so exaggeratedly oversized that several people had to help, with the assistance of sticks, to put the cage and the garments on.



Figure 7: Dressing up in Victorian times

Nevertheless, thanks to the new advances in fashion, the situation has changed a great deal. New materials are being used nowadays, much more comfortable and easy to wear. These enable new Neo-Victorians, in general, and steampunks, in particular, to wear clothes resembling those of the period but not being forced to endure the consequences of the use of corsets and crinolines. Moreover, since times have changed, female steampunks are not required to wear those long skirts and stiff crinolines. Nowadays, it is common to find them wearing trousers and light, short skirts allowing them to move freely.

The pictures below show this clearly (Figure 8). In the first one, we can see Mina fighting the villain. Being dressed in black leather, she is represented as a tough character, ready to do whatever she wants to. Moreover, she is not wearing a skirt; she is wearing a more male outfit, more appropriate for a fight. These clothes give her a freedom of movement

unthinkable in Victorian times for a woman of her status. Nevertheless, even when she is not fighting—like in the second one—, her outfit is a very comfortable one: long coat, fitted but open at the bottom, a long skirt in the same fashion, and a light shirt, not a tight corset or a crinoline. This kind of clothes allows her to move freely in her laboratory while carrying out her experiments.



Figure 8: Steampunk Mina

One of the characteristics of the steampunk trend is the extensive use of DIY—which stands for Do It Yourself—since they adapt contemporary fashion to their needs of recalling the Victorian period. Probably, one of the reasons for this rapid spread of DIY techniques is the increasing importance of social networks (Stetz 2009) and of websites such as YouTube where a new steampunk can find nearly 150,000 tutorials of all types—makeup, goggles, hats, journal covers, guns... This contributes to the increase not only to the steampunk community but also of the involvement of those who already belong to the group.

In comparing steampunk with Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), Feldman-Barrett argues that “material objects have the ability to travel through time and become markers of the past” (Feldman-Barrett 2013). Thus, this memorabilia used by steampunks enables them to move to a more exotic world where they can find relief from the anxieties of contemporary society. In their search for the relationship between punk and steampunk, Cherry and Mellins express a similar idea: “Punks ... embody a conscious rejection of the norm and signal active dissent through clothing and performance.” Thus, these DIY techniques can be seen as a way of expressing the steampunks’ rejection of contemporary “traditional” societies.

DIY techniques, also known as modding, are not exclusive for fashion. This modding is also applied frequently to modern machines. Steampunks find relief in manipulating devices. If they can manipulate these tools, it means that they can understand how they work. Thus, they can understand the world they live in better and, at the same time, they can overcome the rapid advance of technology in contemporary societies. Moreover, as Rosi Braidotti argues in her work *The Posthuman* (2013), life can be modified by technology, which at the same time also allows us to relate and to connect to other environments (Braidotti 2013).

According to Feldman-Barret, this modding has become a way of differentiating from mainstream society and building steampunks’ identity. However, there are still people who are not good at modding—or that do not have enough time for it. About this, Feldman-Barrett quotes Muggleton’s “From Classlessness to Clubculture” (2005), arguing that “the physical manifestations of identity come from a mix of ‘what is available in the shops, in the market, and the imprint of our desires’.” (Feldman-Barrett 2013)

In her article, Ferguson talks about “anachroretrofetishism” (2011, 76), that is, a tendency followed by people who show particular interest in those products and fashion recalling past times. Thus, the three different movements included in Feldman-Barrett’s article can be considered examples of anachroretrofetishism: goths, lolitas and steampunks. In

her description of goths, she argues that they look at Bram Stoker's *Dracula* for an inspiration (Feldman-Barrett 2013), which implies the influence that this work has had on these movements. The lolitas also obtain their inspiration from the Victorian period but in this case, they try to recall Victorian girlhood and innocence using pastel colours and childish outfits (Feldman-Barrett 2013). Finally, in her explanation of steampunk, she sums up this fashion "as the style attributed to that of Victorian adventurers or 'mad' inventors" (Feldman-Barrett 2013). Nevertheless, in the case of women, we can also find more Victorian outfits including some steampunk complements as these pictures reveal (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Steampunk fashion

As most pictures included in this essay show, one of the characteristics that can be observed is a hypersexualization of the female body through outfit. The form and materials of the corsets and the modernized crinolines and crinolinettes are so similar to those of the Victorian period that one may think that the significance is the same. However, taking into account that this sub-cultural fashion is not so widespread, the meaning of these garments has changed a great deal.

As stated above, the materials of which these pieces of clothing are made are lighter and more flexible, so they do not prevent women from moving as they used to. It is also relevant to point out that, since tight-lacing is not taken to the extreme—with a few exceptions around the world—, female bodies do not lose their regular shape and cannot be said to suffer in the way Victorian tight-lacers did. Thus, the idea implicit in the corset of “domestication of the female body” can be argued to disappear.

Moreover, the new gender stereotypes that have become frequent in this movement have also led to different ways of life. This has also translated into a change in fashion. Whereas Victorian women were expected to wear dresses and long skirts, steampunks usually wear trousers and mini-skirts too, usually made of pieces of cloth either tied up or joined by safety pins—like those outfits common in the punk movement (Cherry and Mellins 2011).

However, there is some controversy within the members of the steampunk community about the necessity of “historical accuracy” (Cherry and Mellins 2011, 19) in their outfit and apparel. On the one hand, some of these members think that their outfit must be as close to the Victorian original as possible. On the contrary, there are some who believe that this type of fashion allows for mixing clothes and accessories of any kind, no matter the era to which they belong. Nevertheless, the fact is that the lines between what is and is not steampunk are not clear cut and allow their members to give the term as many different interpretations as they wish.

Summing up, it seems that fashion changes as time goes by, adapting to the current era. Since steampunk looks at Victorian times for inspiration, the members of both worlds wear a similar style. However, we can argue that the same piece of clothing has different interpretations in each period. For instance, as I have illustrated, whereas the corset was used

as a means of oppression, submission and control over other bodies in the past, it is nowadays used as a symbol of power, domination and control over one's own body.

Women were taught that they had to look perfect, and fashion was aimed at that end. The tight corsets and the crinolines highlighted those parts of the female body that were considered desirable for men. They had to be "exquisite slaves" (Roberts 1977) and their apparel represented that. Tight-lacing became the self-imposed chains for Victorian women. However, thanks to the new materials and the new ideas about the female body, these pieces of clothing are not punishment anymore but a personal choice, instead. Moreover, modding is used by women and other steampunks to express their inner feelings and interests.

The change in personal apparel has been such that from being dressed in order to emphasize their femininity, risking their physical health, steampunks start to dress up giving particular importance to the control over technology, of knowledge, and paying particular attention to those elements representing power and domination, the new values of the woman of the twenty-first century.

The term anachroretrofetishism becomes critical in the understanding of this new subculture. It shows their attraction for what happened in past times rather to contemporary events and attitudes. They look for inspiration in those periods that they consider more relevant, the cradle of what we know nowadays. The Victorian period is an era of inventions and of rapid technological advance in which steampunks find relief from the anxieties provoked by all these advancements.

Finally, the type of disguises used in steampunk conventions, although very close to Victorian clothing, shows the change in gender stereotypes. Women are not innocent, submissive beings anymore; they are now mature and powerful. They break the rules that were established to regulate their bodies. Their sexual instincts come to the fore and women show themselves as dynamic beings able to achieve whatever they want without the need of a man by their side.

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The Industrialization of the Female Body in Twenty-First Century Crime Fiction

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Abstract

Women have been present in crime fiction from its early stages, playing either the role of the victim or the criminal. However, there has been a dramatic and significant shift in twenty-first century American crime fiction and female characters are no longer reacting to their male counterparts. This paper will analyse how the main characters in *Gone Girl* (2012) by Gillian Flynn and *Luckiest Girl Alive* (2015) by Jessica Knoll subvert traditional and patriarchal discourses by using the concepts of performativity, masquerade and plastic bodies. In this new auto re/presentation, the Internet and mass media have played a key role allowing the two protagonists to craft their identities taking into account social considerations of gender and social class. By doing so, the characters are also reclaiming their agency, while always locating themselves in the most formulaic literary genre.

Keywords: feminism, crime fiction, contemporary literature, American

1. Introduction

The role women have played in crime fiction has shifted dramatically during the 20th century. So much so that by the 1990's women had conquered this literary genre both as authors and as main characters. With characters such as Dr. Kay Scarpetta and Dana Scully, female main characters became the preferred detectives for mass audiences. However, by the end of the century, the role these women were playing in traditional literary forms had run its course and, during the second decade of the twenty-first century American, crime fiction saw the rise of a new kind of female main character. There have been two significant novels in the aforementioned shift: one is Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* (2012) followed by Jessica Knoll's *Luckiest Girl Alive* (2015), which will be analysed from a feminist point of view, always taking into account their belonging to the mainstream literary crime fiction genre.

In traditional crime fiction, women have been either victims or criminals and they had always played a secondary role to the main male detective. That is, women entered the narration either as corpses or as femme fatales, who used their bodies to seduce the male detective. Linda Mizejewski highlights the importance of giving female bodies in crime fiction the attention they deserve, even in more traditional plots:

The detective story is all about bodies, usually beginning with homicide, the disturbing discovery of the body, a threat to meaning and order. The goal is to restore order through the justice system. But the usual machineries of justice—investigators, police, the legal system—are overwhelmingly filled with masculine, white, heterosexual bodies—an old-boys network, shot through with suspicion of women.

When she does appear in the traditional story, the woman shows up as a body—if not the victim, then the seductress or suspect. The interrogation scene in *Basic Instinct* (1992) says it all—a roomful of guys and the lethal blonde in a skirt who uncrosses her legs. (2004, 12-13)

But women in twenty-first century crime fiction are no longer victims or femme fatales and they no longer react to the male main characters (Munt 1994, 4). Flynn's and Knoll's main characters have inaugurated a new paradigm in crime fiction in which women are re/acting to the traditional subversion of their bodies. Furthermore, they are reclaiming their bodies by playing by the rules: by using traditional images and discourses, both main characters have managed to question and subvert re/presentation of women's bodies in crime fiction. Due to crime fiction's tight links to the context it is being produced in, it is necessary to acknowledge contemporary theories dealing with the representation of bodies and the crafting of self-identity.

The first one is Judith Butler's idea of performativity or identity as role-playing, even though she makes it clear in *Gender Trouble* (1990) that such a performance is not intended. Butler even explores the role language plays in the construction of identity and she finally concludes: "language has the power to create the socially real" (1990, 115). However, what is real and what is not in crime fiction is deeply affected by Joan Rivière's theorisation of femininity as a masquerade (1929). Both ideas put the female body at the centre of identity creation, although they deprive women of the agency to decide who they are.

It was not until Susie Orbach published *Bodies* (2010) that we reached a point in which we can think of our bodies as blank spaces we can fill in with whatever adjective we want, that is, women were recognised the agency they really had. Because crime fiction has always worked as a tool for social criticism, and because women have traditionally been just bodies in detective novel, we can say that we now have a re/definition of the female body as plastic. Orbach has already addressed this discussion from a feminist perspective and she speaks of unstable bodies that are "experienced as objects to be honed and worked on" (2010, 2). In order for us to believe that we can work on our bodies, she has identified a set of mind in which we believe our bodies to be "infinitely modifiable" (2010, 177).

These theories, as well as the original narratives that will be analysed, have yet benefited from a social development that has radically changed the way women see and construct their bodies. Social media and the Internet have played a key role in this new perception of our bodies. It is only necessary to surf the net for a few hours and visit just a few beauty or fashion blogs to find out how to adequate female behaviour and appearances to endless contexts. We can find how to dress accordingly for a wedding, for a cocktail party, for a baby shower, and many other things that, apparently, we need help with. Because of the way in which social media are helping to spread different codes, and performances, we are living in a way in which our identity, understood in a very superficial way, has become industrialized. We have mass production of clothes and make-up that have led to a mass production of performances, bodies and identities.

To put these three ideas in common into the field of crime fiction: female characters are no longer performing a masquerade of classic femininity that results in a bad ending for them. We now have female main characters who are conscious, in a meta-literary way, of the role they are supposed to play and the ways in which society produces women bodies and identities. So, in short, we have two main female characters who are subverting crime fiction tradition by taking advantage of nowadays' industrialization of women's bodies as a reflection of their identities.

2. Analysing Amy

Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn tells the story of Amy and Nick, a young couple, who have recently moved from NYC to Missouri after the economic crisis left them jobless. By the time the narration starts, they are about to celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary, when Nick comes home to find it burglarized and his wife missing. As the plot unfolds, the reader discovers that Amy and Nick were having problems and he is displaying a very calm demeanour despite the situation.

On the now very famous second part of the book, which starts with what is known as “The Cool Girl Rant,” the reader discovers Amy is actually alive and she is setting up Nick for her murder after finding out he had been having an affair with one of his young students. As the real Amy takes charge of the narration, we also discover that she has been putting up a performance for years, playing along with what patriarchal society considers to be a ‘cool girl’ or ‘cool girlfriend’:

Men always say that as the defining compliment, don't they? She's a cool girl. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinks cheap beer, loves threesomes and anal sex, and jams hot dogs and hamburgers into her mouth like she's hosting the world's biggest culinary gang bang while somehow maintaining a size 2, because Cool Girls are above all hot. Hot and understanding. Cool Girls never get angry; they only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want. Go ahead, shit on me, I don't mind, I'm the Cool Girl.

Men actually think this girl exists. Maybe they're fooled because so many women are willing to pretend to be this girl. (2012, 22-23)

By setting up this new persona, Amy has created a performativity affecting her identity (Butler 1990) through masquerade (Rivière 1929), in which she has considered her body as plastic (Orbach 2012). The quote shows a performance where a young woman's mind is erased, and she is left to be defined by her body and basic bodily actions like eating, drinking and having sex. This discourse proves that Amy is aware of the social expectations for young women—reduced to their bodies—but, after playing the role a few years, she is not happy with it. So, she decides to reclaim her body by crafting her own murder: she chooses to become the victim and plays the role for her own benefit.

After setting up Nick for murder and running away, Amy is discovered, recognized by someone and robbed. She retorts to Desi, a high school boyfriend who is very happy to take care of her, as long as she goes back to the idea of ‘Amy’ he has in mind. They go to a house by a lake from which she does not get out of, and he starts buying her healthy food, blond dye and fashionable clothes. As she sees herself trapped in yet another version of Amy that a man wants—but that she is not longer happy to play by—Amy creates a new narrative in which she is being held hostage by Desi. Images play a key role in this new plot, and she makes sure to be seen crying and soaked in blood—actually wine—on the house's CCTV. When she finally kills Desi and goes back to Nick, she does not change her clothes, nor does she get rid of the white lingerie she is wearing. When she parks the car in front of her house, all the national television companies are there to film a distressed Amy, back home soaked in blood after escaping her kidnapper. She has made sure she is a prime time worthy victim.

3. Analysing Ani

Luckiest Girl Alive by Jessica Knoll was published three years after *Gone Girl* and it tells the story of TifAnni “Ani” FaNelli, a middle-class, New Jersey young girl who grew up obsessed with appearances. As a consequence, she has been modelling herself after the American beauty canon in which capitalism, social class, and appearances subject the female body. Her job as an editor at a New York-based magazine provide her with a privileged point of view from which to talk about fashion, make-up, and the so-called beauty routines reminiscent of mass production that shape the lives of many young women nowadays. However, the title of the novel refers to Ani’s escaping a mass shooting at her high school, when she was a teenager. *Luckiest Girl Alive* focuses on the construction of femininity from a pop culture point of view. Knoll also highlights patriarchal discourses that have led Ani to wish to “marry up”. To do so, the main character makes a great use of her successful job at a NYC women’s magazine to analyse, deconstruct and become the type of women who marry upper American class men.

Once the story starts, she is “Stylish, successful, engaged, and all by twenty-eight years old, no less” (2015, 17). She makes clear she has achieved such a success thanks to her body and her looks. She claims there is a way to get dressed, and that is “fashion-blog right” (2015, 41) and she starves herself to make her body fit into size 0 white jeans. When Ani speaks, she uses a discourse of hunger and sacrifice that is inspired by images of women in mass products such as magazines and ads. Even though she has what we would call “*femme fatale* looks”, like big breasts and wide hips, she considers these traditional female marks as vulgar and tries to erase them. However, other classical feminine markers remain intact and are integrated in the industrialization of the body, such as the hair, which is usually described as “a panel of hair” (2015, 145). The novel subverts pop culture and patriarchal discourses from an aesthetic point of view to which fashion and female bodies are central. No wonder Ani ends up claiming, reminiscing Orbach (2010), “Everything was fixable” (2015, 78). She even admits to having fooled all of NYC’s upper class with her “rich girl” looks, because, she proudly states: “My mask was that convincing” (2015, 88).

4. Conclusions

It is the way in which both characters take on social constructions and expectations for women, put them in relation to the crime fiction tradition and subvert them that has turned these two novels in landmarks in twenty-first century crime fiction. By being aware of the plasticity of their own bodies, they are reclaiming them as a tool, even though the identities that they produce could not be considered healthy. They put up a masquerade, fully aware of every choice that they make, and they proudly claim their right to do so in a society where mass production has become the norm. Both women end up producing industrialized identities based on social constructions, but in the process they subvert not only the literary genre they belong to, but gender stereotypes as well.

We can conclude that these two novels offer a re/imagining of traditional crime fiction as well as a questioning of gender stereotypes through a process reclaiming their bodies. Both Amy and Ani produce their bodily identities in an industrial way, so that they put up a masquerade that becomes an accepted performance of femininity. However, while doing so, both women are fully aware that it is their body they are using, and that they have the right to own it and use it. Both happy endings suggest that feminist crime fiction in the twenty-first century is finally a place where women can become agents and break away with a literary

tradition in which they were either corpses or femme fatales. Twenty-first century crime fiction is, then, a place for feminism.

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The Will to Belong in Carson McCullers’ *The Member of the Wedding*

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Abstract

Carson McCullers’ *The Member of the Wedding* introduces a twelve-year-old girl called Frankie Addams struggling to belong and to be part of a group. However similar this character may be to the author, the novella presents a typical problem, common to this age group and gender. This paper tries to show the main character’s “sense of isolation” (Carr 1973, 335), how she faces society, reality, her own self, her own growing up and her place in her environment, as well as the mechanisms she disposes of in order to cope with this struggle. Language is found to be the main means to help her discover not only how the world is and works, but also how it helps her to figure out her own truth, her motivations and her place in the world.

Keywords: McCullers, membership, isolation, belonging, language

1. Introduction

Carson McCullers (Columbus, Georgia, 1917) achieved prestige and notoriety at a very young age, when she published *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, her first and most famous work. The novella *The Member of the Wedding* (1946) is her third work and it also received both public and critical acclaim, although not as much as *The Heart*. Throughout all of her work, there are two predominant characteristics which can be found in this novella. On the one hand, her characters always feel some “sense of isolation” (Carr 1976, 335). On the other, her “characters share a particular quirk in the exercise of their capacity to love—they exist, and eventually expire, by falling in love with a hopeless hope” (Bloom 2009, 2). It is the aim of this paper to exemplify these issues, in addition to her will to belong *to* or *with* a group, to end that feeling of isolation, and, finally, the mechanisms she uses to achieve her aims.

Carr reminds us that, for the author, “reciprocity in a love relationship seemed impossible” (1976, 2), and her works represent this struggle. The main character of this novella is a twelve-year-old girl called Frankie Addams, who falls in love with her brother’s wedding from the first moment when, at the beginning of the story, the family is told he is getting married. She magnifies this event, for she finds a group to belong to, as the couple becomes, according to her, “the we of me” (position 585 out of 2277). So far, her “sense of isolation” (Carr 1976, 335) had been as strong as McCullers’ own. This is also represented in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, whose title is “her most impressive metaphor” (Bloom 2009, 2). The same title could easily be applied to all of her work. Both in her first novel and in this novella, the adolescent characters—Mick Kelly and Frankie, respectively—resemble the author. As Presley reminds us, Frankie’s similarity with the author is even stronger (1996). It is true that “Frankie Addams was not McCullers’ mirror image as an adolescent, but she was

close kin in every important aspect of character and being” (Carr 1990, 73). Nevertheless, despite the strong resemblance between McCullers and the character she crafts, the point is, according to Dangerfield, the “pattern of behavior” that “Frankie Addams [...] conforms” (1996, 31), in addition to the isolation every child may feel. Dangerfield reminds us that Frankie “does nothing much a twelve-year-old might not do. Yet the further you read into *The Member of the Wedding* the more you realize, it seems to me, that Frankie is merely the projection of a problem that has nothing much to do with adolescence.”

2. Isolation

The dichotomy “individual” against “crowd” is quite recurrent in the arts. Through a young character such as Frankie Addams, the reader perceives the sense of isolation intensely. The Spanish journalist Javier Gallego has recently argued that people belong wherever they happen to pay their taxes (Gallego 2015)¹. Although obviously and easily arguable, this statement may be partly true and, in the novella, this idea enables us to understand that a young person cannot really belong until she finds an aim, or at least some purpose in life, and begins to make decisions regarding, for example, where to live and where to work. Besides, since being born in a certain place is completely accidental, an adolescent does not necessarily have to belong in this place, and the South of the United States is a repressive place for the characters McCullers creates, as well as for the person McCullers herself was. So it is obvious that place of birth is *not* necessarily her problem, but that of everybody else.

And this *feeling* of isolation begins with their physical appearance. The author’s body becomes important in this novella when we bear in mind that both Frankie and Carson were, at about the same age, concerned about their height. Carr reminds us that, when McCullers was young, “the characteristic that [she] was most self-conscious about—and a differentness she did not like—was her height. It had leveled off at 5 feet 8½ inches when she was thirteen” (1976, 24). In the novella, this concern is represented through Frankie’s fear of never stopping growing (244), a problem that becomes insignificant when the bride says she does not think she will keep growing for too long. Frankie perceives this as a compliment, and her imagination takes off. Besides, the name of the place where they are getting married, Winter Hill, only encourages her to use her imagination even more: she thinks it is full of snow and mountains, which are as high as her imagination flies. And, for Frankie and McCullers, “imagination was far truer than reality” (Carr 1976, 19). So finally, when she does get to see Winter Hill, she discovers the reality of it just being another Southern town.

Before that, we are focusing on her thoughts and her will to belong. From the moment she comes up with the epiphany of her belonging with the couple, she feels everything is changed. She is unable to see the logic in the world, the consequentiality of everything, and she is only able to think “the world is certainly a sudden place” (65), but nevertheless she belongs. Her obvious immaturity does not allow her to understand how the world works, as “things began to change and Frankie did not understand this change” (296). Moreover, she cannot understand that there is no way for her to really go and live with her brother, despite her willingness and her belief that she actually *does* belong with them. Not only does she believe so, but she actually changes her name in order to be like her brother and the bride, Jarvis and Janice. As “[b]oth their names begin with J A”, as she herself says, she changes her name by reducing her real masculine-sounding name to a one-letter minimum and adding a

¹ This observation came up in an entirely different context, as it was made in relation to the Catalonians’ claims for political independence in the last few years.

middle name: F. Jasmine. This is much more feminine, less ambiguous, and much less childish than her own. This is encouraging for her. She also remembers what the bride had said about her own height and taken it as a compliment. That is, for her, certainly more than she can gain from a missing father, a present and loving caretaker, and a little cousin. In this way, she is just starting to shape her reality through language, which is her mechanism to belong, to be part of something and to understand the world.

The reader is told that Frankie “wanted only to be recognized for her true self” (828), but, at the same time, she is afraid of that very same thing. This is mainly represented through the group of Freaks that are going around town. The ambiguity Frankie feels towards them is very interesting. It is through these Freaks the reader learns about her worries and the other side of the coin of belonging with a crowd, when it comes to an unwanted crowd. Her thoughts around this are related to what McCullers herself felt. Carr stated that the author “yearned to belong to a group—or at least *be able* to join one if she chose—yet she retained of her own separateness and the need to feel and remain unique” (1976, 13-14). She also said that “she reasoned that if she were ‘a member,’ she could have whatever degree of anonymity she wished” (24). Frankie describes the situation as follows,

The Half-Man Half-Woman, a morphidite and a miracle of science. This Freak was divided in completely half—the left side was a man and the right side a woman. The costume on the left was a leopard skin and on the right side a brassiere and a spangled skirt. Half the face was dark bearded and the other half bright glazed with paint. Both eyes were strange. Frankie had wandered around the tent and looked at every booth. She was afraid of all the Freaks, for it seemed to her that they had looked at her in a secret way and tried to connect their eyes with hers, as though to say: we know you. (263)

Ambiguity is obvious from the very beginning of this quote, when she sees the “Half-Man Half-Woman,” and it ends up with her fear to be recognized and accepted by that crowd she is both attracted to and repelled by. She sees the crowd as an “undifferentiated mass” (DeLillo 1991, 3). Thus, she would be acquiring a certain anonymity McCullers so yearningly looked forward to by becoming a member, but it is, first, not a well-considered crowd—they do not fit in society—, and second, not *her* own decision to belong to this group, but, rather, the other way around. This crowd is *used* for society’s leisure time and she considers that they are laughed at rather than really accepted, yet integrated into society. The crowd in DeLillo’s novel *Mao II* (1991) also implies a religious feeling. Although not explicitly, the same happens in McCullers’ novella, somehow. Martín Salván states that in DeLillo’s novel the crowd is presented as doubly dangerous, not only because it threatens to include the individual by erasing barriers and limits, but also because it is understood as an aligned entity. The sect, she argues, only admits committed followers (2009, 186). The crowd is also envisioned as a threat to the individual (188). And Frankie seems to understand it this way too.

In a way, the passage quoted above also deals with heterosexual and marital love, the seemingly only option in society back then, even more so in a place like the South. The Half-Man Half-Woman embodies the perfect union, the only one that the concept of “love” that she has been taught is supposed to represent: a man and a woman together. This union is the final way in which society tells people to belong, to fit in. The “freak” disrupts the traditional conception of a two-fold love, of reciprocity, for that person has both sexes in one body. That is attractive for Frankie, who is, as mentioned earlier, a kind of embodiment of McCullers herself. She feels ambivalently attracted to this person. They find that duality both attractive

and terrifying. Frankie understands it is not accepted and she is still not mature enough to cope with it.

The African-American housekeeper, Berenice, is her external voice of reason and she tells Frankie that she “keep[s] building on to any little compliment you hear about yourself You cozen and change things too much in your mind” (466). Her childhood prevents her from seeing the ones who are close to them and finding something—or someone—outside her identity and her world. That is why she is so surprised when she understands that Berenice feels included when Frankie says “we” (1323). Frankie witnesses she belongs but she does not feel accepted and keeps looking for something external to her, external to her hometown. She still seeks to be seen, to be perceived, in spite of the fact that she *is* already seen, perceived and loved.

So Berenice is Frankie’s “teacher”. Through her, Frankie is reminded of the good and the bad things of fitting in and of love. Frankie learns of the “norm” through the housekeeper. Through their conversations they keep, we are told of the strength and, at the same time, the brutality, of love. When Berenice tells her of her previous marriages, Frankie is shocked because of the powerfulness of love and the feeling it produces after it falls apart. Frankie is both immensely attracted to the way Berenice talks about it and afraid of what it represents. Berenice did not grow “an inch since” her first marriage (374), as she tells Frankie, and that frightens her and comforts her because she fears she will never stop growing, as stated earlier on. But Berenice was also unhappy in her subsequent marriages due to her obsession, her need to find someone who fitted her memories of her first husband, Ludie. Berenice is Frankie’s voice of reason because of her central role in Frankie’s life, due to her mother’s death when giving birth to her and her father constantly working. As her voice of reason, Frankie is following her example: she is obsessed with the feeling her brother’s wedding produces in her. She understands that Berenice transcended then, and she is also looking for and forward to that as well and thinks that she can do it through the wedding. She seeks to transcend “boundaries, race and gender” (Byerman 2008, 25), and not only to belong. And she tries to transcend through her telling of her own story, of her belief of belonging to her brother’s marriage. She tries to be the third member of the marriage, which is *unnatural* to the patriarchal structure imposed by society. So language is basically her means to transcend, however conscious she is about it, and it seems to her the only way possible.

Her giving words to her thoughts and her constant search for them to express herself is her way towards freedom of the self. Consequently, she changes her name twice throughout the novella. The work is divided in three parts, each covering one day, except for the last section, which also includes the situation not long after the wedding. The first section tells us: (1) when the family is told her brother is getting married, then (2) the day before the wedding and, finally, (3) the day of the wedding and sometime after it. After that very first day, she changes her name into F. Jasmine. This is done not only for her to belong with her brother and his bride, but also to seem more feminine and not as childish as before, when she was Frankie. She is trying to shape her reality. Later on, she changes it into Frances, her real name, which may mean her coming closer to who she really is, to her self-recognition as a person, as a self. By changing it, she is trying to change, to be different, to transcend. This happens despite Berenice’s warnings, for she says that “things accumulate around your name” (1589), and the problems that this change may bring: people could stop recognizing you. It is true that Frankie is not McCullers’ characterization in this work, but, as stated earlier, “she was close kin” (Carr 1990, 73). Through Frankie, McCullers is trying to define reality and find a meaning through language, through the giving of words to their thoughts. Language seems to help both

the author and Frankie cope with pain. Through language, she finds—or thinks she finds—herself.

3. The Clash, the Disappointment

In the end, she clashes with reality, for she does not stay in Winter Hill with her brother and she is not ready to accept it, despite Berenice's warnings. However, she starts to grow up and grow wiser as she begins to assimilate the meaning of the wedding, even though she refuses to talk about it. She makes a new friend, who is even her age, and so she starts to belong with someone in a *significant* way. Her process of maturing is reinforced by her cousin's death, which is certainly sudden, as she thought everything was. She progressively understands the world better. She is getting to know the limits, the boundaries, she is becoming "a member." Her suffering is not over, as it will never be, but she is growing up and she is learning to cope with it. The ending is very similar to the recent film by Disney-Pixar, *Inside Out* (2015). Its final speech is as open and ambiguous as McCullers' ending: "We've been through a lot lately, that's for sure, but we still love our girl. She's got great new friends, a great new house... Things couldn't be better. After all, Riley is 12 now. What could happen?" The pain and the suffering may not be over, as the tone in these sentences also makes clear. However, they will keep growing up, overcoming the difficulties they might find in their way.

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Erased Identities: Marita Conlon-McKenna's *The Magdalen* (1999)

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Abstract

Following postmodernist and trauma studies discourses, my aim here is to analyse Marita Conlon's novel in which she gives voice to a fictional character, Esther, as representative of those Irish women who were sent to a Magdalene Asylum after being displaced and rejected by their own society on the grounds of a doubted moral behaviour. Like Esther, thousands of women underwent physical and psychological abuses under the custody of members of the Church, a traumatic experience to which they responded in a repressed way keeping silence and even abandoning their home country up to the 1960s. Consequently, their identity became erased as a result of the repression and violence they were subjected to. They were psychologically wounded for their whole lives finding difficulties in adapting to normal life. Even after their liberation, they found themselves rejecting the male figure and their attempt to impose power over them.

Keywords: identity, trauma, Catholicism, Magdalen asylums

1. Introduction

In their attempt to create a unified Catholic Ireland right after their independence (1921), and given the great power the Catholic Church enjoyed at that time, Irish national identity was built upon a strict moral code of self-denial and purity. What Inglis referred to as "the Catholic habitus" became throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a necessary requirement for all Irish women as a sign of their identity. Overall, the history of Ireland concerning sexuality and women's problems is one of repression and silence, what Smith has called "Ireland's containment culture" (5). Hence, those restrictions have been rooted in Irish identity, for as Crotty claims: "... Church teachings that emphasized humanity, docility, and obedience to authority, made for a particularly passive Irish personality: retiring, unassuming, obedient, self-deprecating, and self-critical" (119).

Due to the lack of information about sexual relations, along with the prohibition of attempting abortion, thousands of women in Ireland interrupted their pregnancies illegally and were subsequently charged with murder of their illegitimate children (Rattigan, 123). According to article 40 of the 1937 Constitution concerning the right for life of the unborn, the government had legitimate right to charge against those women who accessed abortion within the country (Fionna). What this practice reveals is the lack of privacy for women who were judged not only by a jury but also by the whole society, being considered immoral citizens.

Right after the achievement of independence, the Irish Church and the State joined forces towards a Gaelic revival of the Irish language and culture. Acquiring the role of “the principal provider of social welfare” (Crotty, 121), the Irish Catholic Church took control of the education and health systems. Moreover, the “devotional revolution” that had taken place in the nineteenth century altered the culture of the Irish people during which Catholicism became a sign of identity and union at the time (Whelan, 139). This devotional revolution enabled the Church to get control of the education of young people by imposing restrictions concerning sexuality and marriage (Larkin).

Women who did not observe this moral doctrine were automatically considered “fallen women”. This term comes from Victorian England and it is applied to those middle and low-class women who were associated with sexual impurity (Gretchen, 344; Romero 2011, 28-31). Repudiated by society, most of the time these women prostituted themselves occupying therefore the public sphere ascribed to men (Romero, *London Lock Hospital*, 25-28). Encountering social rejection and displacement, most of them were confined in religious institutions such as the Magdalen Asylums where they could pay for their sins and amend them. Created throughout Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Magdalen asylums were intended for women who being in an unfavourable situation—those who had been abused by a relative, homeless, orphans, unmarried mothers, mentally handicapped—did not adjust to the moral code the Church and the State imposed on women. These institutions offered shelter and protection to those “deviant” women in return for doing laundry work, among other tasks without remuneration. Their stay there was accounted for their reformation as women who had committed “sins” and had to expiate them and “purify” their souls.

However, the reality behind those institutions was very different from what both the Church and the State promulgated. As Smith shows, the history of the Magdalen asylums in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century diverges from that of the twentieth century, when these institutions “adopted a punitive and recarceral function that increasingly supplanted their original rehabilitative and philanthropic mission” (47). At the turn of the twentieth century, the Rescue Movement lost its original aim and a more intolerant attitude was adopted towards penitents. What started as an alternative for women who had fallen in prostitution became a tool for the Catholic Church to promulgate its religious doctrine; at the same time, they got free handwork. The Magdalen asylum was originally intended for prostitutes but as the number of prostitutes decreased, unmarried mothers, mentally handicapped and young women occupied the asylums in Ireland. Laundries needed women to do the job, so many women were forced to enter alleging they were at risk of falling (Smith, 43). The original intention of the Founders of Magdalen Institutions to rehabilitate and achieve women’s reinsertion in society seems to have been forgotten once the religious institution got control of the Homes. Indeed, very few women achieved social inclusion and employment after their reclusion.

Overall, literature during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries started to question the role of the Catholic Church and its practices in Irish society, especially after the scandals several priests were involved in—Bishop Edmond Casey (1992) or priest Michael Cleary (1992). Irish writers, especially women, began to contest Catholic teachings and the moral rigidity so long imposed on Irish society. This is the case of Marita Conlon-McKenna whose novel *The Magdalen* (1999) exposes the experience of those women who were victims of religious power; they were enclosed in those institutions known as Magdalen asylums or laundries. Set in the 1940s and 1950s, during De Valera’s government, it tells the story of a rural Catholic family of Connemara who go through different misfortunes that cause the

breakdown of the family. The last stroke is the pregnancy of the female protagonist, Esther. Since unmarried mothers were seen in Irish society as sinful beings that damaged the reputation of their families, Esther is secretly sent to a Magdalen asylum in Dublin. Once in the asylum, Esther and other penitents such as Tina, Rita, Maura, Sheila, Detta, or Bernice will endure psychological and physical violence on the part of the nuns and priests who run this institution under a strict moral code of behaviour.

Traditionally grounded on the Catholic faith as an individual and national symbol, Irish identity in the twenty-first century has collapsed and the path towards secularization has triggered the necessity to reconsider and redefine what it means to be Irish nowadays. Given the silencing attitude the Irish State and Church have adopted concerning the questionable practices carried out in these asylums, it is undoubted that for those women their identity has been erased being anonymity their hallmark during life and after death. My intention in this paper is to follow trauma studies in the analysis of Marita Conlon-McKenna's novel to prove how Esther, as thousands of other Irish women, lost her identity after a repressive stay in a Magdalen asylum, and how this traumatic experience haunts her for the rest of her life.

2. Trauma and silence

Women's presence in politics from the 1960s onwards had much to do with the new direction Ireland took towards modernity and social reform. A new plural identity was defined then, plural voices which were able to tell their stories and were no longer considered minority groups. With voices I am obviously referring to all those victims who had been silenced for so long and who, thanks to the political and social advancement achieved during the 1990s, saw an opportunity to make their story public, disclose the reality they had experienced and show the traces of that traumatic past. The improvement of educational, health and working conditions, the arrival of the contraceptive pill and free secondary education, among other measures, changed the lives of women in Ireland granting them a gradual inclusion in society.

As LaCapra notices, the testimonies of those traumatized subjects open a dialogue between present and past. This present-past connection is triggered by the use of memory thanks to which the victims can recreate their experience and reconstruct their identity—an identity which has been lost:

Testimonies are significant in the attempt to understand experience and its aftermath, including the role of memory and its lapses, in coming to terms with or denying and repressing—the past. (LaCapra, 86-87)

The problem then is that the act of remembering could be painful for the traumatized subject, since it implies the reopening of his/her wound. Therefore, some people tend to repress and forget those records by silencing them. Contrary to this practice, psychologists like Freud and Breuer believed that trauma can only be overcome when the repressed is released either by sharing it with others (confessions) or by taking action (revenge) (9).

Concerning the response of secondary witnesses to trauma narratives, Kaplan defines certain “ethics of response for secondary witnesses” (98)—objectivity, empathy necessary for understanding, and no identification with the victims. However, she warns against generalizations concerning historical trauma: “we are not all victims, we are not all wounded,” she says (712). On the contrary, Felman and Laub believe that “the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself” (57). In the case of the

Magdalenes, I believe a generalization is necessary since this historical trauma affected the whole Irish society's identity as a group.

3. Conlon-McKenna's *The Magdalen* (1999)

Concerning our case of study, Conlon-McKenna is not a victim but just a witness of this traumatic life Magdalen survivors have transmitted through their testimonies, which she analyses from her own point of view. In this work, individual and collective traumas are intermingled trying to show a reality concealed by the Irish State and the Catholic Church. As Kaplan explains, people forget as a way of protection from a traumatic past (74). However, in this case I believe it is rather a mechanism used by the State to avoid reprisals.

Kaplan distinguishes between different types of trauma and the way people react to it: "At one extreme there is the direct trauma victim while at the other we find a person geographically far away, having no personal connection to the victim" (2). Whereas the former would be the Magdalenes, we (readers/viewers) would be the latter. We encounter trauma through cultural products, what she calls "mediatized trauma" (2), by which we are made witness of others' suffering. The trauma of these women depicted in Conlon-McKenna's novel was caused by the psychological and physical damage they endured, such as sexual abuses, punishment, humiliation, the imposed denial of motherhood, constant surveillance, and hard work. Considered "outcasts" in the eyes of the Catholic Church and rejected by their family and society, these women bear the physical and psychological wounds of a traumatic experience within the Magdalen laundries as a result of a sinful life.

In Conlon-McKenna's novel, the first traumatic experience we can point out is the death of Esther's sister, Nonie—a handicapped child. Majella, her mother, is also traumatized by the loss of her child and seeks relief in religion. From the very beginning, we can see a parallelism between Majella and Esther, since both lose their children. The loss of a child either by death in the case of Majella and Maura or by imposed adoption in the case of Rita, Detta, Tina, Sheila, and Bernice, causes a pain they try to overcome in two ways, namely, by taking revenge or by adopting silence/repression—Majella reacted blaming others and mourning, Tina repressing herself and keeping silence trying to forget the lost child and the past, and Esther with silence going away to start a new life. In the case of the latter, Nonie's death and the fact that she blames herself for that tragedy haunts *The Magdalen's* protagonist for the rest of her life. However, Esther endured other traumatic experiences throughout her life such as a suicide attempt, the abandonment by her beloved Connor, once he knew she was pregnant, the subsequent rejection of her family, and her final confinement in a Magdalen laundry. In contrast to other inmates, she opted for concealment and silence concerning the traumatic reality she experienced there. After her release, unable to face back her own family and the community's suspicion about where she had been, Esther decides to stay in Dublin and make a life for herself. She recuperates her identity, but a distorted one: "She was a Connemara woman, a survivor, a Magdalen ready to put the past behind and begin again" (Conlon-McKenna, 378).

The Magdalen can be considered a historical but also a trauma narrative, since it encompasses the aspects used in trauma fiction I have previously discussed. Yet, the book challenges some conventions about the Magdalene's story. Generally speaking, Conlon-McKenna shows a more objective vision of the Magdalen asylums, offering the perspective of both nuns and penitents. In so doing, Conlon-McKenna tries to balance the story offering a counterpoint of what is generally said about the labour of the nuns. Nevertheless, the sad reality is that, always at the margins of society, women's confinement in Magdalen laundries

contributed to the blurring of their identities and the silencing of their voices. They started a new life inside the asylums where they were obliged to create a new identity—even a new name was given to each of them. This practice Luddy (496), Finnegan (26) and Smith (37) mention metaphorically refers to the new life they would embrace; a pious and religious life to supplant the previous sinful one.

4. Conclusions

Conlon-McKenna's novel, together with other novels, documentaries and films on this subject, are the means to remember the Irish past against the silence on the Magdalens that has prevailed up to the late twentieth century. Conlon-McKenna gives the opportunity to those traumatized subjects to speak out and to make their own story known. Through the fictionalization of these survivors' stories, I think the real victims would be able to empathize with the characters re-experiencing their trauma. Their wounds are open again, but this time the healing is not intended to be individual but a collective process the whole society is encouraged to participate in.

Despite the Catholic Church's attempt to maintain in silence the questionable practices carried out in these religious institutions, social injustices and the reality behind the Magdalen asylums have come to light thanks to the testimonies of several victims of the abuses and misfortunes they endured during their stay there. In the light of all this, the image of the Church and the State as the main moral guardians of the Irish country crushed causing a profound crisis of identity. Once more, it is literature and popular culture which fictionalises reality opening a dialogue with the past by which not only is the nation's discourse challenged but also its identity and foundation. As we have seen through the analysis of Marita Conlon-McKenna's novel, *The Magdalen*, her story has allowed the reimagining of the past and the bringing of individual traumas to the public arena where everyone in Ireland can be made responsible.

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***Americanah*: Translating Three Countries into English and the Afropolitan Consciousness**

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Abstract

This article aims to address translation through a post/neo-colonial lens, that is, as a metaphor for the interpretation of culture, race, gender and class in colonized subjects. The case of Nigeria exemplifies such dynamics of colonization and traumatic decolonization. The first part of the essay deals with postcolonial theories of translation, particularly Taiye Selasi's Afropolitan theory in relation to Nigeria, its history and the contemporary diaspora of young Africans to the United States and Britain. I analyze Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's last novel, *Americanah*, as a textual space that lays bare the impact of cultural translation, the enduring wounds of colonialism and new possibilities of healing.

Keywords: postcolonial translation, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Taiye Selasi, gender, decolonization

1. Translating Postcolonial Experiences

In 2014 the *European Journal of English Studies* published a special issue, entitled "Translation and Ethnicity," which explored the construction of the ethnic other through language. As Mini Chandran, one of the contributors, asserts "Translating ethnicity is to fight a difficult battle on a ground that is skewed by unequal power relationships between cultures, haunted by expectations of/from the exotic 'other' which the translator feels obliged to fulfill" (2014, 263). In the Introduction of the issue, the co-editors clarify their preference of ethnicity over race as a concept to be discussed because it is "less loaded," "more fluid" and it shifts over time, influenced by societal and cultural concerns (Bruti and Valderón 2014, 233). However, as Toni Morrison recently argued in an interview, race is also a social construct and the biological features associated with it are another invention to justify asymmetrical power impositions: "Race is the classification of species. And we are the human race, period" (Wood 2015).

The fiction of race and racial hierarchy has been contested from Du Bois to Gilroy on numerous occasions. In this same vein, Walter D. Mignolo endorses the importance of adopting a new epistemology that underscores "the wounds of racial classification" in the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality. In this regard, "decoloniality becomes a process of recognizing the colonial wounds that are historically true and still open in the everyday experience of most people on the planet" (2013). His latest endeavor, "Decolonial AestheSis," acknowledges that the modern/colonial project has implied not only control of the economy, politics and knowledge but also dominance over the senses and perception; Mignolo refers in particular to Latin America. Hence, modern aesthetics have played a role in configuring a

canon, a normativity that enabled the disdain and rejection of other forms of aesthetic practices or, more precisely, “other forms of aesthesis, of sensing and perceiving.”

For Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, translation is an overarching metaphor for the unequal power relationship that defines the condition of the colonized:

The colonial subject fixed to his [or her] native site, as well as the unsited migrant post-colonial, are thus equally translated persons.... there is now a conceptual near-synonymity between the ‘transnational’ and the ‘translational’, and the translated hybridity of the ‘unhomed’ migrant now inhabits a ‘Third Space.’ (2002, 12)¹

Drawing on Homi Bhabha’s seminal concepts, they locate translation as an inherent part of the postcolonial process. Thus, in our age of migration, exile and diaspora, the word translation seems to have come full circle and reverted from its figurative literary meaning of an “interlingual transaction” to its “etymological physical meaning of locational disrapture” (Bassnett and Trivedi 2002, 12).

Similarly, Paul Bandia approaches translation as a metaphor for writing in the African context; the resulting discourse, which is necessarily hybrid, is a language that he refers to as a “third code,” by analogy with Bhabha’s notion of a “third space”:

Post-colonial intercultural writing is the result of a process whereby the dominant metropolitan language culture is deterritorialized geographically in terms of its historical and literary references and is subsequently reterritorialized within a post-colonial space. Within this space there is a blending of indigenous and western discourses resulting in an Other code, a third code, which is hybrid in nature, a ‘code métissé’, which is neither completely detached from its African nor its European sources. (2012, 356)

When analyzing pre and post-independence African writers such as Ben Okri or Chinua Achebe, Bandia highlights how they are constantly translating from their respective oral narratives and inventing a new English, “in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings” (Achebe 1975, 59).

Hazel Carby (2007) also pinpoints three key issues in postcolonial studies: the term itself and its appropriateness (breaking with coloniality or continuing with capitalist exploitation), politics and representation. She finishes her essay with her “translation” of postcoloniality in the metropolitan heart of empire after World War II. Carby explores how the postcolonial can be multiply inflected in and through feminist understandings of the complex processes of gendering, representation and the making of sexual and class affiliations at work in the formation of British racialized subjects in the 1940s and 50s. In a later essay, “Lost (and Found?) in Translation,” Carby continues to ponder the meanings of being a “child of empire.” Translation is encompassed here as the means to analyze the “practical strategies for countering and overcoming the effects of institutional racism” (2009, 36).

2. Taiye Selasi’s Afropolitan Consciousness: Translating Cultural Hybridity

The Afropolitan consciousness outlined in Selasi’s influential short essay “Bye-Bye, Babar

¹ The use of “his” in this quote specifically refers to Salman Rushdie.

(or: What is an Afropolitan?)” complicates and destabilizes categories of nation, belonging and identity, whereas it refers to privileged experiences of migration from Africa to the West: “You will know us when you see us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic success.... We are Afropolitans—not citizens, but Africans of the world” (2009, 36).² The initial praise of “Cultural Hybrid” introduces an interesting meditation on identity: “While our parents can claim single countries as home, we must *define* our relationship to the places we live: how British or American we are (or act) is in part a matter of effect” (2009, 37). The fiction of nationalities and the performative component of identities, also highlighted by Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall or Judith Butler, among others, can be linked here to the act of cultural translation.³

In this regard, Selasi is translating and resignifying cosmopolitanism, a Western concept, to include the experiences of some African descendants outside the African continent.⁴ Although she aptly calls for a multi-dimensional thinking when approaching “the Africans of the world,” her definition neglects migrating without a Visa, as portrayed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah* (an author Selasi labels as Afropolitan in her essay). Nor does Selasi consider the added difficulties of gendered Afropolitans, the enduring legacies of Euro-colonization or the precariousness of work conditions in Western countries.

Drawing on Bhabha’s notion of “in-between” spaces, Selasi claims that there are interstices in which “modern adolescent Africans” are forming their hybrid identity along three dimensions: racial, national and cultural (2009, 37). Hence, Selasi ignores the implications of gender, while contradicting the nationless premise of the term itself. What Selasi calls “lost in transnation” (2009, 37) is named “lost in translation” by Hazel Carby, a notion that further underscores the challenges of interpreting cultural imposition and difference in the case of migrants. Selasi goes on to explain that “the Afropolitan knows that nothing is neatly black or white: that ‘to be’ *anything* (white, black, American, African) is largely to act the part” (2009, 37), thus evincing the highly constructed nature of such categories and their performative component. She further acknowledges that it is crucial to locate oneself within the history responsible for constructing race.

Born in London, of Nigerian-Ghanaian parents, raised in Boston and educated at Yale and Oxford Universities, Selasi explains that she coined the term “Afropolitanism” because while growing up, when asked where she was from, she was always at a loss for words, and even if she did respond, people were never satisfied with the answers she gave. She clarifies that being Afropolitan is not an exclusive identity, and that she wrote the essay based on her personal experience (Otas 2012). The responses that stemmed from her article led to the writing of her debut novel, *Ghana Must Go* (2013), in which she complicates the term, delving into the conflicts of world Africans and ultimately revealing how cultural traditions are translated, performed and sanctioned through personal and local experiences in a global world.

The impact of Taiye Selasi’s coinage has been remarkable both within and outside of Africa. For Simon Gikandi it brings less pessimistic views of representing the continent as the Western “other” in search of a “hermeneutics of redemption” (2011, 9). The genius of Selasi’s idea, according to Chielozona Eze, lies in contesting the largely uncritical application of

² Selasi first published an online version of her essay in *LIP Magazine* (2005), republished in *The International Review of African American Art* in 2009.

³ See Bhabha 2004, 57-94; Hall 2000, 15-30 and Butler 2011.

⁴ On new theories of cosmopolitanism see Glick Schiller and Irving 2015; Braidotti 2013; Vieten 2012; Mendieta 2009. These studies are indebted to Mignolo’s geo-political idea of cosmopolitanism, “emerging from the various spatial and historical locations of the colonial difference” (2000, 741).

Africa as a tag of identity to any person genetically linked with the continent, proposing instead a transgressive attitude that disrupts static and essentialist notions of belonging: “identity can no longer be explained in purist, essentialist and oppositional terms or by reference only to Africa” (2014, 240). Nevertheless, in a recent interview with Yewande Omotoso, this Nigerian writer claimed that “the term Afropolitan only seems useful for the West as it gives the West an opportunity to understand and even ‘consume’ Africa. I am not from the West and I don’t need anybody translating things for me” (Fasselt 2015, 235).

3. *Americanah*: (En)gendering Translation

The main character of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s novel, a Nigerian woman who leaves her country in the 1990s in search for a university education in the United States, embodies the Afropolitan migrant. An independent federation since 1960, Nigeria still endures the legacies of colonization that left behind elites of corrupted politicians and underpaid university professors, whose protests for better salaries paralyzed higher education and triggered waves of young migrants to Britain and the US. Before their departure, they had already imagined their lives in “Americah,” prompted by a fiction created in the books they read and the films they watched.

Nevertheless, the narrative unveils two different paths to migration from Nigeria: one belongs to Ifemelu, a documented migrant with a partial undergraduate scholarship who has to find her way in a prejudiced U.S. society; the other is the journey of Obinze, an undocumented emigrant who relinquishes his identity to be able to work in London with a borrowed job permit. Despite their different locations and circumstances, the protagonists’ perils and struggles are similar in their respective attempts to integrate into the host society and break through cultural barriers. Therefore, Ifemelu and Obinze translate their own experiences into Nigerian English, trying not to lose their native accents, which is one of the aspects that challenges the rather idealized construction of Afropolitan subjects: “Ifemelu decided to stop faking an American accent on a sunlit day in July, the same day she met Blaine. It was convincing, the accent. She had perfected it, from careful watching of friends and newscasters . . . but the accent creaked with consciousness, it was an act of will” (2013, 173).

Another feature of the novel that problematizes the “Afropolitan” successful venture is the return to Nigeria (in Obinze’s particular case, after deportation or “removal” from London, as it is described in the novel). Of particular significance is the return to the local, and how they establish themselves back in Lagos. Nevertheless, their (re)encounter with the local is corrupted by their cosmopolitan experiences, a fact that is displayed through Ifemelu’s sarcastic comments about the Nigeropolitan Club, “a group of young returnees who gather every week to moan about the many ways that Lagos is not like New York as though Lagos had even been close to being New York” (421). This exclusive club does not include the experiences of those, like Obinze, whose lives abroad are characterized by invisibility: “he lived in London indeed, his existence like an erased pencil sketch; each time he saw a policeman, or anyone in uniform, anyone with the faintest scent of authority, he would fight the urge to run” (257).

Having faced estrangement as a migrant, Ifemelu will revisit that feeling upon her return to a city transformed by neoliberal speculation and religious conservatism. Her choice is that of a critical returnee who has faced both the hazards of migration and the challenges of displacement when she moves back to Lagos as an “Americanah,” a designation for those who “look at things with American eyes” (385). This definition is a direct reference to Mary

Louise Pratt's groundbreaking *Imperial Eyes*. Pratt recounted how European writers represented the colonies and the colonized subjects; Ifemelu, on the contrary, writes her internet blog "Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly Known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black" about her experiences as a racialized woman in the U.S. (a neo-empire), with remarkable posts such as "Job Vacancy in America—National Arbiter in Chief of 'Who is Racist'" (315) or "What Academics Mean by White Privilege, or Yes It Sucks to Be Poor and White but Try Being Poor and Non-White" (220-221).

In a post/neo-colonial world, Adichie further questions fixed notions of race, class and gender, while highlighting the aftermaths of cultural and geographical borders in migrant subjectivities. After thirteen years in the United States, "Nigeria became where she [Ifemelu] was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil" (6). On her return to the local, however, she has to translate her experiences abroad and the changes that Lagos has undergone after speculation and the exploitation of oil by companies flowing in from Houston and Scotland (470-471). Hence, Ifemelu becomes a critical Afropolitan, who is aware of the post-colonial outcomes in Nigeria and how they affect its citizens.

4. Decolonial Healings and New Translations

The title of Taiye Selasi's essay, "Bye-Bye, Babar," makes reference to John Landis's 1988 movie *Coming to America*, in which Eddie Murphy represents a naive prince from Zamunda who travels to New York and "conjures the images of African immigrants" and "cultural condescension" (Selasi 2009, 37). Babar is also the name of the notorious elephant in Jean de Brunhoff's traditional children's tale *L'histoire de Babar* (1931), translated into English as *The Story of Babar*. The stories are allegories of French colonization, as seen by the complacent colonizers: the naked African natives, represented by the "good" elephants, are brought to the imperial capital, acculturated, and then sent back to their homeland on a civilizing mission. Brunhoff's son continued the series and wrote *Babar Comes to America* (1965), a massive display of all the artifacts of Western civilization.

The travelers' assimilation of Western customs and the return to their native Africa on a civilizing mission is part of these cultural references. However, Selasi translates and resignifies them through her coinage, establishing new possibilities of recuperation, healing and empowerment. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* further complicates and problematizes the Afropolitan representations, identifying additional threats for gendered migrants and for those without a residence permit or a passport, Afropolitan privileges that lead to new translations of the local and the world abroad.

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Tracing the Edwardian Artist in Contemporary Fiction

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Abstract

Contemporary popular representations of the Edwardian period often take us back to country houses inhabited by idle aristocrats. However, the turn of the century also fosters great interest from an artistic perspective, for it covers the last years of the *belle époque*, one of the most nostalgically remembered periods in the history of art. This paper explores how neo-Edwardian fiction tends to recur to the figure of the Edwardian artist and artisan as an alternative to other views of the Edwardians, often deconstructing our own ideas and expectations about them while reflecting on the present.¹

Keywords: nostalgia, Neo-Edwardianism, contemporary fiction, historical fiction, art

As the twentieth century was drawing to its end, discussion about filmic representations of the Edwardians involved the question of whether they enclosed mere nostalgia and evasion for passive spectators or not. The first view seems to be embodied in the collective imagination by the Edwardian aristocracy or bourgeoisie. However, although the dwellers of the Edwardian country house still suppose an important source of escapism, our interest in this period has expanded beyond this static idea. Furthermore, recent work on memory and nostalgia suggests that what is nostalgic is not necessarily simple and regressive. Proof is that recent re-imaginings of such era often feature doses of nostalgia with other kinds of characters and spaces, as it is the case with *Summer in February* (1996) by Jonathan Smith, A.S. Byatt's *The Children's Book* (2009) and Imogen Robertson's *The Paris Winter* (2012), among others, because, by using the figure of the artist instead and paying particular attention to the places they inhabit, they manage to portray other sides of Edwardian society and contribute to adding new colours to our current perspective on the dawn of the century. In fact, this paper draws on Teresa Gómez-Reus's and Arántzazu Usandizaga's idea that "[s]pace, like time, is never neutral, never critically transparent, and its artistic representation is always intentional, dialectical and culturally embedded" (2008, 19).

In these three cases, the dialogue between past and present, fact and fiction, and literature and art are problematic for two reasons. First, the novels are placed within the literary and cultural phenomenon of neo-Edwardianism, which is close to neo-Victorianism as

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a subgenre which revises the past and adds new features and concerns to it (Heillmann and Llewellyn 2010, 8). Simultaneously, when it comes to approaching the Edwardians, a nostalgic and evasive component still pervades, at least in popular culture, as the following excerpt from Wendy Wax's novel *While We were Watching Downton Abbey* (2013), in which a group of women comment an episode of the ITV drama *Downton Abbey* manifests:

“The clothes and the house are unbelievable,” Brooke sighed.
 “They are spectacular”, Claire said. “But I’m not sure you’re allowed to call it a house.” (Wax 2013, 73)

Indeed, they call it “castle” throughout the rest of the novel, summarising the way in which many spectators and readers feel towards the Edwardians, as if they belonged in a fairy-tale world. This is not a new feeling: Sarah Edwards has already suggested that both Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf transmitted nostalgia for the Edwardians and their huge country houses in their post-First World War writings (Edwards 2013, 93). The detailed descriptions of Chevron, the house in *The Edwardians*—which is based on Vita's family's house that she could not inherit—have contributed largely to this idealisation, for instance, when depicting “silver furniture” which “gleamed dimly in a ray of the moon” (xii).

Although it also describes a golden childhood in the house, Pamela Horn points out that the games and activities of Vita Sackville-West were an exception (Horn 1991, 34) and Edwardian life was not all joy, particularly for women and children. Moreover, Victoria Glendinning suggested in her introduction to *The Edwardians* that Vita Sackville-West had expressed ambivalence about her Edwardian childhood (1983, ix). That is, she longed to come back to this period which was lost, but, at the same time, she also considered it socially obsolete and, like so many things, full of flaws.

Partly because they have not, like Vita Sackville-West, lost an Edwardian country house, neither an Edwardian childhood, some authors who have been revisiting in their fiction the Edwardian period over the last 25 years, influenced, to some extent, by the neo-Victorian trend, may hold an even more ambivalent view, as well as their readers, who are not only interested in glamorous and aristocratic atmospheres. This, which has already been observed by Katherine Byrne (2013) in neo-Edwardian TV dramas, causes constant conflict between nostalgia and postmodern revisions of history in neo-Edwardian fiction.

Jonathan Smith's novel already exemplifies this ambivalence in its title. *Summer in February* tells the story of a community of Edwardian artists painting in the Cornish countryside. It begins in the 1940s in a country house which is full of “traces” of the past in the form of works of art triggering the process of remembering for Gilbert Evans (2013, 28-9), who takes us back, not to the glamour of the manor, but to some bohemian Edwardian huts while trying to fill in some gaps in painter Alfred Munnings's biography. The evocation of these huts could be evasive, for they could represent the innocence often associated with the period (as shepherds in the Renaissance). And so it looks at the beginning when readers attend a bohemian party at Munnings's studio, full of candles—even though electric lights existed—, music instruments, food, bottles and other objects “to make the place more comfortable” (Smith 2013, 52) and a chimney “which badly needed a good sweeping” (2013, 52). As for the guests, they are young people who talk to each other in a very straightforward way (2013, 65). It is the opposite of a party in our ideal Edwardian country house, but it looks equally nostalgically appealing to us, readers, as well as to Florence Carter-Wood, a young artist, who, having lived all her life in London, is fascinated by this atmosphere. But, Munnings's house is “all shambles” (47), damp and full of smoke during the day (2013, 51-2) and its windows rattle, the downpipe gurgles and the roof groans (2013, 53), noises than no-one

notices at the party. The house, with its doubleness acts as a mirror of its dweller, who, far from being an Edwardian gentleman, swears (e.g. 2013, 142) and spends nights at the pub with the locals. He has also a dark side which becomes more explicit through his love relationship with Florence, whom she objectifies (2013, 87). It is in the private sphere, inside their house, that readers witness a brutal man whose wife is afraid of him to the extent that she attempts suicide. In fact, this pleasant landscape turns more disagreeable for Florence as the novel gets closer to its ending, when pigs splash mud into her shoes (2013, 280) or flies annoy her (2013, 283). Hence, the countryside mirrors Florence's spirit. It turns Florence into a fallen woman, symbolised by a fallen tree that she paints (2013, 285). This novel, dating back to the 1990s, with its nostalgic images and Florence's story, seems to develop a view that had begun in 1984 with the broadcasting of *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*, which, according to Sarah Edwards, on the one hand showed that Edwardian women artists were limited but, at the same time, presented them "as the site of our own origins" (Edwards 2011, 127). In this regard, Byatt's *The Children's Book* is connected to Smith's novel in its concern about the impossibility to combine family and art for an Edwardian woman (Hadley 2012). Covering the last years of the Victorian period, the Edwardian era and the First World War, it tells the story of several British-German families from artistic circles whose lives are intertwined.

According to Joseph Bristow, *The Children's Book* "belongs to a larger movement" which "weighs heavily upon the present" (2012, 66), which may be the reason why Margaret Stetz has classified it as neo-Victorian and neo-Edwardian (2012, 89). Therefore, in the same way as Jonathan Smith's novel, Byatt's re-takes the life of lesser known members of Edwardian society mixing artists, politicians, nudists and all sorts of "ex-centric" characters in the sense devised by Linda Hutcheon (1995). It also fills in the gaps which do not appear in official historiography, emphasising, according to Elizabeth Hicks (2011), the dichotomy of the public versus the private with regards to art collections.² This dichotomy affects the artist's domestic sphere too. For instance, Jane Sturrock has already noticed that the novel imagines the reality of several households for men but also for the tortured women who live in them.

One of these households is Todefright, where the Wellwood family seems to live in perfect harmony within a natural environment, at least according to the newspapers which interview Olive, a mother and successful author of children's tales. However, as Katharina Uhsadel has noted "appearances are ... deceptive in the Wellwood's household" (2012, 74), which hides secret relationships and an incredible lack of communication between the members of the family deriving in an identity crisis for the children (Byatt 2010, 314-15), jealousy and hatred that grow more explicit from 1901 onwards as it also happens in Purchase House, where worshipped artist Benedict Fludd keeps an incestuous relationship with their daughters. Even garden parties are not as innocent as they should be, enlivened by sinister marionettes, let alone the constant allusions to the Garden of Eden and the original sin that appear throughout the novel (2010, 215). Both Olive and Philip Warren—a young apprentice

² For Byatt's obsession with materiality and museums, see Lara-Rallo, Carmen. 2009. "Museums, Collections and Cabinets: 'Shelf after Shelf after Shelf.'" In *The Exhibit in the Text: The Museological Practices of Literature*, edited by Caroline Patey and Laura Scuriatti, 219–39. Bern: Peter Lang.

of Benedict Fludd's who is an orphan and used to live in the V&A Museum—seem to use art to escape their grim realities.

Roughly, instead of showing the prototypical Edwardian lifestyle as innocent or glamorous, Byatt seems to show that there are dangers and degeneration in it, as Elizabeth Hicks has noticed too (2011). Furthermore, like many neo-Edwardian novels, it stresses the difficulties faced by intellectual and artist women, as well as poor artists, who were trying to change their role in society.

Finally, Robertson's *The Paris Winter* stems again from the figure of the artist. Its title already announces two ideas: first, that it wants to detach itself from the image of the "long Edwardian summer," and second, that it takes us to a radically different place again: the streets, parks and shabby studios of Paris. It is the story of Maud, a young English girl who settles in Paris, learning to paint at the well-reputed Académie Lafond. However, unable to keep up with the cost of living in the French capital, she finds herself keeping company to the depressed sister of a businessman, beautiful opium addict Sylvie Morel, until the night her employers accuse her of stealing a tiara and then throw her into the dark waters of the Seine. Far less limited than Florence or Olive, Maud survives, and with the help of her friends—a Russian aristocrat and a French model who uses the same language as Alfred Munnings—, she manages to discover the criminal record of the Morels, whom she is determined to haunt, changing the course of their sordid plans.

In this tale, Maud accompanies us in a ramble through 1909-1910 Paris. As Maud is a painter, no detail escapes her gaze, especially those related to women's anatomy, clothes, and daily life, described in pictorial terms. Thus, it continues the traditional voyeuristic appeal of historical novels and films—in fact, verbs of visual perception appear with high frequency—, albeit simultaneously casting new light on the Edwardians and empowering the female protagonist, who substitutes men as the ones who, according to Lin Pettersson (2014), have traditionally held the gaze.

Notice, for instance, this description of an urban landscape which nostalgically evokes the *belle époque*:

In the full darkness, the clubs and cabarets shone like jewels. The city then was a woman in evening dress certain of her beauty and endlessly fascinating. The air smelled of roasting chestnuts, and music spilled out of every café, humble or luxurious, into the streets. In the full light of day Paris was chic and confident. The polished shops were filled with colour and temptation and on every corner was a scene worth painting. It was modern without being vulgar, tasteful without being rigid or dull. A parade of elegant originality. (Robertson 2013, 6)

The passage describes an appealing place. Yet, in opposition to the static vision of Edwardian society that one can get from earlier and televised fictitious accounts of the period, Maud is witness to a world illuminated by artificial lights and characterised by movement and change—which is exemplified by her visit to Gertrude Stein's apartment, where the art of Picasso and others clashes with Maud's own conception of the universe so far (2013, 41-2). In addition, due to the Morels, the protagonist descends into darkness and comes out of it more mature, as if her life was an anticipation of the century ahead. But, most importantly, as an artist—and later a spectral figure—, she can show us the worlds of the low, middle and upper classes of her era that mingle in the city, alongside less pleasant aspects of history, in a way an aristocrat living in a "castle" would be unable to do.

In summary, the liminal and onlooker status of this urban artist allows for a rich description of the *belle époque*, going from the drawing rooms of the Russian aristocracy to

the darkest opium dens. Moreover, it helps to reclaim a place for women in the history of the early twentieth century with female protagonists that work, create and solve their problems on their own, for, as their stories are rather unknown, it seems that it is the author of fiction's duty to fill in a white canvas with his/her imagination.

So to conclude, I have taken the reader to a literary exhibition which shows that aside from the glamour of *Downton Abbey*, other interesting neo-Edwardian characters transiting different spaces exist. With the evidence presented, it could be defended that in neo-Edwardian fiction, the Edwardian artist serves as an instrument to show a broader picture of the period, beyond its popular image, as authors may be aware that "memory too, can smooth nastiness and horrors into gilded patterns" (Byatt 2010, 412). Quite significantly, the conflict between reality vs appearances is key in the three stories. Ever since postmodernism began to take off, both readers and authors of historical fiction have demonstrated a strong tendency to peeping into all small corners of history, exploring what goes beyond mainstream historiography. Nevertheless, I believe fiction still is a source of escapism as well. These characters and their stories seem to connect both positions as bridges between the past and our present. Actually, the fact that artists produce something that remains in the present as a trace of their past provides the text with a realistic, a nostalgic and a symbolic dimension, prompt to inspire debate about the nature of fiction and memory. Were these places and their occupants really as described in these novels? Could these scenes have actually inspired real art? No-one has the answer, for there are limits to what we can know about the past. However, as Anselm, one of the characters in *The Children's Book* declares: "the imagined has more life than the real" (2010, 268) and so, these (neo)Edwardian artists are now certainly alive in our minds.

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Sacred Femininity and Spiritual Self-Definition in African American Women Writers: From Zora Neale Hurston to Ayana Mathis

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Abstract

African American women have defied reductive analysis from the eurocentric and androcentric perspectives of those, inside and outside the black community, who would trace race, class, and gender as discrete and somewhat independent entities. Following this debate, I would add religion as a major cultural token that has been used by black women not only to facilitate an ontological shift towards a unique intersection of race-ethnicity, class and gender as a motive force for social change but it has also proved to create a feminist aesthetics that links the *feminine*, the *sacred*, and the various fates that conform *Africanness* as a model of identity. In this light, the work of Zora Neale Hurston, Ntozake Shange and Ayana Mathis undergird a feminist aesthetic that authenticates its “healing omnipotence” and boosts dire recognition of how black women have successfully proved to envision a new way in which the African American women’s (literary) subjectivity can be reimagined and renegotiated.

Keywords: spirituality, sacred, femininity, African American women

Highlighting the crucial distinction between race and black culture, as Toni Morrison foregrounded in “Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation”, became primordial to redefine the distinctive traits of a genuine transhistorical literature produced by the African diaspora in the US. Historically, when taking into account the reconfiguration of the social reality applied to the United States, Cheryl Townsend Gilkes reminds us that “race and class always intersects” (2001, 28). However, within the black community itself, race and class but also gender and religion have played an important role in portraying the conflicting reality of the African American experience. African American women, particularly, have defied reductive analysis from the eurocentric and androcentric perspectives of those, inside and outside the black community, who would trace race, class, and gender as discrete and somewhat independent entities. Following the debunking of such categories within the debate, I would add religion as a major cultural token that has been used by black women not only to facilitate an ontological shift towards a unique intersection of race-ethnicity, class and gender as a motive force for social change but it has also proved to create a feminist aesthetics that, in Julia Kristeva’s words, links “the *feminine*, the *sacred*, and the various fates of *Africanness*” (2001, 21).

Thus, and despite an unwarranted disregard of an autonomous endeavor on the part of black culture to unweld black literature from the taxonomy race/culture, African American

women *signified* upon spirituality as an epistemological means which assists cultural objectives that “withstand various ideological assaults and develop their own liberating ideologies” (2005, 23), according to Judilyn S. Ryan. Indeed, black women’s narrative engagement with spiritual agency propelled Afro-Christianity as an asset that could “collectively perpetuate community-culture and ... an ideology of freedom” (Ryan 2005, 33) for Christianity was used as a vehicle for their own empowerment. Parallel to the family tradition that black women propelled as a network that could enable African Americans to cope and to survive, they also built a religious tradition both to blot out the effects of racism and sexism but also to legitimize a *black feminine aesthetic* that could single out their own experience.

In their attempt to get over the isolation and tokenism within the black community, or the “deformed equality” to borrow from Angela Davis (1981), a feminist reading of the sacredness of Afro-Christianity became black women’s cultural ally to insist that they were also “persons for whom Christ died”. Indeed, as Townsend Gilkes contends,

Afro-Christian’ recognizes that our African ancestors constructed a complex and dynamic tradition not only from the materials provided by the missionaries and other Europeans confronted in the nighttime of slavery, but also from the cultural imaginations of their African backgrounds, in which women were essential to cultural and religious practice. (2001, 126)

A feminist reading of the sacredness of the Afro-Christian creed, with the contemptuous plurality it encompasses and experiences, will serve me to read Zora Neale Hurston’s *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939), Ntozake Shange’s *Sassafras, Cypress and Indigo* (1982) and Ayana Mathis’ acclaimed debut novel *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* (2013) as stories that reinterpret the concept of the sacred as a “healing omnipotence” (Kristeva) that predates the natural religious bigotry and buttresses a black feminine aesthetics that has been mastered by African American women writers throughout the twentieth century up until today.

Although in her classic essay “Characteristics of Negro Expression” Zora Neale Hurston sarcastically claimed that “[t]he Negro is not a Christian really” (1997, 56), her third novel, *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, stands in the tradition of a long history of African American use of the biblical musings that aims to relativize and yet uphold a new version of the sacred story under the gaze of a black woman that manipulates and admonishes the characters of the gospel to offer a feminist side of the Bible. The novel has been extensively analyzed as a meditation on the nature of the authoritarian state and of absolute political power, especially when these ideas apply to the reality of black people in the US. Published in 1939, it is no wonder that, as Deborah E. McDowell highlights, “Hurston’s *Moses* can be read as an intervention in the discourses about race ranging throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but also discourses used to justify ... the utter extinction of Jews under Nazi Germany” (1991, 17) since 1939 was the year Hitler ordered the attack on Poland which led Germany into a world war. But if, as Judilyn S. Ryan explains, “cultural identity and spiritual identity are coterminous” (2005, 29), Hurston’s *Moses* can also be read as an exercise that foregrounds the status and future direction of African American liberation discourses, in which the black women priestess play a central role. In this vein, and following black historian Albert Raboteau, Afro-Christianity “could become a double-edged sword” (1978, 290) for it can be used to foster black liberation theology and to engender a black feminist aesthetics akin to a sacred femininity embodied by a black priestess. So, although Miriam is not presented as the main character of the story, her presence illuminates Hurston’s theological recasting of the

biblical plot. By remythologizing and expanding the novel's cultural milieu, Miriam displays a narrative gesture that links the US and Africa and brings to the front black women's spiritual and intellectual leadership across the Black Atlantic overshadowing, in such a move, the burdensome effects of slavery. Hurston points to the reductive theological power of Moses as the main protagonist and offers Miriam as his spiritual contraposition. When Moses publicly claims Miriam's leadership in his eulogy: "all about those days back in Egypt when the house of the prophetess Miriam was the meeting place of all those who were willing to work for freedom. How she had gathered folks together by twos and threes *and changed weakness into resolution*" (Hurston 1990, 265; emphasis added), he accepts her status as a leader in Israel and thus certifies her spirituality as a force of empowerment. Still, Hurston contemplates a sacred femininity shaped by a core ethical movement towards inclusion and democracy so when, in the end, Miriam, utterly jealous of Zipporah, breeds quarrels among Moses and his wife a divine punishment falls upon her in the form of a leprosy which magically, yet dreadfully, whitens her skin and turns her into "a horrible sight in her leprous whiteness" (Hurston 1990, 301) that relegates her as an outcast within the black community. Hurston confirms this way her compromise with sacred femininity as "confrontation with *abjection*" (Kristeva 2001, 37).

Three decades before the post-colonial era, Hurston's bold representation of the sacred femininity of the black priestess discloses the unapologetic role of the African spirituality within the realm of the African American women and transcends Spivak's *sanctioned ignorance*, when it comes to assure the transnational fate of the black woman. Furthermore, it aims to expose and revitalize the role of black women that, as Anthonia Kalu rightly asserts, were taken for granted, if not removed, "from the scene of invention and participation during a significant transitional moment in Africa's history on both sides of the Atlantic" (2002, 89).

In Ntozake Shange's *Sassafras, Cypress and Indigo*, the opening line, "[w]here there is a woman there is magic" (Shange 1982, 3), forecasts the idea that spirituality informs every aspect of the novel. Shange portrays a story of a female kinship network between Hilda Effania and her three daughters after whom the novel is titled. Yet, it is Indigo, the youngest one, who reveals to possess an agency attuned to a sacred femininity that calls to the role of the priestess. Indeed, Indigo underpins her spiritual self-consciousness in the American South and in the village ancestors. For Kristeva, sacredness is "rooted in the certainty about life" (2001, 12) and, as such, in an autonomous move that exemplifies her theological precepts, "Indigo had decided it was the spirit of things that mattered. The humans come and go" (Shange 1982, 8). "The South in her" (14) is reflected upon her name which is particularly evocative since it was a cash crop directly responsible for the importation of large number of Africans to the US. Through Indigo, and as Hurston did with Miriam, Shange attempts to create a new mythos of the black female self linking African spirituality with a reconfiguration of the sacred figure of the African American woman. The result is a black female aesthetic that relies heavily on a new understanding of a "spiritual development," citing Toni Morrison, that shapes the self-definition in the black woman's hands. The talking fiddle, which blends the trope of the talking book and the blues as a black female artistic outlet, upholds Indigo as the spokeswoman between the past and the present whilst it confers her the power for the priestess role inasmuch as it connects "the moon in her mouth" (Shange 1982, 14) to the "many spirits who loved her, real and unreal" (28). Following Catherine Clément, who propounds that "[o]ften, in fact, sacred is rational and God combined" (2001, 32), Indigo transforms her reality into a sacred domain by equating spirituality and magic with black female agency, that is, with human agency itself. In hindsight, Indigo's sacredness as mediational function allows Shange to explore the myriad uses of spirituality, magic and

feminine empowerment as epistemological means that reconfigure and redefine black womanhood. So, in *Sassafras, Cypress, and Indigo*, the development of the priestess within the Afro-Christianity tradition is transformed into a volitional sublimation for black women to collectively perpetuate community-culture as an ideology of redemption and freedom.

Following this cue, Ayana Mathis' debut novel *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*, published only two years ago, adds up to the appropriation of sacred femininity as a cultural and aesthetic value in black women's tradition and confirms such legacy within the African American literary canon. As the story unfolds, we learn about Hattie Shepherd and her personal tribulations in rising her eleven children and grandchild, who constitute the twelve people of her tribe that the title of the novel alludes to. Precisely, the title signals Hattie as the biblical figure of Hagar and inaugurates an overlapping set of stories about each of the twelve people who, mirroring the black feminist trope of the quilt, attempt to set out Hattie's conflicting behavior. The story of Six, who eventually becomes a preacher as a means to survive his personal catastrophe, reveals Hattie not only as the main character but also as a spiritual leader that, although content in the belittlement with which she behaves towards her children, stands as the paradigm of resistance through religion. Reversing the submissive role of the biblical Hagar, Hattie emerges then as an empowered woman who trades on her spirituality as a self-definition and cultural ideal.

Torn apart due to an accident with boiling water that left him with a scarred body, Six clings to religion as a redeemer of such tragedy. Although Hattie is the mediator since, on Six's departure from home, she "rushed forward and held a Bible out to him" (Mathis 2013, 41), it is his mother's example that sets Six on the move towards salvation. After losing her first children, the twins aptly named "Promise and Hope," Hattie's spirituality will give her the strength to overcome not only her grief but also her new children's. The only way to salvation is through a refashioning of religion applied to the reality of black people. So, Hattie's order to her son Six is simply to be "an instrument of God, even a ruined one" (Mathis 2013, 69). As Shange's *Indigo*, Hattie's role as a priestess for her family thrusts the Afro-Christian message as a viable cultural and interpretative blueprint for redemption and self-definition and, ultimately, succeeds in her spiritual mission because Six "would stay in that little town and he would preach on Sundays, and the congregation would say God had anointed him to heal" (Mathis 2013: 70). Hattie, as an "archaeologist of faith" (Kristeva 2001, 38) enlarges the maternal "Immaculate Conception" to personify the aestheticized *praeredemptio* or the bearer of filial redemption, Kristeva's "healing omnipotence," that expands both the concept of black motherhood and of sacred femininity.

In conclusion, by presenting a feminist African American version of the story of Moses, one in which she blends black folklore, biblical rhetoric and magical power, Zora Neale Hurston paves the way for the unfolding of a specific sacred femininity in which ideological, spiritual and aesthetic objectives conflate. Assuredly, according to Jeannette King, through the allure of this rehabilitated version of female sacredness (black) women upheld "alternative myths which [could] offer women a more constructive view of their own gender" (2000, 3). Thinking the divine in terms of *posse* rather than *esse*, black women illustrate Jacques Derrida's eschatological deconstruction of religion as "sovereign, as almighty" and ground the aesthetics to build their subjectivity in the Derridian conception of sacredness, that is, from "precisely the most powerless" (qtd. in Kearny 2005, 298).

In such a way, and from the Derridian "(p)owerlessness as power" (qtd. in Kearny 2005, 298), Hurston inaugurates what Ryan labels *the paradigm of growth* for African American women, an approach that belabors psychosocial self-definitions on a chosen feminist direction of growth "which exist in the form of rituals, philosophies, artistic

practices, memories and ethics” (Ryan 2005, 17) and thus fosters new understandings of the biblical and folkloric imagery to be applied to black women’s epistemology. Ntozake Shange’s *Sassafras, Cypress, and Indigo* and Ayana Mathis’ projection of the sacred self in *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* undergo the same process of conjuring up biblical appropriation and the black religious cosmology, traced back in the African folklore, which Zora Neale Hurston set forth. If, building on Roland Barthes, postmodernist critic Stuart Hall determines *race* as the floating signifier in the social understanding of representation, power and identity of the black self, Hurston, Shange and Mathis reflect otherwise and take a different tack from Hall’s theory. Their works depose how a national continuum that has historically linked black women with religion argues for *sacred femininity* as the signifier that propels a nuanced display of such representation, power and identity adjusted to the characteristics of the black woman’s expression.

To cap it all, the three novels undergird a feminist aesthetic of religion recasting “another dimension of the sacred: self-assurance” (Clement and Kristeva 2001, 12) that authenticates its “healing omnipotence” and boosts dire recognition of how black women have successfully proved to envision a new way in which the African American women’s (literary) subjectivity can be reimagined and renegotiated.

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Family Loss in Joyce Carol Oates's *We Were the Mulvaney*s

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Abstract

Joyce Carol Oates's works frequently deal with traumatically violent events within the family circle and the experience of human loss derived from them. Her novel *We were the Mulvaney*s (1996) is one of the clearest examples of this, since it describes how the rape of the family's only daughter represents an experience of loss for the whole family. In order to analyze the process of mourning, I shall interpret this novel under the light of Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok's psychoanalytical theories on introjection and incorporation. According to them, introjection is the constant process of readjustment of the subject's psyche when facing changes. At times, though, a subject may tend to ignore and deny the suffering caused by a loss, inducing the so-called fantasy of incorporation. In *We were the Mulvaney*s each character copes with the trauma of loss in his/her own personal way, thus providing examples of both reactions.

Keywords: Joyce Carol Oates, *We Were the Mulvaney*s, Loss, Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, Incorporation, Introjection

Among Joyce Carol Oates's (Lockport, New York, 1938) extensive works of fiction, family relationships occupy a prominent position, especially in those cases in which some of the family members are exposed to violence. From the combination of these two ingredients, family and traumatic violence, there emerges the inevitability of the experience of human loss. Oates's *We Were the Mulvaney*s (1996) is a perfect example of this, since it describes how a process of loss triggered by a traumatic rape affects a whole family.

In general, a loss is produced by "an event which is perceived to be negative by the individuals involved and results in long-term changes to one's social situations, relationships, or cognitions" (Miller and Omarzu 1998, 12). Most losses are linked to traumas. A trauma entails "the personal experience of drastic, horrendous, unpleasant, shocking events" (Stroebe et al. 1998, 82). In the present essay, we shall deal with major losses, specifically defined as "the loss of something in a person's life in which the person was emotionally invested" (Harvey 2002, 5); that is, a love object.

The kind of loss presented in *We Were the Mulvaney*s is what Tizón (qtd. in Nomen Martín 2007, 21) defines as relational loss. These losses are linked to the "other"—mostly a love object—and include the end of relationships, affective lacks and abuse. To analyze this process of loss, we shall apply Abraham and Torok's psychoanalytical distinction between introjection and incorporation. According to them, introjection is the constant process of self-creation and readjustment of the subject's psyche when facing changes. It is a process of acquisition, which involves our potential to expand by opening ourselves to our own desires and feelings, as well as to the outside world. That is why, as Sandor Ferenczi explains,

introjection requires first of all self love: “In principle, man can love only himself; if he loves an object he takes it into his ego” (qtd. in Abraham and Torok 1994, 112). Therefore, when the loss of a love object is introjected, the subject can healthily recover the libidinal energy invested in the lost object and is able to reinvest it in a new love object.

However, that is not always the case. Sometimes, when a painful event occurs, we tend to isolate this suffering, to remove it from our free flow of ideas and emotions, and to avoid its communication to other people. This process of removal may give origin to the fantasy of incorporation. As Abraham and Torok put it, “in order not to have to ‘swallow’ a loss, we fantasize swallowing (or having swallowed) that which has been lost” (1994, 126). The subject thus refuses to mourn, because he does not want to recognize the full dimension of the loss.

A process of demetaphorization is linked to incorporations. It represents an attempt to revert the process of metaphorization which necessarily accompanies any introjection. Thus, the basic movement from introjection into incorporation occurs when the subject cannot verbalize the traumatic experience of loss. Therefore, an imaginary thing replaces words in an attempt to deny the very existence of the conflict. Eventually, the whole situation is swallowed up, along with the words, the pain and the trauma.

This lack of verbal expression results in the erection of a so-called secret tomb or secret crypt inside the subject: “Crypts are constructed only when the shameful secret is the love’s object’s doing and when that object also functions for the subject as an ego ideal. It is therefore the object’s secret that needs to be kept, his shame covered up” (1994, 131).

Thus, a fantasy is created around the secret that is concealed even to the subject in order to avoid any readjustment of his mental topography. The fantasy has thus a conservative aim and it is essentially narcissistic, because it tends to transform the world rather than inflict injury on the subject.

*We Were the Mulvaney*s presents the story of an American family from the perspective of the youngest son, Judd, when he is an adult. The family is formed by the parents, Michael Sr. and Corinne, and their four children, Mike Junior, Patrick, Marianne and Judd. When she is seventeen years old, Marianne is raped by one of her classmates, Zachary Lundt. This marks the beginning of the process of loss for the family.

Marianne’s sexual assault falls into the category of acquaintance rape or date rape, which is committed by a person that the victim knows. According to statistics, the largest group of this type of sexual offenders is composed by males aged seventeen to thirty (Gluck 2013, n.p.). This is Zachary’s case, who is nineteen years old.

Apart from the physical consequences, one of the major emotional consequences of rape is the appearance of the Rape Trauma Syndrome, identified by Ann Wolbert Burgess and Lynda Lytle Holmstrom as “a cluster of emotional responses to the extreme stress experienced by the survivor during the sexual assault” (“Emotional and Psychological Impact of Rape” 2008, n.p.), specifically caused by the fear of death. Indeed, Marianne felt that Zachary could have strangled her.

The first stage of this syndrome is called the “Acute Phase.” It is characterized by the disruption of the victim’s normal life, by shock and disbelief. In fact, Marianne feels she has lost herself: she has lost her virginity and her role as the sweet girl, and at the same time, she is not accepted in her present state. The second stage is the “Reorganization phase,” or the time when survivors reshape their life to adjust it to their new conditions. This reshaping works at several levels, the most relevant being the level of personality, in which the victim needs to find out her own mechanisms for coping with the trauma. Marianne basically resorts to religion: “you could make of your pain an offering. You could make of your humiliation a

gift. She understood that Jesus Christ sends us nothing that is not endurable” (Oates 2001, 90). In other words, Marianne understands this process as one of soul purification. Depression, guilt and loss of self-esteem are also frequent psychological reactions. Shame and guilt, especially over having been drinking, are two of the reasons why Marianne refuses to report on her rapist.

Eventually, Marianne is sent to live with her mother’s cousin. This marks the beginning of what we have called her *runaway life*, when she wanders from one place to another, never establishing deep connections with people. Although she is truly hurt by her parents’ abandonment, she still blames herself for what has happened: “I’m immature, and careless, I disappoint people. My family specially. My Dad, and my Mom” (Oates 2001, 342). She also keeps wishing to be forgiven and allowed to return home. This lack of self-love proves that she still considers herself guilty of her rape and for this reason in need of forgiveness; and it would also disqualify her for the experience of introjection.

Furthermore, her wish to return home shows her inability to introject its loss because it is in fact a manifestation of the loss of what had defined her self until then. Ironically, her cat Muffin, whom she takes from her house to live with her during her runaway life, is the one permanent link with her long-lost home. It represents a great relief for her with its “[l]oving unjudging eyes... Unknowing” (Oates 2001, 70). The cat acts as a fantasy, since it symbolizes the possibility of going back home to her old life ignoring the changes brought about by her rape.

Some years later, Marianne is able to put an end to her runaway life and start a gradual process of introjection. Significantly, it is during this period of time that her cat Muffin has to be sacrificed, but now she is able to come to terms with its loss and with the other losses that the cat symbolically represents. Towards the end of the novel, she sees her father again in his deathbed, but he is not completely conscious, so it is not clear whether he recognizes her. Marianne chooses to believe that he has, and so she interprets this scene as one of reconciliation, which helps her to finally put an end to the past.

Marianne’s rape is an absolute shock to her family, but since this kind of violence is socially shameful, they cannot bring themselves to talk about it: “*rape* was a word that came not to be spoken at High Point Farm. What were the words that were spoken? I remember *abuse-assault-taking advantage of-hurt*. . . . The perpetrator . . . was always referred to as *he, him*” (Oates 2001, 157). This denotes their difficulties for dealing with the rape, since introjections require the communication of the conflict. Each family member negotiates this situation in his or her personal manner.

Michael Sr. cannot avoid incorporating his loss, that is, he cannot acknowledge that his favorite daughter has been raped and is not a virgin anymore. As he says: “Always I’d be thinking, *I would kill for her, my baby girl*. But- . . . How can I live knowing that! . . . I wish to God I never had to lay eyes on her again” (Oates 2001, 185).

His reaction is conditioned by his feelings of possession over Marianne. According to Anne Phillips, rape was traditionally considered a crime against male property: “[t]he very etymology of the English term, linking it to the snatching or dragging away, locates rape as a property crime involving live prey” (2013, 42).

Michael’s wish never to see her again provokes Marianne’s final estrangement from the family. This wish shows that Michael’s love object is not exactly Marianne herself, but his image of Marianne as his perfect daughter: this is the loss he cannot cope with. As Oates explains, “If Michael, Sr. had behaved differently, the Mulvaney tragedy would not have occurred” (Oates n.d.). Michael’s demand of Marianne’s banishment shows his inability to recover the libidinal energy originally invested in his previous love object, his beloved

daughter, to reinvest it in a new love object, Marianne the victim of a brutal rape. Marianne the rape victim comes then to represent a constant threat for the incorporation he tries to build by swallowing his lost love object and his own guilt.

Subsequently, a secret tomb gets erected in Michael's psyche where he hides the loss of her daughter as an intrapsychic secret. Somehow, he sees the rape as Marianne's doing, her shame and secret, which he needs to conceal from people. The world of fantasy created by Michael to repair the injury of the loss takes two opposite directions. The first one involves the creation of the self-justifying fantasy that he has been betrayed by everyone, especially his daughter. This strategy allows him to excuse his own disloyalty towards her. The second fantasy is his conviction that he has sent Marianne away in the name of love.

Michael tries to bring the rapist to court (significantly despite Marianne's refusal), and eventually, this sterile legal process destroys him and the relation with his family. He turns to drinking, and loses his business and the farm. In the end, he separates from his wife and dies from cancer without consciously reconciling with his daughter.

At the beginning, Corinne is supportive to Marianne since she feels extremely guilty for the rape: "*I'm her mother, it must have been partly my fault*" (Oates 2001, 114). Corinne's main shock, apart from the loss of Marianne, is the effect it has for the whole family: she is forced to see that they were not as united as she thought. For instance, she is hurt to know that not even Patrick, who was so close to her sister, knew about the rape.

When Corinne is forced to choose between losing her husband or her daughter, she chooses him, thinking that by doing so the family will remain united. However, she eventually loses her husband too, and the Mulvaneys disintegrate. Even then, she still clings to her original decision by trying not to get too involved emotionally with her children, especially Marianne. This rejection functions as a cover-up for Corinne's guilty feelings for abandoning her.

Corinne gradually comes to introject the trauma, acknowledging her unfair behavior and apologizing to Marianne when Michael is agonizing: "I'm sorry not to have been a better mother" (Oates 2001, 426). Perhaps, it is precisely her husband's disappearance which allows her to place her libidinal love again in Marianne, now an adult woman.

The three brothers introject the loss in their own particular manner. Mike feels anger for Marianne's rape and for her treatment at home, but he is not too supportive of her. He soon goes away from home and goes on with his life. Apparently, he prefers to mourn the loss alone.

Patrick loves Marianne intensely and never deserts her. He is outraged when he learns about his sister's banishment from home, since he considers she has been "abused, vilified, exiled *even by her family*. Like we're some primitive tribe, for Christ's sake! Like our sister has become a carrier of a taboo" (Oates 2001, 284). Patrick's love for the Marianne of the past can easily evolve to become love for Marianne the victim of rape. In other words, he recovers the libidinal energy originally invested on her and reinvests it on Marianne, the victim of rape.

Patrick also decides to take personal revenge on the rapist by kidnapping and killing him. In the end, he lets Zachary live and feels greatly relieved. Patrick introjects thus the trauma by performing a violent attack on her sister's rapist to get rid of his long-contained anger and by finding in the non-virgin Marianne a new love object.

Judd is also affectionate and sympathetic towards his sister, to the point that he assists Patrick with his revenge plan. This helps him channel his mourning process, but his main strategy to overcome the trauma is to narrate the whole story. By doing so, he is performing a metaphorization process opposite to his father's demetaphorization (or inability to articulate the loss in words).

We have demonstrated that the majority of the characters in Oates's *We Were the Mulvaney*s are able to introject their traumas. Marianne undergoes a Rape Trauma Syndrome that destroys her self-love and is forced to introject the loss of her home and her former self. Corinne is also able to introject the trauma, but only after she is free from her choice of her husband over her daughter. His son Mike introjects it by going on with his life. Other characters find it easier to introject the loss: in Patrick's case, his immense love for his sister Marianne allows him to replace the libidinal energy into her new self; while Judd writes the family story in order to come to terms with it.

Sometimes, losses cannot be overcome. This is what happens to Michael Sr., who cannot come to terms with losing his dearest virginal daughter, and so he experiences a process of incorporation. Besides, some characters resort to fantasies to hide their real losses under the delusory belief that they never occurred. For instance, Marianne wishes for a long time to return to a home that no longer exists; while her father is convinced that he has forsaken her daughter in the name of love and that everybody has betrayed him.

The responses to a loss are obviously very different even if the loss is the same. This occurs because the subject needs to adjust his mental topography to the change in order to introject it, and every person does this in his own particular way.

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Garrick's Jubilee: Between Theatre and Ritual

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Abstract

The first Shakespeare celebration, Shakespeare Jubilee (1769), did not include the staging of any play and generated a certain tension between the local, national and global status of the poet. The event was aimed at commemorating Shakespeare in his birthplace and celebrating him as a world genius. However, the celebrations were restricted to the local aristocracy and the visitors from London, leaving aside the people of Stratford. The Jubilee was the first celebration of Shakespeare with a series of artistic activities, which allows the analysis of the event as performative. This paper aims to, first, explore the issues related to ownership that emerged during the events and, second, to analyse the celebrations using Willmar Sauter's model of the theatrical event to demonstrate how the Jubilee can be simultaneously considered a quasi-religious ritual and the precursor of the Shakespeare festivals yet to come.

Key words: Shakespeare, Garrick, Jubilee, commemoration, festivals

The eighteenth century has been acknowledged as a key moment in the reinvention of Shakespeare (Dobson 2001; Ritchie and Sabor 2012). Different cultural and ideological forces coincided to shape Shakespeare as literary, theatrical and national icon. In this century, the popularity of his works increased on the London stages, new editions of his plays appeared and the first form of Shakespeare festival, the Jubilee, took place. The 1769 Shakespeare Jubilee is one of the landmarks in the *making* of Shakespeare; as Michael Dobson observes, the event represents "Garrick's own dramatization of the climax of Shakespeare's investiture as national poet" (Dobson 2001, 15). This "dramatization," as Dobson calls the performative activities of the Jubilee, is considered the predecessor of all present-day Shakespeare festivals.

As the first Shakespeare celebration, the Jubilee is remarkable for two main reasons: it did not include the staging of any play and it generated a certain tension between the local, national and global status of the poet. The event, held in Stratford-upon-Avon on dates with no relevant connection with Shakespeare (from the 6th until the 8th of September 1769), aimed at commemorating the poet in his birthplace and celebrating him as a world genius. As the dates bore no significant relation with Shakespeare, the ceremonial nature of the Jubilee was instead enhanced by its placement in Stratford, the birthplace of the poet. However, the local dimension of Shakespeare and his universal transcendence were neglected during the celebrations through the exclusion of the local inhabitants of the town and of foreigners (Dobson 2001, 220).¹ This gives rise to the question of to whom Shakespeare, at least the Shakespeare of the Jubilee, belongs. The Jubilee was the first time that Shakespeare was

¹ The ticket price of the events—a guinea—is another indication of the exclusion of local citizens. See Paper Ticket for Shakespeare's Jubilee 1769.

being celebrated with a series of artistic activities, a fact which allows the analysis of the event as performative, understanding this term as the adjective form of the broad concept “performance,” meaning the embodied presentation of events in the presence of an audience in a specific time and place. The purpose here is, first, to explore the issues related to the appropriation of Shakespeare that emerged during the events and, second, to analyse the celebrations under the light of Willmar Sauter’s model of the theatrical event, in order to demonstrate how the Jubilee can be simultaneously considered a quasi-religious ritual and the precursor of the Shakespeare festivals yet to come.

The first idea for the Shakespeare Jubilee came in 1767, when the Town Council in Stratford-upon-Avon determined to rebuild the Old Town Hall and left a space for a statue of Shakespeare. Stratford authorities decided to ask David Garrick, the most distinguished Shakespearean actor at the time, to order “a statue of the Bard and a portrait of himself so as to commemorate their joint fames together” (Dávidházi 1998, 38). Garrick, flattered with the offer, proposed the celebration of a festival to Shakespeare’s memory. The preparations for a jubilee, which would celebrate Shakespeare in his hometown, started. In spite of all difficulties (e.g. the amphitheatre was not finished two weeks before the opening, there were not enough lodgings in Stratford to accommodate all London visitors, etc.), the cannons were fired upon the opening on the 6th of September. Garrick acted as the Steward of the Jubilee, wearing Stratford’s wand and a medallion, both made of mulberry wood from the famous tree supposedly planted by Shakespeare himself in New Place, the house that the playwright bought in Stratford.

The Jubilee activities included the recitation of an Ode written by Garrick himself, concerts, parades, balls, a pageant of Shakespeare’s characters and a horserace, together with daily feasts for breakfast and lunch. However, due to the heavy rain that was, together with Shakespeare and Garrick, the other main protagonist of the celebrations, the pageant had to be cancelled. Interestingly, no performance of Shakespeare’s plays was included in the activities. Peter Dávidházi (1998), Michel Dobson (2001) and Robert Sawyer (2010) agree that the absence of plays is a sign of the need of making Shakespeare transcend the notion of the playwright to elevate him into national idol. Without the presence of the poet’s own works, an authorial substitute was needed and that was the role of the Ode, which worked as “the most important substitute for Shakespeare’s own words” (Dobson 2001, 216). The Ode combined Garrick’s recitation with musical excerpts, generating a highly theatrical and, at the time, solemn ambience. The recitation was followed by a pre-arranged verbal discussion between Thomas King and Garrick, in which Garrick stood as Shakespeare’s most ardent defender. Thanks to the Ode, the authority of the poet was transferred to Garrick’s words and, therefore, generated a strong association between Garrick and Shakespeare, and vice versa. This association, together with the acknowledgement of Garrick as one of the promoters of Shakespeare’s status in the eighteenth century, is reflected in the name that is often used to refer to the events, that of “Garrick’s Jubilee,” instead of the original “Shakespeare Jubilee.”

The poet was positioned as a universal artist during the events, with the Jubilee ribbon in the colours of the rainbow as an allegory of Shakespeare as world genius (Dávidházi 1998, 39). However, the exclusion of foreigners and locals was patent in the afterpiece *The Jubilee*, a re-telling of the events performed in Drury Lane, in which the inhabitants of Stratford and foreign visitors appeared as ridiculous and humorous characters, as they were not prepared—according to London standards—to understand neither the Jubilee nor Shakespeare. The legitimate celebration of Shakespeare was therefore restricted to the local aristocracy and the London visitors. The Jubilee tried to present a Shakespeare that belonged to Stratford—otherwise it could have been held in London, where Shakespeare developed his professional

career—and that was universal. However, the attempt failed, and it might be more accurate to analyse the Jubilee as an event based upon exclusion: Shakespeare is a universal genius but, however, he is undoubtedly English and, although he was born in Stratford, it was in London where he could unfold his genius. In spite of the universal and Stratfordian remarks, Shakespeare belonged to that London mid-upper class society that had moved to Stratford to celebrate the poet. The national poet in eighteenth-century England could only belong there where he could be better appreciated, that is, London.

Whether the Jubilee was a success or not is arguable; critics have looked at it from different perspectives. What Samuel Schoenbaum describes as “absurd, commercialized and also somehow touching” (1990, 107), for Kate Rumbold is a mixture of “triumph and failure, bathetic comedy and an ultimate success story of Shakespeare’s long-term triumph in spite of this muddy praise” (2012, 273). What is true is that Garrick lost lots of money in the festival, but the afterlife of the event helped him to recover from the financial losses. The Jubilemania reached London shortly after the Stratford celebrations, with a significant amount of accounts and retellings of the event invading the city. Garrick’s play *The Jubilee* was a dramatization of the celebrations in Stratford created after the success of George Colman’s *Husbands and Wives*—an already existing matrimonial comedy altered to be set in Stratford with plenty of Jubilee references. *The Jubilee*, performed for three weeks at Drury Lane and included in the theatre’s repertory thereafter, turned to be not only one of the greatest successes of the actor, but also, as Douglas Lanier observes, “part of Garrick’s campaign definitely to ally himself and the stage with the direct authority of Shakespeare himself” (2002, 147). An important victory on that campaign was the one over Covent Garden, eventually ceding “the artistic high ground to his rival, thus further strengthening Drury Lane’s claim to be the playhouse ‘sacred to Shakespeare’” (Cunningham 2008, 118). When *The Jubilee* was being staged, Shakespeare’s house can be said to have been metaphorically moved from Stratford to Drury Lane, as the audience went to the theatre in search of the “true” Jubilee experience. The play was full of music and humour and also restored the cancelled pageant with Shakespeare’s characters. Its half-satirical, half-idealized nature could not fail on the London stage as everything was calculated to appeal to the city’s audience. Coleman’s and Garrick’s Jubilee-related plays are only some examples of the afterlife of the event; there were more references in other plays and a good amount of prologues and pamphlets for and against Garrick and the Stratford celebrations.² The afterlife of the Stratford Jubilee outgrew the real event and, as Rumbold suggests, “It is in the telling, rather than in the event itself, that the Jubilee becomes a turning point in Shakespeare’s status” (Rumbold 2012, 365). Thanks to both the Jubilee and its afterlife, Shakespeare could reassert his reign as the national author.

The adjective “performative” applies to activities as diverse as theatre plays and religious rituals. The Jubilee is half-way through both: on the one hand, it is a sort of quasi-religious event celebrating the poet as a demigod, and not as a literary or dramatic author; on the other, it also has some features in common with theatre, as its structure—arranged to have an impact on the spectators—demonstrates. The Stratford celebrations used the firing of the cannons to mark the opening, fireworks for the closing and the Ode as the *coup de theatre* (Parkinson 1969, 925). One of the most highly-theatrical moments was the mock-debate between Thomas King and Garrick. This instance can be considered a brief theatre performance as it included imitation, action and spectatorship, the three basic constituents of theatre as defined by Marvin Carlson (2014, 2).

² For a list on some relevant Jubilee plays, prologues and pamphlets, see Holland 2015, 31-32.

Given the performative nature of the celebrations, it is possible to analyse the Jubilee using Willmar Sauter's model of the theatrical event (Sauter 2000 and 2004). According to Sauter, this model is not "another definition or description of the essence of theatre" (2000, 1), but an attempt to reevaluate the object of Theatre and Performance studies from a theoretical perspective. The model of the theatrical event considers theatre in general as an event and emphasises the role of theatre as an act of communication in which "the meaning of a performance is created by the performers and the spectators together, in a joint act of understanding" (2000, 2). This communicative exchange does not take place in a vacuum, but within different overlapping contexts that frame the theatrical event. As a theatrical event, the meaning of the Jubilee is created thanks to the collaboration between the main performer (Garrick) and the audience (those attending the celebration). On the one hand, Garrick constantly interacts with the audience in activities such as the Ode. On the other, many activities, as the ball or the cancelled pageant, require the direct participation of the attendants. Although the interaction between performer and spectator is central to the theatrical event, Sauter goes a step further, stating that "the event itself is defined by its position in the theatrical, cultural and social world at large" (2004, 11). The theatrical position of the Jubilee is that of not being a theatre play nor a theatre festival, but a performative event including different activities with a varying degree of dramatization. Regarding its cultural and social position, the Jubilee brings together various contexts: that of Stratford, where the celebrations take place, and that of London, from where most of the audience comes. The superposition of these contexts results in an act of exclusion, as the celebrations and the retellings consciously leave aside the local inhabitants of Stratford to celebrate a Shakespeare that belongs to London's bourgeois society.

The Jubilee combines dramatized moments with others in which the commemoration of Shakespeare is transformed into a sort of quasi-religious ritual. In *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare*, Peter Dávidházi analyses the event paying special attention to its quasi-religious features, half-way through the secularized ritual and religious revival. Dávidházi pays special attention to an event that is overlooked in many accounts: at one point, some of the participants drank wine from a goblet made with wood from the Mulberry tree (1998, 41). This imitation of a Christian ritual acquired a new meaning: that of commemorating a secular author. Dávidházi mentions as well some other ceremonial features of the celebrations, such as the symbolism of the Mulberry tree wood wand and medal, the inclusion of an oratorio among the concerts or the sense of *communitas* (with the temporal suppression of social order typical of cultic rituals) that many activities prompted (1998, 38-45). However, arguing that the Jubilee took a purely ceremonial form would be going too far. Whereas many of the activities had ceremonial features, the entertaining nature of others (for instance, the horserace on the third day) challenges the possible conception of the Jubilee as a ceremony. It is therefore more accurate to define it as a performative event combining both theatrical and ceremonial characteristics, whose activities are ritualised throughout their repetition in subsequent celebrations of the poet (e.g. some of the Jubilee activities, as the pageant, are still held in Shakespeare's anniversary in Stratford).

In spite of the exclusions, the Jubilee is the first example of Shakespeare festival and, as such, all later celebrations stem somehow from it. Levi Fox acknowledges the role of the Jubilee as the starting point for Shakespeare celebrations:

Again, the very concept of Shakespeare celebration stemmed from the Garrick Jubilee. Though somewhat different in form, the annual Birthday Celebrations at Stratford, in which representatives of all the nations of the world take part, were originally inspired by the Garrick festivities. (1973, 22)

In his assertion, Fox comments on an important aspect of Shakespeare celebrations: whereas later birthday festivals included representatives of all nations, portraying the universal aspect of Shakespeare, the global representation in the Jubilee is a fictitious one, as the mockery of locals and foreigners in the after-play *The Jubilee* shows. Later celebrations introduced a shift from local to global, including representatives from different nations and even the performance of Shakespeare's plays in languages other than English, as was the case of the World Shakespeare Festival in 2012.

The Stratford Jubilee became mythical and culminated Shakespeare's process of consecration and elevation into national poet in the eighteenth century. It was not only Shakespeare who achieved his glory, as the event also promoted Garrick's career. The Jubilee planted the seed for future celebrations and, therefore, for modern Shakespeare festivals. These festivals have inherited from the Jubilee the need or desire to celebrate and commemorate Shakespeare, no matter whether his words are involved or not.

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Perhaps Not “Absolutely True,” But Definitely Closely Observed and Deeply Rooted in Reality

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Abstract

Sherman Alexie’s novel for young adults *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) won numerous book awards, including the Amazon.com Best Book of the Year and the National Book Award. Most reviewers praised the raw feelings and the intelligent humor that Alexie uses in his portrayal of a 14-year-old Native American boy who faces many of the ordeals that the author himself experienced as an adolescent: bullying, a dysfunctional family, racism, etc. His protagonist, Arnold Spirit Jr., shares with young heroes such as Huck Finn and Holden Caulfield an urgent desire to escape, in his case from the constraints forced upon him by life on the Spokane Reservation. Curiously, despite the immense courage and honesty that the character exudes, the book has become the center of some controversies as it is said to depict violence, sex and xenophobia in ways that will hurt the sensibilities of young readers.¹

Keywords: YA fiction, Native Americans, Sherman Alexie, problem novels, censorship

1. Introduction

Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) was the author’s first foray into the young adult (YA) genre; yet, it could easily be argued that he succeeded in mastering the form of this type of fiction in one single book. Probably the best evidence to prove that his incursion into the genre was fortuitous is the number of awards that the book received soon after its publication. Among them, there was the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, the Amazon.com Best Book of the Year and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. Most reviewers agreed that it was the raw feelings and the intelligent humor that Alexie uses in his portrayal of a fourteen-year-old Native American boy that gave the book its arresting character. Bruce Barcott, for example, noted that working in the voice of the adolescent protagonist forced the author “to strip everything down to action and emotion, so that reading becomes more like listening to your smart, funny best friend recount his day...” (Barcott 2007). In a similar line, Diane Samuels concluded in the *Guardian* that “Opening this book is like meeting a friend you’d never make in your actual life and being given a piece of his world, inner and outer. It’s humane, authentic and, most of all, it speaks” (Samuels 2008). Like most YA fiction, *The Absolutely True Diary (TATD)* is characterized by the memorable voice of the narrator, the prickly and shocking themes that it

¹ The research carried out for the writing of this essay was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (code: FFI2014-52738-P).

covers, a particular sense of humor and the accuracy and authenticity with which the—often trying—events are conveyed (cf. Cole 2009, 61-65).

The protagonist of the novel, Arnold Spirit Jr., is faced with many of the trials that the author himself experienced in his transition from childhood into adulthood: poverty, bullying, a dysfunctional family, racism, etc. “Junior,” as he is widely known on the reservation, shares with classic young heroes such as Huck Finn and Holden Caulfield a profound desire to escape from the constraints that, in his case, life on the Spokane Reservation impose on him. Like those earlier heroes, Junior is seen to struggle with his wish to remain true to himself while, simultaneously, trying to find his place as a member of a human group—or more. As Roberta Trites has maintained, much YA fiction deals with these identity questions, since the “protagonists must learn about the social forces that have made them what they are” (2000, 3). In Junior’s case, he will need to embark on a hazardous—but also illuminating—journey that will allow him to see beyond the narrow horizons that those people closest to him applied to his life. Of course, coming to the realization that the context in which you are growing up offers little hope for the materialization of your dreams and ambitions is not pleasant at all. However, as will be seen below, Junior manages to survive the pains of harrowing events such as the loss of his pet dog, Oscar, of his beloved Grandma and smart elder sister, Mary Runs Away, or his visceral brawls with his best friend, Rowdy. Most likely, Alexie’s greatest achievement in this dark tale of unremitting woe is to move his readers to sympathy and understanding as they get to see Junior clawing his way out of a seemingly inescapable fate (see Santos 2010).

In spite of the generally positive reception, the favorable reviews and the prestigious literary prizes the book was awarded, a number of voices were also raised to criticize Alexie’s crude representation of issues such as bullying, alcoholism, sex or, even, the violent deaths of some of the characters. Some parents, school boards and libraries believed that such explicit renditions of the squalor and anguish present on Indian reservations were “inappropriate” for the delicate palates of young readers. See, for instance, Junior’s reflections after the rather inane death of one of his father’s best friends: “And, after Eugene’s funeral, I agreed with her [Euripides’ Medea]. I could have easily killed myself, killed my mother and father, killed birds, killed the trees, and killed the oxygen in the air. / More than anything. I wanted to kill God” (173). While it is true that some of the loud violence, sexual references and profane language may seem shocking even to adult readers, the second half of this article will discuss the wisdom—or lack of it—in censoring literary works that present such harsh aspects of contemporary life. Alexie, of course, has his own opinion on the matter, but other specialists in the field of young adult fiction, such as James Blasingame and Steven Wolk, have also contributed to the debate—or should we say controversy—with stimulating ideas.

2. Toying with the YA Genre in Alexie’s Fictional Autobiography

Undoubtedly one of the reasons why Alexie found it relatively easy to relate to the voice and the general attitude of his protagonist was the fact that much of the background information about Junior’s childhood provided in the early chapters of the novel is directly based on the author’s own experiences on the Spokane Reservation in Wellpinit, WA. Like Junior, Sherman was also born with hydrocephalus—“I was born with water on the brain” (1), the opening sentence of the novel states—and suffered from headaches and a number of sight impediments. Due to his oversized skull, the author was often teased by his classmates in school and became the object of bullying: “My head was so big that little Indian skulls orbited around it. Some of the kids called me Orbit. And other kids just called me Globe. The bullies

would pick me up, spin me in circles, put their finger on my skull and say, ‘I want to go there’” (3). Besides his serious health problems, another aspect that Alexie’s childhood shares with that of his hero is the poverty and despair of the social context in which he grew up:

It sucks to be poor, and it sucks to feel that you somehow *deserve* to be poor. You start believing that you’re poor because you’re stupid and ugly. And then you start believing that you’re stupid and ugly because you’re Indian. And because you’re Indian you start believing you’re destined to be poor. It’s an ugly circle and *there’s nothing you can do about it*. (11, italics in original)

In the speech Alexie gave when presented with the Boston Globe Horn Book award, he stated in regard to the autobiographical nature of the book that “If I were to guess at the percentage, it would be about seventy-eight percent true” (Alexie 2009b). Like Junior, the author also chose to leave the reservation to attend high school in Reardan High, located in a rich farm town, where he was the only Indian kid—except for the school team’s mascot. Although mostly based on Alexie’s dreadful experiences on and off the reservation, it is also true that he occasionally introduces slight modifications to make his protagonist’s situation even more poignant. Thus, for example, when Junior learns that he has been given the same geometry textbook that his mother used thirty years before, instead of throwing the book against the wall, as Sherman allegedly did, he throws it at his geometry teacher, Mr. P: “My school and tribe are so poor and sad that we have to study from the same dang books our parents studied from. That is absolutely the saddest thing in the world” (31). All things considered, it could be said that, as the author himself has admitted, although *TATD* comprises many of the real-life experiences he had as a teenager, they are told by an Indian kid who proves to be much smarter and kinder than he himself was at that age, a fact that made the novel “easier to write” (Alexie 2009a).

As pointed out above, although *TATD* was Alexie’s first inroad into the YA genre, one can easily demonstrate that the author—probably assisted by his editor, too—managed to encompass in the novel many of the features and issues one expects to find in this kind of fiction. On the one hand, the book is packed with events and problems that adolescents can easily identify with: being different and bullied, feeling ignored by one’s parents, losing friends, etc. Mr P sums up some of these problems when he visits Junior after he is suspended from school for hitting him with the book: “‘You’ve been fighting since you were born,’ he said. ‘You fought off that brain surgery. You fought off those seizures. You fought off all the drunks and drug addicts. You kept your hope. And now, you have to take your hope and go somewhere where other people have hope’” (43). The old teacher’s words open the young hero’s eyes to both the sadness and lack of opportunities that have dominated his childhood and the need to seek a different future somewhere else. Not only are young readers likely to be enthralled by the fast-paced and believable action in Junior’s coming-of-age adventures, but the story is framed in language that they can immediately understand and connect with. The first-person narrator has a voice that perfectly conveys the kind of anger and confusion that govern most of his experiences. This, for instance, is how he describes the reaction of his new fellow students at Reardan High on the first day of school: “Those white kids couldn’t believe their eyes. They stared at me like I was Bigfoot or a UFO. What was I doing at Reardan, whose mascot was an Indian, thereby making me the only other Indian in town?” (56). According to James Blasingame, if a YA book aspires to succeed among adolescent readers, it needs to contain problems and characters that they can relate to real situations they have encountered (2007, 11). Despite being rooted in one specific socio-cultural context,

TATD clearly brings together many contemporary issues (bullying, alcohol abuse, family conflicts and so on) in an emotionally honest voice that lends them universality.

Now, while recognizing that Alexie’s novel incorporates many of the characteristics that are to be found in most of the examples of YA fiction—such as accurate details, lively and authentic dialogues, memorable characters and an effective voice—it must also be noted that a few innovative elements make the reading even more exciting. For example, we learn early in the novel that Junior finds in drawing one of the few ways in which he can get a little respite from all the difficult experiences he is going through. His illustrations (or cartoons) do not only seem like the perfect supplement to his vigorous writing style, but they become an integral component of Junior’s attempt to escape the confining horizons of life on the reservation: “So I draw because I feel like it might be my only chance to escape the reservation. I think the world is a series of broken dams and floods, and my cartoons are tiny little lifeboats” (6). Figure 1, a portrait that sketches his parents as they might have been if someone had paid attention to their aptitudes and dreams (12), appears after two pages in which Junior has described to us the family’s extreme poverty and his parents’ problems with alcohol.



Figure 1: Junior’s “potential” parents

Besides the inspired and witty drawings—prepared for the book by artist Ellen Forney—one other ingredient that may set *TATD* apart from more traditional YA fiction is a special brand of Native humor which incorporates heavy doses of serious social criticism but, at the same time, may give a lighter touch to dramatic questions about one’s identity, family conflicts or uncertain future. Late in the novel, after Junior goes with his parents to visit and clean the graves of some close friends and relatives he has lost throughout the story, he reflects on the hideous influence that reservation life is having on his people and concludes: “I realized that, sure, I was a Spokane Indian. I belonged to that tribe. But I also belonged to the tribe of American immigrants. And to the tribe of basketball players. And to the tribe of bookworms. / And to the tribe of cartoonists. / And to the tribe of chronic masturbators. / And to the tribe of teenage boys...” (217). As a few reviewers have pointed out, one other element that clearly distinguishes Junior from other (ethnic-minority) protagonists of YA novels is that while they usually reclaim and try to retain their “ethnic ties in order to find their true selves, Junior must separate from his tribe in order to preserve his identity” (Publishers Weekly 2007, 71).

3. Where Should the Limits of Representation Be Set in YA Fiction?

Notwithstanding the many strengths and innovations that readers have discovered in Alexie’s novel, it must be recognized that responses to the book have not been consistently positive. Several reviewers and parents expressed their concern that the treatment given to difficult issues such as sexuality, alcoholism or death itself was not befitting for young adults. Meghan Cox Gurdon, among others, has described recent teen fiction—in which she includes *TATD*—as “a hall of fun-house mirrors, constantly reflecting back hideously distorted portrayals of what life is” (Gurdon 2011). According to this critic, young readers are unnecessarily exposed to pain, loss and brutality that can hardly be expected to make their lives easier or happier. Certainly, Alexie’s YA novel is not characterized precisely by looking into the most cheerful aspects of teenage life: “There are all kinds of addicts, I guess. We all have pain. And we all look for ways to make the pain go away. / Penelope gorges on her pain and then throws it up and flushes it away. My dad drinks his pain away” (107). Junior is not one who would try to candy-coat serious problems such as his new sweetheart’s bulimia or his father’s alcoholism. And it could even be contended that sometimes he may be excessively bleak in depicting the realities on the reservation: “I read that [Euripides] and thought, ‘Well, of course, man. We Indians have LOST EVERYTHING. We lost our native land, we lost our languages, we lost our songs and dances. We lost each other. We only know how to lose and be lost’” (173). However, I would not agree with Gurdon that Alexie’s ultimate aim—like that of much of the YA book industry—is simply “to try to bulldoze coarseness and misery into... children’s lives” (Gurdon 2011).

Alexie responded to the complaints raised by Gurdon and other reviewers in a post entitled “Why the Best Kids’ Books Are Written in Blood”, which appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*. As the Native American author saw it, all these endeavors to prevent young readers from learning about the grimmest facets of contemporary life came “way, way too late” (Alexie 2011). From his point of view, it is rather ridiculous and hypocritical to make believe that one is protecting the youth when, in fact, they are exposed in their daily lives and the media to all sorts of aggressions that will inevitably interfere with their moral development. Alexie offered abundant evidence from his own childhood (violence, sex abuse, etc.) to show that ignorance of those realities did not help him much. Not only that, but he thought that removing his book from some libraries and school programs in states such as Missouri, Idaho or Wyoming was utterly absurd and unjustified when he was constantly receiving letters and messages—often accompanied by cartoons, too—from children and adolescents who told him that they had found his book helpful in fighting the troubles and abuse that they were facing.

Two other important arguments could be used to rebut the platitudes of conservatives regarding the potential dangers of YA novels that represent current realities in too explicit terms. On the one hand, as Andrew Fersch and Steven Wolk, among others, have maintained, it is important that this kind of fiction, rather than blocking out and repressing childhood and teenage memories, should help adolescents to tackle the ordeals that they come across in their daily lives. In this regard, the latter has rightly observed that “Living a socially responsible life means understanding and acting to improve the many problems confronting the United States, especially involving culture, gender, economic class, and sexual orientation” (Wolk 2009, 667). In Fersch’s opinion, “Alexie has written a novel that at once entertains and educates, and one that should be required reading for everyone, regardless of ethnicity, age, sex or race” (Fersch 2007), since it dives headlong into the “less-talked about types of discrimination” affecting teenagers. On the other hand, it should also be stated that Alexie is not the first YA fiction writer who has become the target of attacks from school boards,

parents and public libraries. Writers such as Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, S.E. Hinton and J.D. Salinger faced similar criticism in their day and, in many cases, their works are lauded today as literary classics in the “problem novel” tradition. As Sarah Herz and Donald Gallo have shown, the themes and situational archetypes represented in YA fiction will not only help teenagers to deal with their tribulations in life, but will also encourage them to read more challenging and ambitious literary pieces that will permit them to widen their views on specific social issues (cf. Herz and Gallo 2005, 64-66).

4. Closing Remarks: Junior’s Successful Journey

TATD combines words and images to depict the brave journey taken by a Native American boy from a family and community ravaged—and often killed—by poverty and alcoholism to look for some hope and a better future beyond the boundaries of his reservation. This journey is by no means easy and it often involves breaking substantial barriers for a person of that age: estranging himself from his culture, losing touch with his best friend, adapting to a completely new environment and so on. Perhaps the most complicated part of Junior’s transformation in the novel is his realization that once he has enrolled in Reardan High it will be impossible for him to think of one single place as “home”: “Traveling between Reardan and Wellpinit, between the little white town and the reservation, I always felt like a stranger. / I was half Indian in one place and half white in the other. / It was like being Indian was my job, but it was only a part-time job. And it didn’t pay well at all” (118). It is no wonder that Junior is constantly assailed by doubts about which group he should pledge his allegiance to, since he finds appealing but also ugly elements in both of them: there is certainly deprivation, violence and endemic alcoholism on the reservation, but there is class-consciousness, racism and ineptitude in Reardan, too.



Figure 2: “Schizophrenic” Junior

Junior’s early days as a freshman at Reardan High are fraught with new trials that he will need to pass: he is afraid that he will be beaten up by the jocks, he is thought an interloper by some parents and teachers and he soon realizes that his family cannot afford the kind of expenses other students deal with. However, he perseveres and manages to make a handful of good friends, Penelope and Gordy, he earns the confidence of his teachers and even succeeds in becoming a player on the varsity basketball squad. Although the novel is fairly open-ended,

it is quite clear that by the end of the story Junior does not see his future as a dead-end road, the way he did at the beginning: “All these white kids and teachers, who were so suspicious of me when I first arrived, had learned to care about me. Maybe some of them even loved me. And I’d been suspicious of them. And now I cared about a lot of them. And loved a few of them” (212). Even if he will never have the same opportunities as his all-white friends at Reardan, he still believes that he has a chance if he tries hard enough.

Probably, parents and school teachers who have paid close attention to the gloomiest aspects of life on Indian reservations, the overt references to sexuality or the no-holds-barred quips that Alexie sporadically utters to talk about death or God, would also do well to look into the emotionally-inspiring changes that we see taking place in the novel. When a group of parents of incoming freshmen at Antioch High School wanted to pull Alexie’s book from the school shelves and the curriculum due to its vulgar language, John Whitehurst, the chairman of the English Department, replied that Junior uses graphic language only to express his bitter feelings and to exchange taunts with his friends. But not only is he consistently courteous and respectful to adults and, particularly, to women, but his reflections are “filled with positive, life-affirming messages, and [have] an especially anti-alcohol message” (Fuller 2009). Truly, *TATD* is a work of fiction jammed full with invaluable lessons about how young men on the cusp of adulthood should deal with verbal and physical aggression, xenophobic attitudes, alcoholism, extreme grief and a long list of other socio-cultural disorders. If Junior’s voice sometimes comes across as excessively coarse and inelegant, we should stop and consider what kind of misfortune or pain he is experiencing at that moment. Hear him, for instance, when all his people get drunk at his elder sister’s funeral:

Okay, listen, I’m not a cruel bastard, okay? I know that people were very sad. I knew that my sister’s death made everybody remember all the deaths in their life. I know that death is never added to death; it multiplies. But still, I couldn’t stay and watch all those people get drunk. I couldn’t do it. If you’d given me a room full of sober Indians, crying and laughing and telling stories about my sister, then I would have gladly stayed and joined them in the ceremony.

But everybody was drunk. Everybody was unhappy.

And they were drunk and unhappy in the same exact way. (212)

According to Diane Samuels, *TATD* shares with some of the best works of YA fiction the fact that they “are like living organisms. They seem to breathe, laugh, weep, joke, confront, meet you eye to eye” (Samuels 2008). Should we expect a teenager to address us in any other way?

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Make it New: Gender and Tradition in Michèle Roberts's *Mud: Stories of Sex and Love*

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Abstract

This paper examines Michèle Roberts's metafictional and intertextual strategies in "Annunciation," a short story included in the collection *Mud: Stories of Sex and Love* (2010). Roberts's narratives are articulated both as a woman's urge to "make something new" with an inherited literary tradition, as well as a visitation of female experience from a variety of perspectives and provocative angles. Roberts portrays the lives of anonymous women and also reinvents Emma Bovary, George Sand, Jane Eyre, Rapunzel, Colette or the Virgin Mary, whose ghosts have haunted women's imagination and have conditioned their relationship with the literary canon. In tune with this, Roberts invites the reader to consider the periphery of literary classics, unweaving the traditional "grand narratives" to focus on the *petit récit* of women's lives, thus opening up an enriching process of reflection on gender, history, literature, creativity and narrative itself.¹

Keywords: Michèle Roberts, *Mud: Stories of Sex and Love*, intertextuality, metafiction, gender

This paper examines Roberts's metafictional and intertextual strategies in the collection *Mud: Stories of Sex and Love* in order to later focus on the eleventh narrative of the collection, "Annunciation," which entails the writer's visitation of the female experience of motherhood from a humorous and provocative perspective. The fourteen stories of the collection explore women's sexual desire through the discovery of their own bodies and physicality—as the word "mud" in the collection title suggests. These stories entail a variety of female perspectives which journey through pleasure, pain, sexual encounters, virginity, prostitution, sensuality, death of the loved ones and, most notably, loneliness and the earthly strategies that some women develop to face solitude.

Mud: Stories of Sex and Love is also a powerful rumination on the role of the writer's imagination, its impact on the reader and on culture at large. The narrator of the inaugural story makes this point obvious by alluding to the collection's metafictional nature and to the material quality of literature, which the word "mud" encapsulates: "I picked up the curls of

¹ This paper benefits from the collaboration of the research project *Women's Tales: The Short Fiction of Contemporary British Writers 1974–2013* (FEM2013-41977-P, Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad) and the Research Group *Discourse and Identity* (GRC2015/002 GI-1924, Xunta de Galicia).

mud and balanced them on my palms. Loops and circles of mud. Mud words. Mud commas and full stops. Bits of writing, broken apart, like the pieces of an old pot you dig up when going over your allotment. I'd piece them back together again, make something new with them" (2010, 7). The passage becomes a metafictional commentary on the writer's craft, on the collection's simultaneously fragmentary and unitary nature, on the material physicality of writing, and on a woman's urge to reassess the inherited literary tradition in order to "make it new." "Mud" actually becomes a powerful motif which recurs in all the narratives, taking the reader back to one of the foundational myths on artistry, life and inspiration in *Genesis*, whose narrative depicts God as a craftsman, creating life *ex nihilo*, modelling both man and woman and endowing them with life with his breath, a most powerful image juxtaposing creation and inspiration. While drawing from this image, Roberts also departs from it by reinventing the Christian myth and placing mud on a woman's mouth, an image which virtually recurs in each of the narratives in the collection.

As a result, Roberts's deployment of such imagery becomes an inspiring reflection on the female capacity to produce life, not only in biological terms, but also in social ones by producing a discourse, a powerful counter-narrative, which reflects on the nature of things, truth, myth and origins, as the protagonist of the first narrative indicates: "Yes I could have eaten a handful of earth, dry-damp-delicious in my mouth, and I could have eaten the long woven hedges and the bright grass and the black thorns glossy as silver. I wanted to lick all of it, taste it and swallow it and be one with it. And then, dissolving, *I wasn't myself, I wasn't myself any more*. I'd gone. I was just part of the mud, fresh in the rain and the sun and I was fed by the world, mouth open, full, churning with joy" (2010, 4; my italics). The narrator's voice in "Mud" echoes other female voices in this quotation, most notably Eavan Boland's "In Her Own Image" (1979), an inspiring reflection on female subjectivity, gender roles, cultural constructions, power and inheritance and the weight of literary tradition on a woman writer by revisiting the *Genesis*' foundational myth of creation and human subjectivity: "She is not myself/ anymore she is not/ even in my sky/ anymore and I am not myself" (Boland 1979).

On the other hand, the biblical "handful of dust" (Matthew 18: 3), a reminder of the transient quality of life and approaching death, becomes in Roberts' collection a strategy of empowerment, of living the world and being fed by it in terms of inspiring creativity. In this process of rethinking and remaking, of making something new out of old fragments and patches of experience, Roberts conceives of imagination as a powerful force which defies rational thinking and certainties, often becoming a space of otherness inside culture where "to experience the kind of chaos necessary for new life, new ideas" (Roberts 1998, 22). In tune with this, Roberts fully explores in this collection "this current of strangeness and chaos which is the unconscious" (Bastida 2003, 96). In this journey, Roberts is often aided by fairy tale conventions, icons and imagery which eventually signal a departure from the rational of everydayness into dream, fantasy, the unconscious and imagination, which Roberts has defined in the following terms:

The place of imagination is at the heart of each of us, at the heart of culture, of society. It's the place inside us where we hold and contain a kind of thinking that re-members how we were as children and still can be: non-rational, wanting to make and give gifts, playful, aggressive, destructive, sad, reparative, joyful. It's a safe place where we can let go of old certainties, let boundaries dissolve, experience the kind of chaos necessary for new life, new ideas. It's a space we need inside our culture. (Roberts 1998, 22)

I would like to argue here that *Mud* could be read as Roberts's fictionalisation of the "place of imagination," a powerful space of otherness where characters let go of received assumptions and certainties, which are however placed at the very heart of the self, and of culture. Additionally, Roberts's "place of imagination" has a feminist slant: in this collection, Roberts explores a matrilineal inheritance which ranges from female writers in the Western literary canon to anonymous women, all of them bonded by their physicality and by their urge to negotiate their sexual identity. For, as Virginia Woolf famously declared in *A Room of One's Own*, "we think back through our mothers if we are women" (1993, 101). In exploring such matrilineal (or maternal) inheritance, which permeates women's life, their writing and their experience, Roberts does not neglect the mother of all mothers, the Virgin Mary. I will be now focusing on Robert's eleventh narrative in the collection, "Annunciation," an inspiring rewriting of a girl's adventure to become the mother of God.

Discussing her Christian upbringing, Roberts affirmed that Catholicism provided her with a "culture of stories" (Bastida 2003, 95) which she has recurrently explored in her fiction. In "Annunciation," Roberts re-examines the Marian myth and its repercussions on women's sexuality. Marie is a working-class, "open-mouthed, vulnerable and soft" girl of eighteen who leaves the convent school to enjoy her independence in the London of the 1960s. From the story's opening lines, Roberts questions the dichotomy virgin/whore, or the inability to reconcile tender, pure affection and sexual drives. Marie is thus both "the good girl" with a solid, Catholic upbringing and the bad girl, "basically common, not respectable enough" who gossips about "periods and pubic hair and French kissing, despise[s] grammar and chant[s] swear words instead" (Roberts 2010, 153). In London, Marie starts work as a clerk for the General Post Office on the Euston Road. Marie ventures out of her Catholic ghetto and meets "deluded heathens who eat sausages on Fridays, refer to the Virgin Mary just as Mary and think she is just another woman" (155).

While she leads an innocent, even naïve, life at the office during daytime, at night she walks the streets on her own wearing make-up and notorious mini-skirts which call the attention of men who "spring out at her from every crack and crevice, edging too much close, rubbing up against her, asking how much she charges" (156). Roberts playfully intertwines here the figure of the "spiritual" mother, the iconic Madonna and the eroticised woman, the prostitute, recalling Mary Magdalene. The biblical prostitute reconciles the spiritual and the sexual in the female, a motif which has been extensively looked into by Roberts in her fiction and essays. Against the Catholic denial of the body, there emerges Mary Magdalene as "a highly coloured version of the eternal feminine," as the very image of the "return of the repressed: the numinous body, sexiness and holiness intertwined," "a figure of glorious contradiction" (Roberts 1998, 27-29).

After experiencing numerous sexual encounters with men Marie does not even like, and realising that she is unable to experience sexual pleasure at all, the character visits a psychiatrist, who concludes that Marie is "promiscuous and frigid; she hates men and wants to castrate them. She's faking it: pretending to be so innocent but really wanting to bite men's penises off" (166). The psychiatrist, sitting in his armchair like a *Pantocrator*, stands for patriarchal rational thinking, normative power and control: "The eyes of this mind-saint bur her up. Marie slumps on her orange vinyl chair. Mouth full of mud. She can't explain. He's like the parish priest. You don't talk back to that fiery judge" (157). The psychiatrist also instils Marie in guilt and self-hatred: "You pretend to be so innocent but you must have wanted it. Why deny that? Why can't you take some responsibility for what happened?" (157).

Marie's life experiences a turning point when she meets Joe, a divorced photographer that recalls Joseph, Mary's husband in the Scriptures. Marie is trapped in a sadomasochistic relationship with Joe, who repeatedly bullies and abuses her:

He ties her up. He knots Marie's hands and feet to the bedstead with silk scarves. He touches and rubs her, gently now, taking his time, until she comes. Then he photographs her. Then he fucks her. Then he photographs her again. Then he unties her. Sometimes he doesn't fuck her at all, just ties her up and photographs her splayed legs. Gorgeous, darling: gorgeous. Sometimes he dresses her up: lipsticked nun flashing her knickers; pouting little First Communicant shedding her dress, her veil. Marie feels taken care of; as though Joe's her mother, the scarves her mother holding her. Silky hands saying come on darling this is for your own good. Rapture of surrender to those hands, to those eyes, to that camera. Rapture of giving Joe everything he asks for; her attention, her love, her crisis. (167)

When Marie finds out she is pregnant and that her GP refuses to practise an abortion, Joe deserts her, and Marie is left jobless and moneyless to wander through the streets of London:

What was the game with the flower petals you ripped off? He loves me he loves me not. I'll have a baby no I'll not. How can I possibly become a mother? It wouldn't be fair on the child. Poor little tyke. She can't ring her parents and ask for help. To them abortion is a mortal sin. Herod's Slaughter of the Innocents all over again, punished by an eternity in hell-fire. She has lost touch with her former flatmates and good riddance. She feels too ashamed to contact Floss and Margaret, tell them what's happened, ask for advice. She's got no friends. Stupid girl, she berates herself: stupid girl. (175)

Despite Joe's repudiation, which echoes Joseph's secret rejection of Mary after finding out she is pregnant, Marie is helped out by Anne, an upper-class lady and by her goddaughter, Lizzie, who resemble Mary's mother and cousin, respectively. Marie gives birth to her son in December, and a new beginning for her is suggested through the bonding and affection provided by this community of women. The Adoration of the three Magi, both an epiphany (God is revealed to men as a mystery in the figure of a child) and a male ceremony of wisdom and power, which sanctions the Child's divine nature, is here replaced by the warm and spontaneous welcome of Marie's flat mates, three plain women celebrating the baby's arrival: "Once the baby is brought home the household throws a party in the kitchen, to bless and welcome him. They encircle his head with a wreath of tinsel and evergreen, hang strings of lights above his basket, light candles, splash drops of gin and tonic on his brow, sing to him" (181).

As shown in the narrative, Roberts deprived this modern version of Mary's miraculous conception and childbirth of its epic, divine attributes by reimagining her as a plain, confused and tormented working-class girl facing unwanted motherhood. As earlier argued, Roberts is interested in the Marian because of its persistent equation between femininity and the Maternal, which Christianity brings to its peak (Kristeva 1997, 304). By questioning the Christian dogma of Mary's "immaculate conception," Roberts places Mary in a human context of sin, mortality and death which Marie's mouth "full of mud" suggests (157).

As Julia Kristeva has argued, "the relationship with Mary was to be . . . the prototype of a love relationship and followed two fundamental aspects of western love: courtly love and child love" (1997, 305-06) and, more fundamentally, "the fantasy . . . of a lost territory," of a

pervading bonding with the mother, of an “idealization of primary narcissism” (302), that is, the “child’s love for the woman who nursed him” (Bowie 1991, 33), as proposed by Freud in “On Narcissism: An Introduction” (1914). Furthermore, fundamental aspects of Western love converge on Mary, becoming a focal point of men’s desires and aspirations (Kristeva 1997, 309). Roberts’s Marie embodies a conflation of milk and tears which, according to Kristeva, are the privileged signs of the *Mater Dolorosa* and whose conjunction works as a metaphor of “nonspeech, of a ‘semiotics’ that linguistic communication does not allow for” (312). But Roberts’s Marie is also reminiscent of the *Mater Amabilis*, who works as an example of an intensely felt, personal relationship with the Virgin: in the medieval Madonna icon, arid theology is transformed into “the image of a human, approachable, supremely adorable woman who stood by humanity like a mother but loved it like a mistress” (Warner 1976, 155). Mary works here as the ideal representation of motherhood in its fullness and perfection, despite her exemption by special privilege “from intercourse, from labour, and from other physical processes or ordinary childbearing. One natural biological function, however, was permitted the Virgin in the Christian cult—suckling,” for Mary’s milk symbolises both Jesus’s full humanity as well as the gift of life (Warner 1976, 192-94). Therefore, the Virgin fills the “visions of those, men or women (often children), who were racked by the anguish of maternal frustration”, the breast symbolising the threshold of infantile regression (Kristeva 1997, 311).

The narrative closes with an image of mother and child communion encapsulated in Marie’s breast-feeding her baby, which also incorporates a metaphor for a fruitful female communion of love and solidarity: “Sometimes, when the baby wakes at three or four a.m. and cries for a feed, Lizzie hears him ... Marie ... looks up and nods: come in ... Sometimes they chat; exchange confidences. Sometimes they remain in silence ... The room holds them. The baby gulps and burps. They swim in an ordinariness that feels safe, and lets their edges blur and loosen ... The three of them sit peacefully together, part of the London night” (182). The traditional holy family is here replaced by a sisterhood of women who experience motherhood in a different, yet inspiring, way. By doing so, these women become images of empowerment where the miracle of motherhood, indeed a miracle in itself in giving and transmitting life, is explained in its full physicality.

To conclude, Roberts firmly inscribes “Annunciation” in a whole tradition of literary and visual narratives which create particular expectations on readers, which are challenged and rebuffed in her narrative. The earthly physicality of Marie’s experience of motherhood reaches back not only to a whole tradition of Christian thought, but also to inspiring rewritings of it, like Roberts’s “Charity,” a short story published in the collection *During Mother’s Absence* (1994), which also tackles the problematics of female identification with Marian iconography and the presence of unsuitable mother figures. However, in “Annunciation” Roberts manages to subvert Marie’s initial subjection and powerlessness to potential empowerment by finding an alternative world of love and affection in new models of family and motherhood, as entailed by her sisterhood with Lizzie. Disinterested love and Christian charity enables Marie to overcome her initial suspicion and reluctance to trust and be trusted, and this sorority of women paves the way for the Saviour to be born. Roberts reimagines the Advent of Jesus in purely human terms and rewrites the Marian icon as a troubled mother figure who bravely faces adversity. In this way, Roberts invites the reader to consider the periphery of literary classics, unweaving the traditional “grand narratives” to focus on the *petit récit* of women’s ordinary lives, thus opening up an enriching process of reflection on gender, history, literature, creativity and narrative for, as Roberts herself

explains, “a book is a fantasy object, a fantasy of a gift, and it’s offered to a fantasy reader, a fantasy muse” (Newman 2003).

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Narrative Emotions and Human Rights Life Writing

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Abstract

This article explores the way in which life writing is used as a vehicle of human emotion. In the fight for human rights, life writing features prominently among the narrative choices that authors have access to. By making their story a claim to those rights that have been violated, their narrative affects us directly. In this article, I focus on a comparison of Malala Yousafzai's memoir and Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio* and their ability to move people. I use these Nobel Peace Prize recipients' accounts as tokens of the problematics and complexities of human rights life narratives, and the way these authors have become role models for current and future generations all over the world. I conclude that their success is due to the highly emotional responses they provoke and the impact they may have on society as a whole.

Keywords: *testimonio*, affective narratology, Malala, Menchú

1. Introduction

As Hogan has argued, “emotions make stories,” but “narratological treatments of emotions have on the whole been relatively undeveloped” (2011, 1). In this context, Schaffer and Smith assert that “storytelling has become a potent and yet highly problematic form of cultural production, critical to the international order of human rights and movements on behalf of social change” (2004, 31). The narrative emotion that pervades human rights life narratives is undoubtedly empathy. The relationship between the two is explained by Shuman as part of a process by which “an individual life story acquires a more-than-personal meaning” (2005, 8). I understand *empathy* in Nussbaum's terms, as the ability “to see the world from another's viewpoint” (2012, 36). This definition bears a cognitivist approach, suggesting a link between literature and “pro-social behavior” (Hammond and Kim 2014, 7-8). This article focuses on Malala Yousafzai's autobiography, published in 2013, and Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio*, published in Spanish in 1983 and, subsequently, in English in 1984, and their ability to move people.

In my discussion, I focus on a comparison of the empathetic mechanisms that Malala's and Menchú's autobiographical writings employ to *move* people in two distinct ways—emotionally and to action. In the case of Malala and Menchú, there are certain empathetic mechanisms that work this way, promoting the articulation of an emotional bond. The first such strategy is the establishment of a cause with which the reader may relate. Common to both these life narratives, I argue, is the emphasis on gender discrimination. Second, they deal with social injustice. Third, I discuss the use of the father as role model in these narratives. I

conclude that these examples of human rights life narrative resort to empathy so as to offer both a locus of resistance and possible socio-political change available for readers and non-readers alike.

2. Empathetic mechanisms in Malala's and Menchú's life narratives

2.1 Dealing with girls' discrimination

Let me start my discussion by looking at their first shared empathetic mechanism; that is, how Malala and Menchú deal with the issue of girls' discrimination in their life narratives. Both of them describe societies, the Pashtun and the Guatemalan Indian, in which women should stay at home, tending to their family's needs, cooking and cleaning, while men work outside the home and are seen as providers. In her *testimonio*, Rigoberta Menchú tells us that girls do not have the same rights as boys. When one considers their rights towards being seen outside the home, the situation may serve the reader to create a mental picture that is quite similar to that of women perhaps centuries ago or right now, but in other parts of the world: "In our community, if a girl is seen in the street with a boy, she both loses her dignity and breaks the customs of our forefathers" (Menchú 1984, 74).

Indeed, this moral code of avoiding being seen with men in the street, especially at a time when one reaches puberty and afterwards, is almost the same in Malala's account of Muslim ways. Women in the street by themselves are even more at risk in Malala's Pakistan under the Taliban regime. Women are not only made to be accompanied by a male relative, but, if seen on their own, they may be subject to physical abuse, such as public whippings (Yousafzai and Lamb 2013, 142), or even poisoned by their family to protect their honor (54). Early marriages are, therefore, quite common in Pashtun society, even if the girl is just ten and married away to an older, already married man (54).

Marriage is also present in Menchú's account, all the more forceful because she tells us that it was her sister's experience that was a bad one, married as she was to somebody from a different community, from a different place, with different language and different customs (1984, 91). Yet, Menchú presents her own community as embracing the somewhat shameful return of the unhappy newly-wed, while that kind of behavior is out of the question in Malala's narrative.

2.2 Focusing on social injustice

The second empathetic mechanism that is common to Malala and Menchú is their focus on social injustices. What sets them apart, though, is whom they consider as responsible. Rigoberta emphasizes the hatred among Indians and *ladinos*, who, even if poor, consider themselves superior because of their Hispanic roots (Menchú 1984, 140-1). While for Menchú Western influences, to her responsible for the atrocities committed against the Indian impoverished community, are to blame, for Malala the Westernized community is the one who suffers at the hands of the fundamentalist Taliban. There is an underlying discourse of equality as a human right. For Menchú, the Indian should be treated equally to any other member of Guatemalan society. For Malala, girls should receive the very same education as any other member of Pakistani society.

Menchú makes readers feel her pain by describing personal accounts of suffering. Instead of telling us about the stories she heard, she tells us that everything happened to either her or her family. Thus, for example, it was actually her father who was wrongly robbed of

his land, accused by the authorities, put in prison, kidnapped and tortured (132-3). However, the episode that has been able to move people all over the world, and which has caused her to receive criticism as well (Rohter 1998; Stoll 1999), is her gruesome, detailed description of her brother's torture and death (Menchú 1984, 201-11). Personalizing these stories, making them her own, Rigoberta makes us feel with her, and, through that shared pain, the emotional bond that she manages to construct is all the greater. Without this terrible, haunting account, Menchú might have never gained the worldwide acclaim that she did. Her voice might never have been heard. Her ability to reach the public, to thereby raise awareness of human rights abuses in her home country, is, as in the case of Malala, reliant on empathy.

Malala's narrative of atrocities includes the aforementioned public whippings, child marriages and honor killings, as well as tortures (Yousafzai and Lamb 2013, 172), kidnappings (172-3) and even sudden death sentences for Christian charitable people trying to help (173). But it is when she gives her own personal account of what happened to her that the reader is most moved—her wishes to go to school, to receive an education, and how those are thwarted by an official ban on girls' education, subsequent threats, schools being bombed, and, finally, being shot in the head by the Taliban because of her continued defiance of the rules and her public speaking out to call for equal rights. For Malala, the right to education is of uppermost importance. Both Menchú's and Malala's ability to move readers emotionally is what makes readers first empathize with them and then think about acting in consequence.

2.3 The father figure

The third empathetic mechanism shared by Menchú's and Malala's life narratives is their use of the father figure. For both of them, the father is a role model, a central idea with which the reader can intimately connect. Menchú's father appears as justification of her choices in life, offering the advice that she needs. For example, when she decides to leave her village, she tells readers that it was actually following her father's words of advice: "My father told me: 'You are independent, you must do what you want to, as long as you do it for our people.' That was my father's idea" (Menchú 1984, 166). Furthermore, Menchú has adopted her father's role as that of a leader: "My father was our community's leader ... My father used to say: 'We don't do this so that our neighbours can say, "What good people they are!" We do it for our ancestors'" (220). Then, in the final pages of her autobiography, Menchú acknowledges precisely that leading role for herself:

Well, my role is now that of a leader. ... My life does not belong to me. I've decided to offer it to a cause. ... I'm fulfilling a mission, so I know that my blood will not be shed in vain, but will serve as an example to my *compañeros*. (288)

Menchú's activism differs from Malala's mainly in their approach to justice. While Menchú accepts violence if it is a means to an end, Malala is totally against it. Both of them have been influenced by their fathers, and that includes their views on ethics and morals.

In the case of Malala, she acknowledges from the beginning that her father has "passed on to" her "a deep love of learning and knowledge as well as a keen awareness of people's rights" (Yousafzai and Lamb 2013, 30). That includes girls' rights to education, which sets Malala's father apart from other men in his community. This is beautifully portrayed in a dialogue that Malala remembers in her autobiography: "'Why don't they want girls to go to school?' I asked my father. / 'They are afraid of the pen,' he replied" (97). This supposed fear on the part of the Taliban, and extremists in general all over the world, is an

idea that Malala continues to emphasize in her public appearances, such as her speech before the United Nations when she turned sixteen (Yousafzai 2013). In that speech, pens feature prominently as a potent symbol: “Let us pick up our books and our pens ... They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world” (Yousafzai and Lamb 2013, 262). The power stemming from pens is education and its ability to transform people’s lives. Malala’s appeals aim at attaining welfare for the whole human race. To achieve that, another key expression is “to speak out” (Yousafzai 2013), a constant in her oral discourse that also shows a clear influence from her father, who used to connect the idea of speaking out to ideals of peace and truth:

My father would say to me, ‘Any organisation which works for peace, I will join. If you want to resolve a dispute or come out from a conflict, the very first thing is to speak the truth. If you have a headache and tell the doctor you have a stomach ache, how can the doctor help? You must speak the truth. The truth will abolish fear. (Yousafzai and Lamb 2013, 115)

Malala’s father goes on to explain why his life is devoted to activism: “We had been left with no choice but to get involved in politics and campaign for education. ‘My only ambition ... is to educate my children and my nation as much as I am able. ... One has to speak out’” (180). Malala has adopted her father’s ideas and made them her own, by adapting them to a certain extent. Thus, her ambition is to do her best to promote every child’s chances of going to school anywhere in the world. Instead of focusing on her family and her country, she chooses to think big, to make us all part of what she considers her psychological family and community. By so doing, Malala’s discourse manages to strengthen the emotional bond between us.

3. Final remarks

To conclude, I believe that resorting to empathetic mechanisms is what makes these two life narratives stand out as icons of human rights life writing. By talking about human rights abuses, the reader is, arguably, already feeling moved. However, the way that the narrator tells the story of her life is relevant. Instead of a mere retelling in the news, where one might find the necessary data and aseptic information, here one is moved emotionally. Some parts of the story move the reader to tears, others to laughter. Even if distance is maintained as a prerequisite for empathy to work, it does not make the reader a passive recipient. Rather, the reader becomes engaged in the cause, be that the rights of an Indian minority, as in the case of Menchú, or the rights of Muslim girls to receive an education, as in the case of Malala. Through an enhanced empathic approach, I contend, the reader feels moved to do something about it, that is, to also speak out. Together with Malala and Menchú, the reader feels the need to raise his or her voice. Moreover, we feel the need to change those situations of abuse and somehow turn them into something else.

True enough, there was a time when Menchú advocated violence as the solution (1984). Nevertheless, she then decided that peace was a much better option, one that provided for equality and freedom. In that regard, Menchú’s and Malala’s narratives coincide, so much that they have both been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. There may be critics that suggest they are not worthy recipients of such a prize, that their accounts are unreliable, untrustworthy (Rohter 1998; Stoll 1999), or just blatantly biased (Ahmed 2014; Aheram 2014; Hines 2014; Rao 2015).

And yet, despite the controversy surrounding them, for millions of people worldwide, these two human rights activists are iconic and highly valued. For instance, Arturo Arias (2001a; 2001b) and Victor Montejo (2005) assert the value of Rigoberta's *testimonio*, insisting that her so-called *untruths* "cannot detract from her role as an international figure promoting human rights and supporting the prosecution of those involved in massacres and genocide in Guatemala" (20). Furthermore, they are not a passing fad, proof of which is Leigh Gilmore's upcoming book on Menchú *Tainted Witness: Women's Life Narrative in Neoliberal Times* (n.p.), the growing number of publications related to Malala, among them many children's and young adults' books (Rowell 2013; Aretha 2014; Yousafzai and McCormick 2014; McCarney 2015; Small 2015; Hansen 2015; Doeden 2015), and Malala's recently released documentary *He Named Me Malala* (Guggenheim 2015). Both Menchú's and Malala's life stories have made it possible to advance social justice claims, to promote helpful initiatives and reach global goals. Thanks to their efforts, some situations of abuse have been dealt with. Legislation for the rights of the Indian community has been passed; also for girls' rights and for children's education. These are, of course, ongoing *wars*, and, in this arena, empathy may be the key that allows human rights life narratives to work, making readers become involved in fighting for the common good.

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Nell Gwyn as the Epitome of Englishness: The Case of Anna Neagle, the True English Rose

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Abstract

As one of the precursors of the celebrity movement, Nell Gwyn's rags-to-riches Cinderella story has made her the focus of media attention. In the 1930s, Herbert Wilcox included her story amongst his repertoire of historical films, choosing Anna Neagle, the modest, resilient and resourceful English rose, to play her. Although he argued that the apparent contradiction in the casting was intended to shock audiences, this paper explores the intertextuality between Neagle and the title character of the film, arguing that far from being a detour in Neagle's career, *Nell Gwyn* serves as way to buttress her image as the English Rose and that the piece, fiercely patriotic and melodramatic, also contributed to the cause of clearing Nell's name by re-imagining her as a true English Rose.

Keywords: Gwyn, Neagle, English Rose, public intimacy

As one of the precursors of the celebrity movement that we now take for granted, Nell Gwyn was, undoubtedly, the focus of attention during the Restoration both for her acting skills and her outrageous sexual adventures. Although she is best-known nowadays as Charles II's longest-lasting mistress, theatre goers of the 1660s, playwrights and fellow performers, all hailed her as a master of comedy and witty banter. Her affairs with powerful men and her talent as an actress would, nevertheless, not justify her having become the first It-Girl: the mystery surrounding her origins and her rags-to-riches Cinderella story have ultimately carried throughout the centuries, becoming part of the public imaginary and turning her into a creature of legend.

Nell Gwyn's fame has led to her being alternatively celebrated as a performer or vilified as a gold-digger; friends and supporters not only compared her to a princess (Dryden 1958, 119), perhaps even the first "People's Princess" (Perry and Roach 2011, 67), but they also hailed her beauty and wit, her modesty and affection for her children (Behn 1996, 87). Her detractors, on the other hand, painted her as ignorant and rude, from dubious parentage (Betterton 1741, 111) and precociously wanton (Straub 1992, 90).

Centuries later, Gwyn's story of triumph has continued to fascinate us with innumerable cultural products inspired by her story. Most of these cultural products have drawn their inspiration for their re-fashioning of Nell from the fairy-tale quality of her royal affair, allowing for an admiration of a success story of the working classes. This paper focuses on a film directed by Herbert Wilcox in 1934, in an attempt at analysing not just the version of Gwyn it presents us with, but the close relationship between the character and the actress playing the "Protestant whore" (Conway 2013).

In the 1930s Wilcox, one of the most successful British filmmakers, created a series of historical films following the lives of extraordinary women. Two examples are *Victoria the*

Great (1937) and *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938), representing “a reverent depiction of monarchy. . . a nationalistic notion of Britishness which is articulated by reference to Victorianism and the Empire” (Street 1997, 41-2). Wilcox used his historical films for clear political ends in times of turmoil and austerity: to “assert the need for national unity. . . in response to different circumstances” (Chapman 2005, 64) and paint “Britain as a collective community” (Street 1997, 40) represented in the figure of Victoria, who withstands trials and tribulations, perseveres and takes her country to glory.

The woman chosen to play such a role was Anna Neagle, Wilcox’s wife. She was the star of films which “are a celebration of tradition and history” (Landy 2014, 313) as well as the films in the ‘Mayfair cycle,’ productions that became hugely successful due to “Wilcox’s style . . . helped by the fact that his wife was something of a national icon because of her portrayals of Queen Victoria and Nell Gwyn” (Butler 2004, 95).

After such box-office hits, Neagle went on to play roles carefully chosen to buttress and add to her image as a more powerful symbol of England than the white cliffs of Dover (Thumim in Street 1997, 124). The analogy was to accompany her throughout a career which revolved around her becoming an expert at one role, just like Gwyn had done: while Nell was the madcap, the quintessential Restoration heroine, Neagle became a “national emblem . . . by her portrayal of Britannia-like women. . . ordinary women transformed into heroines by extraordinary wartime circumstances” (Street 1997, 127), roles that held a strong appeal for audiences living through the austerity of the interwar period.

Nell Gwyn (1934) is a musical comedy which follows the affair of the Restoration actress with Charles II, emphasizing her competition for the King’s favour with the French aristocrat Louise de K rouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth, a character born of a palimpsest of concubines (Gwyn, Barbara Palmer and K rouaille) whose rivalry with Gwyn did not take place in real life, for by the time K rouaille came about, Nell had been Charles’s lover for years. The film resembles none of the archetypal Neagle roles, for it presents us not with a dignified lady who triumphs against all the odds, but with a rude street urchin who delights in bawdy repartee and in the mischievous humiliation of the Duchess of Portsmouth. Such a character seems to be in contradiction with the image of Neagle that she and her husband strove to exploit until it became their most successful formula and an inextricable part of her public persona. So how does pretty, witty Nell fit into this canon, amongst Queen Victoria and Nurse Edith Cadwell? How does the Protestant whore, mother of royal bastards contribute to Neagle’s image as an English Rose? According to Street and Wilcox, it does not, for, in Street’s words, “on several occasions, she deviated from the norm to keep the public guessing” (1997, 121) and Wilcox declared that he wanted to “shock the critics into noticing the actress in her and also shock audiences out of the English Rose image” (1969, 97-8).

Critics have claimed that although *Nell Gwyn* was one of her best performances and major successes, it was films like *Victoria the Great* that established her public persona since this costume romp does not fit into her filmography. It is my contention that, far from being a departure point from her archetypal roles, Neagle’s Gwyn not only contributes to her image as the English Rose, but re-fashions the figure of Nell herself: instead of Neagle being polluted by Gwyn’s rudeness and base origins, Neagle’s “British, non-European and white identity” (Street 1997, 121) is transferred to the Restoration actress, turning her into a melodramatic heroine the public can root for.

The strength of this film lies in the intertextuality existing between the actress and the character; the identification between performer and character has been used since the Restoration as a device to create ‘public intimacy,’ “a kind of public performance produced

expressly for the purpose of stimulating theatrical consumption, [an] illusion [which] makes possible the creation of desire, familiarity and identification” (Luckhurst and Moody 2005, 3) and which ensures the performer’s success and fame. This was a constant in Gwyn’s theatrical life and she would even comment on her roles onstage, which, in most cases, had been written specially for her to exploit both her abilities as a *comediienne* and physical attributes. Neagle also participated of this public intimacy which linked her private persona to her roles, to her public self, to the point when audiences could not distinguish one from the other.

Despite the contrast between Neagle, an actress whose fame as a respectable woman meant “gossip columns rarely mentioned [her] or discussed her in sexual terms, reassuring the public that good British girls were not ‘like that’” (Street 1997, 120) and Gwyn, a woman whose identity is inextricably linked to her sexuality, the parallels between them are quite astonishing and help set the basis for Neagle’s public self and roles as an English heroine.

In this film, we are presented with a girl who, at first sight, could not be more different from all that Neagle represented: Gwyn is loud, rude, uneducated, a friend of drunks and an actress at a time when the name was equated with prostitution. But right after the opening credits, we start seeing the similarities between the urchin and the actress who would soon play Queen Victoria. Wilcox’s representation of Gwyn revolves around her generous and selfless nature, qualities which many of Gwyn’s contemporaries extolled in an attempt at redeeming her public cuckolding of the Queen and which Wilcox seems intent on highlighting. At the beginning of the film, we see Nell strolling towards the theatre with Meg, who will continue to accompany her at Court as friend and maid, only to find two maimed soldiers to whom Nell not only gives money, but with whom she promises to meet after the play (1934, 4:24-5:25). Once she is ‘a grand lady’ in her grand house, she invites them over and while drinking, they inform her of their dire economic situation: penniless and homeless since they cannot serve the army and navy again, they do not receive any pension from the State (1934, 53:30). Nell decides to ask the King for help in setting up a hospital for veterans to go to once they have done their duty for his country. The image then fades into a text (figure. 1) which reminds audiences of how important Chelsea Hospital has been in caring for the health of those who defended Britannia against its enemies, stressing that it was Gwyn’s idea, emphasising her generous and nurturing character.

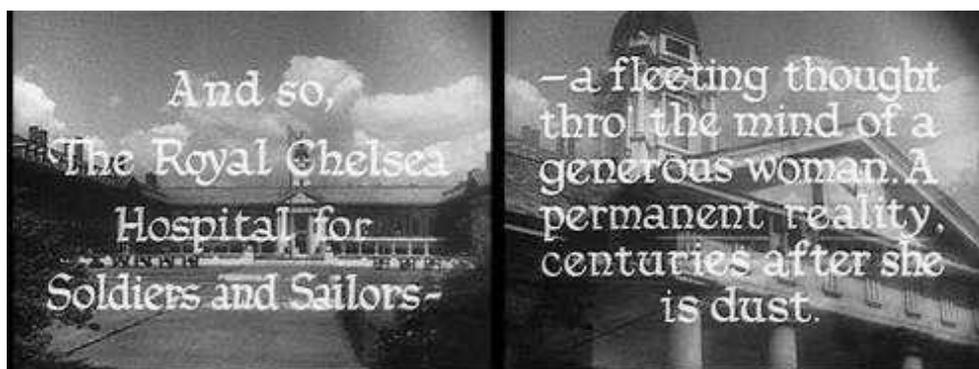


Figure 1

This generosity and patriotism is stressed even further when, accused of cheating on the King, Nell reproaches him lack of care towards his people “if you listened to your own people. . . instead of to a French trollop!” (1934, 58:00). This statement, that could easily be

taken as the irate response of a jealous woman, is a patriotic declaration, entreating government and Royalty to listen to the people they rule over, to be attentive to their needs, for they are indeed, the ones that, like all Neagle's characters, will defend Britain.

Scenes like this, if played by any other actress who had not acquired Neagle's fame, would not work in the same way; but since she was seen as a paragon of Englishness, audiences are more than willing to believe this version of Gwyn.

Furthermore, the actual story of Gwyn's elevation from orange seller to *comédienne* to Royal concubine mirrors Neagle's own path to stardom, which was recounted as an exemplary tale. This story, with Neagle as the epitome of all English values, was key in the marketing of her public and private persona, with one critic even commenting that "things are as they should be when a girl can by determination and hard work rise from the ranks of the chorus in a few years to international eminence in English films" (Street 1997, 121).

The identification between Nell and Neagle is then unavoidable, for both had raised from humble origins to become symbols of their age through acting and thanks to the help of powerful men: actor Charles Hart and the King's companion Charles Buckhurst had been pivotal figures in the life of Gwyn, while Wilcox had been Neagle's mentor, lover and the man who had discovered her talent. Truth be told, Neagle's story lacks the scandal of Gwyn's royal affair, but then again, 1930s Britain lacks the glamour and brilliance of the Restoration. Charles's opening scene, where he announces his intention to "restore to the country its old good nature, its old good manners and its old good humour" (1934, 3:44) is not only a political declaration drawing a parallel between Puritanism and the austere 1930s, but an equation of Gwyn with the merry, witty and resourceful nation of old times.

The film is a homage to the common people who brought back Britain to what Wilcox considers their "real character" both during the Restoration or after WWI, to those who brought back the happiness and wit native to the country, characteristics all embodied by Nell/Neagle in their comically patriotic fight against Kérouaille. This confrontation is a political statement hailing the superiority of the English and their resistance to foreign intervention, as seen in the juxtaposition of the two Royal lovers: to Kérouaille's smug haughty manner, we find Gwyn's humorous selflessness, to the French sense of superiority (figure 2), we have English salt-of-the-earth humility, to foreign manipulative plots, we have English plain dealing and honesty. From the first meeting between Nell and the King, Portsmouth seems to sense the threat the actress might become: Louise is dismissive of the actress, quick to criticise and badmouth her, something we do not actually see Nell doing, emphasising her as good-nature and justifying her fight with Portsmouth as response to these provocations and slights.



Figure 2

The fight between them reaches an all-time high when Portsmouth plans to appear in the theatre wearing a fantastic dress and hat, inspired by the clothes of one of the French mistresses, who then became as good as Queen (1934, 47:30). Gwyn steals the limelight coming onstage wearing an even more extravagant version of the costume (figure 3), ridiculing the French aristocrat and provoking the laughter of all present, including the King.



Figure 3

In his representation of this cat-fight, which never really took place, Wilcox is also proposing Neagle and Gwyn as the epitome of Englishness, possessing all the qualities that make her superior to any foreign power. This comic confrontation serves not just to emphasise the supremacy of English sense of humour and wit, but it also works to shape Gwyn and Neagle as the heroines of a tragicomedy: the triumph over Portsmouth is followed by a period of stability for Charles and Nell, which comes to legitimise their relationship depicting it as a “companionate marriage” (Stone 1990, 101) in which Gwyn’s loyalty and admirable qualities are highlighted (figure 4). This representation of the couple would echo the Neagle-Wilcox union: married in the late 1940s, their relationship transcended the realm of feeling becoming one of the most successful and profitable business associations of British cinema, “unusual in the sense that it did not appear to conflict with their marriage in 1943, implying that as a team they enjoyed a great degree of mutual respect” (Street 1997, 120) where Neagle was a muse, business partner, producer and co-writer.

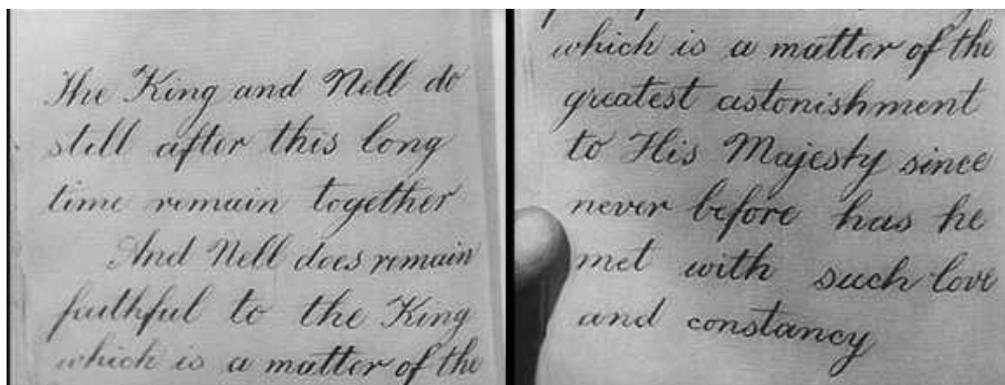


Figure 4

This intimacy and companionship of the second part of the film, serves a double purpose: first, it strengthens the Gwyn/Neagle identification through the representation of their intimacy with the King of Britain and Britain's king of cinema; and second, it transforms Gwyn into the heroine of a tragic love story. The last part of the film, where we see the death of King Charles and the consequences this has for Nell and K  rouaille, elevates Gwyn to new heights of respectability, degrading the French aristocrat and further emphasising the superiority of English working classes. While the King lies dying, the French Countess is seen gathering all her riches and fleeing court, without so much as a backward glance to the man who elevated her (figure 5).



Figure 5

Nell, meanwhile, runs towards the palace as soon as she hears the news, only to be banned from entering the King's chamber, as she is not of Royal or even noble blood. Although Gwyn has been faithful to the King, his constant companion, the Court does not fully accept her and leaves her waiting for news separated from him by wooden bars. Once she learns of his death, Wilcox offers us a close-up of her face, which is not smiling in this case (figure 6). It is this scene that elevates Gwyn to respectability through Neagle's acting skills and her rendition of the dignified grief and strength which, according to Wilcox, are native to England.



Figure 6

This brief analysis of the film *Nell Gwyn* and “the Neagle persona” (Street 1997, 120) proves that it is not a departure point in her cinematic career and that although it has been presented as a costume romp, a musical comedy and a “bawdy and controversial British historical drama” (H. Wilcox 1934), it is a piece of nationalistic propaganda in which history is manipulated to fit the director’s purpose: *Nell Gwyn*, intended to boost the morale of the country, is the perfect vehicle to exploit ‘public intimacy’ thus buttressing both Neagle’s stage persona and the nationalistic message of the work, through its reconstruction of Gwyn’s reputation.

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Humanity, Nature and History. Destiny Bounded to Natural Phenomena: Fokir in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Abstract

Among the new ways of studying literary works, ecocriticism should be considered as the approach which analyses the relationship between characters and nature in a literary work or the role of nature itself as a relevant character. The analysis of any literary text from this perspective justifies a belief in the inseparability of literature from nature and the ecological whole. Through this approach, literature becomes part of the globalizing process in being a tool to achieve new models of thought and argument in favour of environmental issues. Moreover, ecocriticism, as a literary approach, plays an important role within this crucial intellectual transformation. Diasporic Indian English writer Amitav Ghosh's portrays in *The Hungry Tide*, through the character of Fokir, the embodiment of ecocriticism in a human being. Once the novel is finished, it is impossible to think about Fokir without linking him to nature.

Key words: ecocriticism, cultural constructions, identity, globalization, global intellectual transformation

Nature can be understood as the physical environment and, extrapolated to the literary field, to setting, one of the basic building blocks in literature. The surrounding environment has extreme relevance: it reveals as much about any given character as about the cultural constructions of nature and ties that any living creature has with the world we live in. It also represents the spatial location, a space to which meaning has been ascribed where place and society are fused as a unity. In short, it justifies the belief of an inseparability of literature from nature and the ecological whole, as well as the need of an interdisciplinary practice to take the most out of a literary work.

Focusing our attention on ecocriticism, *eco* and *critic* both derive from Greek *oikos* and *kritis*, a tandem which means “house judge,” where *oikos* is nature and *kritos* an arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order (Coupe 2000, 163). Different authors provide different approaches to define this theory. Timothy Clark, in his *Cambridge Introduction to Literature and Environment*, defines literary and cultural criticism, or “ecocriticism,” as “a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, usually considered from out of the current global environmental crisis and its revisionist challenge to given modes of thought and practice” (Clark 2011, xiii). In the first page of Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism*, we find that the term “explores the ways in which we imagine and portray the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural production, from Wordsworth and Thoreau to Disney and BBC nature documentaries” (Garrard 2012, i).

In short, it could be said that ecocriticism is a critical approach to literature which focuses its attention on the study of the relationship between the characters and nature in a

literary work; or in the role of nature itself as a relevant character. It also analyses the ways in which nature is always culturally constructed in a broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture take place.

The use of an ecocritical analysis in the Indian English Narrative is completely justified if we take into account that nature has been present in this literature from its very beginning, and it is a crucial and very important element in this fiction. The Indian subcontinent, as well as other contexts in Asia, Africa or Latin America, has been exposed to brutal aggressions towards nature in very recent years. We should also take into account that since colonial times, the natural Indian landscape started to be changed to accommodate the comfort and need of the colonizer as well as to satisfy progress. Thus, the link between the postcolonial and the environment is perfectly portrayed within the Indian English text.

Moreover, since the 1930s, with the works of Mulkraj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, R. K. Narayand and Raja Rao, "The Pioneers," Indian English Literature has acquired a status of meaningful independent existence in the complex body of Indian literature, with its many vernacular literatures. There has always been a parallelism between the historical and social development of the Indian subcontinent and that of its literature written in English. Nowadays, Indian English authors are transcending contexts and adopting themes that could be considered global, revealing the role that India is acquiring in the Western world.

Diasporic Indian English writer Amitav Ghosh's portrays in *The Hungry Tide*, through the character of Fokir, the embodiment of ecocriticism in a human being. Living in Lusibari, an island of the Sundarbans archipelago, his life is tightly tied to nature to the point of being uneducated and knowing by heart one of the legends of the place, "The Glory of Bon Bibi," plenty of references to the flora and fauna of his homeland. Moreover, his life is taken away by nature in a cyclone with the same characteristics as the one which caused the death of his grandfather.

Thus, by following an ecocritical perspective and applying literary anthropology, which understands the literary text as a cultural object and as a reflection of that very culture, this paper tries to prove that an ecocritical analysis of the character is necessary to understand the relevance of natural roots and nature in the life of human beings. Moreover, through this approach, literature becomes part of the globalizing process in being a tool to achieve new models of thought and argument in favour of environmental issues, and ecocriticism as a literary approach plays an important role within this crucial intellectual transformation. As a brief summary of the novel,

In between the sea and the plains of Bengal, on the easternmost coast of India, lies an immense archipelago of islands. Some of these islands are vast and some no larger than sandbars; some have lasted through recorded history while others have just washed into being. These are the Sundarbans—the beautiful lands. Here there are no borders to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea, even land from water. The tides reach more than two hundred miles inland, and every day thousands of acres of mangrove forest disappear only to re-emerge hours later. For hundreds of years, only the truly dispossessed and the hopeless dreamers of the world have braved the man eaters and the crocodiles who rule there, to eke a precarious existence from the unyielding mud, in what could be considered a kind of Paradise or idyllic community. (<http://www.amitavghosh.com/thehungrytide.html>)

The current research focuses on the character of Fokir, who is most influenced by nature than any other in the novel. The first appearance of Fokir is in "a small canoe-like craft with a

hooped covering at the rear. There seemed to be only one fisherman on board. He was going through the motions of casting a net, standing upright to make his throw and stooping to pull his catch in” (Ghosh 2004, 41). The description we are provided with is that of a man with “the grizzled look of an experienced hand . . . his body was bare except for a single twist of cloth, wound between his legs and around his waist. His frame was skeletal, almost wasted, in the way of a man who’d grown old on the water, slowly yielding his flesh to the wind and the sun” (Ghosh 2004, 42-3).

Fokir means protection, knowledge of nature, helpfulness. He may be illiterate following the Western literacy canons, but his knowledge of nature and the land makes him extremely valuable and necessary in the lives of the inhabitants of the place, as “Fokir’s abilities as an observer are really extraordinary” (Ghosh 2004, 268) and “his knowledge can be of help to a scientist” (Ghosh 2004, 212). He is different to any other human being and while “people almost automatically went through a ritual of naming when they were with a stranger of another language. Fokir was an exception in that he had made no such attempts” (Ghosh 2004, 93).

His ability makes him indispensable for the development of the story, as he is Piya’s major helper in her natural research in the zone. He is her savior from human beasts as well as from those of nature. They meet each other when Fokir rescues Piya from two men who were trying to abuse her and now, in the river, “suddenly the water boiled over and a pair of huge jaws came shooting out of the river, breaking the surface exactly where Piya’s wrist had been a moment before. From the corner of an eye, Piya saw two sets of interlocking teeth make a snatching, twisting movement as they . . . passed so close that the hard tip of the snout grazed her elbow and the spray from the nostrils wetted her forearm” (Ghosh 2004, 174). Just a moment later, Fokir “took hold of one of his oars [which] hammered into the head of the crocodile just as it was surfacing. . . . The river bubbled again as the reptile sank out of sight” (Ghosh 2004, 175).

It could be said that one of the common threads of the narrative is that of dolphins and their life in their natural environment. These animals are the messengers of Bon Bibi, the tiger-goddess with an Islamic religious origin, one of the legends of the place Fokir knows since he was very little. He is even singing it during the expedition. Though to a foreigner it could seem something stupid or childish, its understanding is fundamental for surviving in the zone:

Bon Bibi . . . was chosen by the archangel for a divine mission: . . . to travel from Arabia to “the country of eighteen tides” . . . in order to make it fit for human habitation. . . . The jungles of “the country of eighteen tides” were then the realm of Dokkhin Rai, a powerful demon king. . . . Rousing his hordes, the incensed demon set upon the trespassers, only to be put to rout in a pitched battle. But Bon Bibi was merciful in victory and she decided that one half of the tide country would remain a wilderness; this part of the forest she left to Dokkhin Rai and his demon hordes. The rest she claimed for herself, and under her rule this once-forested domain was soon made safe for human settlement.

A man called Dhona . . . put together a fleet of seven ships in the hope of making a fortune in the jungle. [There was] a young man called Dukhey [whose mother] gave him a word of advice: were he ever to find himself in trouble, he was to call on Bon Bibi; she was the saviour of the weak and a mother of mercy to the poor; she was sure to come to his aid. (Ghosh 2004, 103-104)

The child was left alone and Dokkhin Rai appeared disguised as a tiger and when the animal was ready to attack the boy, he “called out: ‘O Mother of Mercy, Bon Bibi, save me, come to my side! Bon Bibi . . . revived the boy [and] nursed him back to health” (Ghosh 2004, 105). Thus, the story of Bon Bibi, the forest’s protectress, “was the story that gave this land its life” (Ghosh 2004, 354). Thus, Fokir knows how to protect himself from danger and to whom he has to call for help and protection when in need.

It is when the climax of the story approaches when we find the connection of the title of this paper with the whole narrative. During the expedition, there is a cyclone coming that none of the characters of the story could imagine, but which has taken place several times during the history of the place provoking disasters of different magnitude, and Fokir is told when only five years old:

The worst storm of all . . . was in 1737 . . . It happened in October—that’s always when the worst of them strike, October and November. Before the storm had even made landfall the tide country was hit by a huge wave, a wall of water twelve metres in height. . . . The waters rose so high that they killed thousands of animals and carried them upriver and inland. . . . The city was hit by an earthquake. (Ghosh 2004, 203-204)

This story helps him to understand the sounds of nature and teaches him the relevance of observation to predict the coming of natural phenomena. Nature alerts them with different signs: a bigger moon, extreme warm weather and humidity, animals fleeing trying to protect them. . . Fokir and Piya are alone in the river. It is written in Fokir’s destiny: his grandfather died on a terrible storm some decades before. When the storm comes, they find shelter in the branch of a tree using a sari “to tie them both to the tree trunk” (Ghosh 2004, 378). “Without [it], they would long since have been swept off the branch” (Ghosh 2004, 382). “It was as though the sky had become a dark-tinted mirror for the waters of the tide country, with their myriad cross-cutting currents, eddies and whirlpools, all with their slight but still discernible distinctions of colouring, . . . as if the earth itself had begun to move” (Ghosh 2004, 379).

As the storm grew in force and they were trying to survive, “the tree strained at its roots and it seemed that at any moment it would be torn from the earth and added to the storm of turbulence following the wave” (Ghosh 2004, 383). “Their bodies were so close, so finely merged, that she could feel the impact of everything hitting him, she could sense the blows raining down on his back. She could feel the bones of his cheeks as if they had been superimposed on her own” (Ghosh 2004, 390). Fokir passes away

in the last hour of the storm. He’d been hit by something very big and very heavy, an uprooted stump; it had hit him so hard that she too had been crushed against the trunk of the tree they were sitting on. The sari had kept them attached to the trunk even as he was dying. His mouth was close enough to her ear so that she’d been able to hear him. . . . She’d left his body on the tree, tied to the trunk with [the] sari to keep it safe from animals. They would have to go back . . . to cut it down. (Ghosh 2004, 392)

Thus, to sum up, Fokir has lived devoted to nature, always in a respectful connection with her, living from the resources she provides as if she were his mother. It is also nature that takes his life away, as she has her own will, unable to be controlled by any human. His destiny, as that of his grandfather, is bounded to natural phenomena and he, as an inhabitant of Lusibari, finds his true self when in the heart of nature.

In terms of the relationship between the discourse and the context, the work reflects a clear relationship between the plot and nature, maintaining a close relationship with its surroundings and the ecosystems that have been present throughout the story. Nature works such an influence that direct contact with her is necessary, if humans are to fulfill their expectations in life. Hence, through this analysis, the aptness of the concept of ecocriticism becomes clear as an approach that should take new turns.

We should continue to rely on nature and, as active elements in the order of things, have the duty to feel one with and within nature. Thus, literature becomes part of the globalizing process in being a tool to achieve new models of thought and argument in favour of environmental issues, and ecocriticism as a literary approach plays an important role within this crucial intellectual transformation.

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New Ways to Remember: Memory in Tayari Jones's *Leaving Atlanta*

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Abstract

The use of memory in African American fiction writing has evolved from the time of the first slave narratives until today's fiction. The following is a reflection upon Tayari Jones's use of memory in her first novel *Leaving Atlanta* (2002), upon unearthing a very close and horrible past event, the Atlanta child murders of 1979-1980, that made an indelible mark on all those affected by them. Searching for closure on a still cold case for some, the author makes us remember the not-so-distant past through the urban landscape of Atlanta, the lived experience of the characters of the story and her own, as she too was a little girl affected by the crimes. And in the midst of the social chaos these murders have left the city in, Jones also reminds us of today's social issues that Black Americans have to deal with.

Keywords: memory, past, closure, social issues, lived experience, urban landscape

In the course of African American writing, memory has always been paramount in visiting and rebuilding African American identity. As Toni Morrison states, "Memory or the deliberate act of remembering is a form of willed creation ... The point is to dwell on the way it appeared and why it appeared in that particular way" (Morrison 1984, 385). It is in remembering that we are best able to connect with our inner selves. Remembering what was, could have been, or should have been like renders us an excellent opportunity to acquire a better sense of self-worth. Memory has served multiple purposes; slave narratives recounted the horrors of slavery so the African American people would never forget what it was like to have been stripped off all signs of collective and individual identity. It was by going back into the past, through the retrieval of one's cultural heritage, that recounting personal lived experiences (for instance, Hurston's *Their Eyes were Watching God*, 1937) or the experiences of others (such is the case of Walker's *Jubilee*, 1966) became intrinsic to shaping African American identity.

This so-called "deliberate act of remembering" also drove Toni Morrison to developing, via revisiting a past in need of reconstruction, a defense mechanism against the mind frame of a white majority who still, back in the 1980s, were reluctant to let African Americans have their own presence. Morrison understood that US society was not made of only one mainstream and dominant culture; on the contrary, it was and is made of a multiplicity of cultures, among them that of African Americans.¹ Along this line of thinking,

¹ The 1980s witnessed scholars such as Allan Bloom and E.D. Hirsch claim that the late twentieth century movement toward diversifying the educational curriculum in favor of a multicultural America had contributed to the fragmentation of America's 'national majority' and 'national culture' (Caroline

Beloved (1987) represents not only a reconstruction of the horrors of the African American past (slavery has left an indelible mark on Sethe, the protagonist, and her people so much so that she, in a state of mental alienation, chooses her child's death over submission), but the building of individual identity (Sethe's) as well as collective (African American's) as part of many cultures that give shape to contemporary US society. In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison goes further into the use of remembering as the narrative offers Sethe (the African American slave woman) and by extension, African American women, the chance to rediscover their past and the right to act against it, which represents a milestone in the process of identity building.

Some time has passed between the writing of *Beloved* and today's African American fiction. In this day and age, memory still remains vital for the creative process of writing. Yet, in any case, "remembering" in today's African American fiction is not so much about reenacting, reimagining, or recounting the past towards identity building as it is about dealing with the social vestiges that the past has left behind either in the streets of US cities or in the members of the black community itself. Tayari Jones's first novel *Leaving Atlanta* (2002) presents us with this urge to stand up to the social issues of today's African Americans. Jones unearths a much controversial and silenced episode of the recent history of Atlanta (the Atlanta child murders of 1979-1981) in an effort to put an end to the feeling of emptiness and fear that the city was left with in the end. In so doing it, the author will introduce a community with problems of its own, trying its best to come to terms with tragedy.

Although many had hoped that justice would be done, the outcome to the Atlanta child murders was disappointing. Wayne Williams, a twenty-three year old black music promoter and free-lance photographer, was found guilty of murdering the last two victims on the official list, two young men in their twenties. Somehow, Atlanta police connected the killings of the other 26 kids to him, yet failed to prove them beyond reasonable doubt. That being done, police and authorities closed the case of the child killings with the conviction of Wayne Williams, who, incidentally, has always maintained his innocence, was the perpetrator, thus leaving an ever puzzled, dumbfounded, and fear-stricken black Atlanta for years to come.

For many Atlantans, this case has remained cold, pending to be resolved so that a proper closure of the events may be delivered. Tayari Jones has compared the case to a bone poorly set upon her deciding to re-open it, at least in writing, in order to come to terms with what happened. In her blog, she reveals her reasons for digging out the past:

Re-examining this case will cause great pain to Atlanta, the city of my birth, the place where my family still lives. I don't anticipate that this will be easy. Tempers will flare, as will old rivalries and grudges. But we know, the only way to repair a bone badly set is to break it again, and then set it right. (Jones 2005)

Tayari Jones feels these crimes were never resolved; she "tries to make sense of what it meant to a group of children in the fifth grade in Atlanta when children were being snatched" (Harris 2009, 154); perhaps in this fashion there will be some closure for those who were never able to put these horrible events behind them. Her effort resulted in the creation of *Leaving Atlanta*, a novel by which Jones's act of remembering unfolds in three different ways: firstly, the city of Atlanta appears as the imprint of memory itself, an imprint that haunts the black Atlantans triggering mixed emotions in them; secondly, the black community will be terrorized by an unknown serial killer and, thus, is forced to remember back to a time of enslavement and

Woidat 1993, 540). Completely opposed to these scholars' attempt to establish a core curriculum that would unify American experience in spite of its cultural diversity, Morrison is adamant on granting the African American people as crucial a role in history as the white majority.

social unrest; thirdly, it is Jones herself who needs to remember these events, for at the time of the killings Jones was a fifth grader who, living in Atlanta, became witness to the course of the events. The following entry in her blog is most revealing:

During the two years that Atlanta was under siege, I was at a peculiar stage in my personal development, caught between childhood and adolescence. These years are significant for all kids no matter where they grow up and under what circumstances. But in my life, they were marked indelibly by the fear of sudden disappearance, and random murder. And the lessons I learned haunt me still. (Jones 2005)

Tayari Jones's perspective on memory in *Leaving Atlanta* will be approached from three different angles: first, an analysis of the city of Atlanta, the reminder of a horrific past, yet a place both familiar and hostile to its inhabitants, will be drawn; secondly, I will focus on the act of remembering that Black Atlantans are forced to perform as a reaction to the killings; lastly, Tayari Jones's personal experiences come through in the figure of Latasha Baxter, as she creates her own character in the narrative not so directly affected by the events.

As far as the first approach is concerned, Jones's novel deals with a city saturated with places where actions of the past may still be present. The Atlanta Jones portrays in her novel is not at all a safe place for the children in the story. Patricia Turner explains that, though rural Georgia in the 1970s and 1980s may have been still beset by racial unrest and hostility, Atlanta seemed to exemplify the potential for racial harmony in the "new" south (in Anderson 2007, 198). Atlanta was an inviting, friendly and safe city not only for the locals but also for the outsider. But when the killings started, that image forged in the minds of many African Americans suddenly changed from good to bad, friendly to hostile, safe to dangerous, familiar to unfamiliar. No longer the friendly city of the South, Atlanta transforms into a gigantic crime scene, complicit with the perpetrator, lurking around to handpick his victims.

Very soon into the story, we begin to read, recognize, and identify places in the city of Atlanta. The city we read about is real, the names of the streets, the description of the roads and the location of some businesses in the story did exist at the time, and they still do. This city, presented as the scene of the crimes, is where these children and their parents do their living. Through Tasha, Rodney and Octavia, the three young protagonists narrating the course of the events from their own perspectives, we know that the fifth graders enjoy the Sunbeam Factory (*Leaving Atlanta* 37), they love going skating at Skate Towne (58). Their mothers shop at Kroger's near Greenbriar Mall (102) and attend yoga classes at YWCA (117). Boys, like Rodney attend Greater Hayes AME Zion meetings and are members of NAACP (102). Girls, like Octavia, love eating at Red Lobster, in fact, it is her "favorite restaurant; it's better than Piccadilly and Shoney's put together" (202). The references to places such as parks, restaurants, lounges, playgrounds, roads, avenues, and streets are abundant and provide the reader with enough information about the protagonists' lives to be drawn into the children's daily activities. Atlanta, however, will cease to be the friendly town, home to the fifth graders, when Rodney lets himself be abducted by the killer on Martin Luther King Drive. Realizing who his abductor is, yet not minding it at all, Rodney lets himself be taken away from the familiar which, at that very instant, turns into unfamiliar, uncanny, strange, dangerous:

The car burps sour exhaust onto the November day. You inhale deeply, tasting the gray poison. "Which way are you going?" He points toward downtown. Against the overcast sky, you make out the lights rimming the Peachtree Plaza Hotel. When you enter the car, you press your eyelids against your eyes until you see only the dancing

spots the color of marigolds. The door shuts and the sedan vaults away in the direction opposite of home. (2002, 140)

The act of leaving Atlanta is directional: from Martin Luther King Drive, past Peachtree Plaza Hotel towards downtown, as well as physical: the title of this second section, “The Direction Opposite of Home,” signals parting with all that is familiar to Rodney. Sadly, in Rodney’s case, the familiar is equivalent to unhappiness, fear, and hatred. Rodney’s nuclear family has been saturated with parental abuse and neglect from the start. His conflictive life is a reflection of one of the realities African Americans suffer nowadays, for *Leaving Atlanta* is not only remembering the past but denouncing current social issues.

On the whole, if the image of Atlanta in the 1970s and 1980s was that of a renewed city with bright, tall buildings shaping up its modern southern skyline, it was also the city where bodies of black children tainted its very carefully worked-on modernity. The Atlanta child killings is a reminder that this city’s historical background rests on the violence perpetrated against African Americans right from its origins, right from the get-go. Atlanta is a place where the practice of lynching black people was not frowned upon, church-burning was a Sunday pastime and blacks kept to themselves.

The second approach to memory in the narrative deals with the black community’s own way of coping. The fear of the unknown that black Atlantans were subjected to during the two years of the killings opened up old wounds, recollections of brutal force against African Americans in a not-so-distant past. Like in reality, the adult characters in the novel remember and relive with sheer horror events from the past, wounds ripped open

Tasha’s father, having come back from participating in a search party for one of the missing children, lets us know that the discovery of the children’s bodies reminded him of Emmett Till. Tasha’s father invokes the right and responsibility to remember:

Emmett Till was a little boy brother in Mississippi; white folks killed him for no reason. Hung him and... “Charles. Hush now.” “No,” Daddy said. “Don’t hush me like a child. I won’t hush. That’s the problem. We been hushed up too long. These children don’t know nothing about lynching. They don’t know about white folks burning niggers alive. That’s why we had to go out today— This whole thing is because black kids don’t have sense enough to be scared of a strange white man. (2002, 76-77)

It is not only Tasha’s father who remembers past events. Ms. Grier’s, one of the fifth graders’ teachers, also appeals to the act of remembering. She shows reservations about having citizens patrolling the streets; her words echo the turmoil of the sixties: “I don’t know about that,” Mrs. Grier said. “I’m not too sure that I like the idea of angry men roaming the streets with baseball bats. That seems just like conflict waiting to happen” (2002, 169).

The act of remembering is also performed by Octavia’s mother. Yvonne remembers quite well what growing up in the south was like. Referring to the preparations for a trip up north, she relates to Octavia her experience about going shopping with her own mother:

But anyway, Mama didn’t like going into town because white folks were so mean back then. We couldn’t try on dresses or hats. You just had to pick one out and pray that it fit when you got home. And you know, if we couldn’t try nothing, they wouldn’t let us *return* it. (2002, 182; italics in original)

The children in the story would also remind us of the horrors of the past. Octavia's account of Rodney's public humiliation takes us back to the times when public whippings of slaves were socially permitted:

But if I had a daddy like Rodney got, he would have been the one ran *me* off. For real. He took that strap to Rodney like he was enjoying it. And Rodney is so quiet that he couldn't even cry. When it was all over, I thought the man was going to take a bow while my stupid teacher, Mr. Harrell clapped. Rodney walked back to his chair, but it seemed like he was crawling. Then he just stayed there. All crumpled up like a dirty napkin. (2002, 149)

Octavia's words echo the times of public scorn and whipping of plantation slaves.

To sum up and in regards to appealing to memory by ways of having the characters of the narrative remember the past, *Leaving Atlanta* presents the reader with a realistic depiction of the fears of a specific social group, southwest black Atlantans, upon digging out some recent historical events. The adults of the story (as are the cases of Latasha's father, her teacher, as well as Octavia's mother, to name a few) cope with their own fear either by directly verbalizing them (Latasha's father) or recalling the past with apprehension (as Octavia's account of her shopping days with her own mom). In any case, relating events is a way to cope, to come to a close, to find closure. As for the children, they also feel their own fear and start reminiscing very recent past events. Octavia relates Rodney's humiliating public punishment with real horror. Remembering offers us the opportunity to discern what is right and wrong, to choose, and to come to a close.

Tayari Jones's third approach to the act of memory comes to us through her personal lived experiences. Jones was a fifth grader attending Oglethorpe Elementary (one the schools affected by the tragedy) when the killings took place. As she explains in her blog:

The Atlanta child murders began just before I started fifth grade, when someone killed two African-American boys, Edward Hope Smith and Alfred Evans, and left their bodies in a vacant lot. The brutal end of their childhoods became the formative event of mine. (Jones 2005)

Tayari Jones recollects the events of the Atlanta child murders to make sense of her own childhood years. In order to do so, the author communicates her own feelings, emotions and actions through the figure of Latasha Baxter, turning the first section of the novel into a semi-autobiographical account. Latasha eavesdrops on her parents as the young Tayari did. Latasha tries to understand big words such as asphyxia, decomposition, ligature, words Tayari Jones didn't understand either. There is no doubt that fiction and reality are interwoven in this section of the narrative, letting Tayari Jones's thoughts, emotions and feelings get through, as in an act of catharsis.

Jones's own act of remembering is also present in the creation of her own character. As a character in the narrative, Tayari Jones shows up at Oglethorpe Elementary when least expected and always through the narrative voice of the children: she brings in her science project and wins first prize at the Science Fair (123); she turns up the one being given a beautiful pink invitation to Monica's birthday party just because Monica did not want to invite Tasha (55); she is the one whose mother, president of the PTA (165), had Monica's birthday party called off because Monica's parents worked at night and were not going to be there to supervise (69); she is the one whose brother, excellent at sports, notices Rodney's poor running abilities, and so on. There are several occasions on which the presence of Tayari

Jones, the fifth grader, is noticed. At a distant, Tayari Jones, the author, remembers her past experience, while also acknowledging that others had it more difficult and terrifying.

In summary, Tayari Jones also belongs to the black community of southwest Atlanta, which was left emotionally maimed and disconcerted. As she relates the events from her own perspective, *Leaving Atlanta* becomes a personal testimony of a fifth grader who also lived through those years with anguish. In so doing, Jones takes on two different approaches: a closer approach by which she explains her fears through Tasha's own thoughts; a more distant one, by which she is a character, present in the story, yet never directly and personally touched by the tragic events.

To conclude and alongside Toni Morrison's ideas on memory mentioned earlier on, the act of remembering presupposes the intention to find out how and why things from the past appear to us in such a particular way (Morrison 1984, 385). Tayari Jones's *Leaving Atlanta* unearths a particularly difficult episode in recent African American history, the Atlanta child murders, that brought fear, despair and sadness to the black community of southwest Atlanta. It also brought back the memory of previously hard and extremely difficult times as well. The place in which this tragedy occurred played a decisive role in the course of the events as Atlanta, the newly formed icon of southern modernity, is inevitably linked to a past of shame and violence. Yet, *Leaving Atlanta* is also an appeal to remembering, as Jones says on her blog: "The world has forgotten these murders because the victims were black and mostly poor..." (2005). Through three different narrative styles, the author recollects the events of the child killings by presenting three different points of view on the facts; recalling or remembering takes place not only among the potential victims of a killer, but also among the black adults in southwest Atlanta. Lastly, recalling the story herself, Jones pays homage to those directly affected by the turn of the events.

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Gothic Fairy Tales: Angela Carter's Torture Chamber and the Evil Marquis

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the analysis of Gothic aspects in Angela Carter's short story "The Bloody Chamber", from her collection *The Bloody Chamber and Other Short Stories* (1979). This tale is an inspiring rewriting of the classic fairy tale "Bluebeard." Departing from Perrault's version, Carter questions the traditional emphasis on female disobedience and punishment in order to focus on the dual characterization of the Marquis. By doing so, Carter reassesses the conventions of the Gothic *Doppelgänger*, which also extend to setting and characterization in the narrative. In this gloomy atmosphere, the forbidden chamber symbolically represents for Carter the transgression, liminality and excess which Gothic fiction has traditionally entailed. The Chamber's torture tools are symptomatic of patriarchal violence and domination exerted on women's bodies and sexuality. This paper will be drawing on theoretical approaches to Gothic studies as well as on postmodern critical reassessments of classic and contemporary fairy tales.¹

Key words: Angela Carter, Gothic, torture, fairy tales

1. Traditional tale

The literary fairy tale has its origins in the European oral and folk tales whose collection and written recording commenced at the end of the Renaissance. "Bluebeard"—and the tale's variants—"is broadly disseminated in England, France, Germany, Italy and Scandinavian countries, even reaching into Slavic traditions. Via trade routes, the story found its way to Africa, India and Jamaica, where Bluebeard sported beards of different hues" (Tatar, 14). However, despite its expansion, the tale is said to have originated in France, where it was deeply rooted in the French tradition (Tatar, 15) due to Perrault's adaptation "La Barbe-Bleue." Warner points out that one possible historical source for the tale could have been the figure of Guilles de Rais: "the Breton ... has been long associated with the fairytale ogre, especially in Brittany and the Vendée, where Gilles de Rais's castle of Tiffauges stood" (Warner, 260).

The main purpose of Perrault's story was to teach women the bad consequences of being curious. The question of her husband's killings is secondary and unimportant. Besides, the tale presents a moralistic tone, mainly focused on the morals at the end of the tale:

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“Perrault’s two morals still uphold absolute patriarchy as a ‘paradise,’ lost when women’s curiosity opened the door to the bloody chamber” (Bacchilega, 105).

Thanks to Perrault’s version of the tale, other collectors focalised the story onto women’s curiosity and its punishment (Bacchilega, 106), considering it the central topic and modifying it in order to make them more suitable for their middle and upper-class audience that began to establish two genre models, one for males and another for females: “After Perrault, the story often comes with a subtitle, ‘The Effect of Female Curiosity’ ... to bring it in line with cautionary tales about women’s innate wickedness: with Pandora who opened the forbidden casket as well as Eve who ate the forbidden fruit” (Warner, 244).

During the nineteenth century, the Brothers Grimm used some motifs and themes from “Bluebeard’s” tale: “Los hermanos Grimm emplearon el motivo de ‘Barbazul’ en dos de sus cuentos de hadas: ‘El pájaro emplumado’ y ‘La niña de María’. Además, su cuento ‘El novio bandido’ está formado a partir de varios elementos que lo emparentan, también, con el relato de ‘Barbazul’” (Fernández, 40).

Since the last decades of the twentieth century, several female writers as well as the cinema industry have been interested in the “Bluebeard” tale: “Serving as a vehicle for addressing anxieties about romance, marriage, and marital fidelity, it offered an opportunity to use the optics of another time ...” (Tatar, 110). One example of such rewriting is Angela Carter’s “The Bloody Chamber.”

2. “The Bloody Chamber”

The English writer Angela Carter (1940-1992) was fairly interested in feminine portrayals in fairy tales. Among other works, she wrote *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* in 1979, the collection of short stories where we find “The Bloody Chamber,” a rewriting of “Bluebeard” that will shortly be discussed.

The author moves beyond Perrault’s and other compilers’ warnings against naiveté and curiosity. Carter changes the focus of the traditional tale. Female curiosity is not the main point anymore and the story concentrates, rather, on the Marquis’s personality and actions: the murders he commits. This intention can be appreciated from its very title, as Tatar points out:

Carter’s title, “The Bloody Chamber”, reveals that she is planning neither to proceed down the well-worn paths of folkloric invention nor to yield to the influence of conventional interpretations developed by folklorists. Generations of tale-tellers and regions of experts on folklore have focused on the bloody *key* or the *forbidden* chamber in the story of Bluebeard. With one stroke, Carter demolishes the myth that “Bluebeard hinges on the wife’s disobedience Instead, she enunciates in the title exactly what is at stake in this Bluebeard tale: a bloody chamber that houses the corpses of a husband who has murdered one wife after another. (Tatar, 115; italics in original)

To highlight this point, Carter uses Gothic conventions such as setting, atmosphere, characterization, duality, symbolism and the forbidden chamber. By doing so, the author is exploiting the tale’s potential to become a Gothic story as a means of deconstructing the traditional tale, bringing to the foreground the issue of gender roles and sexuality:

Angela Carter’s fiction, self-consciously mixing different forms, including fairytale, legend, science fiction and Gothic, shows the interplay of narratives shaping reality

and identity, particularly in relation to the production of meanings for sexuality. [...] "The Bloody Chamber" (1979), like other stories in the collection of the same name, plays with the ways fairytales, legends and Gothic fictions construct identities, fantasies, fears and desires, particularly in terms of female sexuality and desire. (Botting 1996, 169)

The most remarkable elements from Gothic literature in the story are the following: the atmosphere of the story transmits isolation and mystery, the setting fluctuates between Paris—at the beginning and at the end of the tale—and a remote place in Brittany, where the main action of the plot takes place. Carter also emphasises the relevance of the setting and the sense of alienation that it creates. Foucault's geography concept of heterotopia refers to spaces that function in non-hegemonic conditions and of otherness, which are neither here nor there, simultaneously physical and mental. David Punter translated the concept to Gothic literature and linked it to liminal, peripheral and faraway places in which the isolation mirrors the human mind. Using David Punter's adaptation of Michael Foucault's concept of heterotopia, we can precisely establish the setting of this story as a wild landscape in which the narrator will be alienated from everything: "It was November; the trees, stunted by the Atlantic gales, were bare and the lonely halt was deserted but for his leather-gaitered chauffeur waiting ... It was cold" (Carter, 116). In the middle of this liminal isolated setting, we find the castle, an inherited property of the Marquis that could fit perfectly in the description of the classic Gothic novel's castles:

And ah! his castle. The faery solitude of the place; with its turrets of misty blue, its courtyard, its spiked gate, his castle that lay on the very bosom of the sea with seabirds mewling about its attics, the casements opening on to the green and purple, evanescent departures of the ocean, cut off by the tide from land for half a day... that castle, at home neither on the land nor on the water, a mysterious, amphibious place, contravening the materiality of both earth and the waves... (Carter, 117)

The white lilies are a symbol that appears throughout the tale. They are related to the Marquis and imply death. At first, the unnamed first-person narrator mentions that he filled their bedroom with these particular flowers: "And there lay the grand, hereditary matrimonial bed ..., with the gargoyles carved on its surfaces of ebony, vermilion lacquer, gold leaf; and its white gauze curtains, billowing in the sea breeze. Our bed. And surrounded by so many mirrors! Mirrors on the walls,... that reflected more white lilies than I'd ever seen in my life before" (Carter, 118). It has to be taken into account that lilies are flowers related to purity and death, commonly used in funerals. Besides, in some cultures white is the colour of death. Carter is anticipating the girls' fate using the flower's symbolism.

Another important Gothic reference is the fact that Carter employs the figure of a Romanian countess as one of the Marquis's wives, giving her the name of Carmilla and tracing her ancestors to Dracula, an allusion to both Le Fanu's and Stoker's Gothic texts:

But the strangest of all these love letters was a postcard with a view of a village graveyard, among mountains, where some black-coated ghoul enthusiastically dug at a grave; this little scene ... was captioned: 'Typical Transylvanian Scene—Midnight, All Hallows.' And, on the other side, the message: 'On the occasion of this marriage to the descendent of Dracula—always remember, "the supreme and unique pleasure of love is the certainty that one is doing evil." ... A joke in the worst possible taste; for had he not been married to a Romanian countess? And then, I remembered her pretty, witty face, and her name—Carmilla. (Carter, 129)

It has to be mentioned that this Gothic intertextuality is also present in another short story entitled “The Lady of the House of Love,” published in the same collection. This tale presents a female vampire descendant of Nosferatu and Vlad as a protagonist in Romania, as an inversion of the Sleeping Beauty’s fairy tale.

Nevertheless, Carter’s emphasis is on the bloody chamber and its Gothic representation. The author moves beyond Perrault’s and Grimm’s warning against female naiveté and curiosity, and focuses on the evil Marquis. Carter reassessed the tale by emphasising the forbidden chamber as a torture place:

And now my taper showed me the outlines of a rack. There was also a great wheel, like the ones I had seen in woodcuts of the martyrdoms of the saints.... And—just one glimpse of it before my little flame craved in and I was left in absolute darkness—a metal figure, hinged at the side, which I knew to be spiked at the inside and to have the name: the Iron Maiden. Absolute darkness. And, about me, the instruments of mutilation. (Carter, 130-131)

There is a great difference between Perrault’s and Carter’s chamber. In Perrault’s tale, it is presented as a normal chamber with the dead bodies and blood on the floor. In his text, Perrault uses only a few lines to describe it. On the contrary, in Carter’s tale that space is transformed into a torture chamber by using Gothic elements and characterization: the funerary urns, the lilies, the candles, the torture instruments and the corpses. It is a place not only for torture but also for the enjoyment of the degenerate Marquis, who enjoys death in all its forms. This is sensed by the gloomy and deadly atmosphere created by the Gothic elements. Carter uses a few pages to focus on the chamber.

The urns and the incense create a sense of doom: “At the four corners of the room were funerary urns, of great antiquity, ... and, on three-legged ebony stands, the bowls of incense he had left burning ...” (Carter, 131); the lilies, the candles and a dead body in a coffin remind us of the scenery of a funeral wake: “Yet at the centre of the room lay a catafalque ... surrounded by long, white candles and, at its foot, an armful of the same lilies with which he had filled my bedroom ... The opera singer lay, quite naked ... I touched her, very gently, on the white breast; she was cool, he had embalmed her” (Carter, 131); the second wife’s skull is a symbol of death itself: “Beyond the catafalque, in the middle of the shadows, a white nacreous glimmer; as my eyes accustomed themselves to the gathering darkness, I at last—oh horrors!—made out a skull ...” (Carter, 131); and finally, we find the torture instrument used to mutilate and kill his last wife, the Iron Maiden, where her corpse still remains:

And where was she, the latest dead, the Romanian countess who might have thought her blood would survive his depredations? ... But, at first, I could see no sign of her. Then, for some reason—perhaps some change of atmosphere wrought by my presence—the metal shell of the Iron Maiden emitted a ghostly twang; my feverish imagination might have guessed its occupant was trying to clamber out ... She was pierced, not by one but by a hundred spikes ... (Carter, 132)

The final point to be analysed is the characterization of the Marquis. Carter uses the Gothic convention of the figure of the double to remark his true nature and his murderous instincts. He is described by the first-person narrator as “a huge man, an enormous man, and

his eyes, dark and motionless as those eyes the ancient Egyptians painted upon their sarcophagi, fixed upon me” (Carter, 116).

The author also uses symbolic animalization to define him—as she will do in other stories from the same collection, sharing the feline forms with the next two stories, rewritings of “Beauty and the Beast”—another literary resource to highlight his sexuality: “If I rose up on my elbow, I could see the dark, leonine shape of his head and my nostrils caught a whiff of the opulent male scent of leather and spices that always accompanied him ...” (Carter, 112).

Besides, from the very beginning there is an identification between his persona and the white lilies, a connection that soon will be related to death: “... but sometimes he seemed to me like a lily. Yes. A lily. Possessed of that strange, ominous calm of a sentient vegetable, ... funeral lilies whose white sheaths are curled out of a flesh as thick and tensely yielding to the touch as vellum” (Carter, 113).

Using the *Doppelgänger*, Carter portrays the Marquis as a charming man who offers women wealthy commodities, presents and a luxurious kind of life: “Carter’s male protagonist is a decadent connoisseur who seduces with his wealth and power, and he bears a resemblance to both the mythical Hades and the Bluebeard of folklore” (Tatar, 115). This character represents the “fascination of the abomination” for the narrator: “I lay in bed alone. And I longed for him. And he disgusted me” (Carter, 125). She feels both attraction and repulsion at the same time—attraction to his wealth, lifestyle and company due to her isolation, but repulsion of him as a man—and, again, she identifies him with the lilies:

And I began to shudder ..., yet also with a kind of fear, for I felt both a strange, impersonal arousal at the thought of love at the same time a repugnance I could not stifle for his white, heavy flesh that had too much in common with the armfuls of arum lilies that filled my bedroom The lilies I always associate with him; that are white. And stain you. (Carter, 119)

He is also portrayed as a violent killer who uses women for his purposes, isolates them, sexually abuses them and finally tortures and kills them: “The Marquis, a consummate sadist, clearly gets his title from the Marquis de Sade; his native land of Brittany is shared with Gilles de Rais and Cunmar the Cursed ...” (Tatar, 116). The evil nature of the Marquis is present from his arrival at the castle and in the sexual encounter with his last wife; it is implicit in the discovery of the bloody chamber and, finally, it is openly exposed in the last scenes, when he is prepared for murder: “Don’t loiter, girl! Do you think I shall lose appetite for the meal if you are so long about serving it? No; I shall grow hungrier, more ravenous with each moment, more cruel... Run to me, run! I have a place prepared for your exquisite corpse in my display of flesh!” (Carter, 141). Through the Marquis’s characterization and his actions, Carter presents the male domination over women in every aspect, especially in sexuality:

La relación ... entre el sexo y la muerte se elabora de la forma siguiente: Barbazul representa el deseo sexual masculino que opera sin restricción alguna con el fin de someter a su mujer; a la vez, se le describe como un ser cercano a la muerte ... Para su mujer, víctima de su agresividad y su violencia, las relaciones sexuales implican, también, un acercamiento a la muerte (Fernández, 91)

The narrator is able to see his dual characterization from the very beginning of the story and it is the real reason why she becomes obsessed with discovering his true nature: “La obsesión de la mujer de Barbazul por descubrir ‘la verdadera naturaleza de su esposo’ tiene su

origen en la realización, ya durante el período de seducción, de la dualidad de su entonces prometido ...” (Fernández, 58). Artificiality is a common theme in Carter’s fiction and, in this particular tale, it represents the motivation for the wife’s disobedience, thus deconstructing the traditional tale’s focus on reprovved female curiosity. The narrator goes to the forbidden chamber to unmask her husband’s appearance:

And sometimes that face, ... with the heavy eyelids folded over eyes that always disturbed me by their absolute absence of light, seemed to me like a mask, as if his real face, the face that truly reflected all the life he had led in the world before he met me, before, even, I was born, as though that face lay underneath this mask. (Carter, 112-113)

3. Conclusion

At the end of Carter’s tale, the narrator is saved from death by the arrival of her wild powerful mother, who shoots the Marquis dead. The author is reversing the traditional tale—in which the girl’s brothers are the heroes—by reinforcing the mother-daughter bond and bringing another female character to the foreground.

As this essay has attempted to show, Carter uses Gothic conventions and elements such as the lilies, the gloomy atmosphere, the isolated setting, the castle, the chamber as a torture place dedicated to death and the figure of the double to characterise the Marquis, to remind the reader the forgotten aspect of the traditional “Bluebeard” tale: the serial killer husband. She displaces the tale’s attention from the symbolic key in order to denounce problematic issues regarding sexuality and marriage in a patriarchal society.

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Sedley's *The Mulberry Garden* (1668) and the Genre of the Dramatic Dedication

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Abstract

The dedication of playtexts was a common practice during the Restoration since it might offer playwrights many advantages, including access to the patron's network of connections. Authors, therefore, assumed a lowly stand by praising their addressee and humbly acknowledging their obligation. However, Sir Charles Sedley's dedication of *The Mulberry Garden* (1668) to Frances Stuart, duchess of Richmond and Lennox, flouts the conventions of dedicatory writing. Sedley did not require her support or protection, for he was a member of King Charles's intimate circle and an admired court wit. Moreover, the duchess was not in a position to offer protection at this junction, given her personal circumstances. In this epistle, Sedley challenges the intrinsic asymmetrical relation between patron and client by placing himself (and not her) in the position of superiority and in control of the exchange. This unusual dedication exemplifies the diversity of this genre during the Restoration.*

Keywords: dramatic dedication, patronage, Sedley, *The Mulberry Garden*, Frances Teresa Stuart, Restoration theatre

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse Sir Charles Sedley's dedication of *The Mulberry Garden* (1668) to Frances Teresa Stuart, duchess of Richmond and Lennox. My intention is to study this epistle as an example that flouts the established code of dedicatory writing, and to explore the reasons for the author's unconventional choice of tone.

In order to understand the way in which Sedley's dedication challenges the conventions of the genre, I would like to begin by examining the custom of theatrical patronage during the Restoration period. In her seminal study of the Restoration dramatic dedication, Deborah Payne argued that both this literary genre and the cultural practice of patronage in this period needed to be reconsidered. Payne rejects post-capitalist views, such as Korshin's, which underestimate the importance of patronage in the Restoration on purely monetary principles, and claims instead that dedicatory writing in the late seventeenth-century can be best understood in terms of anthropological theories of gift exchange.

As she points out, patronage culture during the Restoration was based on what Pierre Bourdieu called an archaic conception of economic calculation, which included "all goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as being rare and worthy

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of being sought after in a particular social formation” (Bourdieu 1977, 178). Building on this notion, Payne sketches a system in which playwrights, besides economic gain, acquire also a symbolic capital of honour and prestige through the success of their plays. They may then invest this symbolic capital, presenting their work to an influential patron by means of a dedicatory epistle. In return for this offering, they expect to receive rewards that go beyond the mere pecuniary gift: social support, protection from detractors and a point of access to the patron’s network of connections (1990, 32-33). Since the person addressed always occupies a higher position, dedications are asymmetrical forms of exchange. The playwright assumes a lowly stand, heaping praise on his patron as well as humble acknowledgements of obligation.

The importance of dedicating plays in Restoration theatre has also been observed by Stanley L. Archer, who noted that more than 50% of the plays published in the period (258 out of a total 472) carry dedicatory epistles (1971, 8). After examining these texts, Archer outlined the main characteristics of the genre. He concluded that, although it is a highly diverse literary form, several recurring features can be distinguished: the epistles are generally in prose and addressed to a single patron; they incorporate the essential components of the personal letter (such as salutation, date, complimentary close, etc.) and present freedom of content (1971, 9). Regarding their structure, the dedications tend to follow a general pattern of: 1) presenting the work to the patron; 2) explaining why he or she has been chosen as such; 3) and entreating him or her for protection (1971, 9). Dedicatory epistles sometimes reflect on political affairs, or comment on play production, actors or the circumstances of the première, and even indulge in criticism, hence their relevance in literary studies. According to Archer, dedications display four conventions of patronage: 1) a request for permission to dedicate the play; 2) praise of the addressee; 3) a request for protection; 4) some allusion to the expectation of reward (1971, 9). To these, we could add the fact that, since dedications are asymmetrical forms of gift exchange, they are naturally offered to someone higher in social rank.

2. Sedley’s dedication of *The Mulberry Garden*

Most of the Restoration dramatic dedications conform to this pattern and exhibit the conventions of dedicatory writing. However, Sedley’s dedication of *The Mulberry Garden* (1668) to the duchess of Richmond and Lennox stands out for a number of reasons. First, although the duchess surpassed him in rank, Sedley did not at all require her support or protection, as he was a member of King Charles’s intimate coterie. From the early years of the Restoration, Sir Charles Sedley had joined the “Circle of Wits”—as they were eventually called—whose company the king much enjoyed (Pinto 1927, 54). In 1661 the duke of Ormonde told the chancellor, the earl of Clarendon, that the king “spent most of his Time with confident young Men, who abhorred all Discourse that was serious, and . . . preserved no Reverence towards God or Man, but laughed at all sober Men, and even at Religion itself” (Hyde 1759, 2:85; Pinto 1927, 54). Sedley is said to have excelled among this group of courtiers for his conversation and ready wit, “which usually took the form of absurd similes which convulsed his hearers with laughter” (Wilson 1948, 68).

Sedley’s reputation as a wit made the announcement that he had written a comedy for the King’s Company arouse great expectation among London playgoers. *The Mulberry Garden* opened on 18 May 1668, attracting large crowds to the Drury Lane theatre, including the diarist Samuel Pepys. When entering, Pepys found “the house infinitely full” and among the audience he distinguished “the King and Queen, . . . and all the Court” (Latham and Matthews 1976, 9:203). However, the play did not produce the effect which was expected.

The general opinion of the audience was expressed by Pepys: "though there was, here and there, a pretty saying, and that not very many neither, yet the whole of the play had nothing extraordinary in it at all, neither of language nor design" (Latham and Matthews 1976, 9:203). In spite of this, the play must eventually have proved popular since records of performances extend over one month: between 18 May and 29 June (Van Lennep 1965, 137, 139).

Sedley's comedy was printed soon afterwards, with a dedication to Frances Teresa Stuart, duchess of Richmond and Lennox, to whom he claims he had shown the play when it was still "in loose Sheets" (1668, n.p.).¹ The epistle, however, defies the readers' expectations from the very beginning. Instead of adopting a submissive stance, the author addresses his dedicatee in a flippant tone far removed from the etiquette of the genre: though he professes himself her "Obedient Servant", yet with every turn of phrase he places himself (and not her) in the position of power and in control of the exchange. To begin with, Sedley breaks the first of the generic rules outlined by Archer: instead of requesting permission to dedicate his play, he presents the practice of dedications as a "privilege" that allows authors to impose on just anyone: "Tis an unquestion'd Priviledge we Authors have of troubling whomsoever we please with an Epistle Dedicatory . . . when we print a Play". Furthermore, Sedley characterises the offering of a dedication as "troubling" but, instead of humbly apologizing for it, he boldly asserts his authorial right.

After starting in this atypical way, Sedley introduces the customary praise of the patron, although in a highly unconventional manner: "I think your Grace (for a Person of so great Eminence, Beauty, Indulgence to Wit, and other Advantages that mark you out to suffer under Addresses of this Nature) has scap't very well hitherto." By praising the duchess parenthetically and, at the same time, pointing out that she has not yet been offered any dedication, he seems to imply that her qualities are taken for granted and need no further emphasis.

The request for the patron's protection, the third element described by Archer, is also revised in this epistle. Rather than beg, the author seizes the opportunity to berate her for being remiss in the duties pertaining to her rank: "I do not remember your Name yet made a Sanctuary to any of these Criminals: But, Madam, your time is come, and you must bear it patiently." Through the choice of the word "sanctuary," Sedley implicitly praises the duchess as a goddess in terms reminiscent of the courtly love tradition, a poetic licence which he can take since his dedicatee is a woman. In addition, playwrights are playfully referred to as malefactors who persecute their patrons in search of undeserved protection.

The poet condescendingly offers to lessen the load imposed on the duchess's shoulders by being concise: "All the favour I can shew you, is that of a good Executioner, which is not to prolong your pain." Once again Sedley blatantly subverts the dynamics of the genre since, in claiming that he can show favour and presenting himself as the "executioner" (with the duchess as the convicted criminal), he is assuming the position of superiority which naturally belongs to the patron, not to the client-author. Moreover, Sedley adds a touch of false modesty referring to his play as a "trifle," which cannot compare to the tributes ("Temples and Altars") that would have been offered to her, had she been born in ancient times. The epistle does not conclude with the typical apology for daring to approach the patron and considering the play worthy of dedicating; although Sedley seems to abide by the rules and beg pardon, he cavalierly blames the duchess for his own effrontery: "I hope you will find it no hard matter to pardon a Presumption you have your self been accessory to."

¹ All the extracts from the dedication are taken from the original edition (1668).

Sedley's epistle is characterised by the use of witty images (the poet as a criminal and an executioner), a flippant tone and a continual deviation from the conventions of dedicatory writing by adopting a position of superiority. He could concede himself such privileges due to the symbolic capital he had accumulated as a celebrated court wit.

3. Sedley's addressee: the duchess of Richmond and Lennox

The unusual tone of this epistle can be explained on the grounds of Sedley's status as a court wit, which justifies (even requires) such insouciance. However, this singular epistle may have also been motivated by the personal circumstances of its dedicatee, the duchess. Frances Teresa Stuart was the most celebrated beauty of the court. *La Belle Stuart*, as she was generally called, had made an immediate impression at court upon her arrival early in 1662 (Handley 2008). One observer wrote in February 1662: "beautiful Mrs Stuart is here so admired and so rich in clothes and jewels, she is the only blazing star" (Handley 2008). She was ardently pursued by King Charles since 1663, when Frances was only fifteen. She soon took Lady Castlemaine's (the king's *mâtresse en titre*) place as the lady whose good graces all courtiers coveted. However, Frances refused both to become Charles's mistress and to play an active role in court politics, despite the efforts made by several courtiers who tried to take advantage of the king's deep infatuation with her (Handley 2008). In November 1663, Pepys, for instance, reports a courtly intrigue to procure her for the king involving the duke of Buckingham and Sir Henry Bennet, the future earl of Arlington (Latham and Matthews 1971, 4:366). The failure of their strategy may have been due to Frances's youth and lack of interest in political schemes.²

Frances's fame as one of the most beautiful women of the court was acknowledged in various portrayals. In the summer of 1665, she was depicted as Diana as part of the famous series of portraits by Lely commissioned by the duchess of York. Then, in 1667, Frances posed as model for John Roettier's figure of Britannia in the medal entitled *The Peace of Breda* and, in a similar guise, in the unfinished *Naval Victories* medal (Handley 2008). Nevertheless, that very same year she secretly married the duke of Richmond (30 March 1667), and thus incurred the king's wrath. Charles felt outraged and banished them both from court. The king's resentment only began to abate when Frances contracted the smallpox in March 1668 and he was moved to pity. We know that in May 1668, he wrote to his sister Henrietta telling her that Frances "is not much marked with the smale pox, and I must confesse this last affliction made me pardon all that is past, and I cannot hinder myselfe from wishing her very well" (Norrington 1996, 151). He renewed his visits and by August she was restored to her position in the queen's entourage.

Sedley's reasons for the choice of his dedicatee are not clear. He may have decided to pay homage to the ailing beauty out of gallantry, at a time when there was still speculation whether Frances would recover her looks (though in the end the only consequence of her illness seems to have been some residual eye trouble). Another possibility is that Sedley wrote the dedication to propitiate the king, once he had relented and forgiven the duchess. Hanowell has also mentioned that Sedley may have dedicated his play to Frances on account of his acquaintance with the duke (2001, 152). Indeed, Sedley and Richmond seem to have been

² Contemporary views on Frances's personality were not unanimous: the Comte de Grammont found her "childish" (Hamilton 1846, 141), but Pepys described her as "cunning" (Latham and Matthews 1971, 4:366).

good friends, or at least close enough to be companions in their night ramblings.³ The dedication could then be interpreted as a gesture of support for the duke in the trying times when the duchess was ill and the couple were struggling to regain favour at court.

4. Conclusion

With this uncommon epistle Sedley chooses to invest his own symbolic and literary capital in enhancing the social image of the duke and duchess as they were trying to recover their former status. This is certainly an unconventional purpose for a dedication since authors generally use them in their own benefit. Dedications trade on a capital of honour, for the patrons are still expected “to show that they are worthy of their rank by showering material and symbolic protection upon their dependents”, while playwrights’ tribute will augment the patron’s prestige (Payne 1990, 32). Sedley’s offer of this comedy to the duchess is meant to prove that she deserves both a gift of this kind and the social prominence that belongs to her rank. However, the fact that Sedley’s symbolic capital was considerably higher than the duchess’s at this junction and that he did not seek real patronage accounts for the original character of this dedication. Sedley’s own position as a court wit allows him to revise the conventions of dedicatory writing, adopting a playful stance and eschewing the submissive tone characteristic of the genre. All in all, Sedley’s epistle illustrates the richness and vitality of this practice at the Restoration period.

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³ In a letter to his wife dated 6 February, 1664, Sir Robert Paston, first earl of Yarmouth, wrote: “The Duke of Richmond and Sir Charles Sydney (Sedley) came in about 10 at night with the Duke’s fiddlers” (Historical 1664, 364).

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Writing Woman: Identity, Self and Otherness in *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* by Noo Saro-Wiwa

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Abstract

The growing number of anthologies and critical studies on Black and Women's travel narratives points to the critics' interest in the potential of the genre to generate counter-hegemonic knowledge. Noo Saro-Wiwa's *Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria* was included in *The Guardian* list of the Ten Best Contemporary Books on Africa in 2012. It offers an opportunity to consider the interaction of some representational practices examined within the field of postcolonial studies. The author's life story and personal motivation to undertake a journey "back home" reveals the complexity of her perspective and makes it difficult to categorize. The study focuses on representations of Nigerian women and explores the implications of the author's background for the understanding of her viewpoint. It also discusses the claim to authenticity conveyed by *The Guardian* definition of the book as "Africa seen by Africans."

Keywords: Noo Saro-Wiwa, travel writing, Nigerian women, "new exotic"

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), which discusses the Orient as a culturally- and ideologically-constructed concept, arose the interest of postcolonial scholarship in travel writing as a source of knowledge about the way discursive representation reinforces European imperialism and hegemony. Homi Bhabha (1994) and Peter Hulme (1986), among others, analyze colonial discourse in travel narratives, exposing its contradictions and stereotyped description of the (exotic) Other. Critical works have traditionally explored "how travel books written by Europeans about non-European parts of the world created the Imperial order for Europeans 'at home' and gave them their place in it" (Pratt 2008, 3). Some studies pay special attention to the representation of colonized women and the relation between race and gender in colonial discourse (Anne McClintock 1995). Others reveal the difference between travel narratives written by men and those written by women within colonial discourse. The most important analysis of women's travel writing, so far, Sara Mills's *Discourses of Difference* (1993), concentrates on discourse structures used by British women travel writers from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria (2012) was publicized by *The Guardian* as a book about "Africa seen by Africans" (Allfrey 2012). The author, Noo Saro-Wiwa, was born in Nigeria in 1976, but moved with her mother and siblings to Britain when she was one. Her father, Ken Saro-Wiwa, an activist and leader of Ogoni people's struggle against Big Oil, was executed by the country's military dictatorship in 1995. Although he took his daughter back to Nigeria every summer and tried to teach her to appreciate the

country, in her own words, Nigeria became a place “where nightmares come true” (quoted in Henley 2011). In the introduction to *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, Steven Clark claims that “The traveller was previously ill-adapted to his or her own society; [thus] the narrative becomes a plea for readmission” (1999, 15). Saro-Wiwa’s allusion to Nigeria as a place of “nightmares” points to her initial “ill-adaptation” to her home country. In this way, her narrative becomes a symbolic “plea for readmission,” an interior journey towards self-knowledge and identity building, a journey that, in the end, “cured [her] emotional fear of the country” (304).

The text, a combination of autobiographical facts and ethnographic observations, narrates Saro-Wiwa’s journey back home, an experience that gives her the opportunity to reexamine and come to terms with the contradictions between Nigerian and English social and cultural conventions. In this sense, the prologue reveals the complex process of identity negotiation and suggests that the assemblage of facts and representations in the narrative echoes anxieties and motivations related to her background. The narrative begins with a description of Saro-Wiwa sitting in the Gatwick Airport’s departure lounge when she is suddenly awakened by a crowd of “predominantly male Nigerians,” angrily gesticulating and shouting at an airport official because their flight has been delayed. It is not difficult to see the contrast between the aggressive Nigerian men, who complain that they are being treated like animals, and the polite English woman, who is trying to help them. Such a stereotyped representation of black men and white women is common in colonial travel writing. The author admits that “Being Nigerian can be the most embarrassing of burdens” and that “as a Nigerian raised in England, [she is] forced to watch the European and African mindsets collide in a way that equally splits [her] loyalty and disdain towards both” (2-3). Saro-Wiwa does not hide her motivational doubts when she admits her “embarrassment,” “split loyalty,” and “cultural dislocation.” The word “home” is written in italics when she refers to her forceful summer holidays in Nigeria and in roman when she refers to “leafy Surrey” in England. This ambivalent initial attitude, revealing the split loyalty characteristic for diasporic identity, emphasizes the difficulty to categorize the author either as a European travelling to Africa, or as an African going back home. In fact, there appears to be a constant shift of perspective throughout the text.

In addition to the author’s background, the analysis of Saro-Wiwa’s representation of Nigerian women and its potential for counter-hegemonic knowledge production takes into account two more aspects: representation of cultural foreignness in travel writing, on the one hand, and her target readership, on the other. From a postcolonial perspective, research in travel literature has focused mainly on writings that display a biased representation of black African people during the colonial period. In “Encounters with the West African Women,” Cheryl McEwan argues that Africans, whose “images were usually constructed through the gender relations that were central to imperial discourse” were perceived as “savages” (1994, 74). Born in Nigeria, Saro-Wiwa is expected to naturally lack all those remains of “colonial images and ideological positions” that, according to Sara Mills, “are being transposed on British cultural forms of the 80s and 90s” (1993, 2). In this case, the fact that the book was commissioned by *Granta* for its predominantly metropolitan readership determines to a great extent the author’s choice of how to represent local people. While the literary creation of Otherness in colonial discourse draws widely on stereotyped images of colonized women as exotic eroticized objects, Saro-Wiwa’s adaptation to her target readers exhibits characteristics that relate to the concept of “new exotic”, discussed by Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan in *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (2000). They argue that both literary-minded and information-oriented travel books catering for

“progressive urbanite” contribute to the creation of a “new *exotic*: a celebration of the modern spectacle of global cultural diversity” (2000, 2; italics in original). For them, “travel writing tends to reinforce the authority of its predominantly metropolitan readership; its world of wonders is, in one sense, a world already known—one made available to readers ‘back home’ through the comforting reiteration of familiar exotic myths” (2000, 5). At this point, we can say that the women that inhabit *Looking for Transwonderland* are predominantly middle and upper-middle class and live in urban areas. We can discern from her painful experience of discovering that while she was living in England her father had another wife and children in Nigeria that Saro-Wiwa disapproves of polygamy, however she does not openly attack this practice. The one deliberate criticism of misogyny in the book is a comment the author makes while observing the behaviour of some monkeys in the Chad Basin National Park. Apparently, she omits “controversial” topics to concentrate on the value of local culture.

Her “most alienating of homecomings” starts in Lagos; she “arrive[s] in a country [she] had never lived in, and a city [she]’d visited only briefly twice before, among a thoroughly foreign-sounding people” (13). “I might as well have arrived in the Congo,” she confesses (13). The first woman she meets and describes is a friend of her mother’s, at whose place she stays while in Lagos. At sixty-three, Auntie Janice “has barely put on weight, not lost any of her physical dexterity” (14). Janice’s husband had been a diplomat during the 1970s and 1980s and his job had taken them to Geneva, Warsaw, Rome and London. She had had a fashion company, but her economic situation had declined after a dramatic divorce. She had become homeless and had to stay at women’s hostels and different types of church accommodation before reclaiming her marital home. This is Saro-Wiwa’s first glimpse of the country. She points that “Staying with Auntie Janice was to be a lesson in dignified living under basic conditions” (15). The idea of “dignified living” seems to be the leitmotif in the representation of Nigerian women throughout the book. Saro-Wiwa’s description of Janice is respectful, though rather distant. The parallel between Janice’s economic decline and Nigeria’s economic decline reaffirms the need to explore representations of women as a clue to understanding the discursive framework of the text and Saro-Wiwa’s sense of (non-) belonging. Janice’s glorious past reminds of a description made by the author’s mother of pre-war Nigeria—“a country filled with factories that produced cars, candles and other everyday necessities; hospitals were well stocked with genuine medicines, and patients didn’t have to supply their own bed linen. Bookshops and libraries abounded, and Latin was taught in schools . . .” (15). Later, Saro-Wiwa offers one of the few images of extreme poverty in the country—homeless beggars in the streets of Lagos—and recognizes that compared to them, Janice belongs to a “privileged stratum” (24).

The next woman the reader meets is Janice’s “quiet,” “laid-back,” twenty-seven-year-old daughter Mabel. Mabel works as a journalist for a local lifestyle publication. The features the author chooses to highlight exemplify her intention to link the representations of women to a global picture of the country, framing her narrative within a new version of “exoticism.” Thus, alluding to familiar tropes, images of “urban exoticism” establish a connection with the Western metropolitan readership. Mabel is too poor to get a flat on her own and has to bear the inconveniences of living at her mother’s house. She has “supermodel proportions” and commutes to work wearing high heels and a skirt, looking “stylish” despite her apparent poverty. She doesn’t bother to “show up for work before midday most of the time” (17), as there is not a spare computer for her at the office and she has to wait for her colleagues to finish first. The author acknowledges that in her previous visits to Nigeria, she had already noticed the “contrast between the sluggishness and ineptitude of the city workers and the work ethic of traditional village society” (17). It seems that if Janice symbolizes the glory of

the 70s and 80s and the subsequent decline, her daughter Mabel stands for the “lethargy” with which city workers operate in present-day Nigeria.

Saro-Wiwa is aware that the presence or absence of certain female types in her narrative will shape the readers’ vision of Nigeria and, eventually, encourage them to visit the country. Through the description of the appearance, behaviour, hopes and desires of the people she meets on her way, the author effectively achieves two purposes: she gives meaning to her experience and her narrative gains credibility. It is interesting to note that references to the colonial past are scarce and slavery is mentioned briefly on the occasion of Saro-Wiwa and Mabel’s visit to the Slave Relic Museum. The author “tries on” some torture tools to see how it feels to wear them, an act one would expect of a European tourist, an act that places Saro-Wiwa in the position of a visitor, a mere observer. She approaches one of the most dramatic phenomena in Nigerian history from a distance that is not only a temporal distance, but a kind of emotional narrative distance that shows a degree of alienation between the narrator and the subject she describes.

Given the importance of education for Saro-Wiwa’s father, it is hardly surprising that the author explores the role of women in Nigerian universities. She does not reflect on excellence, academic programs or the proportion of women students. Instead of that, she directs the reader’s gaze elsewhere. She points to the existence of aggressive cults, initially men-only, whose violent activities ranged from kidnapping to murder. Saro-Wiwa claims that in the late 1990s all-women cults, such as The Black Brazier and Daughters of Jezebel, emerged to take over prostitution syndicate. Faith Odele, a “slim, quiet girl, whose graceful neck holds a pretty face”, who is the President of the Student Association, is “disgusted by the current state of affairs” (89). She sounds critical, even desperate, although she attempts to draw the author’s attention to the positive experiences at university and is determined to achieve her dream to be a professional poet. Violence against women is only briefly mentioned when Faith Odele, with tears in her eyes, tells Saro-Wiwa that “a cult member had thrown acid in her sister’s face after she refused to date one of his friends” (91). Although not completely absent from the text, gender discrimination is underrepresented, limiting representation of women to their social and cultural characteristics. In spite of the fact that several northern Nigerian states have adopted Sharia law, manifestations of gender violence are generally omitted from the narrative. The words of another woman, Saro-Wiwa’s cousin Ketiwe, on the main characteristics of men from different ethnic groups illustrate the author’s decision to limit questions of gender relations to anecdotal observations: “Hausa men are the nicest. . . . They buy you things, they take care of you when you’re dating. If you run out of water they buy you a whole crate of bottled water” (133) and “An Igbo man takes care of his wife. . . . She will dress like a queen while he wears ordinary clothes” (134). To make a long story short, the author compresses her vision of marital relations in a sentence: “But marriage everywhere in the country seemed a minefield of infidelity, jealousy, intrigue and money fights, a clash between modern values and traditional ideas” (134). Immediately after this definition of marriage, which otherwise does not look different from marriage anywhere in the world, Saro-Wiwa offers the reader a “highly entertaining insight into the Nigerian dating scene” through a number of short ads taken from the Sunday newspapers. Needless to say, the author’s selection is essential for the representation of “Nigerian lonely hearts contributors.” The one word that unites and characterizes these messages, from a European point of view, i.e. the potential readership, is *vulgar*.

Saro-Wiwa pays a visit to her brother, a government official, and meets his colleague Nini. Nini’s story is the epitome of personal growth and success. She and Saro-Wiwa attend the same school in England. At the age of fifteen, Nini is “unusually popular,” “blessed with a

charm that was impossible to deconstruct or emulate” (114). Her father withdraws her from school and sends her back to Nigeria, where she earns a degree from the University of Benin. In her thirties, having given birth to four children, Nini is still a dazzling beauty. While she is working in the Foreign Service at the Nigerian Vice-president’s Office, her husband, with a master’s degree in law from a Scottish university, is unemployed. Nini is the family’s breadwinner. The description of Nini is probably the clearest example of Saro-Wiwa’s approach to the representation of Nigerian women. Embracing cosmopolitan discourse as a means of opposing stereotyped descriptions prevailing in colonial travel writing, the author adopts a perspective known as Afropolitan. Taiye Selasi introduces the term in her essay “Bye-Bye Babar (What is Afropolitanism?)”: “Afropolitans—the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem lab/jazz lounge near you. You’ll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics, and academic successes. . . . We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world” (Selasi 2005). Over the past ten years, the concept has generated a wide debate. Some see it as an alternative to Eurocentric discourse, others, like the Irish/Nigerian writer Emma Dabiri argues that “The problem is not that Afropolitans are privileged per se—rather it is that at a time when poverty remains endemic for millions, the narratives of a privileged few telling us how great everything is, how much opportunity and potential is available may drown out the voices of a majority who remain denied basic life chances” (Dabiri 2014). Intended to be an alternative to the victimization discourse, Saro-Wiwa’s Afropolitan approach appears to be in part the “new exotic.”

It may be argued that the author attempts to achieve “a level of generality and universality” by representing women from different regions and social background, but it becomes clear that in her desire to solve the inner conflict between belonging and allegiance, Saro-Wiwa focuses on representations of a certain type of women. She chooses to describe young, emancipated women, determined to pursue their dreams in a society that is apparently divided between European concepts of modernization and conservative beliefs, often a mixture of religion and superstition. In this way, she challenges colonial travel narratives that portray African women as essentially compliant, submissive, erotic subjects. Her representation of women seems unbiased; however, we should not forget that “travel writing, however entertaining, is hardly harmless, and that behind its apparent innocuousness and its charmingly anecdotal observations lie a series of powerfully distorting myths about other (often, non-Western) cultures” (Patrick and Huggan 2000, 8). While it will be inaccurate to classify Saro-Wiwa as a “postcolonial counter-traveller,” the representation of Nigerian women in her travel narrative is a significant attempt to avoid the “the single story” that Chimamanda Ngozi warns against in her now famous TED Talk.

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Part III.

Language and Linguistics

Gapping and Pseudogapping Constructions with Multiple Remnants

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Abstract

This paper deals with two ellipsis phenomena that have received a lot of attention in the literature: gapping and pseudogapping. The former is standardly analyzed as involving TPE, the latter VPE. In both cases, some VP internal constituent abandons the phrase that will undergo deletion before ellipsis applies. Its landing site is the Spec of a Focus projection which dominates the category that will be deleted. Although most proposals in the literature concentrate on sentences with only one remnant, this paper shows that multiple remnants are also possible. The analysis just outlined is successfully applied to constructions with multiple remnants. The fundamental assumption is that a VP containing the various remnants moves to SpecFocusP. As a result, an elegant account emerges that solves the problems posed by some previous proposals.

Keywords: gapping, pseudogapping, Focus, multiple remnants

1. Introduction

The sentences in (1), drawn from Johnson (1994), illustrate, respectively, the ellipsis phenomena of gapping and pseudogapping.

- (1) a. Some have served mussels to Sue and others swordfish.
b. Some have served mussels to Sue while others have swordfish.

In both sentences the verbal head has been deleted in the second conjunct of a coordination in (1a), in the subordinate clause in (1b). However, only in the latter does the tense and agreement specification survive in the auxiliary. For this reason (among others) it is usually assumed that pseudogapping involves the deletion of a smaller chunk of structure than gapping. Thus, whereas the latter is assumed to involve the ellipsis of TP (TPE), the former is typically analyzed as a case of VP ellipsis (VPE). In both cases, the internal argument has escaped deletion by abandoning the deleted constituent before ellipsis applies. If gapping does indeed involve TPE, the subject is a second remnant in (1a).

The two sentences above illustrate the typical cases analyzed in the literature. Even when the discussion most often focuses on sentences with only one VP remnant, and despite the fact that it is sometimes explicitly argued that sentences with multiple remnants are unacceptable, the truth is that sentences like those in (2) and (3) are as grammatical as those in (1). The data in (2) illustrate pseudogapping with multiple remnants, (3) gapping.

- (2) a. I didn't give a dime to Mary, but I did a nickel to Sue.

- b. I give dimes to Mary more often than I do nickels to Sue.
Bowers (1998)

- (3) a. I read a book yesterday and Peter a paper today.
b. John met three congressmen and Bill three senators on Thursday.

Lasnik (1995) starts sentences with multiple remnants like those in (2). Bowers (1998), however, considers them acceptable with a specific prosodic contour which involves contrastive stress on the auxiliary and the internal arguments in the two clauses that make up the two sentences.

This paper will focus primarily on sentences as those illustrated in (2) and (3), i.e. on gapping and pseudogapping constructions with multiple remnants. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In order to introduce the discussion, Merchant's theory of ellipsis will be sketched briefly in section 2. The discussion will turn, in section 3, to Bowers' (1998) proposal for pseudogapping with multiple remnants. In the course of the presentation of his analysis some problems will be pointed out and an alternative proposal will be introduced that attempts to solve them. In section 4, a similar analysis as that proposed for pseudogapping will be extended to gapping. Finally, section 5 will close the discussion with the conclusions.

2. Merchant's theory of Ellipsis

The conception of ellipsis that will be sketched in this section was presented in Merchant (2001) and developed in subsequent work (cf. Merchant 2004, 2007, 2012).

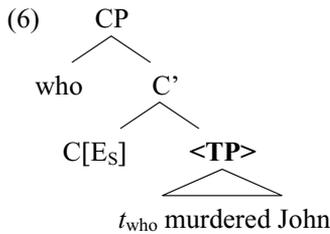
According to the linguist, ellipsis is always triggered by the presence in the derivation of an appropriate E-feature, which is an item of the Lexicon with certain syntactic requirements. In the case of sluicing, illustrated in (4a) below, the E-feature is associated with a strong uninterpretable *wh*-feature and a strong uninterpretable Q-feature, as shown in (5), where E_S denotes the variety of E-feature relevant in sluicing.

- (4) a. Someone murdered John, but I don't know who.
b. Someone murdered John, but I don't know who murdered John.

- (5) $E_S [\mu_{wh}^*, \mu_Q^*]$

Under this type of conception, in order to derive a sentence with sluicing, the E_S feature will have to be selected from the Lexicon and added to the initial numeration. The strong uninterpretable features in its matrix will trigger its association with a head that contains compatible features; in the case at hand, a C-head specified as [*wh*, Q]. The association of the E-feature with a functional head is forced by its morphosyntactic deficiency in a way comparable to what is proposed in the analysis of certain clitics. Merchant suggests that one possible implementation of this association is the addition of the E-feature to the matrix of its licensing head.

The parser of the embedded clause in the second conjunct of the sentence in (4a) above is provided in (6). Following Merchant's practice, the category that will be affected by PF ellipsis is placed in angle brackets.



Roughly, the E_S -feature on C will instruct the post-PF phonological interpretive component not to parse its complement. This is possible only if there is an antecedent that guarantees the semantic identification of the elided material (what is traditionally known as the *recoverability condition* on ellipsis). Merchant (2001) encodes this requirement as the semantic relation he dubs e-GIVENNESS, defined in (7), coupled with the Focus Condition, stated in (8).

- (7) e-GIVENNESS
An expression E is e-GIVEN iff there is an antecedent A which entails E and is entailed by E modulo \exists -type shifting.
- (8) Focus Condition
A constituent α can be deleted only if α is e-GIVEN.

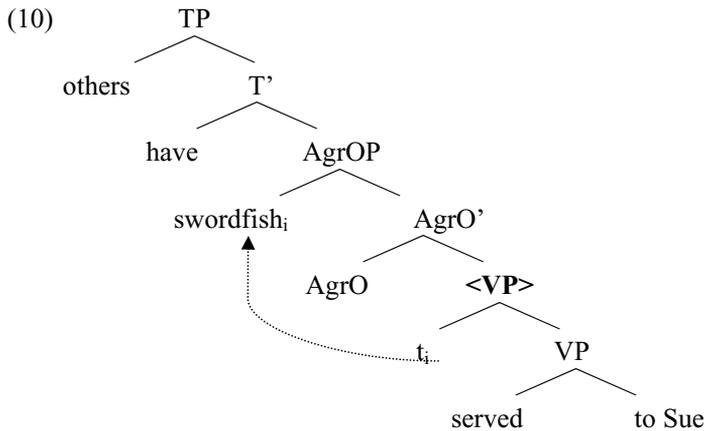
This will be basically the theory of ellipsis applied to constructions with gapping and pseudogapping in the remainder of this paper. The discussion turns now to pseudogapping.

3. The syntax of pseudogapping

As mentioned in the introduction, pseudogapping is an ellipsis operation that involves the deletion of the non-finite verb and is therefore regarded as a case of VPE. However, unlike in VPE, in the case of pseudogapping, at least one complement or adjunct of the verb has to survive deletion. The sentence used to illustrate the phenomenon in (1b) above is repeated here for convenience as (9).

- (9) Some have served mussels to Sue while others have swordfish.

Since Jayaseelan (1990) pseudogapping is analyzed as VPE preceded by movement of the remnant out of VP. The landing site of this constituent has been a matter of intense debate in the literature. Lasnik (1995), for instance, proposes raising of the remnant to SpecAgrOP. The syntactic structure of the gapped clause in (9) under this assumption would be as represented in (10).



According to Lasnik (1995), movement of the direct object to SpecAgrOP is triggered by the need to check accusative Case, the gapped structure resulting from the subsequent application of VPE. But this analysis would not work if movement of the verb were not delayed. If the verbal head were allowed to rise to AgrO, it would also survive VP-deletion. In order to solve this problem, Lasnik (1995) has to assume that the strong feature that triggers V-raising is a feature of the verbal head (e.g. a theta-feature), not of the functional head to which the verb should rise (AgrO, in this derivation). The strong feature on V, which is an illicit PF object, will be deleted when VPE applies.

Lasnik's analysis poses a further problem which is more difficult to overcome: if AgrOP is the category involved in pseudogapping, only one constituent would be expected to survive VPE, and this constituent would have to be the direct object. Sentences like those in (2) above, repeated here as (11), cannot be derived in Lasnik's system.

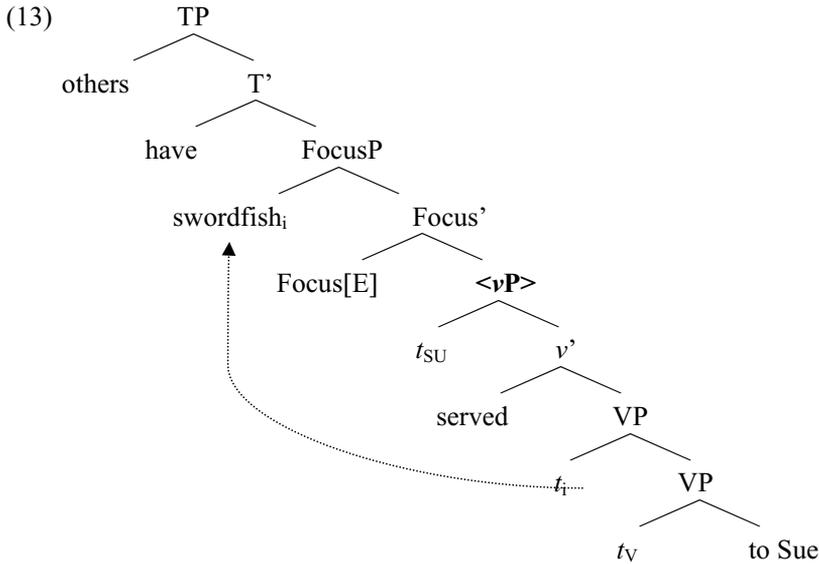
- (11) a. I didn't give a dime to Mary, but I did a nickel to Sue.
 b. I give dimes to Mary more often than I do nickels to Sue.

Bowers (1998) notices that, for these sentences to be acceptable, the remnants have to bear contrastive stress. As he interprets contrastive stress as the phonetic realization of a syntactic process of focalization, he claims that the functional projection that plays a role in pseudogapping is FocusP, rather than AgrOP.

Focus also plays a role in Merchant's conception of ellipsis. According to him, the functional head involved in pseudogapping bears a [+focus] feature and the E-feature which will license the ellipsis of *v*P. However, Merchant remains unspecific as to the nature of this functional projection, which he simply labels XP, as represented schematically in (12). In this paper it will be assumed for concreteness that this projection is a FocusP in the left periphery of the *v*P phase. See also Kuno (1981), Jayaseelan (1990, 2001), Bowers (1998) and Gengel (2007) for similar analyses.

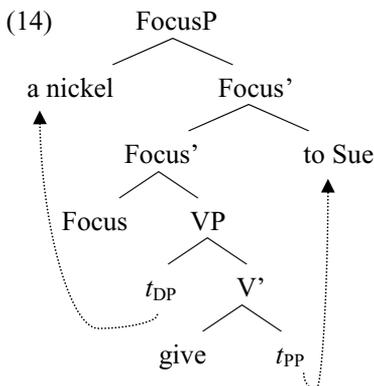
- (12) [TP [T' T⁰ [XP remnant [_{X'} X⁰ **[focus, E]** [VoiceP [Voice' Voice⁰ [_vP ...

(13) shows an updated version of the analysis in (10) which includes a FocusP as the landing site of the remnant.



The E-feature, associated with the Focus head, will instruct the PF component not to pronounce its complement, i.e. vP . The internal argument, which provides new information and is contrastively stressed, is assumed to rise to the Spec of the Focus projection, thus escaping ellipsis. Notice that this analysis has the additional advantage over Lasnik's proposal that it does not need to assume any mechanism to guarantee that the verb stays inside the deleted category. In the structure shown in (13) the verb is under v , its usual position.

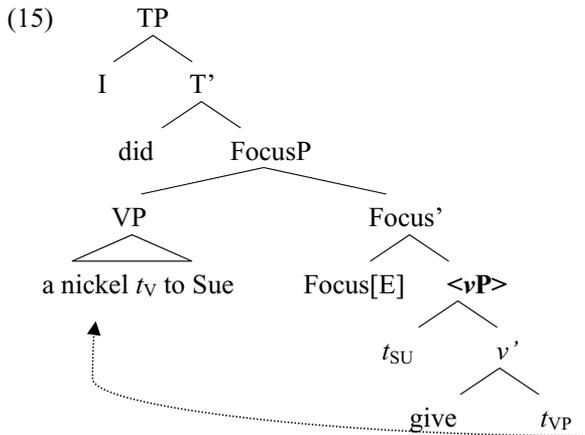
The question that arises at this point is whether this analysis works so smoothly in sentences with multiple remnants, as those in (11) above. Following the rationale used for single remnants, it has to be assumed that in the sentences above the two internal arguments should be focalized before ellipsis applies. Adopting Chomsky's (1995) theory of multiple Specs, Bowers (1998) proposes that the two remnants move separately to an inner and an outer Spec of a Focus projection on top of VP. In order to guarantee the correct linearity, Bowers has to assume (i) that the most deeply embedded argument (in the case at hand, the PP) has to move first, and (ii) that the linear order of a moved constituent with respect to its head must be preserved. The structure that results from the application of these conditions is shown in (14).



As can be seen in this parser, the structure preserving condition proposed by Bowers (1998) forces the projection of one of the Specs of FocusP to the right, something striking in a

language like English, where all the Specs project to the left. But this proposal poses an additional problem: the projection of multiple Specs of one and the same Focus head appears to be an artifact to override the uniqueness of Focus (cf. Rizzi 1997).

These two problems can be neutralized if it is assumed that the two internal arguments (both associated with a strong [+focus] feature) rise together to SpecFocusP, as shown in (15).



By moving the minimal maximal projection containing the two arguments (in this case, VP) to the SpecFocusP, it is guaranteed that the two constituents will be linearized with respect to each other exactly in the same way as they would if they stayed in situ. At the same time, it is only necessary to project one SpecFocusP so that the uniqueness of Focus is respected.

In the following section, it will be shown that this analysis can be successfully extended to gapping constructions.

4. The syntax of gapping

Some of the proposals in the literature have capitalized on the similarities between gapping and pseudogapping and have extended the analysis in terms of VPE proposed for the latter to the former. For a relatively recent incarnation of this type of proposal see Coppock (2001). However, the fact that T does not survive deletion in gapping structures seems to tell a different story. The obligatory absence of the T head in gapping can be taken to derive from the fact that a higher phrase is deleted than in pseudogapping, namely TP.

Merchant (2007), for instance, argues that the absence of Voice Shift effects in gapping, but not in pseudogapping, would support his hypothesis that what he calls ‘big/high ellipsis’ is involved only in the former. Compare in this respect gapping (16) with VPE (17).

- (16) a. *Some bring roses and lilies <are brought> by others.
 b. *Lilies are brought by some and others <bring> roses.
 (Merchant 2007)
- (17) a. The janitor must remove the trash whenever it is apparent that it should be <removed>. (Merchant 2007)
 b. Actually, I have implemented it [=a computer system] with a manager, but it doesn’t have to be <implemented with a manager>. (Merchant 2007, quoting Kehler 2002)

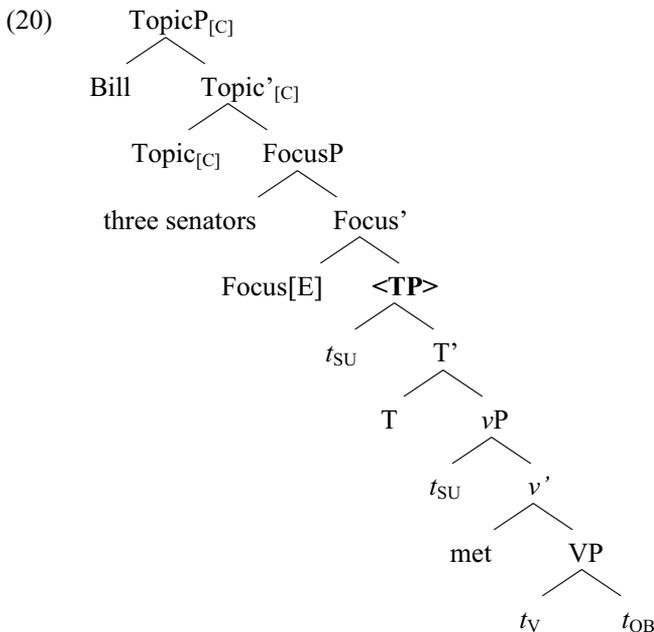
According to Merchant (2007), a different Voice specification can only be licensed in the elliptical structure if VoiceP (a functional projection on top of vP) survives ellipsis. If the whole TP is deleted in gapping constructions, VoiceP will be included in the deletion operation, which correctly predicts the prohibition of Voice mismatches.

Gengel (2007) notes that, unlike in the case of pseudogapping, where there is a strong preference for coreferential subjects, the subject of a gapped conjunct has to be contrastive, as shown in (18), her examples.

- (18) a. Claire read a book and Heather a magazine.
 b. *Claire read a book and she a magazine.
 c. Claire_i read a book and SHE_k a magazine.

This taken together with the fact that the other remnants (the constituents internal to VP) do also stand in contrast with some parallel constituents in the antecedent conjunct leads Gengel (2007) to claim that gapping in English involves a *contrastive topic-contrastive focus* structure. These facts can be accommodated in the phrase structure in (20) below, which shows the partial derivation of the second conjunct in the sentence in (19).

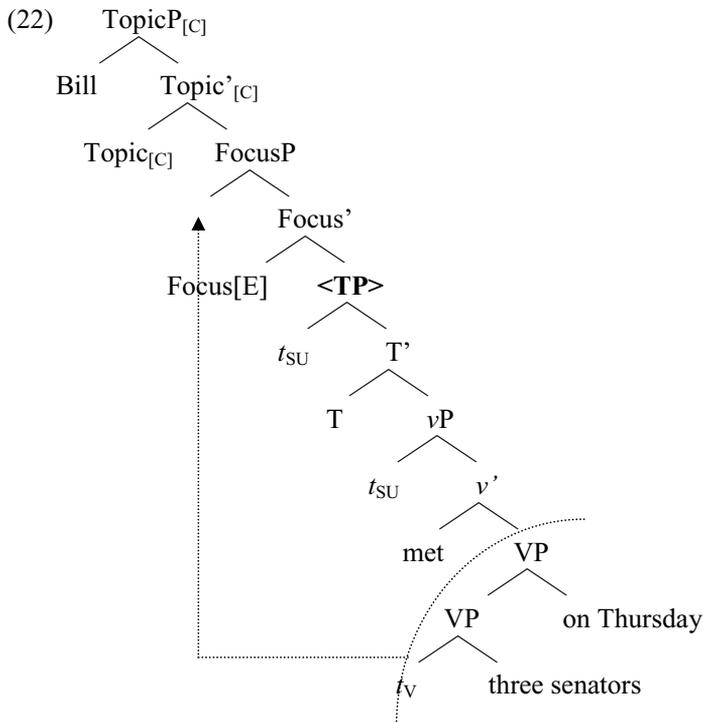
- (19) John met three congressmen and Bill three senators.



In this structure, the subject moves to SpecTP to check the EPP and further to SpecTopicP_[C] to check a strong [+topic, +contrast] feature. The internal argument, on its part, targets the Spec of the Focus projection dominating TP. The E-feature on Focus will trigger the phonological deletion of its complement, i.e. of TP. It has to be noted that, in the case of gapping, the left periphery of the sentence (rather than the left periphery of the low phase) is activated. This might be due to the properties of the E-feature triggering gapping (E_G), which differ from those of the E-feature triggering pseudogapping (E_{PG}).

Although it has sometimes been argued that only the subject and one VP constituent can become the remnants of a gapped construction, the truth is, as mentioned in the introduction to this paper, that sentences like those in (21) are acceptable. Given the uniqueness of Focus, it can be assumed (as it was done in the case of pseudogapping) that the two VP constituents associated with a strong [+focus] feature move together to the sole SpecFocusP in the structure. The minimal maximal projection containing the two VP remnants is again the verbal projection. The derivation of the second conjunct of the sentence in (21) is shown in (22).

(21) John met three congressmen and Bill three senators on Thursday.



5. Conclusion

This paper has shown that gapping and pseudogapping constructions with multiple remnants can be derived successfully by allowing the remnants to move together out of the constituent which will be deleted, VP or TP, before ellipsis applies.

Although still tentative, the analysis proposed in this paper provides an elegant solution to problems raised by its predecessors. Thus, it will not be necessary to make non-standard assumptions concerning, for example, the position of the verbal head or the projection of SpecFocusP. At the same time, the analysis presented here respects minimalist tenets such as economy and the uniqueness of Focus.

Nevertheless, some details of the analysis are in need of refinement. Thus, it is not clear, for example, why the FocusP involved in gapping has to project in the left periphery of the sentence, whereas that involved in pseudogapping projects in the periphery of vP. It has been tentatively suggested that the answer to this question might be in the requirements of the E-feature, which might be different in the two operations.

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A Corpus Study on *Durst* and the Construction *Dared* and *Bare Infinitive Clause* in Middle English and Early Modern English

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Abstract

This study reviews the previous literature on blend constructions and investigates both the rise, evolution and status of *dared*, and the obsolescence of *durst* in simple past and conditional contexts in Middle English and Early Modern English. The corpora selected in this research are the Penn-Helsinki Corpus of Middle English and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English. The data indicate that *durst* lost its past reference and was gradually replaced with *dare*, in conditional contexts, and with *dared*, in past contexts. My findings support that the form *dares* for third person singular and *dared* for simple past show the same evolution, but with a time lag between them. Both *dares* and *dared* show layering and the possibility to occur in (non-)assertive contexts (Heine 1993, Quirk et al. 1985, 138-39). Similar to *dares*, *dared* plus a bare infinitive clause show blend features (cf. Beths 1999 and Taeymans 2004).¹

Keywords: Modal, lexical verb, blend constructions, layering, (non-)assertivity, regularisation

1. Introduction

The verb *dare*, which is considered a pre-modal verb in Old English (henceforth OE), starts to show some lexical features in late Middle English and in early Modern English. Moreover, it is attested in constructions combining modal and lexical features, as in (1). In other words, it occurs in the so-called blend, mixed, hybrid or ambiguous verbal constructions (Duffley 1994; Denison 1998; Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004; Schlüler 2010). On the one hand, example (1) shows modal features as it selects a bare infinitive (hereafter BI) complement clause, i.e. *doe*. On the other hand, the *-ed* inflection for simple past confers lexical features on *dare*. Although scholars agree on most of the blend features, there is no consensus regarding the characterisation of the simple past form *dared* when it selects a BI clause. *Dared* is considered both a blend (Denison 1998 and Schlüter 2010) and a modal verb (Beths 1999 and Taeymans 2004).

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- (1) They *dared not doe* as others did. (1650 Fuller Pisgrah I.145; OED s.v. *dare* v.¹ 4. β. 15)

The aim of this study is to clarify the status of *dared* plus a BI clause and to investigate the reasons for the obsolescence of *durst* both in conditional and simple past contexts. For this purpose, I will trace the rise and evolution of *dared* and the use of *dares* in the blend construction with BI complementation in Middle English (ME) and Early Modern English (EModE). The type of context in which *dares* occurs, i.e. (non-) assertive, is a relevant feature in determining the status of the form *dared* and BI clause. The data are retrieved from two corpora: the Penn-Helsinki Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2), which is a 1.1 million word corpus and is subdivided into four periods, i.e. M1 (1150-1250), M2 (1250-1350), M3 (1350-1420) and M4 (1420-1550); and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Early Modern English (PPCEME), which consists of over 1.7 million words and is divided into three periods, E1 (1500-1569), E2 (1570-1639) and E3 (1640-1710). The *Oxford English Dictionary* is also used as a source for additional material.

This paper is organised as follows: Section 2 analyses the use of *dare* in third person singular contexts. Section 3 deals with the regularisation of *dare* in simple past contexts and the obsolescence of *durst*. The feature of layering and the type of context in which *dares* and *dared* occur are discussed in Section 4. The conclusions are drawn in Section 5.

2. Third person singular *dare*

In the literature on blend constructions, scholars agree on the blend status of *dares* + BI clause, as in (2) (see Duffley 1994; Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004; Schlüter 2010). Example (2) shows the lexical morpheme *-s* for third person singular and the modal complement type BI clause. In addition, *dares* is in a non-assertive context followed by the direct negation *not*, but no restriction is made explicit in the literature regarding the use of *dares* + BI construction (see Section 4).

- (2) The fellow *dares not deceive* me. (1611 Shakesp. Cymb. IV. i.24) (Beths 1999, 1095)

Table 1 shows the use of *dare* in third person singular contexts in ME and EModE. *Dare* shows modal status with the absence of the morpheme *-s* and BI clause in ME and E1, as in (3). In example (3), the main verb *loveth* shows agreement with the subject *she*, whereas *dare* exhibits the modal uninflected form.

	M1	M2	M3	M4	E1	E2	E3
MODAL	6	7	7	1	7	2	6
BLEND	0	0	0	0	0	9	2
LEXICAL	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 1: *Dare* in 3rd person singular contexts (raw data).

- (3) I knowe she loueth me, but she *dare* not speake. (UDALL-E1-H, L.233.108)

The morpheme *-s* is attested in E2 and E3 giving rise to blend and lexical verb features, as in (4) and (5), respectively. Example (4) shows the lexical *-s* for third person and the BI typical of modal verbs. In example (5) *dares* shows lexical features since it exhibits the inflection and selects a *to*-infinitive as its complement. The situation attested in E2 is what Heine (1993) calls ‘layering’, i.e. the co-existence of different forms of the verb. In E3 *dare* is only attested in modal and blend constructions.

- (4) I must commend your courage, that dares withstand such mightie gyants. (DELONEY-E2-P2, 37.139)
- (5) Then let them all encircle him about, And Fairy-like to pinch the vncleane Knight; And aske him why that houre of Fairy Reuell, In their so sacred pathes, he dares to tread In shape prophane. (SHAKESP-E2-P2, 56.C1.740)

3. *Dared* and *durst* in simple past contexts

The construction *dared* + *BI* has been characterised as either blend (Denison 1998, 169 and Schlüter 2010, 299) or modal (Beths 1999, 1101 and Taeymans 2004, 100-102). Beths (1999, 1101) contends that the only indicator of the status of *dared* as either modal or lexical is precisely the context in which it is used, that is, assertive or non-assertive. *Dared* exhibits modal status when it occurs in a non-assertive context and selects a *BI* as its complement. In turn, *dared* + *BI* show lexical characteristics in assertive contexts. In line with this explanation, Taeymans (2004, 101–102) maintains that modal *dare* has a past form *dared* when it selects a *BI* and is restricted to non-assertive contexts. She also mentions the lexical use of *dared* when it is a past participle but she does not explain the use of the simple past form *dared* plus a *BI* clause in assertive contexts. Contrary to this view, Schlüter (2010, 299) observes that the fact that *dared* + *BI* clause is still attested in inversion and negation in Present-day English (PDE) tips the balance in favour of analysing this construction as an ‘ambiguous’ use, i.e. as blend.

The analysis of the PPCME2 and PPCME indicate that *durst* is the only form attested in conditional and simple past contexts from M1 to M3 (Table 2). Modal *durst* with *BI* complementation is the preferred use in this period, as in (6). *Durst* is also attested with *that*-clause complementation in two occurrences, one in M1, in (7), and another one in M3. *That*-clause complementation confers lexical characteristics on this verb. In OE the ancestors of PDE modal verbs could exhibit lexical characteristics (Warner 1993, 97-102). It is not until EModE when “the status of modals and auxiliaries was substantially clarified” (Warner 1993: 198).

	M1	M2	M3	M4	E1	E2	E3
Past <i>durst</i>	11	2	17	49	36	21	15
Conditional <i>durst</i>	0	0	2	6	3	4	1
Conditional <i>dare</i>	0	0	0	3	6	6	1
Past <i>dared</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Table 2: *durst*, conditional *dare* and lexical *dared* in ME and EModE (raw data)

- (6) Ğit worldli clerkis axen gretli what spiryt makith idiotis hardi to translate now the bible into English, sithen the foure greete doctouris dursten neuere do this? (CMPURVEY, I, 59.2327)
- (7) *Forrþi þatt he ne durrste nohht* // *þatt aniz mann itt wisste* (CMORM, II, 237.2485)
‘Therefore he did not dare *that any man know it.*’

In E1 and E2 modal *durst* is also found in Denison's (1998, 176-79) 'modal past' constructions, i.e. *modal + have + past participle*, as in (8). The past meaning in (8) is conferred by the perfect construction *haue layd* rather than the modal *durst*. This may indicate that *durst* is starting to lose past meaning. In M4, the form *dare* is first attested in conditional contexts, where only the form *durst* was previously found, as in (9). The simple past form *dared* is first attested in E2 in my data in one occurrence, in (10).² In example (10) *dared* shows the lexical features since it exhibits the inflection for past tense and it selects a NP as its complement.

- (8) Hodge Gogs hart, *I durst haue layd* my cap to a crowne (STEVENSO-E1-P1, 6.62)
 (9) And *yf thou dare truste* the wether, lette it lye so all nyghte: (FITZH-E1-P2, 34.226)
 (10) But here is the sport - *the footeman*, seeing it was the king's pleasure to see the wager tried, *dared him*, which made Jemy mad, that he would run with him from Edinborough to Barwicke which was forty miles in one day (ARMIN-E2-P1, 22.233)

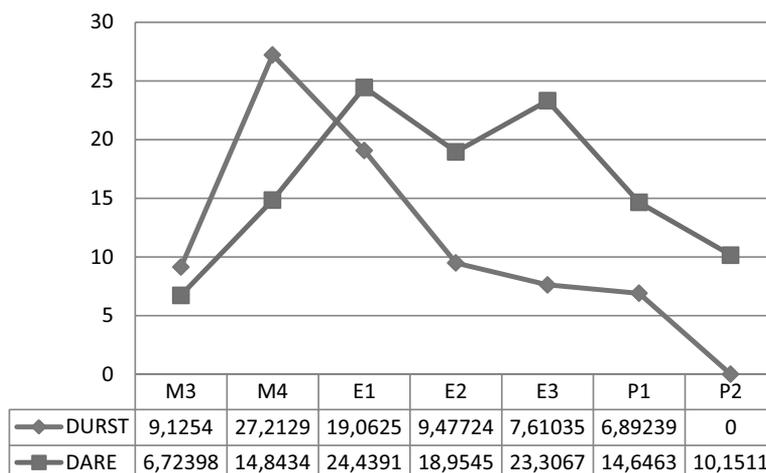
Two factors favoured the regularisation of the verb *dare* and the replacement and consequent obsolescence of the old form *durst* in late Modern English (LModE) (see Graph 1 below). The first one is the incipient bleached status of *durst* in modal past constructions, as in (8) above. The second factor is the regularisation process that *dare* undergoes at the end of ME and in EModE. From M4 onwards, *dare* is attested with NP and *to*-infinitive complementation, with the non-finite forms (*to*-infinitive, BI, *-ing* and *-ed*), and with other modal verbs.

Graph 1 shows the distribution of *durst* and *dare* from M3 (1350-1420) to P2 (1770-1839), that is the period before the presence of the first lexical features with *dare* and the period after the obsolescence of *durst* in my data.³ The form *dare* includes all the finite uses of the verb in conditional, present and past contexts, as well as the non-finite forms of this verb. The form *durst* refers to the uses of the old form in conditional and simple past contexts. The statistical analysis confirms that the difference in frequency of *dare* and *durst* in M3 is not significant.⁴ These two forms compete in use until the beginning of E1 and *durst* is the more frequent form in M4, when it is attested in 55 (n.f. 27.21) out of 85 (n.f. 42.05) of the occurrences. The frequency of the form *durst* decreases in use from E1 onwards until P1, when it is last attested in 8 (n.f. 6.89 out of a total of n.f. 21.53) occurrences.

² Another example with the form *dared* is attested in E2, but in this case it is used as the past participle in a passive construction: "The E. replied wth a kynde of frowne *to be dared*, that they all knewe he had not named one man, that daye for an other" (ESSEX-E2-H, 16.176).

³ For LModE I have used the Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English (PPCMBE) which is just under 1 million words and is subdivided in three periods of time: P1 (1700-1769), P2 (1770-1839), P3 (1840-1914).

⁴ The chi-square is $P = 0.6171$ for both the uses of *dare* and *durst* with respect to the total in M3.



Graph 1: *durst* and *dare* from M3 to P2 (normalised frequencies per 10,000 IP-MATs).

The high frequency of the construction *durst* + *BI* clause may have influenced the late introduction of the new simple past form *dared*. Bybee (2003, 617) explains that combinations of words and morphemes can be stored and processed in one chunk if they co-occur very frequently. In addition, Aarts et al. (2012, 9) observe that the old pattern of negation has been resistant to change with high-frequent verbs. In this vein, the repetition of the old form *durst* plus the *BI* complement favours its processing as an automated single unit which is not likely to change (see Bybee 2003, 618-621). However, the construction *durst* + *BI* clause becomes a weak competitor when other constructions with similar meaning and additional functions are developed. The form *dare* can be used in conditional, present simple contexts and as a non-finite bare infinitive form. The form *dared* can occur in simple past contexts and as a past participle in passive and perfect constructions.

4. Layering and assertivity

As mentioned in Section 2, the verb *dare* in third person singular contexts shows layering since it can exhibit modal, lexical and blend status in E2. In the case of *dare* in simple past contexts, my data show the modal use of *durst* with a *BI* clause and the lexical counterpart *dared* with *NP* complementation (see Section 3). The form *dared* is not found with sentential complementation in my data, but the OED (s.v. *dare* v¹) provides the following two pairs of examples from E2 and E3, respectively:

- (11) She *darde to brooke* Neptunus haughty pride (c 1590 Greene Fr Bacon iv.18)
- (12) Lovely Eleonor, *Who darde* for Edwards sake *cut through* the seas (c1590 Greene Fr. Bacon iv. 10)
- (13) They *dared not doe* as others did. (1650 Fuller Pisgrah I.145)
- (14) They *dared not to stay* him. (1650 Fuller Pisgrah I.145)

Examples (11) and (14) show the lexical features with the *-ed* inflection for past tense and the *to*-infinitive complementation. The lexical *-ed* morpheme and the *BI* complementation typical

of modal verbs confer blend status on *dare* in (12) and (13). Hence, the form *dared* also exhibits layering in EModE.

As for assertivity, Beths states that “classifying *dare* as an auxiliary is identifying it in a non-assertive context” (1999, 1099). Quirk et al. (1985, 138-39) classify as non-assertive contexts negative and interrogative clause, semi-negative clauses with adverbs such as *hardly* and *seldom*, conditional clauses, comparative clauses, putative *should*-clauses and restrictive clauses with conditional meaning. Based on this classification, I have analysed the use of *dare* in third person singular and in simple past sentences in (non-) assertive contexts (Table 3 and Table 4 below).

The data indicate that the invariant modal *dare* is attested in both assertive and non-assertive contexts but it prefers non-assertive uses in the three periods of EModE (Table 3). The blend construction *dares* + *BI* clause is attested in 8 out of the 9 examples in non-assertive sentences in E2 and in one example in each type of context in E3. The lexical *dares* plus *to*-infinitive construction is only found in one example in E2 and this is an assertive context.

	E1		E2		E3	
	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive
Modal	1 (0.48)	6 (2.93)	0	2 (0.76)	1 (0.46)	5 (2.37)
Blend	0	0	1 (0.38)	8 (3.03)	1 (0.46)	1 (0.47)
Lexical	0	0	1 (0.38)	0	0	0

Table 3: *Dare* in 3rd person singular and (non-)assertive contexts (raw and normalised frequencies of per 10,000 – IP-MATs–).

Similarly, Table 4 shows the use of *durst* in simple past and the new simple past form *dared* in (non-) assertive contexts.⁵ The data show that *durst* prefers non-assertive contexts in EModE. However, *durst* is also attested in at least two assertive instances in each period. The two occurrences of *dared* in my data are found in assertive context, but examples (13) and (14) above, taken from the OED, illustrate that this form is also found in non-assertive contexts in simple past uses. Therefore, the blend constructions *dares* + *BI* and *dared* + *BI* are attested in both (non-) assertive contexts in EModE.

⁵ The use of the form *dare* in conditional clauses is not included in Table 4 since these types of clauses are considered (non-)assertive (Quirk et al. 1985, 138-139).

	E1		E2		E3	
	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive	Assertive	Non-assertive
Modal <i>durst</i>	10 (4.88)	26 (12.71)	2 (0.76)	19 (7.2)	3 (1.42)	12 (5.71)
Lexical <i>dared</i>	0	0	2 (0.76)	0	0	0

Table 4: *Durst* and simple past *dared* in EModE (raw and normalised frequencies of per 10,000 – IP-MATs–).

5. Conclusions

In this study I have argued that the regularisation process that main verb *dare* undergoes may have favoured the replacement and obsolescence of *durst* by the form *dared* in simple past contexts and by the form *dare* in conditional contexts. The fact that *durst* is losing its referential role to past events in ‘modal past’ constructions (Denison 1998, 176-79) may also have influenced this replacement. In addition, my data show that there is no supporting evidence for the classification of the new past tense form *dared* in non-assertive constructions as modal simply because this form replaced the old form *durst* in past contexts (cf. Beths 1999, 1099). My findings reveal that the form *dared* for simple past shows the same evolution of the form *dares* for third person singular, with a time lag between them. Both *dares* and *dared* illustrate layering and a preference for non-assertive contexts (Quirk et al. 1985: 138-39; Heine 1993). As is the case with *dares*, *dared* plus a bare infinitive complement is here analysed as a blend construction (cf. Beths 1999; Taeymans 2004).

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Fusing Nonfinite Peripheral Constructions Constructively: on Absolutes and Free Adjuncts in the Recent History of English

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Abstract

This paper offers a synchronic constructional perspective for the study of two extra-clausal structures: free adjuncts and absolutes. Free adjuncts and absolutes are treated as constructions, more specifically, as two options of a more abstract construction which has been called ‘nonfinite-periphery construction’. Data for this study has been retrieved from the *Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English* for Late Modern English and the British component of the *International Corpus of English* for Present-day English. This study claims that free adjuncts and absolutes deserve unitary constructional treatment in Present-day English on the basis of: (i) the range of verbal predicates entering the nonfinite periphery, (ii) the set of so-called introducers, (iii) the proportions of ACs and FAs semantically ‘related’ to the clause, (iv) their position and (v) the set of semantic relations.¹

Keywords: free adjunct, absolute, constructional network

1. Introduction

The goal of the present paper is to examine the suitability of a network analysis of verbal FAs (1) and ACs (2) from a contemporary synchronic perspective following a constructional approach (as in Goldberg 2006). For that purpose, we will analyse the variation of these two constructions in Modern and Present-day English (PDE) and will pay attention to their similarities and differences which will either support or discourage this network analysis.

- (1) **Speaking at a broadcasting conference in London this morning**, he also said that even if the new company were to transmit only from a European satellite it would always have to work within a regulatory framework (ICE S2B-007 #038:1:B)
- (2) ‘I’ll not be hit for it, Brett muttered, **his teeth clenching, fire rising to his cheeks**. (ICE W2F_001_93)

Both FAs and ACs maintain a detached status with respect to the main clause (Dik 1997, 381; Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002, 1250ff) which is made evident by means of punctuation in writing or intonation in speech. As a consequence of this, these constructions lack full integration in the syntactic skeleton of the clause. Being somehow syntactically independent allows them to occupy different positions in clause structure. Semantically, their

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meaning is not essential to the meaning of the main clause, and even if they are omitted, the clause continues to be semantically true and complete (see Stump 1985 and Yoo (2008, 58) for a discussion of structures of this type conditioning the truth conditions of the clause). Within semantics, FAs and ACs are categorised depending on the type of referential link they hold to the main clause. In example (1) above the referential link in the main clause is explicit and the subject of the main clause corresponds with the subject of the FA. By contrast, the AC in example (3) does not find any referent in the main clause.

- (3) **'Theology' being the science of 'God,'** 'philology' should be the science of 'friendship' or the affections. (BAIN-1878,375.250)

FAs and ACs accept the presence of introductory elements, such as in example (4), which are usually referred to as 'subordinators' (Kortmann 1991, 1) or 'augmentors' (Stump 1985). Finally, the array of potential predicative constituents is another characteristic which is shared by FAs and ACs. Depending on their heads, they are classified as either verbal or nonverbal-head FA/ACs. This paper focuses on nonfinite *-ing* and *-ed* examples because they are the most common types. No further discussion will be pursued here concerning nonverbal-head examples such as the one in example (5).

- (4) **But then through experimenting through through trying things out we gradually** overcame our awkwardness our embarrassment uhm (ICE S1A-001 #062:1:B)
- (5) **A virtuoso in the art of the discourteous aside,** he had never been subject to such disrespect. (Kortmann 1991, 6)

The origin and the diachronic development of FAs and ACs constitute distinguishing features. FAs are said to be of indigenous origin, the *-ing* type used more frequently than the *-ed* FA in Old and Middle English, and the latter becoming more common with Latin translations (Visser 1972, 1132, 1152). For ACs, two paths of evolution are supported. The first one reinforces the Latin origin of AC from the Latin ablative (Callaway 1889, Ross 1983). The second option gives support to the Germanic origin of ACs although admitting their increase in productivity thanks to translations from Latin (van de Pol 2012; for a detailed discussion of the development of FAs and ACs, see Fonteyn and van de Pol 2015.) A further crucial difference between FAs and ACs is the presence/absence of the subject constituent in the construction. While in FAs the subject is not explicit, it is compulsorily overt in ACs – this difference can be observed in examples (1) and (2) above.

Considering the previous similarities and differences between the two structures and adopting a constructional approach (as in Goldberg 2006), we assume that FAs and ACs are 'constructions' (Langacker 2005, 139; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 14; Trousdale and Norde 2013, 37; Trousdale 2014), i.e., sufficiently frequent form-meaning pairings (Goldberg 1995, 2006) with a robust structure, that is, syntactically quite fixed and at the same time exhibiting constructional scope properties. Semantically, they are not compositional and their meaning depends on the main clause to which they are attached.

In Bouzada-Jaboïs and Pérez-Guerra (2015) we argued that FAs and ACs could be described as micro-constructions of a more abstract macro- or meso-construction sharing the common features of the nonfinite peripheral adverbials under investigation (Traugott 2008; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 199, 203). In this paper we adopt a network analysis of FAs and ACs, a theoretical option which is not completely new in the literature (see, among other, Riehemann and Bender 1999, Yoo 2008 and Fonteyn and van de Pol 2015). Our purpose is to support the '(nonfinite) periphery construction' in Bouzada-Jaboïs and Pérez-Guerra (2015) through a network of FAs and ACs which will be syntactically and semantically schematized

as in (10a) and (10b), respectively. Syntactically, there is the orthodox clause and the nonfinite periphery with a nonfinite form of the verb as the nucleus of the construction. This nonfinite periphery consists of an optional introductory element, a subject constituent (explicit in ACs and implicit in FAs) and other optional elements. Semantically, the nonfinite periphery holds a relation of specialized, unorthodox or even multiple adverbial subordination to the main clause (Stump 1985, 329-333; Kortmann 1991, 112-113).

- (6) a. [(Introducer) (Subject_i NP/pronominal) V_{nonfinite} XP]_{nonfinite periphery} [.]
 [... x_i ...]_{(orthodox) clause} (and reversed version)
- b. [nonfinite periphery] R [(orthodox) clause]

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we will describe the data and the methodology for the corpus study. In section 3 we deal with the discussion of the data and the results. Finally section 4 offers some conclusions on the study.

2. Data and methodology

The examples analysed for this study of FAs and ACs have been retrieved from the Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English (PPCMBE) for the Late Modern English (LModE) period and from the British Component of the International Corpus of English (ICE-GB) for PDE. We carried out a precision and recall analysis for each corpus to know whether we can rely on the corpus tagging. Recall rates were high enough to rely on the automatic extraction of the examples (99.4 and 89.65 percent, respectively). Yet, precision rates were quite low (38.8 and 44.57 percent, respectively) and this entailed extensive manual pruning of the results to exclude erroneous examples. Our sample includes both FAs and ACs from the PPCMBE, and examples of FAs from the ICE-GB.

The PPCMBE consists of around one million words from 1700 to 1914. It is divided in three seventy-year periods of which only the first (1700-1769) and the last (1840-1914) have been analysed in this work. The ICE-GB consists of more than one million words and we have analysed a random twenty-five percent of the corpus.

We have relied on Río-Rey’s (2002) work on ACs and FAs when including data from Early Modern English (EModE). For PDE, for comparability purposes, we also resort to data from Kortmann (1991, 1995) and van de Pol and Cuyckens (2013, 2014).

3. Analysis and discussion of results

The results presented in Table 1 provide raw numbers and normalized frequencies for FAs and ACs from EModE to PDE. The evolution of the two constructions is illustrated in Figure 1 with the normalized frequencies provided in Table 1.

	EModE*	LModE**	PDE***	PDE****
FAs	847 (33.5)	1935 (35.95)	1412 (31.3)	520 (18.81)
ACs	336 (13.3)	668 (12.41)	269 (6)	3984 (11.03)

Table 1: Overall frequencies of FAs and ACs from EModE to PDE²

² [* Río-Rey (2002, 314); ** our data from the PPCMBE; *** Kortmann (1991, 1995); and **** FAs belong to our data from ICE-GB and ACs belong to van de Pol and Cuyckens’s (2014) work]. Remark: the concept of FA/AC is not identical in the three studies.

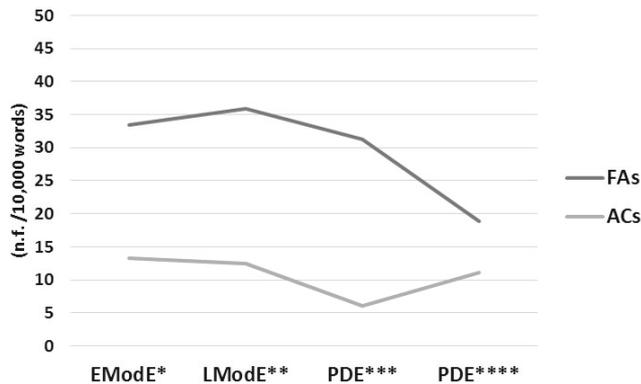


Figure 1: Normalized frequencies of FAs and ACs from EModE to PDE

Figure 1 shows that FAs decrease across time while ACs, although generally less frequent, maintain a similar rate of appearance except for an apparent decrease in PDE according to Kortmann’s (1991, 1995) data. These results manifest the greater statistical homogeneity of both constructions in PDE.

As regards mobility, FAs and ACs have been coded according to their position with respect to the main clause. They can occupy initial and final positions, when they appear before or after the main clause, and medial positions when they interrupt the main clause at some point. Information as regards position is given in Figure 2. In the left-hand side of the table we provide the data for FAs and in the right-hand side for ACs.

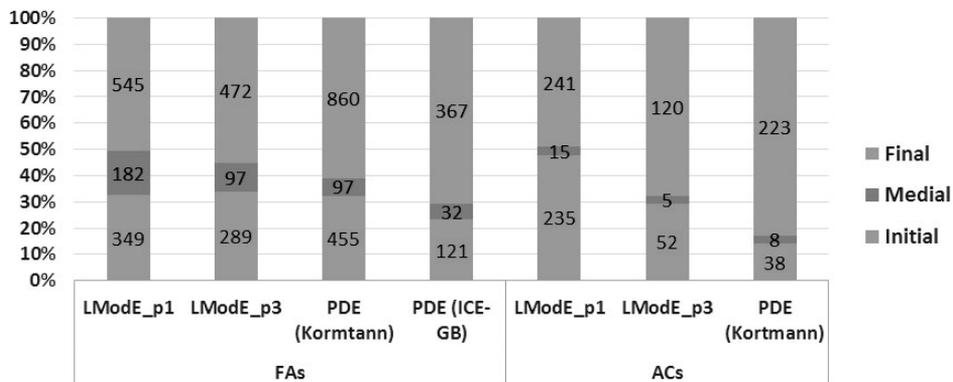


Figure 2: Position of FAs and ACs from LModE to PDE

Figure 2 shows that FAs and ACs occur most often in final position. In the first period of LModE nearly half of the FAs and ACs appear in this position, and this percentage increases significantly to almost 70 ($\chi^2(4)=71.91, p<.0001$) in FAs and 85 ($\chi^2(4)=91.75, p<.0001$) percent in ACs in PDE. Medial position is by far the less common position. Interestingly for our proposal of a network analysis, the results show greater distributional homogeneity in PDE. Both structures evolve to peripheral afterthought strategies which are usually placed in end position to comment on the information in the preceding main clause (Chafe 1984, 448).

Semantically, we will deal with two features of FAs and ACs: their adverbial meaning and the referential links they hold with respect to the main clause. To analyse their adverbial interpretations, we have adopted Kortmann’s (1991, 121) scale of informative relations by

which adverbial meanings have been categorised as either most or least informative depending on their complexity. Within the category of least informative meanings, that is, of those that only add some information about the main clause, Kortmann (1991) includes addition, accompanying circumstance, same time, exemplification, specification and manner. The group of most informative interpretations comprises anteriority and posteriority, cause and result, instrument and purpose, condition, contrast and concession. A third category of ‘other relations’ has been added when we coded the examples in the database to embrace those FA/ACs for which it is impossible to ascribe only one meaning.

The results for LModE and PDE are shown in Figure 3 for both FAs and ACs.

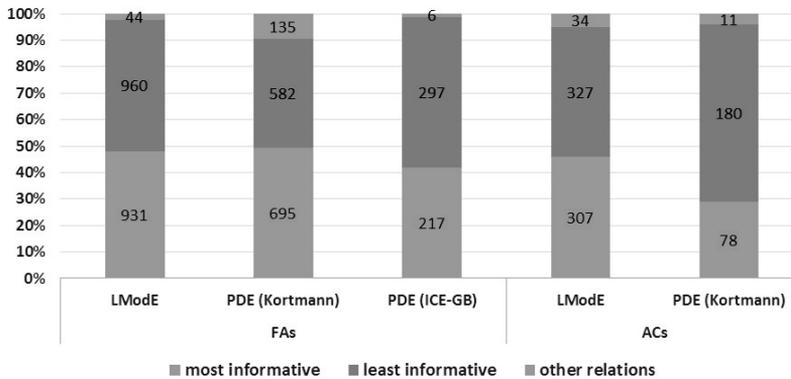


Figure 3: Adverbial

interpretation of FAs and ACs from LModE to PDE

The results in Figure 3 show that in LModE, FAs and ACs share very similar proportions as regards meaning, with nearly 50 percent of the examples coded as most informative. Yet, in PDE there is a decrease of the most informative types in FAs ($\chi^2(2)=10.6$, $p=.005$) from the 50 percent in LModE to approximately 40 percent of the examples in the ICE-GB data. In the case of ACs, there is a statistically significant decrease ($\chi^2(2)=25.26$, $p<.0001$) of the most informative type to approximately 30 percent of the PDE instances. In general terms, there is a trend towards an informatively more peripheral strategy which again favours greater homogeneity in PDE. This preference for least informative interpretations is in keeping with these constructions’ preference to occupy final position since, FAs and ACs in final position, as well as those conveying least informative meanings, comment or add some information on the main clause.

Still within the field of semantics, FAs and ACs establish some type of referential link to the main clause. Following Kortmann (1991), prototypical related FAs are those whose implicit subject correspond with the subject of the main clause. Whenever this is not the case, the FAs are classified as unrelated. ACs have their own subject constituent and the situation is then different. Examples have been coded depending on their degree of coreference to an element in the main clause. ACs which hold any kind of relation with respect to the main clause have been classified as related while those which do not establish any referential link have been classified as unrelated. The results are shown in Figure 4.

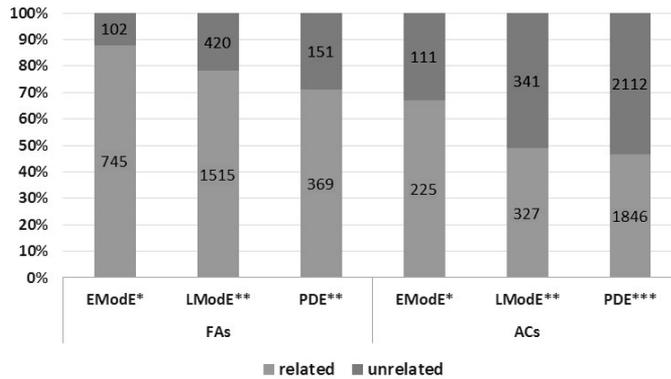


Figure 4: Coreference relations in FAs and ACs from EModE to PDE³

The proportions in Figure 4 show a clear preference for prototypical related FAs in all three periods under analysis. FAs lack an explicit subject so they need to saturate the empty subject slot. In ACs, nearly 70 percent of the EModE examples and approximately half of the examples in LModE and PDE are semantically controlled, which in principle goes against their semantic integration in clause structure since they already have a subject of their own. Interestingly, there is a slow increase of unrelatedness in FAs ($\chi^2(2)=62.4$, $p<.0001$) that is more noticeable in the case of ACs ($\chi^2(2)=51.35$, $p<.0001$) because, as the latter have their own subject, there are no structural constraints against it.

FAs and ACs have the possibility of being preceded by introductory elements. FAs accept conjunctions, prepositions and even elements that are ambiguous between conjunctions or prepositions such as *after* or *before*. In PDE the range of augmentors in ACs is more restricted since only *with* is commonly used. Less often ACs are augmented by *without* and *what with* (Kortmann 1991, 199; van de Pol and Cuyckens 2013). Figure 5 shows the results obtained for augmentation in FAs in LModE and PDE.

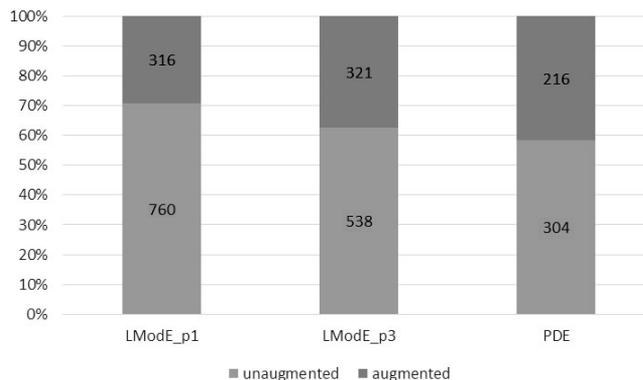


Figure 5: Augmentation in FAs from LModE to PDE

Unaugmented FAs constitute the preferred option in all three periods. However, there is a statistically significant increase of the augmented type across time ($\chi^2(2)=26.91$, $p<.0001$), with approximately 42 percent of the PDE FAs carrying augmentors.

³ [* Río-Rey (2002, 314); ** our data from the PPCMBE and the ICE-GB; *** van de Pol (2013)]

Figure 6 provides the proportions of augmentation in ACs. In this respect, we have relied on van de Pol and Cuyckens' (2013, 2014) figures.

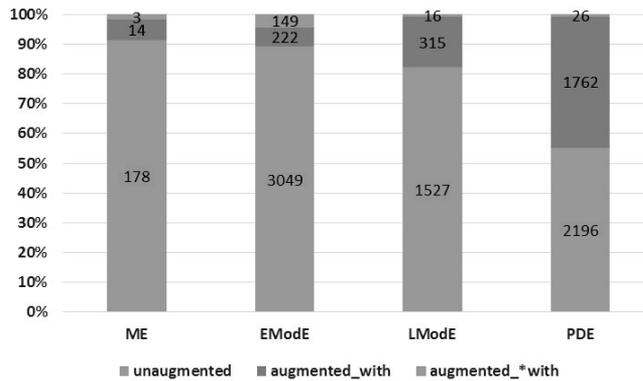


Figure 6: Augmentation in ACs from Middle English to PDE

The category of augmented ACs have been split in those that are *with*-augmented and those that are augmented by any other element (**with*). As in the case of FAs, the data reveals a persistent preference for unaugmented ACs from Middle English (ME) to LModE in spite of a progressive increase in the proportions of the augmented type. However, in PDE there is a radical increase ($\chi^2(3)=1311.2$, $p<.0001$) of augmented ACs. As regards the type of augmentors, *with* ACs gain ground across time and in PDE this type accounts for the majority of the examples of augmented ACs.

4. Discussion of the results and conclusions

In this study we have aimed at searching for linguistic evidence in favour of a unified constructional treatment of FAs and ACs in the recent history of English. For that purpose, we have considered FAs and ACs as productive constructions with a quite fixed syntax allowing for optionality as regards the array of potential predicate types, augmentation and the presence or absence of a subject constituent, and a non-compositional adverbial meaning. At the same time, we have reckoned similarities and differences between the two constructions. After the analysis of a set of variables, we have been able to conclude that there is empirical evidence for minimizing some of the differences that in principle could discourage a constructional analysis.

To sum up, the results on the distribution, position, augmentation and semantics of FAs and ACs in LModE and PDE have shown greater statistical homogeneity than in previous periods. The preference of FAs and ACs to appear in end position and to be interpreted as least informative, together with the increase of unrelatedness in both constructions across time and the rise of augmentation have corroborated a broad diachronic harmonization of FAs and ACs in recent times and have thus evidenced a process of in-progress constructional change towards what we have labelled the 'nonfinite periphery construction'.

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A Contrastive Analysis of English *Possible* and Spanish *Posible*

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Abstract

This paper presents a contrastive study of the English modal adjective *possible* and its Spanish equivalent *posible*, based on two comparable corpora of contemporary spoken and written language. A quantitative analysis of 500 occurrences of each adjective was carried out in terms of the kind of modality expressed (epistemic, deontic, dynamic or root), syntactic role and occurrence in generic utterances. The results show, among other things, that both adjectives express mainly dynamic and root modality, frequently function as clausal Subject Complement or Object Complement, and are common with generic utterances. Two factors are proposed to explain the similar frequency of the two adjectives and their distributional differences in types of modality.

Keywords: *possible* and *posible*, modality, corpus-based analysis, contrastive analysis

1. Introduction

The study of modality in English and Spanish is a complex issue due to, among other factors, the polysemy of many modal expressions in both languages. The complexity increases in contrastive studies, due to the lack of narrow correspondences between apparent equivalents in the two languages. At present, the English-Spanish contrastive studies on modal expressions have by and large focused on the English modal auxiliaries and corresponding Spanish periphrases, as well as a few adverbs (Carretero, 2012; Silva-Corvalán, 1995, among many others). This paper sets forth a contrastive analysis of the English modal adjective *possible* and its Spanish correlate *posible*, which, to my knowledge, have never been subject to a contrastive analysis in spite of their central role within the area of modality.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 is devoted to the concept and types of modality that serve as point of departure of the analysis; Section 3 offers a modal characterization of *possible* and *posible*; Section 4 covers the research hypothesis, data and method for carrying out the contrastive analysis, whose results are presented and discussed in Section 5; Section 6 sums up the main conclusions.

2. The concept and types of modality

The approach to modality followed here is traditional, based on logico-semantic categories, as in Perkins (1983), Palmer (1990) or Portner (2009), and more specifically on the proposal presented in Carretero et al. (2007). Modality is built around the logical notions of possibility and necessity, and the main categories distinguished are epistemic, deontic, dynamic and volitional (or boulomaic) modality. This last modality does not concern *possible* nor *posible* and will not be considered hereinafter.

The different types of modality share a number of common semantic features: firstly, they express an attitude, normally of the speaker/writer (sp/wr), towards the state of affairs communicated; secondly, they tend to express non-factuality, i.e. the utterance is neither true nor false, or the action has not been performed yet at the speech time; and thirdly, the modal meanings can be described in terms of scales along the possibility-necessity axis. Following Perkins (1983), I consider epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality as possibility and necessity derived from rational, social and natural laws, respectively. The epistemic scale goes from absolute positive certainty ('something is true') to absolute negative certainty ('something is not true'), the middle points being probability and possibility. The deontic scale goes from obligation to prohibition, the middle points being recommendation and permission. The dynamic scale goes from positive to negative inevitability (from the unavoidable to the impossible), the middle points being tendency, potentiality and ability.

3. A modal characterization of *possible* and *posible*

Possible and *posible* may well be considered as prototypical ways to express modality in English and Spanish. As was stated above, possibility ('posibilidad' in Spanish) is a core modal category, and in both languages the adjective is the primitive word from which the noun is derived. References about English and Spanish approaching modality in terms of meaning, such as Perkins (1983), Silva-Corvalán (1995), Martín Zorraquino (1999), Portner (2009) or Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), unanimously include *possible* among modal expressions.

With regard to the type of modality, *possible* and *posible* can express the three types of modality, thus being polysemous. This polysemy is illustrated by (1-3), three examples of *possible* whose closest translation in Spanish is *posible*, from the British National Corpus. *Possible* is epistemic in (1), where it, combined with the modal auxiliary *may*, expresses a degree of probability of the killer having had local knowledge. In (2), it is deontic, since it concerns the period of legally permitted credits in the export trade. In (3), it is dynamic, since it concerns the physical-psychological possibilities of the mind.

- (1) Johanna's home is less than a mile from the spot where her body was found. 'It is **possible** the killer may have had local knowledge', said Det Supt Cole. (*BNC* written)
- (2) Whereas in the home market sales and production are likely to be financed from existing working capital, the extended period of credit which is **possible** in the export trade may necessitate additional forms of finance. (*BNC* written)
- (3) Without the devil or demons being involved, the ouija board can act as stageprop to inspire the subconscious of the weak-minded and susceptible. John Allan, an experienced Christian in the field of parapsychology and the deliverance ministry, spoke to me of his fears in this area. He said, 'It is **possible** to bypass the censor which normally filters the impulses deriving from our subconscious, and let out things which ought to be kept in'. (*BNC* spoken)

In certain cases, the modality of *possible* and *posible* lies in between the deontic and the dynamic types. These cases are well explained in terms of merger (Coates 1983), rather than ambiguity: both modalities occur at the same time, and the choice between one and the other is not necessary to understand the message. For example, in (4) *possible* points to deontic factors (for example, limitations of the quality of the service due to other social obligations such as the need to obtain benefits) and dynamic factors (such as the limitations of the providers and the means available). These cases have been labelled with the term root modality, adopted from Coates (1983).

- (4) And it's important for our staff to be aware of that, and to realize that we have gotta continue to give, those two clients I believe in particular, the best **possible** service we can provide. (*BNC* spoken)

Possible and *posible* occupy the middle point of the scale for all the modalities: when they are epistemic, they mean weak probability, in contrast to positive or negative certainty; when deontic, they express permission, in contrast to obligation or prohibition; and when dynamic, they indicate that something has the potential to occur, in contrast to the extreme positive meaning of inevitability and the negative meaning of impossibility.

4. The contrastive analysis: hypothesis, data and method

4.1 Research hypothesis

The quantitative analysis took as point of departure the hypothesis that the results would uncover two differences. The first is their overall frequency: *possible*, as well as other Spanish modal adjectives such as *cierto* ('certain') and *probable* ('probable'), seem to be more common than their English equivalents. The second concerns the distribution of the types: epistemic modality was predicted to be more common for *possible*, for the reason that it is pragmatically acceptable in a number of contexts in which *posible* is not; for example, *es posible* is readily used in spoken language as (part of) an answer to a question about future plans, while its English equivalent *it is possible* is not; other expressions, such as *perhaps*, *maybe* or *might*, would be used instead.

4.2 Data and method

The hypotheses stated above were tested by means of a contrastive analysis based on naturally-occurring data, obtained from the *British National Corpus, World Edition (BNC)* for English and from the Peninsular Spanish part of the *Corpus de referencia del español actual (CREA)* for Spanish. The *BNC* contains approximately 100 million words, of which 90 per cent are written language and 10 per cent spoken language. Most of the texts were produced from 1975 onwards. The Peninsular part of the *CREA (CREApe)* consists of texts produced between 1975 and 2004, totalling approximately 85 million words. The distribution is also 90 per cent written language and 10 per cent spoken language; therefore, the written and the spoken part of this subcorpus contain approximately 76.5 and 8.5 million words, respectively.

The overall frequency of *possible* and *posible* is specified in Table 1. The counting includes the Spanish plural form *posibles*. This frequency agrees with the hypothesis that *posible* is globally more frequent than *possible*, but the difference is not great and only occurs in written language, whereas in spoken language *possible* is more common than *posible*. In order to track plausible factors that could account for these facts, and also to uncover other similarities and differences, a quantitative analysis was carried out on 500 examples of each adverb, 250 spoken and 250 written. Among the examples selected, there were two cases of the Spanish derived noun *posibles*, which always occurs in the plural and means 'property, income or means that a person has'. Since this noun is not modal, these examples were replaced with others.

		TOTAL	NORMALIZED FREQUENCY (per million words)
POSSIBLE	Spoken	1,522	152.2
	Written	32,134	357.04
	Total	33,656	336.56
POSIBLE	Spoken	827	97.29
	Written	36,141	472.43
	Total	36,968	434.92

Table 1. Number of occurrences of *possible* in the *BNC* and *posible* in the *CREApe*

The examples were registered in four databases created with Excel, one for each language and mode, each having the following fields: 1) the actual example; 2) type of modality; 3) syntactic function and 4) generic utterances. As for syntactic functions, both adjectives were found to be syntactically versatile. They function as constituents of phrases, concretely as modifiers in Noun Phrases (*possible solutions*), Adjective Phrases (*the worst possible*), Adverb Phrases (*as quickly as possible*) and Prepositional Phrases (virtually restricted to *possible*, as in *en lo posible*, lit. ‘in the possible’, i.e. *as far as possible*), and even in Determinative Phrases, i.e. phrases headed by determiners (Huddleston and Pullum 2002), as in *as much memory as possible*, in which *possible* functions as a postmodifier of the Determinative Phrase ‘as much as’, which in turn modifies ‘memory’. They can also function as clausal constituents, in extraposed constructions with anticipatory *it* (5) or in other constructions, as in (6), where *possible* is complement of the object depending on the verb *make*:

- (5) Yeah, s s surely the, the point is, we'd have booked another comedian if it had been **possible** to book another comedian at that time, which it obviously wasn't. (*BNC* spoken)
- (6) It may be difficult, but knowledge-based innovation can be managed. Success requires careful analysis of the various kinds of knowledge needed to make an innovation **possible**. (*BNC* written)

As regards generic utterances, reading the examples for analysis led the author to realize that, in many cases, *possible* and *posible* occurred with generic utterances about a class of entities or situations, such as (7), which concerns the organizations of wards as a whole. These statements were registered in order to detect possible differences among the four subcorpora.

- (7) There are obviously going to be problems associated with learning at the bedside. The organisation of a ward is directed towards ensuring the best **possible** standard of patient care, and is not primarily concerned with the needs of the learner. (*BNC* written)

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Frequency of each type of modality

The frequency of each type of modality for the two adjectives, in the spoken and written examples, is registered in Table 2. The quantities lead to consider that dynamic and root modality are by far the most frequent in the spoken subcorpora of the two adjectives, while in the written subcorpus root modality is less common, perhaps because, in the absence of a non-linguistic situational context, the linguistic context tends to make the kind of modality clearer.

The results also confirm the hypothesis that epistemic *possible* is more common than *possible*; this difference is particularly strong in spoken language, where the epistemic cases of *possible* almost triple those of *possible*.

	NO.	EPISTEMIC		DEONTIC		DYNAMIC		ROOT	
		To.	%	To.	%	To.	%	To.	%
POSSIBLE Spoken	250	24	9.6	16	6.4	107	42.8	103	41.2
POSSIBLE Written	250	37	14.8	27	10.8	123	49.2	63	25.2
POSIBLE Spoken	250	66	26.4	22	8.8	76	30.4	86	34.4
POSIBLE Written	250	67	26.8	22	8.8	111	44.4	50	20.0

Table 2. Frequency of each type of modality in the examples of *possible* and *posible*

5.2 Syntactic functions

The frequency of the syntactic functions specified above of *possible* and *posible* is registered in Table 3, which shows that both adjectives are most frequent as constituents of extraposed clauses, and that written *posible* displays the highest percentage of cases in which it modifies a Noun Phrase. Spoken *possible* displays more occurrences modifying Adverb Phrases than the other subtypes. All these cases occur in the comparative construction (*as soon as possible*, *as well as possible...*), and their frequency may well be one of the reasons why *possible* is more frequent than *posible* in spoken language, contrary to what was predicted.

	POSSIBLE Spoken (250)		POSSIBLE Written (250)		POSIBLE Spoken (250)		POSIBLE Written (250)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Modifiers in NPs	42	16.8	61	24.4	57	22.8	73	29.2
Modifiers in AdjPs	29	11.6	27	10.8	22	8.8	30	12.0
Modifiers in AdvPs	36	14.4	18	7.2	15	6.0	14	5.6
Modifs. in DetPs.	9	3.6	9	3.6	5	2.0	0	0.0
In extrap. clauses	83	33.2	85	34.0	95	38.0	83	33.2
Other clausal contexts	50	20.0	50	20.0	48	19.2	42	16.8

Table 3. Frequency of different syntactic functions for *possible* and *posible* in the corpora

The syntactic analysis also uncovered that the only clausal functions of both adjectives were Subject Complement and Object Complement, except for three cases in the BNC spoken, in which it was erroneously used as an Adjunct (instead of *possibly*). A difference was also found between *posible* functioning in NPs as premodifier, which was epistemic in nearly all the cases (8), and as a postmodifier, which normally expresses other modalities, as in (9), where it is deontic:

- (8) Se conjeturó un **posible** accidente. (*CREApe* spoken)
(‘A possible accident was conjectured...’)
- (9) Ahora, excluyendo estos casos, pues no encuentro la más mínima ni explicación, ni justificación **posible** a un comportamiento tan brutal. (*CREApe* spoken)

(‘Now, excluding these cases, then I don’t find the slightest explanation, nor any possible justification for such brutal behaviour’)

5.3 Generic utterances

The frequency of generic utterances, in total number and subclassified by types of modality, is specified in Table 4. This table shows that they are strongly associated with dynamic modality, followed by root modality; therefore, generic statements are strongly associated with natural possibility. Their particularly high frequency with written *possible* may partly account for the fact that the frequency of *possible* in the BNC written is not much lower than that of *possible* in the written part of the CREA, despite the scarcity of epistemic cases of the English adjective.

	NO.	TOTAL GENERIC		EPISTEMIC	DEONTIC	DYNAMIC	ROOT
		To.	%	Total	Total	Total	Total
POSSIBLE Spoken	250	65	26.0	5	4	42	14
POSSIBLE Written	250	119	47.6	7	13	73	26
POSIBLE Spoken	250	88	35.2	14	7	33	34
POSIBLE Written	250	89	35.6	12	6	59	12

Table 4. Number of generic utterances of *possible* and *possible* in the corpora

6. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of *possible* and *possible* presented here shows that both adjectives are polysemous, since they can express epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality, as well as root modality (indeterminate non-epistemic modality). The results of the corpus-based quantitative analysis can be summarized as follows: the two adjectives are more common in the written than in the spoken subcorpora; their overall frequency is similar, *possible* being more frequent in the spoken subcorpus, and *possible* in the written subcorpus; they mostly express dynamic and root modality; they are often clausal constituents functioning as Subject Complement or Object Complement, and they are frequent with generic utterances. Their relatively similar frequency is contrary to the initial research hypothesis, which predicted that *possible* would be clearly more common than *possible* due to the higher frequency of epistemic cases of the Spanish adjective. This last fact was confirmed by our analysis; however, the quantitative difference in epistemic modality seems to be compensated in spoken language by the relatively high frequency of *possible* in collocations such as *as soon as possible* or *as far as possible*, and in written language by its extended use in generic utterances.

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Ah! Interjections

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Abstract

In this paper, we set out to discuss some grammatical idiosyncrasies of English interjections. In section 1, we present the main properties of interjections as provided in the main reference grammars of the English language and relevant literature. In section 2, we discuss the nature of interjections as examples of proto-language, that is, an initial stage in the process of language evolution. In section 3, we pay attention to the way the architecture of diverging grammatical frameworks are able to capture the properties of interjections at the various levels of representation. It will be shown that the extent to which an interjection's meaning belongs within grammar and matches with a syntactic counterpart has more to do with the theoretical framework at hand than with the interjection's contribution. Section 4 summarizes our conclusions.

Keywords: interjections, grammar architecture, mismatches

1. Interjections: relevant properties

Interjections can be defined as small linguistic elements, typically single-word utterances, which express particular “emotional or mental attitudes or states” (Wharton 2000, 176). The fact that they are syntactically defective, in that they cannot be combined with other elements to create complex units, makes them very often be “denied their own identity and rather neglected in the literature” (Matamala 2007, 117). The lack of attention that interjections have received can be confirmed if we take a quick look at their treatment in three main descriptive grammars of the English Language, Quirk et al. (1985), Huddleston and Pullum (2002) and Biber et al. (1999).

Quirk et al. (1985, 74; 853) just devote two short sections to interjections, which are defined as “purely emotive words which do not enter into syntactic relations”. They note that they are “also peripheral to the language system itself, in that they frequently involve the use of sounds which do not otherwise occur in English words” (1985, 74). As an example, they provide the case of *ugg*, which is pronounced with an ‘achlaut’ /x/ that is “not a phoneme in standard AmE or BrE”.

Similarly, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 1360-1) also provide a very short section on interjections (just one paragraph) and define them as “a category of words which do not combine with other words in integrated syntactic constructions, and have expressive rather than propositional meaning”. The authors seem to establish a distinction between central interjections such as *ah*, *hey*, etc., and those deriving from verbs such as *blast*, *bugger*, or *damm*. Expressions such as *Damn the mosquitoes* or *Fuck you!* which involve the combination of an interjection with a Noun Phrase are considered interjection phrases (2002, 1360fn).

Not surprisingly, Biber et al.'s (1999) corpus-based grammar with its orientation towards spoken and written language provides more interesting insights into the nature of

interjections. The authors note that interjections have an “exclamatory function, expressive of the speaker’s emotion” (1999: 1083) and claim that they contribute meaning or a pragmatic function to the expression, although the nature of that meaning is not discussed.

Biber et al. classify interjections in an order of frequency of use, which gives the following ranking:

Interjection	Pragmatic function	Example
<i>Oh</i>	Surprise / discourse marker	<i>Oh, I should have come / Oh, I see.</i>
<i>Ah / wow</i>	Surprise (greater intensity)	<i>Ah! Then listen carefully. Wow, that’s great.</i>
<i>Oops / whoops</i>	Unpleasant mishap	<i>Oops, I dropped it!</i>
<i>ugh</i>	Disgust	<i>I don’t like that diet food, ugh.</i>
<i>Ouch</i>	Pain	<i>Ouch, my neck hurts.</i>
<i>Tt</i>	Disapproval	<i>Tt, I guess I tend to snack a lot.</i>
<i>Hm</i>	Doubt /lack of enthusiasm	<i>Hm, is that so?</i>

Table 1. Interjections: frequency of use and pragmatic function.
(adapted from Biber et al. 1999, 1083-1085)

However, a significant problem in the characterization of interjections is the fact that other lexical items in the language may serve a similar expressive or interactional function. Thus, a classical distinction is established by Ameka (1992, 105), who divides interjections into two main classes: primary and secondary interjections (see discussion in Wharton 2000). Primary interjections are words that cannot be used in any other sense than as an interjection, e.g. *oops* and *ouch* in (1):

- (1) Patient: Be careful with that needle!
Dentist: Oops.
Patient: Ouch!

Secondary interjections “are those words which have an independent semantic value but which can be used...as utterances by themselves to express a mental attitude or state” (Ameka 1992, 111), e.g. *hell* and *shit* in (2):

- (2) Dentist: Hell! I’m sorry.
Patient: Shit! Get the bloody thing out of my cheek!

What the two categories have in common is the fact that they both function as extra-clausal constituents or independent utterances, syntactically and phonologically detached from the surrounding linguistic expression. Semantically, they both lack denotative or literal meaning, that is, they do not establish a relation with a world entity.

The nature of the semantic or pragmatic contribution of interjections is a complex issue. As noted by Huddleston and Pullum (2002), interjections do not have propositional meaning. In other words, they do not contribute to the truth-value of the sentence. However, some authors argue that interjections are associated with a conceptual structure deriving from their conventional use in specific contexts (Wierzbicka 1992).

From a lexico-semantic point of view, however, it can be safely concluded that interjections do not have literal meaning, as they cannot be said to refer or denote a given entity in any conceivable ontology. Those who believe that interjections have conceptual structure assume that their meaning derives from their being tied to specific situations of use. But it is precisely the fact that the meaning of conventional lexical items is not tied to specific occasions of use what gives language its almost unlimited expressive potential.

Some authors claim that interjections convey ‘procedural meaning’, that is, they aid in meaning construction by guiding addressees to relevant interpretations of the communicative value of interjections themselves and the accompanying expressions. As Padilla Cruz (2009, 184) puts it:

[I]n the processing of interjectional utterances hearers may pragmatically enrich them thanks to some of their linguistic properties and contextual factors so as to obtain fully fledged propositions that correspond to what they in the think or sense their interlocutors intend to communicate.

In this sense, a notion which is crucial in the characterization of interjections is that of context-dependence. Interjections are expressions which are (more or less) conventionally uttered in specific communicative situations, but which do not contribute meaning outside those contexts. This suggests that interjections could be seen as examples of the so-called proto-language in present linguistic systems and that they might provide interesting insights into the nature of language evolution and first language acquisition.

2. Interjections as examples of proto-language

The term proto-language is due to Derek Bickerton, who argues that the development of human language took place in two stages. As put by Jackendoff (2002, 235), proto-language is language as we know it nowadays minus syntax. For millions of years, hominids would have spoken in proto-language, which would mostly consist of single-word utterances before the emergence of syntax added unlimited combinatorial possibilities. Jackendoff hypothesizes that interjections are ‘defective’ lexical items or fossils of this one-word stage of language evolution (2002, 240).

In the field of language evolution, it seems widely assumed that the symbolic nature of words emerged from previous gestures (such as pointing) which were connected to sounds (Bickerton 1995; Jackendoff 1997; Tomasello 2008) and tied to particular speech situations. This initial, mostly purely referential vocabulary, might have evolved into a more conventional lexicon, once items began being employed in different contexts and were displaced from their initial context-bound meaning. Tomasello (2003) argues that the acquisition of words by children follows a similar process. In order to construct or determine the meaning of a word or linguistic expression, children interpret adults’ communicative intentions and infer which object or action the adult is referring to in a given situation. The context dependence of interjections and their contribution to the expression of basic feelings and emotions thus suggests that they illustrate properties of a previous stage in language evolution and acquisition.

If interjections and other one-word utterances are instances of defective language, the question arises as to what kind of function they serve in the system. In recent functionalist theory, it is customary to speak of interpersonal meaning to describe the communicative value of expressions or the speakers’ encoding of attitudes and feelings. In other words, interpersonal meaning refers to those communicative aspects in language which are not part of denotative meaning. It can thus be argued that interjections serve an interpersonal function or convey interpersonal meaning.

3. Interjections and grammar architecture

In this section, we look at the way the architecture of diverging grammatical frameworks are able to capture the properties of interjections at the different levels of representation. In particular, this section will answer the following questions:

- Are interjections represented within or without the grammar proper?
- Are interjections represented at the syntactic and/or the semantic level?
- Can interjections be represented at the pragmatic level instead of at the semantic one or, in other words, does the grammar contain a formalized pragmatic level of representation?
- Is the representation of meaning at the semantic and/or pragmatic level dependent on that of the form at the syntactic and/or phonological level, if it exists, or are they autonomous representations?
- Is the relation between the representation of the interjection site and the remainder utterance at the various levels one of symmetry or one of asymmetry?
- Is the answer to all of these questions theory-driven?

Our answer to the questions above will be, rather than closely related to, totally and fully dependent on the architectural tenets of the theory of grammar at hand (which already answers the last question). When we talk about architectural tenets, we will mainly refer to the following:

- Is the relation between the functional (semantic, pragmatic) and formal (syntactic, phonological) levels one of dependence or one of independence? In other words, does the representation of the interjection site at functional levels of representation depend on that at formal levels?
- Is the interface between the functional and formal levels transparent or flexible? That is to say, can there be mismatches or unexpected, non-default correspondences between the representation of the interjection site at the functional and formal levels or do these have to mirror each other?

In what follows, an account of three diverging architectures of grammar will be analyzed in order to establish a relation between the answers to the first block regarding the representation of interjections within a grammatical framework, on the one hand, and the answers to the second block regarding the architectural nature of a given grammatical framework design, on the other. In order to illustrate this, the three frameworks will be:

- Traditional Generative Grammar as it appears in Chomsky's Syntactic Structures (1957), the Standard Theory (1965), Government and Binding (Chomsky 1981) and the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995).
- The Parallel Architecture as it appears in Jackendoff (1997, 2002) and in Culicover and Jackendoff (2005).
- Functional Discourse Grammar as it appears in Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, 2010).

3.1 Traditional Generative Grammar (TGG)

TGG presents a scenario such that the semantic structure is derived from (thus depends on) the syntactic structure (see Figure 1 below).

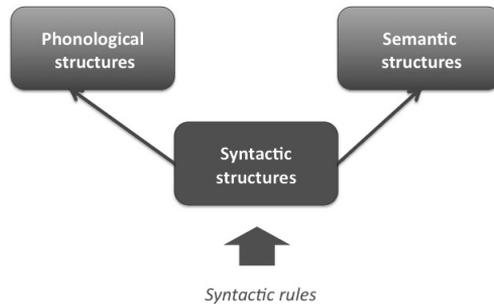


Figure 1. The architecture of Traditional Generative Grammar.

This means that the syntax-semantics interface is transparent and this, in turn, that whatever happens at the syntactic level needs to be mirrored at the semantic level, i.e., the syntax-semantics interface in the representation of interjections ought to be one-to-one and show no unexpected mismatches. Under these restrictions, three case scenarios are made possible; see Figures 2, 3 and 4 below for a representation of *ah* in (4) below according to this architecture.

(4) Ah, then listen carefully. (Auster, P. *The Brooklyn Follies*)

The TGG framework could argue that interjections are not syntactically integrated within their surroundings, thus they may be ignored by the syntactic component. This is represented in Figure 2 below (Contreras-García 2013, 221), whereby the interjection *ah* is not represented at all – i.e. it is seen as not belonging to the grammar proper but rather outside of it within a non-grammatical, pragmatic component outside of the grammar. Since generative grammar argues for syntax-semantics transparency, and since there is no syntactic representation for interjections, there is no need to represent interjections at the semantic level either.

Alternatively, TGG could argue that interjections do belong within the grammar proper, constituting an independent phrase by themselves (see section 1). This could lead to an analysis of (4) such as that in Figure 3 below (Contreras-García 2013, 222). According to this analysis, *ah* would belong within the syntactic level but would constitute an independent interjection phrase IntP that may optionally be the daughter of a higher node CP for the sake of uniformity. Since Generative Grammar argues for syntax-semantics interface transparency (no mismatches), the fact that *ah* and the remainder utterance show a symmetric relation between them at the syntactic level should translate into a symmetric relation between the representation of *ah* and the remainder utterance at the semantic level as well.

Finally, Greenberg (1984) proposes an analysis such that the interjection (INT) appears to the right of potential left-dislocated constituents (LDC) and as a daughter of S' (here C') to the left of S (here C). An adapted analysis following this line of thought is suggested in Figure 4 below (Contreras-García 2013, 223). The suggested order of constituents follows from the fact that, in a sentence containing a LDC and an interjection, the order appears to be LDC+interjection+CP. This is illustrated in (5a) below (cf. (5b)). Since Generative Grammar argues for syntax-semantics interface transparency and since the relation

between *ah* and the remainder utterance is one of asymmetry at the syntactic level, an asymmetric relation in the representation of the semantic level would be expected as well.

- (5) a. You, man, then listen carefully. LDC+IntP+CP
- b. *Man, you, then listen carefully. IntP+LDC+CP

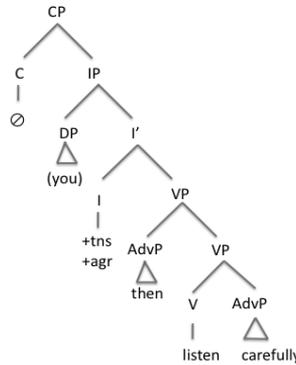


Figure 2. Interjections do not belong to Generative Grammar syntax.

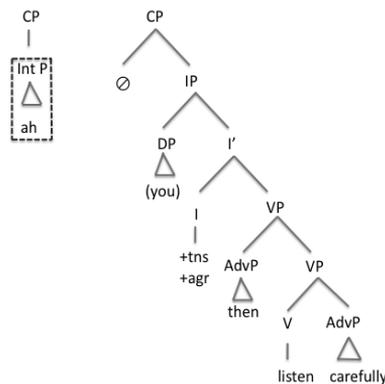


Figure 3. Interjections do belong to Generative Grammar syntax and are independent units.

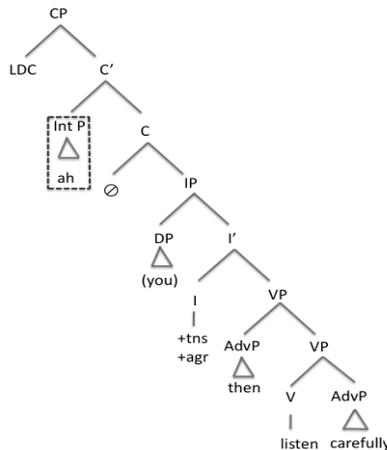


Figure 4. Interjections do belong to Generative Grammar syntax and are dependent units.

3.2 The Parallel Architecture (PA)

The basic structure of the PA, as developed by Jackendoff, is sketched in Figure 5 below.

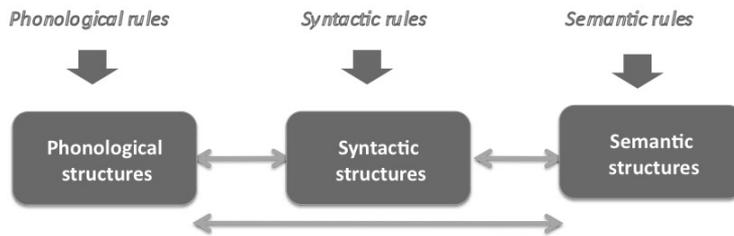


Figure 5. The architecture of the Parallel Architecture.

As can be seen from Figure 5 above (Contreras-García 2013, 226), the PA possesses no separate pragmatic component. It possesses autonomous phonological, semantic / pragmatic and syntactic structures, thus does not observe inter-level transparency. Inferences and other pragmatic features may be included within the conceptual component such that the meaning of interjections would be most likely to appear at the conceptual component and not outside of the grammar proper. Since the PA does not need to show inter-level transparency, interjections should not necessarily appear at the syntactic level altogether with the conceptual one. The fact that they appear at the syntactic level is not a consequence of the need for interface transparency or any such architectural constraint. Figure 6 below offers a possible syntactic and conceptual structure for example (4). Dotted squares indicate the interjection site.

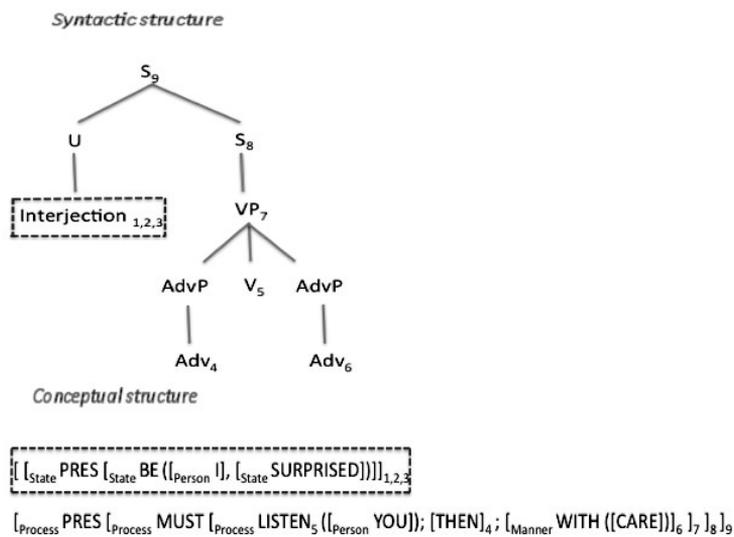


Figure 6. Interjections belong to the PA syntactic and conceptual structures.

At the syntactic level, Interjection_{1,2,3} is simply represented as an independent utterance U that together with the sentence S₈ forms the sentence S₉. Note that the interjection is not to be considered as a different sentence but as an utterance (U) due to its idiosyncratic syntactic nature (see Jackendoff and Culicover 2005, 237). Note that the conceptual structure of the interjection *ah* is represented as the speaker's present state of being surprised and is thus included in the Conceptual Structure. However, the desirability of giving the attitude

expressed by an interjection a conceptual structure is questionable, just as it is to assign a conceptual structure to facial expressions or hand gestures (Culicover, p.c.).

3.3 Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG)

The basic architectural tenets of FDG are represented in Figure 7 below.

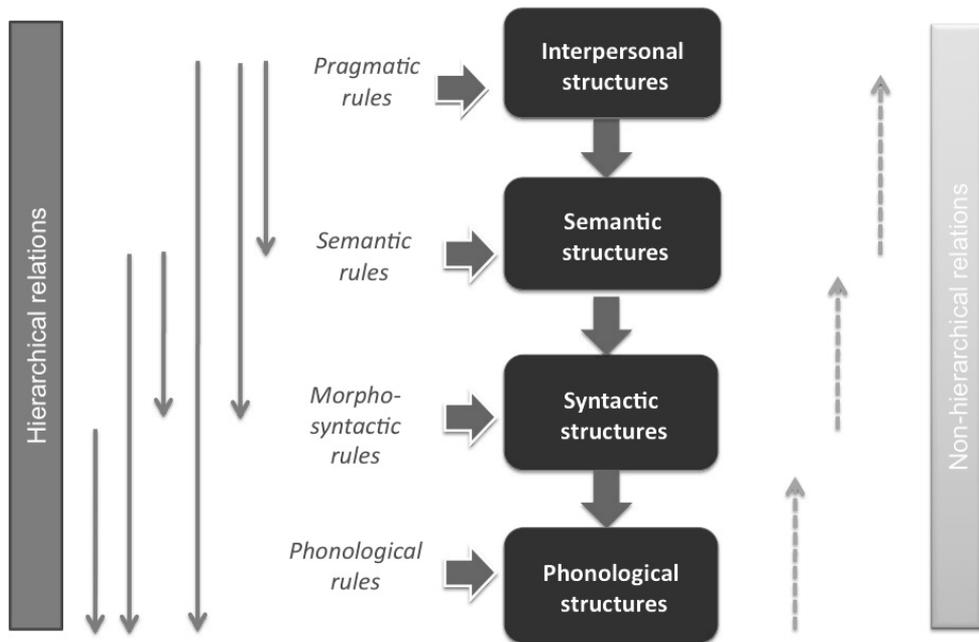


Figure 7. The architecture of Functional Discourse Grammar.

Thus, FDG has an Interpersonal level (IL) that is separate from the semantic one, which means that the pragmatic contribution of interjections can be represented at IL within the grammar proper. At the same time, FDG allows for inter-level mismatches, which means that the semantic (representational) level (RL) does not necessarily need to have a semantic counterpart for the pragmatic site of the interjection. Nor is there any architectural constraint leading to a morphosyntactic counterpart at the Morphosyntactic Level (ML). There exists a mismatch therefore between the interpersonal / phonological and the representational / morphosyntactic levels of representation, since interjections are sent directly from the Interpersonal Level down to the Phonological Level (Hengeveld and Mackenzie 2008, 77). This is shown in the representation of *ah* in (4) as it appears in Figure 8 below (Contreras-García 2013, 228).

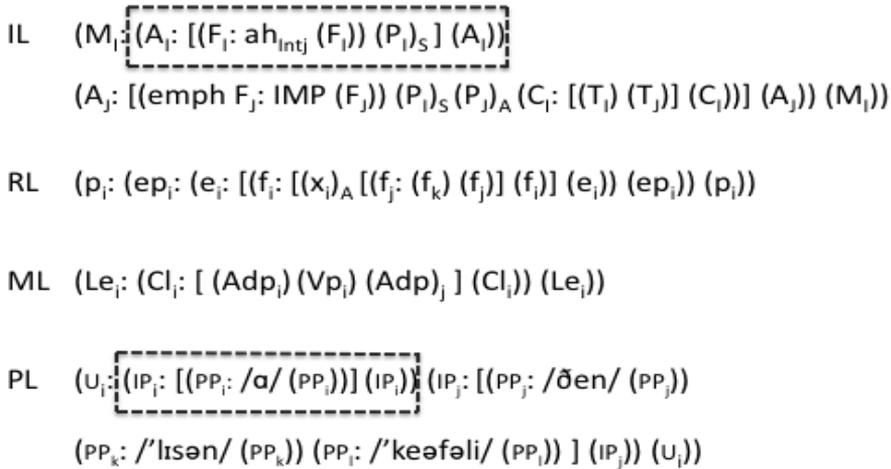


Figure 8. Interjections belong to the FDG Interpersonal and Phonological Levels.

The interjection *ah* occupies the head of the slot for Illocution at the Interpersonal Level. This coincides with Poggi's claim that the meaning of interjections is that of whole speech acts that have a performative content (Poggi 2009) –though she claims that they have propositional, thus semantic, content as well. Note that this framework's ability to incorporate the contribution of interjections within the grammar partly falls on the fact that the model possesses a pragmatic level of representation. The independence that is shown at the IL by positioning the interjection at an independent discourse act A_i is reflected at the PL by representing the phonological site of the interjection as an independent intonational phrase IP_i . At the RL and ML, the interjection is not represented.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we have shown some general properties of English interjections. Although linguistic theory has not paid much attention to them, interjections pose interesting challenges. We have shown that a full account of their properties very much depends on the architectural features of the different grammatical frameworks to the extent that their potential analyses are clearly theory-driven.

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More People Have presented in Conferences than I Have. Comparative Illusions: When Ungrammaticality Goes Unnoticed

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Abstract

This paper investigates a phenomenon known as *comparative illusions*. Sentences like *More Americans have been to Russia than I have* are a type of *grammatical illusion* in which an ill-formed comparative structure produces the erroneous perception of syntactic and semantic well-formedness (Phillips et al. 2011). What is most interesting about these structures is the robustness of their illusory effect. In spite of their ungrammaticality and lack of congruent meaning, they seem to be acceptable to most native speakers of English. Even though this phenomenon has not received much attention in the literature, the existing experimental studies point towards some type of reanalysis whereby meaning is extracted as the source of the illusion (Wellwood et al. 2009, 2015, O'Connor et al. 2012). By means of a two-alternative forced choice task conducted online, this pilot study aims to measure the interpretations assigned to these ungrammatical sentences and the influence of the syntactic and semantic properties that bias the interpretation in a particular direction.¹

Keywords: grammatical illusions, comparative structures, syntax-semantics interface, reanalysis, language processing

1. Introduction

The accuracy of the human parser in applying the immense collection of grammatical constraints that conform the different languages is extraordinary. For this reason, it is particularly interesting when real-time linguistic processes give rise to representations that are not allowed by the grammar. Structures that do not comply with the constraints imposed by the grammar, but are erroneously perceived as well-formed, are known as *grammatical illusions* (Phillips et al. 2011). *Comparative illusions* (CIs), instantiated by comparative structures like (1), are a subtype of this phenomenon.

(1) More people have been to Russia than I have.

When native speakers are faced with (1), their initial judgement is that it is an acceptable sentence of English, and what is more, that it has a coherent interpretation. However, according to the rules of grammar, (1) is both ungrammatical and incongruent. The fundamental problem lies in the expression of the *than*-clause. An essential element of nominal comparatives is that the *than*-clause subject must be a correlate of the matrix clause

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more. This means that the matrix clause subject in (1) *more people* should tie in with a degree operator (equivalent to *how many* in degree questions) in the *than*-clause subject; something which is neither possible with the first person pronoun *I*, nor with any other pronoun, proper name or definite description (Bresnan 1973).² With regard to semantics, nominal comparatives require that the expression of the subject in the *than*-clause hosts a degree variable in the form of a semantically plural NP (Hackl 2001). Accordingly, only a bare plural noun can occupy this position. In sum, the sentence in (1) poses a logical semantic problem since the matrix clause subject *more people* does not find an element in the *than*-clause that is countable, and hence, a comparison about two quantities of individuals is impossible.

It should be noted that CIs are not the only case in which speakers fail to notice the violation of certain grammatical constraints. *Agreement illusions* as in (2) — most commonly known as *attraction* —, or *negative polarity illusions* as in (3) are very interesting examples. The illusion arises when speakers perceive them as acceptable, despite the fact that, in (2), the verb does not agree in number with the head noun, and in (3), *ever* is not being licensed by a c-commanding negative element.

- (2) The key to the cabinets are on the table. (Bock and Miller 1991)
 (3) The bills [that no senators voted for] will ever become law. (Parker and Phillips 2015)

Grammatical illusions are a valuable gateway in order to study the nature of the linguistic system independently from the input (O'Connor et al. 2012) and the role of grammar in language processing. In this regard, the issue with CIs “is not about whether the example type is ungrammatical, or whether it is merely semantically incoherent, or why. The puzzle is about why people initially don't notice there is anything wrong with it at all” (Pullum 2004).

2. Comparative illusions

The classic example of the CI in (1) was first reported by Montalbetti as “the most amazing */? sentence I've ever heard” (1984, 6). CIs have also been referred to as “Escher sentences”, drawing an analogy with a famous visual illusion created by M.C. Escher.³ According to Lieberman, both types of stimuli —the visual illusion by Escher and the linguistic illusion reported here— “involve familiar and coherent local cues whose global integration is contradictory or impossible” (2004). In the first explicit attempt to account for CIs, Townsend and Bever (2001, 184) hypothesize that the ungrammatical sentence in (1) works its way into the system by matching the sentence templates bold-typed in (4). Inasmuch as both templates are separately possible, they could induce the false impression that (1) is equally grammatical.

- (1) More people have been to Russia than I have.
 (4) a. **More people have been to Russia** than I could believe.
 b. People have been to Russia **more than I have**.

² This can be easily observed if, as explained in Wellwood et al. (2015), we convert the content of the *than*-clause into an overt degree question: **How many I/they/the elephants have been to Russia?*

³ M.C. Escher's famous lithograph entitled *Ascending and Descending* (1960), based on the model of the Penrose stairs (Penrose and Penrose 1958), depicts a group of monks walking a never-ending staircase, creating an impressive visual illusion.

According to their explanation, CIs are the result of applying rough-and-ready mechanisms in the absence of deep syntactic and semantic processing. Nonetheless, if this were the case, these illusory effects would be pervasive in language. Contrary to this, linguistic illusions have become an issue of interest precisely because they are restricted to very constrained profiles (Phillips et al. 2011). In fact, the first systematic investigations have recently come up with experimental evidence that suggests that CIs are deeply processed and that, far from illustrating language comprehension without grammatical analysis, they “underscore the importance of syntactic and semantic rules in sentence processing” (Wellwood et al. 2015). This account, which was the starting point for the present study, is revised in the next section.

2.1. Semantic reanalysis: two hypotheses

Although the rules of nominal comparatives cannot assign a plausible interpretation to CIs, informal reports suggest that native speakers articulate two possible interpretations, presented in (5), when asked about sentences like (1). These interpretations can be explained as the outcome of two different reanalysis routes that implicate semantic processing: *additive reanalysis* and *event comparison reanalysis*.

- (5) a. More people have been to Russia than just me.
b. Other people have been to Russia more than I have.

- **Additive reanalysis:** *More people have been to Russia than just me*

According to Wellwood et al. (2015), the interpretation reported in (5a) can be explained as the result of a lexical ambiguity between *comparative* and *additive more*. The example in (6) illustrates this ambiguity. As explained by Greenberg (2010, 151-152), on the one hand, a comparative interpretation of *more* in (6) would indicate that today, John interviewed a number of students that is greater than 3 (i.e., 4 or more). On the other hand, an additive interpretation of *more* would indicate that John simply interviewed additional students (i.e., 1, 2, 3...).

- (6) Yesterday John interviewed three students. Today he interviewed **more** (students).

If we apply this rationale to the classic CI, (1) would be taken to mean that, in addition to the speaker, there are a number of people who have also been to Russia. This is precisely what is expressed in (5a). In order to prompt a reanalysis of this type, the subject of the *than*-clause must be a member of the set denoted by the matrix subject (as *people* and *I*). Otherwise, an additive interpretation is not possible.

- **Event-comparison reanalysis:** *Other people have been to Russia more than I have*

Another interpretation that speakers suggest when they are asked about CIs is the one displayed in (5b). This interpretation, following Wellwood et al.’s (2015) account, would be the result of reanalyzing an impossible comparison of number of individuals as expressing counts of individual participations in events. According to Krifka (1990, 509), numerically-quantified NPs as in (7) allow for two types of readings: i) an *object-related reading* would simply entail that, last year, there were four thousand ships which passed through the lock. ii) A perhaps less transparent *event-related reading* would say that, last year, there were four thousand events of passing through the lock by a ship (that is, four thousand “ship-passings”).

(7) **Four thousand ships** passed through the lock last year. (Krifka 1990, 488)

With respect to the classic CI, an event-counting reading is reached by shifting from a comparison of number of individuals to a comparison of individual participations in events. This is, by comparing the number of times that other people visited Russia with the number of times that the speaker visited Russia. This interpretation is only possible if the semantic properties of the VP express a repeatable action. Otherwise, the possibility of an event-counting reanalysis is not available. The results obtained by Wellwood et al. (2009, 2015) and O'Connor et al. (2012) coincide in finding a correlation between the possibility of building an alternative event-comparison interpretation and the illusory effect. That is, experimental sentences that had repeatable verbs received higher ratings in acceptability judgements, and were read quicker in self-paced reading tasks. Notwithstanding the above, these experiments were not concentrating directly on interpretation. Drawing on their findings, the aim of the present study is to investigate deeper into the interpretations that are assigned to CIs.

3. The pilot study

The study was articulated in order to answer two main research questions: i) what is the preferred interpretation for CIs? Based on evidence from previous studies, our prediction is that an event comparison reanalysis of CIs will be preferred over an additive reanalysis. ii) Are participants sensitive to the semantic properties that bias the interpretation in a particular direction? In this sense, our prediction is that the semantic features [+/- repeatable verb] and [+/- subject inclusion] will determine participants' interpretive behavior. The task presented in the following sections was designed as a means to test these predictions.

3.1. Participants and procedure

The participants were 35 university-educated native speakers of American English (age: mean 28; standard deviation 3.86; range 22-35). Their participation in the study was voluntary. The experiment was a two-alternative forced choice task (illustrated in figure 1) in which, after reading a CI, participants had to choose one out of two interpretations provided, which corresponded to the two types of semantic reanalysis revised in section 2.1.⁴ The task was programmed online using the open source tool *LimeSurvey* and it was distributed to the participants by means of a web address.⁵

Figure 1. Example of one experimental item from the task.

3.2. Materials

The stimuli consisted of 56 items: 14 of them were experimental sentences and 42 were fillers (a 1:3 ratio of experimental to distractor items). The experimental items were constructed so

⁴ The order of appearance of the two possible interpretations was randomized across items.

⁵ <http://www.usc.es/dl2enqu/index.php/783431/lang-en>

as to fit three different conditions (see table 1). The *ambiguous condition* contained critical sentences that replicated the characteristics of the classical illusion: they had a repeatable verb (e.g. *present in conferences*) and an inclusive subject (e.g. *students/she*). This rendered both reanalysis possible. The items in the other two conditions were manipulated in order to bias the interpretation for one of the two possible reanalysis. In the *event comparison condition*, the subject of the *than*-clause was made non-inclusive by means of gender mismatch (e.g. *policewomen/he*), blocking an additive reanalysis. In the *additive condition* non-repeatable verbs (e.g. *lose a father*) were used as a means to block the event-comparison interpretation.

Condition type	Example	Semantic properties	N° of items
Ambiguous	<i>More PhD students presented in conferences than she did.</i>	+repeatable verb +subject inclusion	8
Event comparison	<i>More policewomen visited the headquarters than he did.</i>	+repeatable verb -subject inclusion	3
Additive	<i>More children lost their father than my daughter did.</i>	-repeatable verb +subject inclusion	3

Table 1. Summary of experimental conditions.

4. Results

The first experimental question of this pilot study sought quantitative data with regard to the preferred interpretation for CIs. The results for the experimental items in the ambiguous condition (see table 1 above), which replicated the features of the classic illusion, can elucidate this question. All the sentences in this condition had a repeatable verb and an inclusive subject. Therefore, both types of reanalysis were equally possible. Figure 2 shows the results. For all the bar plots in this section, the y-axis displays the number of observations and the x-axis the two possible reanalysis.

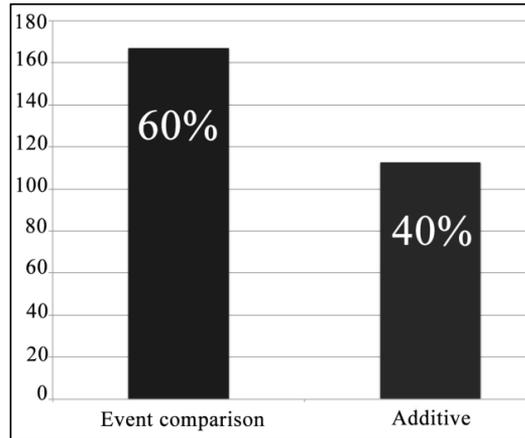


Figure 2. Results for the ambiguous condition.

In the ambiguous condition, the event-comparison interpretation received 60% of the answers registered for the CIs presented, while the additive interpretation got the remaining 40%. This difference has been found statistically significant ($p < 0.01$, one proportion z-test over a total number of 280 observations).⁶ In other words, the results for the ambiguous condition show that, for CIs like (8), the preferred interpretation was the one reached through an event comparison reanalysis, confirming thus our initial prediction.

(8) More PhD students presented in conferences than she did. [+rep. verb] [+subject inclusion]

The second question that we wanted to tackle was whether participants were sensitive to [+/- repeatable verb] and [+/-subject inclusion] when interpreting CIs. The conditions that were biased towards one type of reanalysis can enlighten this issue. Figure 3 shows the results for the event-comparison condition. As a reminder, the experimental sentences in this condition had a repeatable verb but a non-inclusive subject, allowing only for an event-comparison reanalysis.

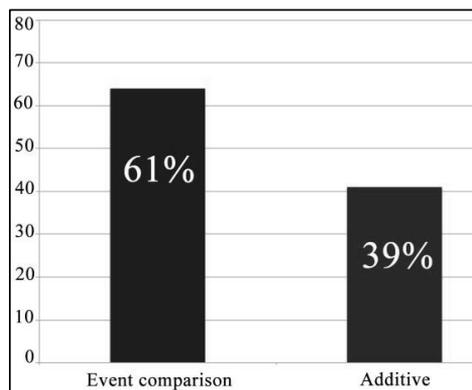


Figure 3. Results for the event-comparison condition.

⁶ All statistical analyses were performed in R 3.2.2.

As shown in figure 3, the preferred interpretation was again the one reached via an event-comparison reanalysis since 61% of the answers provided fell into that category ($p < 0.01$, one proportion z-test over a total number of 105 observations). Nonetheless, if we compare figures 2 and 3, it is surprising that both show equal tendencies, despite the fact that the items in the event comparison condition had a clear bias: the subject was non-inclusive, blocking any possible additive reanalysis. Indeed, statistical tests confirm the impression that these two bar plots do not show different tendencies ($p > 0.01$, two proportion z-test). The fact that participants behaved similarly when they encountered stimulus like (8) and (9), suggest that, contrary to our initial prediction, they are not being sensitive to [-subject inclusion].

(9) More policewomen visited the headquarters than he did. [+repeatable verb] [-subject inclusion]

The approach with respect to the additive condition is the same. In contrast to the event-comparison condition, the experimental sentences had a non-repeatable verb and an inclusive subject. The results in figure 4 indicate that the additive interpretation received the majority of the answers, 69%, while the event-comparison interpretation got only 31%. This difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$, one proportion z-test over a total number of 105 observations).

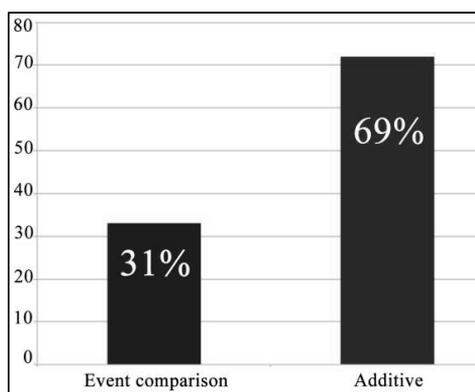


Figure 4. Results for the additive condition.

If we compare the results of the ambiguous condition with the results of the condition biased towards additive reanalysis (figures 2 and 4) we observe exactly opposite tendencies. Indeed, after applying a two proportion z-test we see that this difference is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The participants displayed a diametrically opposed interpretive behavior when they encountered a stimulus like (8), repeated here, and (10), which entails that speakers are being sensitive to the absence of a repeatable verb ([-repeatable]).

(8) More PhD students presented in conferences than she did. [+repeatable verb] [+subject inclusion]

(10) More children lost their father than my daughter did. [-repeatable verb] [+subject inclusion]

5. General discussion and concluding remarks

All in all, the results from this pilot study provide evidence that the preferred interpretation for CIs is the one facilitated by an event comparison reanalysis. As for the semantic properties that could guide the interpretation of CIs, participants proved to be sensitive to [+/- repeatable verb] but not to [+/- subject inclusion]. These results suggest that, in most cases, the event comparison was the closest reanalysis at hand, and thus, speakers overlooked whether the subject of the *than*-clause was inclusive or not, since it was irrelevant for their interpretation. In addition, properties of the verbal domain like [+/- repeatable verb] are expected to be accessed more easily given the fact that the verb is the core of argument structure, while [+/- subject inclusion] triggers a long distance dependency.

Nonetheless, these preliminary results are not conclusive, and call for an improvement of the experimental design. First of all, the effects derived from the nature of a two-alternative force choice task should not go unnoticed. Due to the fact that both interpretations were facilitated to the participants, it is impossible to know whether they were available in advance, or whether the participants had constructed additional interpretations. For this reason it is necessary to find ways to elicit interpretations in a more natural and efficient way, avoiding duality. Second, in order to reach definite conclusions, it is essential to increase the number of experimental items per condition and perform judgements on them in order to make sure that all the items, at least within conditions, are equally acceptable.

In any event, these results are largely consistent with the findings from Wellwood et al. (2009, 2015) and O'Connor et al. (2012) in which the repeatability of the verb in CIs turned out as the main source for the illusion. What we observe under the reanalysis account proposed here is the effort to impose a grammatically derived reading, even if the input is ungrammatical, emphasizing the role of grammar and interpretive processes in language comprehension. CIs, and grammatical illusions in general, are a puzzle for current theories of sentence processing. Therefore, uncovering the forces behind such phenomena can advance our understanding of linguistic cognition. In the words of Townsend and Bever, “one might argue that these [structures] are insignificant ephemera at the boundaries of legitimate linguistic investigations. Similar objections have been raised against the use of visual illusions as tests of visual theories. But we find that the importance of illusions is critical in both the study of vision and language” (2001: 184).

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Students' perceptions and concerns on the use of CLIL in Teacher Education Degrees

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Abstract

With the advent of bilingual education, one of the main concerns of Spanish Teacher Education is to help undergraduates be proficient enough in an additional language as well as to provide them with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement bilingual education successfully. Taking such concerns into consideration, the Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros launched a bilingual itinerary for the Infant and Primary Teacher Education Degrees in 2010, awarded with the European Language Label in 2014. This itinerary involves the use of CLIL as the educational approach students experience to make them aware of the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to work in their classrooms in the future. After five years of implementation, this study focuses on a group of students' perceptions and concerns in relation to this itinerary. The data gathering tools used were questionnaires and focus-groups. Results indicate participants perceive clear learning gains in terms of didactic and linguistic knowledge.¹

Keywords: Teacher Education, CLIL, in-service training, perceptions

1. Introduction

Since the publication of the White Paper "Towards the learning society" (1995), it is a major objective of European education systems to foster the learning of two foreign languages apart from the mother tongue. Following these indications, many are the educational institutions, mainly at infant, primary and secondary level, that have embraced bilingual education as the means to achieve this goal. A good example of this is the Bilingual Project running in the region of Madrid since 2004. At tertiary level, and following the Bologna declaration (1999), students are expected to finish their studies having a B1 competence in a foreign language (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

This situation will logically demand that teaching staff be trained in the teaching of foreign languages and with a higher communicative competence in the second or foreign language used. However, the exposure time of students taking Teacher Education Degrees is dramatically reduced because of two main reasons. Firstly, the new Bologna Process reduces the time students spend ensuring their contact with the language inside the classroom. Secondly, the Ministry of Education dictates that subjects related to teaching specializations

¹ The author would like to thank Prof. Matthew Johnson (CU Cardenal Cisneros) for his collaboration in this research.

will be offered only during the last two years of their studies. All in all, this reduces students' exposure to the foreign language.

It seems clear that if we want to train our students properly to become good teachers and thus satisfy the demands of a society which asks for bi- or multi-lingual professionals (see García (2008: 150) on this point), we should consider the possibility of introducing bilingual education at University. Nevertheless, this raises a second question related to how we can implement an effective and valuable bilingual programme in a Teacher Education degree.

2. Literature Review

Looking around, foreign language medium instruction at university level is not new in countries such as Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium or Sweden (see Dafouz et al. 2007, 91 for an overview of this). In other countries this type of project is still a novelty at University, (even if it has been already successfully implemented in other educational levels), see for example the case of Austria (Kralicek 2010). In Spain, most bilingual degrees have been offered by private universities, and they have been predominantly focused on the field of Business and Administration (Dafouz and Núñez 2009, 101).

While studies supporting the benefits of CLIL are now well known and recognised (see Mohan 1986; Marsh 1994; Genesee 2004; Pérez Vidal and Campanale 2005; Dalton-Puffer and Smit 2007, among others), literature involving the study of teachers' and students' concerns is still in its embryonic phase. Recent studies indicate this interest, as Dalton Puffer et al. (2009), focused on vocational students' perception of CLIL use in their classrooms; Pavón and Rubio (2010), who deal with in-service teachers concerns and uncertainties reported in the first stages of CLIL implementation in the context of Bilingual Education in Andalusia, or Thijssen and Ubaghs (2011), who present a study on teachers' and students' perception of the effects of CLIL in secondary education in the Netherlands, obtaining positive responses regarding the use of CLIL. Also, Papaja (2012) measures the impact of student attitudes on CLIL in Higher Education in Poland, obtaining positive perceptions but indicating university students' concerns on the difficulty of studying content subjects through an additional language.

However, studies on the perceptions of CLIL implementation in Teacher Education Degrees are still scarce. Some examples can be found in Northern Europe, such as the study presented by Hellekjaer and Wilkinson (2001), which aims to explore Norwegian university students' perception of CLIL. Results indicate that CLIL courses were perceived to be as effective as courses held in their mother tongue. Along the same lines, Lehtse (2012) was interested in researching the perceptions of CLIL implementation in Teacher Education Degrees. Some small-scale research was conducted in a context where CLIL was explained using CLIL strategies. This approach proved to be effective in terms of subject-matter acquisition. However, a need for acquiring the basics of language pedagogy to provide enough language support was spotted.

As regards bilingual initiatives in the autonomous community of Madrid, Fernández et al. (2005) collected teachers' perceptions when they were about to start the programme. The study shed light on areas which had not been covered, such as the lack of materials or the rather intensive character of the training they were receiving. This study was replicated by Halbach and Fernández (2011), who collected information from 56 primary teachers working at state primary schools. Although their material needs had been partially covered, primary school teachers were demanding more specific methodological training which could help them deliver effective lessons in their bilingual contexts.

After eight years of implementation, Cabezuelo and Fernández (2014) replicated the study, this time using a case-study format. Seventeen primary school teachers answered a

questionnaire regarding their training needs and perceptions. The study recognizes this tendency among teachers to advance from claiming material needs to requiring methodological support. However, teacher training offered by the Administration or taken by teachers has decreased dramatically.

In the context of higher education, Costa and Coleman (2010) present a report on the implementation of CLIL in HE in Italy, highlighting the need for studies in this area. They conclude that the lack of proper training or the unwillingness of lecturers to take it is causing CLIL to be “performed in a rather casual manner”. Regarding the context of our research, university lecturers participating in the project were studied. More specifically, teachers’ beliefs were explored by Johnson (2013), who investigated university lecturers who were becoming part of the programme to train them to implement CLIL in their subjects. His study was revealing in relation to the importance of the teachers’ initial mindset concerning bilingual education, and how they can evolve with appropriate training. Five years after having implemented the first Degree with a bilingual itinerary, the present study tries to shift attention towards student perceptions and concerns regarding the impact of the bilingual programme through CLIL at the Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros.

3. The Study

3.1 Aims and context

The study was conducted at the Centro Universitario Cardenal Cisneros (CUCC), located in Alcalá de Henares, a town 30 km. from the city of Madrid. CUCC is a private university administratively attached to the state-run Universidad de Alcalá, and run by a religious congregation, Marist brothers, who are focused on implementing a humanistic view of education and training teachers with this philosophy. This university college offers Social Education and Psychology, apart from the Infant and Primary Teacher degrees. It also offers students on-line and face-to-face degrees. It is composed of 50 teachers and around 900 students, apart from administrative and services staff.

Since 2010, Infant and Primary Teacher degrees with a bilingual itinerary have been implemented. The idea behind these degrees is to offer the students the opportunity to have progressive exposure to subjects delivered in English and using CLIL as the pedagogical approach. Our motto is ‘we don’t tell, we involve you’. To do that, university lecturers were trained by experts in the field, such as Do Coyle, Phil Ball, Oliver Meyer or Ana Halbach, and by prestigious institutions such as the British Council, Pilgrims Ltd. or NILE (for more information on this training please check Johnson 2013). The programme has been awarded the European Language Label (2014), which recognizes language initiatives in the field of education which promote communication and cultural understanding.

The study presented in this paper is part of a longitudinal work which aims to check whether the ‘loop input’ (Woodward 2003) is taking place. Hence, what students are experiencing in their classes is later implemented in their classrooms once they start teaching. For the purposes of this work, one fundamental aim was set and this was to find out whether students perceive CLIL provision as an added value to their teacher training.

3.2 Participants

The study involved 43 students in their last year of Infant (n=12) and Primary (n=31) Teacher Education. There were 33 women and 10 men. This ratio corresponds to the general population of students taking Teacher Education degrees at our university. Age ranged from 21 to 30 years old. In the focus groups, 6 Primary students and 4 Infant students participated.

3.3 Data gathering tools

The study was conducted in December 2014. Students were asked to complete a questionnaire (see appendix 1) divided into four sections: general information, methodological training, linguistic training, and perceptions about bilingual education. Questions were asked in Spanish but, surprisingly, most students responded or/and made comments in English. For the purposes of this study, questions concerning methodological training will be considered in the analysis, as they are related to the set of aims. Later, volunteers representing each of the groups (Infant) and (Primary) were invited to participate in the focus-groups, which helped researchers to get into detail and refine some of the results obtained using semi-structured interviews with the whole group.

3.4 Results and discussion

Concerning students' perception and satisfaction with the bilingual itinerary, they were requested to indicate if they would take the itinerary again, if given the chance. All participants, without exception, gave a positive answer. In relation to perceptions concerning content learning, participants were requested to rate the 'quantity' of contents they had learned in comparison with subjects delivered in Spanish. 44.2% participants indicated they had learned more contents and 16.3% indicated many more contents. Just 16.3% perceived they had learned fewer contents, and 20.9% considered they had learned the same. This indicates that there is not a perceived content reduction due to the use of an additional language in the classroom, hence indicating that the implementation of CLIL may help students reach the same objectives as their Spanish counterparts.

We were also interested in finding out whether students perceived that their competences were also developed in the same line. Surprisingly, the majority of participants, 46.5% answered they had acquired many more competences in comparison with those worked on the Spanish subjects. 37.2% indicated they had acquired more, and 14% said they were acquiring the same. None of the students indicated they were acquiring fewer competences. This may indicate that CLIL may favour clearly competence-based learning, as it is more focused on skill and ability development than in the mere assimilation of content.

Following this, students were asked about what amount of didactic strategies they had learned thanks to the bilingual subject. This was focused on finding out whether students recognized didactic strategies in practice. Responses strongly indicated that they had learned a lot (51.2%); many (44.2%); and some (4.7%). Again, none of the participants indicated few or none. Again, this may indicate that students perceive the use of CLIL strategies which will be part of their teaching repertoire later on.

Information gathered in focus-groups concerning student perceptions of their learning gains reinforces data obtained from the questionnaires. Students generally indicated they would recommend other students entering the degree to choose the bilingual option because, "even if it is not recognised officially as an extra qualification, it will provide you with a more enriching learning experience" (participant's literal words). They also recognised that there is a "different way of doing things" in CLIL lessons, and this has an impact on how they learn and how they will take these ideas to their own teaching contexts in the future.

4. Conclusion

There is still a lack of consensus about how to train future teachers to be ready for the challenges of bilingual education. Offering them the opportunity to improve their communicative skills in the English language as well as to raise their language awareness, and

help them acquire the necessary didactic knowledge and skills can only be done by integrating CLIL in their in-service training.

In this study, perceptions and concerns regarding the implementation of a bilingual itinerary (English) through CLIL were studied. Participants indicated that CLIL provision is aiding them in gaining more content knowledge, more competences and more didactic strategies. This may indicate that CLIL does prevent teachers from watering down contents to make them accessible to students. In contrast with other HE contexts (see Costa and Coleman, 2010 for a report on CLIL provision in Italian HE), it may also be concluded that as university lecturers were trained both linguistically and methodologically, they were convinced and ready to use strategies to make contents comprehensible to the students.

To end with, the lack of similar studies makes it difficult to establish if these results would be the same in a different context, and therefore there is a research gap which should be considered if Teacher Education is really going to embrace the chance CLIL offers to introduce good practices in bilingual classrooms.

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Appendix 1. Extract from the questionnaire: questions analysed in the present study

Cuestionario para estudiantes de 4º curso (Magisterio Ed. Infantil) Itinerario Bilingüe. Diciembre 2014	
Información personal	
Eres:	<input type="checkbox"/> Hombre <input type="checkbox"/> Mujer Edad:
Formación metodológica	
Si pudieras volver atrás y matricularte de nuevo en Magisterio, ¿seguirías eligiendo el itinerario bilingüe?	<input type="checkbox"/> Sí <input type="checkbox"/> No Justifica tu respuesta:
Creo que por haber estudiado en el itinerario bilingüe he aprendido:	<input type="checkbox"/> Muchos más contenidos <input type="checkbox"/> Más contenidos <input type="checkbox"/> Los mismos contenidos <input type="checkbox"/> Menos contenidos <input type="checkbox"/> Muchos menos contenidos
Creo que he por haber estudiado en el itinerario bilingüe he aprendido:	<input type="checkbox"/> Muchas más competencias <input type="checkbox"/> Más competencias <input type="checkbox"/> Las mismas competencias <input type="checkbox"/> Menos competencias <input type="checkbox"/> Muchas menos competencias
Las asignaturas del itinerario bilingüe me han aportado:	<input type="checkbox"/> Muchísimas técnicas y estrategias que puedo poner en práctica en el aula <input type="checkbox"/> Muchas técnicas y estrategias que puedo poner en práctica en el aula <input type="checkbox"/> Algunas técnicas y estrategias que puedo poner en práctica en el aula <input type="checkbox"/> Pocas técnicas y estrategias que puedo poner en práctica en el aula <input type="checkbox"/> Ninguna técnica o estrategia que puedo poner en práctica en el aula

Revisiting the Role of Plural *of*-Dependents on Verbal Agreement with Collective Nouns: A Syntactic Pilot Study on New Englishes

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Abstract

This paper presents a synchronic corpus-based study aimed at exploring verbal agreement patterns with collective noun-headed subjects taking *of*-PPs in a corpus of so-called World Englishes. The investigation extends prior research on the statistically significant influence of this prepositional constituent and its syntactic properties on the high rates of plural verb number attested in British and American English. Data retrieved from World Englishes corroborate this claim as collective-headed subjects evinced an overall (yet lower) preference for plural agreement. Results also revealed how syntactic distance separating the subject from the verb as well as the complexity of the modifier of the *of*-dependent reduce the influence that plural *of*-PPs exert on the verb and, therefore, plural agreement significantly lowers. This observation is also conditioned by morphological restrictions, since morphologically-unmarked plural nouns within the *of*-PP such as *people* have a more remarkable influence on verb number than irregular and regular plural nouns.¹

Keywords: verbal agreement, collective noun, *of*-PP, corpus

1. Introduction

Collective noun-headed subjects may show variation in agreement patterns according to factors such as the conceptualisation of the collective noun (holistic or individualistic reading; Berg 1998, 45–46) or the type of verb (whether applicable to the individual members or to the group; Biber et al. 1999, 189). A further complication of this variation involves the plural *of*-dependents which often accompany some collective nouns, as exemplified in (1).

(1) the crowd_{SG} of well-wishers_{PL} start_{PL} chanting [BNC: FSN 93]

These *of*-PPs have been mostly overlooked and their role in agreement has been oversimplified and attributed to the attraction triggered by the plural nouns that they usually contain (Levin 2001). Fernández-Pena (2015), with data from the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), has already pointed to the significant influence that these *of*-dependents exert on subject-verb agreement: they favour plural agreement but their effect on agreement significantly diminishes with increasing

¹ This study has been funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and the European Regional Development Fund (grants no. FFI2013-44065-P, FFI2014-51873-REDT and FPU FPU13/01509) and the Autonomous Government of Galicia (Secretary General of Universities, grants no. GPC2014/060 and R2014/016). I would also like to express my gratitude to Javier Pérez-Guerra for the valuable comments he made on an earlier version of this paper and to Marianne Hundt, Hans M. Lehmann and Gerold Schneider for giving me access to the Dependency Bank interface.

distance and less overtly-marked plural morphology. This study will enlarge the database and incorporate further varieties of English by exploring data from the corpus of Global Web-based English (GloWbE), which comprises twenty different varieties of English, so as to try to reach a more homogeneous characterisation of these structures and of the syntactic behaviour of *of*-PPs.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 offers a brief background on collective nouns. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 describe the goals of the study and the methodology used. The corpus-based analysis and the discussion of the data is presented in Section 3.3. The paper is rounded off by the conclusions in Section 4.

2. Collective nouns and agreement

Collective nouns, those which denote “a group of animates or inanimates” (i.e. *committee, party, series, number*), may “pattern with a plural or a singular verb according as the predicate applies to the individuals or to the whole mass in its collective unity” (Dekeyser 1975, 35fn1, 37). Besides, plural verb number is reinforced and thus becomes the predominant pattern when collective nouns take *of*-dependents which contain plural nominal elements.

(2) A group_{SG} of girls_{PL} are_{PL} eyeing the boys [COCA: FIC Mov:FreddyvsJason]

As illustrated in (2), the interference of a plural oblique noun (i.e. *girls*) between the collective and the verb reinforces the conceptual plurality of the whole collective noun-based subject and, thus, favours a higher likelihood of plural verb agreement. Few discussions as to the influence of plural morphology of oblique nouns on verb number can be found in the literature (Dekeyser 1975; Berg 1998; Haskell and Macdonald 2003). Recent corpus-based studies (Fernández-Pena 2015, forthcoming) have explored the extent to which this preference for plural verbal forms in collective noun-headed constructions taking *of*-dependents is morphologically motivated. Thus, contrary to prior claims, they have evinced significantly higher rates of plural verbal agreement with non-overtly marked plural nouns (i.e. *people*) than with overtly-marked plural nouns (i.e. *preschoolers*) in British and American English.

(3) a host_{SG} of famous people_{PL} have_{PL} been proud to call this charming county home.
[BNC: EEG 24]

(4) Another group_{SG} of preschoolers_{PL} were_{PL} assigned to a suggestion condition [COCA: MAG ChildrenToday]

Accordingly, this study will explore ‘morphologically motivated overrides’ of syntactic agreement such as (3) and (4) so as to determine the extent to which the *of*-PP and its syntactic properties influence verb number on further varieties of English.

3. Case study: Verbal agreement with N_{COLL} of N_{PL} in GloWbE

This section introduces the goals, the methodology, the corpora and the data retrieved for this investigation. The paper is rounded off by the discussion of the results obtained.

3.1 Goals

The point of departure of this pilot investigation is my corpus-based study on Present-Day British and American English (see Fernández-Pena 2015, forthcoming), where I have already attested the high incidence of plural verbal patterns with collective noun-based subjects. In

particular, I have observed how the complexity and the morphology of the *of*-PP trigger significant variation in this preference for plural verb number – with locality favouring higher rates of plural agreement which significantly decrease with syntactic distance and less overt morphology. The goal of the current study is, thus, to extend the scope of this prior investigation to more varieties of English so as to obtain further evidence in this regard and to provide a wider picture on the collective noun-based subjects under scrutiny.

3.2 Methodology

To replicate my prior investigation in varieties of English other than the British and the American ones, I retrieved data from a parsed version of the corpus of Global Web-based English (GloWbE),² which contains almost two billion words from twenty different varieties of English obtained from websites and blogs.³

The data have been retrieved using the syntax query of the Dependency Bank interface of the University of Zurich. The parser identified over 32,000 examples of complex subjects (reliability of 87%) containing:

- A singular collective noun (twenty-three different collective nouns – Biber et al. 1999, 249 and Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002, 503 – and up to 3,000 hits per collective were considered).
- A postmodifying *of*-PP with a plural (oblique) noun (e.g. *of boys*).
- A verbal form.

After the manual pruning, the resulting 8,742 instances of these N_{COLL} *of* N_{PL} structures were analysed and classified according to different syntactic variables which may affect verb number:

- Constituent structure of *of*-PPs.
- Typology of the modifiers of the *of*-PP.
- (Ir)regular morphology of the oblique noun.

3.3 Analysis and discussion of the data

The research to be presented here extends prior research on collective noun-headed subjects taking plural *of*-dependents by exploring the impact of the syntactic properties of these plural *of*-PPs on verbal agreement in the so-called ‘World Englishes’, a topic with few antecedents in the literature (Hundt 2006, 2009) to this date.

3.3.1 Regional variation

The data retrieved from GloWbE seem to corroborate the claims in Fernández-Pena (2015, forthcoming) as for the determinant role of plural *of*-PPs in verb number in Present-Day English. In fact, the *of*-dependent also plays a significant role in verbal agreement in GloWbE, yet to a lesser extent in this case, as illustrated in Figure 1.

² The ICE corpora have also been surveyed but they did not provide enough results to carry out a robust quantitative analysis.

³ Further information: <http://corpus.byu.edu/glowbe/>

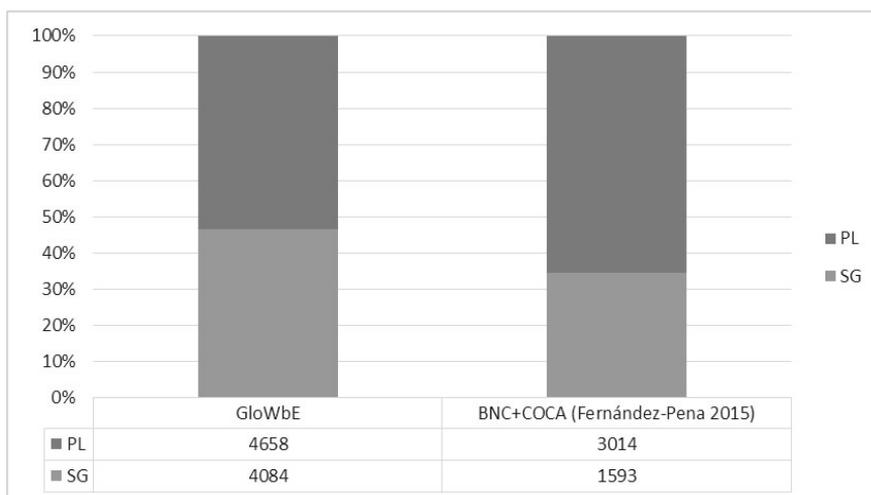


Figure 1. Verbal agreement in GloWbE vs. BNC+COCA.

Results show how the rate for plural agreement in the data obtained for the World Englishes (53.28%) is significantly lower than that obtained in prior research on the BNC and COCA (65.42%) ($\chi^2(1)=181.4$, $p<.0001$). Despite this observation, the relevance of this prepositional constituent is still evident and, thus, the discussion that follows will be focused precisely on analysing the different syntactic properties of the *of*-PP so as to detect similarities or differences with respect to the tendencies previously observed in British and American English.

Before discussing syntactic variables, however, a brief remark on regional variation is in order here. As already noted, GloWbE comprises data from twenty different varieties of English. A preliminary analysis of these varieties reveals the substantial variation presented in Figure 2.

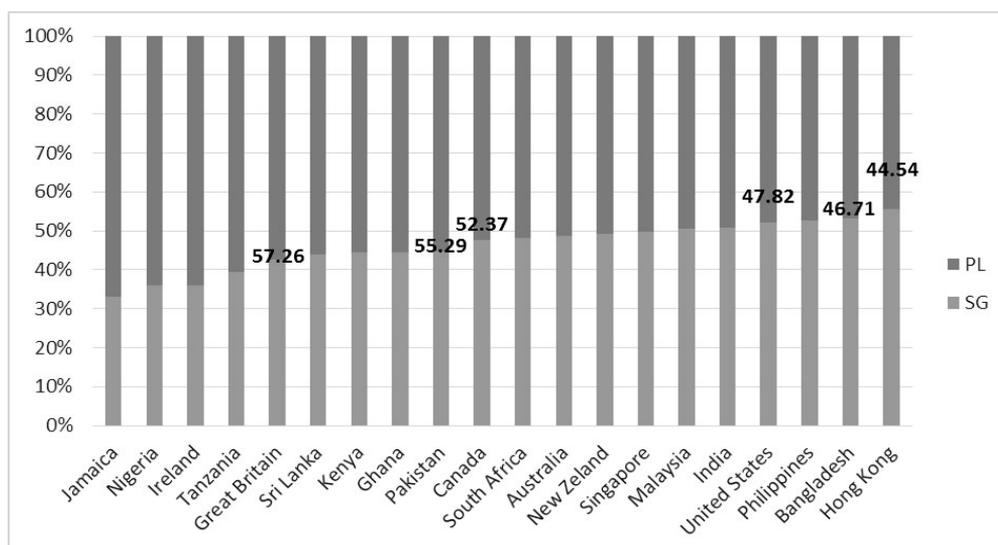


Figure 2. Verbal agreement in the twenty varieties of GloWbE.

As can be observed, only the first nine varieties of English clearly favour plural agreement (over 55%), the following ten show quite balanced proportions for singular and plural

agreement (their figures ranging from 46–53%) and, interestingly, only one variety, namely Hong Kong English, displays an evident preference for singular agreement (over 55%).

As for the two varieties surveyed in previous studies, i.e. British and American English, we observe that the results obtained in GloWbE, contrary to those in Fernández-Pena (2015) are in keeping with the literature on collective nouns (Algeo 2006, 279). Accordingly, the data for British English shows a stronger preference for plural agreement (57.26%) while the American variety favours singular verb number (52.18%).

In brief, as observed and as attested through statistical tests, the variable ‘regional variety’ and the different implications it involves (i.e. potential influence of the substrate language and its particular characteristics) are undoubtedly influencing the selection of verb number and, by extension, the data presented here ($\chi^2(19)=99.47$, $p<.0001$). Yet, the remainder of this paper will focus on syntactic variables since, on the one hand, they have turned out to be as highly significant as the former ($\chi^2 p<.0001$) and, on the other, because the current study aims at finding further evidence on the effects of the syntactic properties of *of*-dependents on verb agreement.

3.3.2 Syntactic complexity

Complexity and syntactic distance have been regarded in the literature as determining factors of verbal agreement with collective nouns. In particular, Corbett (1979) and Levin (2001) have claimed that syntactic distance between the controller and the target and, thus by extension, syntactic complexity,⁴ increases the proportion of plural (i.e. semantic) agreement. The restrictions that syntactic boundaries impose in our short-term memory hinder our capacity to keep activated the formal characteristics of the collective noun and, as a result, its semantic properties (i.e. its plurality) prevail and, eventually, end up favouring higher rates of plural verbal forms.

In this vein, a higher incidence of plural verb number is expected in the constructions under scrutiny here as in N_{COLL} of N_{PL} we find not only a semantically plural collective noun but also a further nominal element within the *of*-PP which is both morphologically and semantically plural. Fernández-Pena (2015, forthcoming) has already demonstrated that the plurality of the oblique noun interacts with distance and complexity but, contrary to expectations, increasing syntactic distance and complexity significantly lowered the proportions of plural verb number in these constructions.

To find further evidence in this regard, this study will also measure the effects of distance and locality on agreement and how this affects verb number selection in these collective noun-based subjects in the data from GloWbE. To this end, I have controlled for the shallow syntactic structure of the *of*-dependent. Hence, as in Fernández-Pena (2015, forthcoming), I have considered four different syntactic configurations:

- (5) *of* + bare NP: The first set [*of points*] were recorded by the astronomer Simon Newcomb [GloWbE: w_us_g03]
- (6) *of* + premodifier + NP: the vast majority [*of American people*] have also condemned it. [GloWbE: w_gb_g12]
- (7) *of* + bare NP + postmodifier: A couple [*of the lads in the espresso fast group*] were pushing Russ and Swifty [GloWbE: w_gb_b01]
- (8) *of* + premodifier + NP + postmodifier: a host [*of innovative young minds in Ghana*] are ready to transform the country [GloWbE: w_gh_b04]

⁴ I will adopt a shallow approach to complexity and, as such, I will assess the influence of ‘overt complexity’. For a discussion on ‘overt’ vs. ‘hidden’ complexity see Bisang (2009).

As illustrated in Table 1 below, the results obtained for these syntactic configurations corroborate my prior observations. Data show how those structures in which the oblique is adjacent to the verb (i.e. ‘*of* + bare NP’ and ‘*of* + premodifier + NP’) favour higher rates of plural agreement; the difference between them being significant but not relevant here for measuring distance between the oblique noun and the verb. Those structures comprising a postmodifier, on the other hand, display lower proportions of plural agreement.

Structure of the <i>of</i> -PP	SG	PL	TOTAL
<i>of</i> + bare NP	1,881 (47.62%)	2,069 (52.38%)	3,950
<i>of</i> + premodifier + NP	1,055 (41.45%)	1,490 (58.55%)	2,545
<i>of</i> + bare NP + postmodifier	770 (51.64%)	721 (48.36%)	1,491
<i>of</i> + premodifier + NP + postmodifier	378 (50.00%)	378 (50.00%)	756
TOTAL			8,742

Table 1. Verbal agreement in bare, premodified and/or postmodified *of*-dependents in GloWbE.

Although statistical support is only found for the contrast between ‘*of* + bare NP’ and ‘*of* + bare NP + postmodifier’ ($\chi^2(1)=5.85$, $p=0.0156$), the decrease in all postmodified structures is still remarkable and, thus, a more fine-grained analysis is in order here.

Figure 3 below presents the typology of the postmodifier of the *of*-PP. Results show that the constructions under scrutiny are very frequently postmodified by prepositional phrases and TPs (i.e. non-finite clauses), followed by relative clauses and noun phrases.

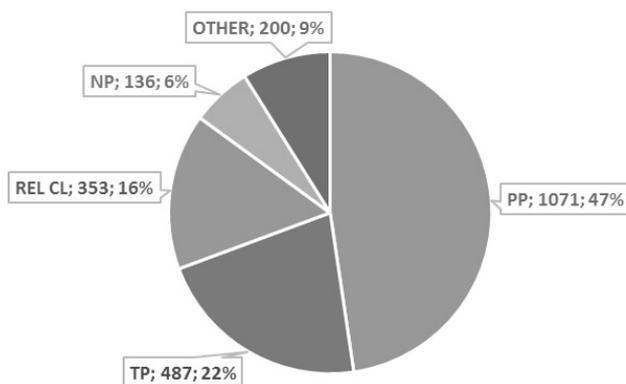


Figure 3. Percentage of each type of postmodifier in GloWbE.

Category ‘other’ comprises a wide range of minor (and irrelevant here) types of postmodifiers. As for the rest, they have been reorganised according to their clausal (TPs, relative clauses) or non-clausal (PPs, NPs) status so as to determine their influence on agreement patterns. It must be noted that complexity will be taken here in a broad sense, thus assuming that clausal postmodifiers, as they have a verbal element and therefore they may licence a particular subcategorisation pattern, involve a further level of complexity.

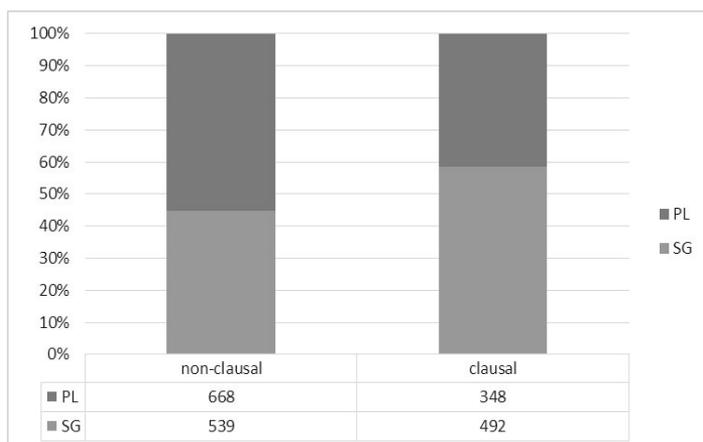


Figure 4. Verbal agreement in clausal and non-clausal postmodifiers in GloWbE.

Results confirm the strong correlation between the syntactic complexity of the postmodifier and the patterns of agreement attested in Fernández-Pena (2015). Accordingly, those modifiers which are non-clausal and, therefore, are considered to be less complex show higher rates of plural agreement while clausal constituents, contrary to the literature, display a lower incidence of plural agreement ($\chi^2(1)=37.81$, $p<.0001$).

3.3.3 Effects of plural morphology

As already mentioned, prior literature has barely discussed the influence of the morphology of the oblique noun on verb number. Nonetheless, in Fernández-Pena (2015) and in this paper as well, morphology is regarded as another determining factor of verb number.

Figure 5 displays the rates of agreement according to the morphology of the oblique noun: (i) overt and regular: a group of *boys*, (ii) overt but irregular: a bunch of *men*, (iii) non-overt: the majority of *people*.

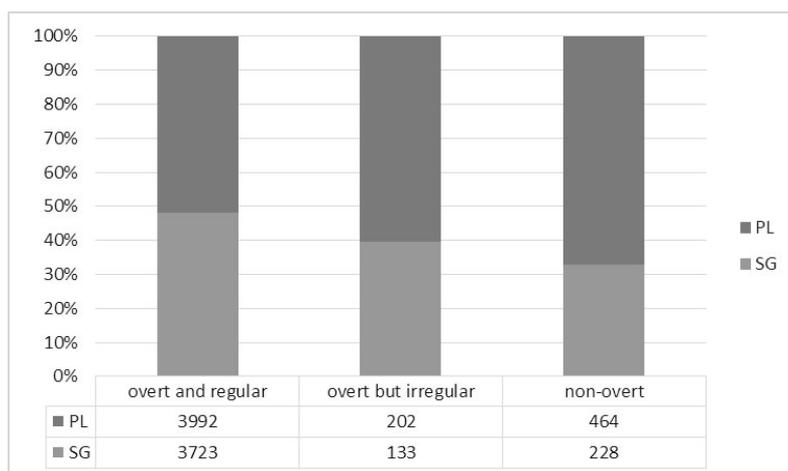


Figure 5. Verbal agreement with each type of oblique noun in GloWbE.

The data evince significant differences between the three types of oblique nouns ($\chi^2(3)=66.68$, $p<.0001$). In fact, the proportions of plural agreement show a strong correlation with morphology. Thus, as we move from regularity and overt morphology to more irregular and

covert plurality, the data experiment a significant and progressive increase in the proportion of plural verbal forms.

The relevance of these observations is even more evident if we explore syntactic distance and its correlation with the type of oblique noun. Thus, as illustrated in Table 2, those structures in which the oblique is adjacent to the verb show again considerably high rates of plural agreement that, once more, progressively lower with the introduction of postmodifiers.

Structure of the <i>of</i> -PP	Overt/regular		Overt/irregular		Non-overt	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
<i>of</i> + bare NP	1,741 (50.14%)	1,731 (49.86%)	47 (37.01%)	80 (62.99%)	93 (26.50%)	258 (73.50%)
<i>of</i> + premodifier + NP	980 (41.95%)	1,356 (58.05%)	33 (32.67%)	68 (67.33%)	42 (38.89%)	66 (61.11%)
<i>of</i> + bare NP + postmodifier	651 (53.58%)	564 (46.42%)	44 (55.00%)	36 (45.00%)	75 (38.27%)	121 (61.73%)
<i>of</i> + premodifier + NP + postmodifier	351 (50.72%)	341 (49.28%)	9 (33.33%)	18 (66.67%)	18 (48.65%)	19 (51.35%)

Table 2. Verbal agreement with each type of oblique noun in bare, premodified and/or postmodified *of*-PPs.

As can be observed, the decrease in this case is especially significantly with less regular and overt plurality ($\chi^2(1)$, $p=0.04$ for overt/regular; $p=0.01$ for overt/irregular and $p=0.005$ for non-overt). Hence, the data demonstrate that non-overt plurality exerts stronger influence on verb number in local syntactic domains. With increasing complexity, however, this type of oblique noun shows the most significant decline in the rates of plural agreement. Overt and regular plurality by contrast evinces a decrease which, yet remarkable, is less significant than in the other two cases.

4. Conclusions

The research reported in this paper has replicated prior research on N_{COLL} of N_{PL} and, thus, has corroborated the main tendencies previously observed for Present-Day British and American English.

The data retrieved from GloWbE confirmed the determinant role of plural *of*-PPs in general, and of their morphology and syntactic complexity in particular, in the variation of verbal agreement with collective noun-based constructions. As for complexity, contrary to the literature, the tendencies observed evinced how increasing syntactic distance correlates with progressively lower rates of plural agreement. Concerning morphology, this study has demonstrated how it significantly interacts with complexity and agreement and, hence, how less overt and regular plurality progressively loses its effects on verb number with increasing distance whereas the decrease in plural agreement with overt and regular plural obliques is considerably less significant.

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GloWbE = Corpus of Global Web-based English (Dependency Bank 2.0; 2010-2013 Hans Martin Lehmann and Gerold Schneider; University of Zurich): <http://www.es.uzh.ch/services/corpling.html>

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Tracing the History of *of*-Collectives: On the Idiomaticisation of *a number of*, *a/the majority of* and *a group of*

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Abstract

This corpus-based study provides a diachronic account of three collective noun-based constructions: *a number of* N_{PL} , *a group of* N_{PL} and *a majority of* N_{PL} , three structures that have evinced marked collocational agreement patterns in Present-Day English. The paper aims at tracing the historical evolution of these collective noun-headed constructions in the recent history of English using data retrieved from the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) and considering both their syntactic fixation and their semantic opacity. The parameters examined pertain to restrictions on premodification and verb number as well as their (potential) grammatical meaning. The results obtained provide evidence supporting the idiomatic status of *a number of* and the potential idiomaticisation of *a group of*. By contrast, in light of the evidence, *a majority of* cannot be said to be idiomaticised as syntactic fixation and grammatical meaning also apply to *the majority of*.¹

Keywords: collective nouns, idiomaticisation, verbal agreement, corpus

1. Introduction²

Verbal agreement with collective nouns in English presents difficulties as syntactic and semantic features of the collective may enter into conflict with those of the verb, especially in the case of *of*-collectives, i.e. those collectives that take plural *of*-dependents, as in (1):

- (1) a group_{SG} of parents_{PL} were_{PL} standing in the corner [BNC: CHR 861]

Plural *of*-dependents interact with verbal agreement to the extent that they very frequently determine verb number. In fact, they may even favour the progressive loss of the lexical status and content of the collective noun, thus leading to the idiomaticisation of a construction, as has been the case with *a lot of* (Traugott 2008). This study extends prior research in this regard with a diachronic corpus-based study that aims at exploring the collocational restrictions that collective noun-headed constructions such as *a number of* N_{PL} , *a group of* N_{PL} or *a majority of* N_{PL} show in Present-Day English (see Fernández-Pena 2015, forthcoming).

¹ This study has been funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and the European Regional Development Fund (grants no. FFI2013-44065-P, FFI2014-51873-REDT and FPU FPU13/01509), and the Autonomous Government of Galicia (Secretary General of Universities, grants no. GPC2014/060 and R2014/016). I would like to express my gratitude to Javier Pérez-Guerra for his valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper.

² For an extended version, see Fernández-Pena (2015).

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 offers a brief theoretical background on idiomaticisation. The methodology is described in Section 3.1, followed by the corpus-based analysis and the discussion of the diachronic data in Section 3.2. The paper is rounded off by the conclusions in Section 4.

2. Idiomaticisation

Idiomaticisation has been defined as the process “whereby meaning becomes more opaque, and, syntactically, the phrasal unity becomes more fixed than before” (Akimoto 2002, 16–17). One of the factors involved in the reinterpretation of lexical elements as grammatical items is precisely their progressive idiomaticisation. This has been the case in binominal structures with potential quantificational meaning such as *a bunch of N_{PL}* or *a lot of N_{PL}* (Traugott 2008; Brems 2011, 157ff., 210ff.; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 23–29, 36–37, 114–118, 209–214). As prior diachronic studies have shown, the frequent collocation with plural *of*-PPs and plural verbal forms progressively triggers the delexicalisation and decategorialisation of the original head noun of the binominal construction and the subsequent grammatical and quantificational status that it acquires.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>(2) <i>a lot of land (for sale)</i>
 Head Modifier
 Verb agreement with <i>lot</i>
 [[N_i [of N_j]] = [part_i – whole_j]</p> | > | <p><i>a lot of land/love</i>
 Modifier Head
 Verb agreement with <i>land/love</i>
 [[N of N_j]] = [large quant.–entity_j]</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(adapted from Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 25)</p> |
|--|---|---|

As illustrated in (2), the original partitive structure *a lot of N* has gradually become semantically opaque and syntactically more fixed, a process which has resulted in the reanalysis of *a lot of* as a grammatical item which quantifies over the second noun of the binominal structure (e.g. *land/love* above).

In line with this research, and given the collocational restrictions already observed for the constructions that will be analysed here (see Fernández-Pena 2015, forthcoming), the study to be presented will focus on the lexical implications of the *of*-PP in the constructions *a number of*, *a group of* and *a majority of*.

3. Case study: *a number/group/majority of*

This study aims at providing a historical account of *a number of*, *a group of* and *a majority of* by exploring the correlation between verbal agreement and their potential idiomatic status as well as how their combinatorial restrictions have conditioned their verbal patterns across the recent history of English. This section introduces both the methodology and the corpora, followed by the analysis of the diachronic data obtained for the constructions under scrutiny.

3.1 Methodology and data retrieval

The data have been retrieved from the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), which comprises 406,232,024 words and covers the period 1810–2009.³ The scope of the study has been restricted to binominal subjects containing:

³ Further historical corpora like *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers* (ARCHER), the *Penn Parsed Corpus of Modern British English* (PPCMBE), and the *Corpus of Late Modern English Texts* (CLMET), covering the period 1600–1920, have also been surveyed but none of these

- (In)definite article
- *Number, majority* or *group*
- An *of*-PP consisting of: the preposition *of*, an optional determiner and/or premodifier and an overtly-marked plural (oblique) noun (e.g. *boys*)⁴
- An inflected verbal form

The following search patterns were used in COHA: ‘(a/the) (number/majority/group) of (*) *.[NN2] *.[(VBZ/VBDZ/VDZ/VHZ/VVZ)]’ for singular verbs and ‘(a/the) (number/majority/group) of (*) *.[NN2] *.[(VBR/VBDR/VD0/VH0/VV0)]’ for plural verbal forms.⁵ After the manual pruning, I obtained 4,034 hits. Besides, to illustrate premodification patterns, I made use of the normalised frequencies provided by the corpus interface (49,922 hits) without further scrutiny.

Following prior literature (Brems 2011, 129, 191-201; Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 22-26, 116), the parameters controlled for to determine the degree of idiomatisation pertain to combinatorial restrictions in premodification and verb number selection as well as the potential quantificational meaning of the constructions.

3.2 Analysis of the diachronic data

This section presents the results of a diachronic quantitative and qualitative study with a view to exploring the potential idiomatisation of *a number of*, *a group of* and *a majority of*, three structures for which some reference to their grammatical meaning and/or function had been made yet without historical support, to the best of my knowledge.

3.2.1 *A number of*

As attested in the OED (s.v. *number* II.10), *a number of* seems to have acquired the quantificational meaning and function of homologous constructions (e.g. *a lot of*), as already in the seventeenth century we can find examples in which agreement is no longer determined by *number* but by the plural oblique noun.

- (3) Water-Lilly..hath a Root in the Ground; And so *have*_{PL} a *Number*_{SG} of other *Herbs*_{PL} that grow in Ponds. (1626)

Examples such as (3) provide support for the idiomatic nature of *a number of* claimed by some scholars (Berg 1998, 54ff.; Biber et al. 1999, 257ff.; Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002, 350). The data from COHA provide further evidence for this observation, as the examples retrieved for *a number of* denote the quantificational nuance, which, in turn, confirms the delexicalisation and semantic opacity of *number* in this structure.

- (4) However, *a number*_{SG} of *superconductivity veterans*_{PL} *predict*_{PL} the price will drop [COHA: 2000 MAG ScienceNews]
- (5) *A number*_{SG} of *current experiments*_{PL} *are*_{PL} in the right regime to form a superfluid [COHA: 2003 NF PhysicsToday]

British English sources provided enough results to carry out a robust quantitative analysis and therefore this investigation will only deal with American English.

⁴ No significant results for non-overtly-marked plural nouns have been found in COHA.

⁵ The parentheses themselves do not belong to the query syntax but are used here for clarification purposes.

Concerning syntactic fixation, the figures obtained for verbal agreement evince an unquestionable preference for plural agreement.

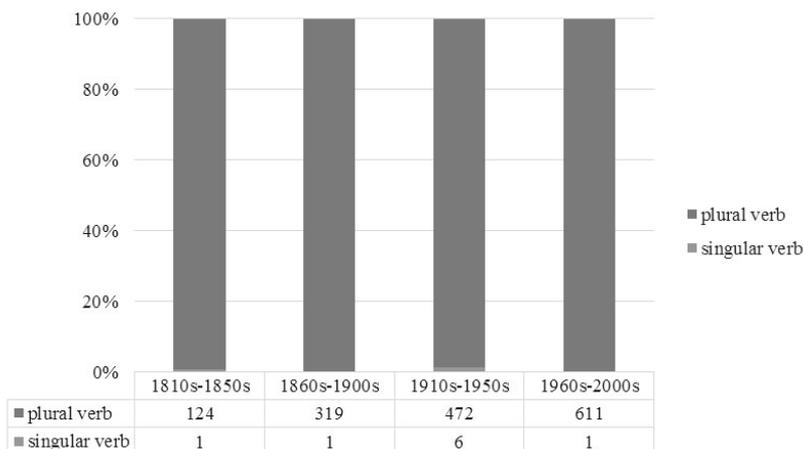


Figure 1. Percentages and absolute frequency of agreement with *a number of* in COHA.

These patterns of agreement clearly indicate that, already in the nineteenth century, the controller of agreement is no longer *number* but the plural oblique noun, which subsequently is symptomatic of the syntactic fixation and the loss of lexical function of *number*.

A further indicator of syntactic fixation concerns the restrictions on premodification patterns. As expected in syntactically fixed constructions, *a number of* shows a progressive and significant decrease ($\chi^2(3)=796.95$, $p<.0001$) in the proportion of premodifiers of *number* across time, an observation which yields support to the previous observations on syntactic fixation.

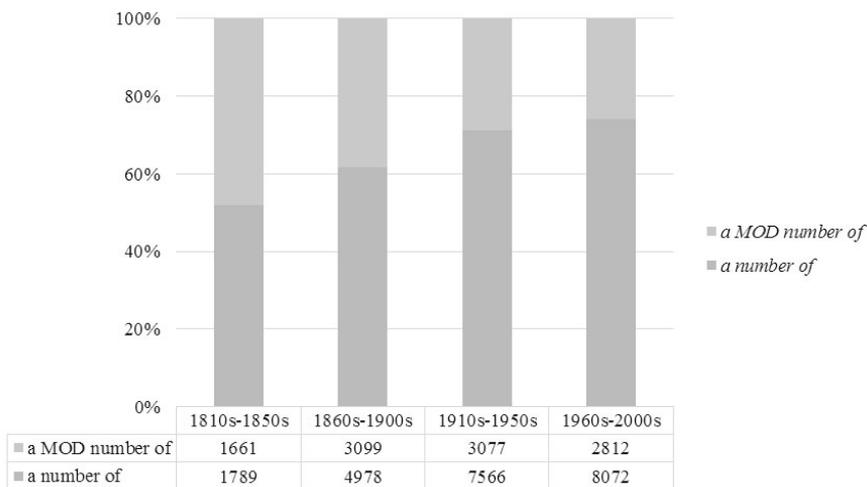


Figure 2. Percentages and absolute frequency of *a number of* with and without premodification in COHA.

It must be noted that the observations for *a number of* contrast significantly with those for its definite congener. In fact, *the number of* takes almost exclusively singular agreement (over 95% from 1810 to 2009) and shows the persistence of the original lexical meaning of

number, i.e. “the precise sum or aggregate of any collection of individuals, things or persons” (OED s.v. *number* I.1a).

- (6) *The number_{SG} of graduates_{PL} is_{SG}* still too few to fully evaluate the success [COHA: 2004 NEWS CSMonitor]
 (7) *The number_{SG} of men_{PL} surpasses_{SG}* their means of subsistence [COHA: 1842 MAG USDemRev]

Thus, *number* still retains both its lexical function as head and controller of agreement and its lexical meaning in the definite construction while idiomatisation, as expected, only affects the indefinite counterpart (Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 116).

In sum, the historical data retrieved for *a number of* evince both a clear semantic opacity and syntactic fixation of this construction. With these results we have enough evidence to claim its idiomatic status in Present-Day English and thus to yield support to the few claims made in the literature.

3.2.2 *A group of*

For *a group of* we do not find many references in the literature, apart from the fact that it may take plural verbal forms when denoting quantification (Biber et al. 1999, 185; Huddleston and Pullum et al. 2002, 503). In this case, although the OED provides us only with references to the collective meaning of the construction, interestingly, we can find examples in which an invited inference of quantification is already evident.

- (8) A fairly large *group_{SG}* of slang *terms_{PL}.describe_{PL}* humorously the special dish or product of a district. (1932)

As illustrated by (8), the collocation of *a group of* with plural nominal elements, apart from the collective reading (i.e. a number of things/people/animals in close proximity forming a collective unity or having common/related properties/attributes; OED s.v. *group* 2a,b, 3b), may evoke a quantificational nuance which resembles that of already grammaticalised quantifiers such as *a lot of*. The same conclusion is drawn in light of the results obtained from the qualitative analysis of the examples retrieved from COHA, as exemplified by (9) and (10).

- (9) *A group_{SG} of men_{PL} were_{PL}* gathered around the stove [COHA: 1910 FIC AlchemistsSecret]
 (10) *A group_{SG} of persons_{PL} try_{PL}* to keep them separate. [COHA: 1832 FIC LastDuelInSpain]

Nonetheless, as claimed in Fernández-Pena (2015), further consideration is needed in this regard given the difficulties found with respect to the classification of examples such as the ones above into lexical (collective) or quantificational readings.

Despite the lack of conclusive evidence supporting a potential semantic opacity, it is worth discussing the results obtained for syntactic fixation. Considering its patterns of verbal agreement, *a group of* could be tentatively compared to homologous binominal quantifiers since, as presented in Figure 3, it shows a clear preference for plural verbal forms already in Late Modern English, which again evinces the influence that the plural oblique noun exerts on verb number.

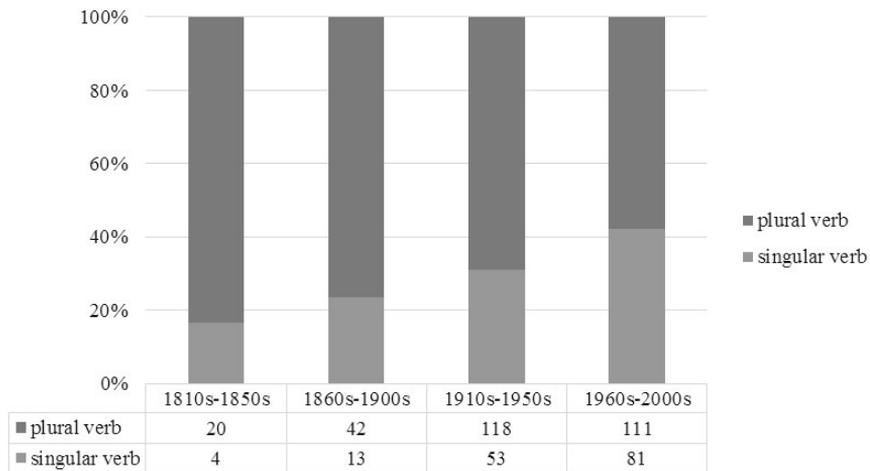


Figure 3. Percentages and absolute frequency of agreement with *a group of* in COHA.

Nonetheless, despite its preference for plural agreement, *a group of* also shows a significant increase in singular agreement ($\chi^2(3)=12.24$, $p=0.0066$) across time which, in principle, does not allow us to consider agreement as a reliable predictor of its idiomaticisation.

Similar conclusions were reached as for the preliminary analysis of its premodification patterns. As shown in Figure 4, in the first place, results display a significant increase in the acceptance of premodification ($\chi^2(3)=19.46$, $p=0.0002$).

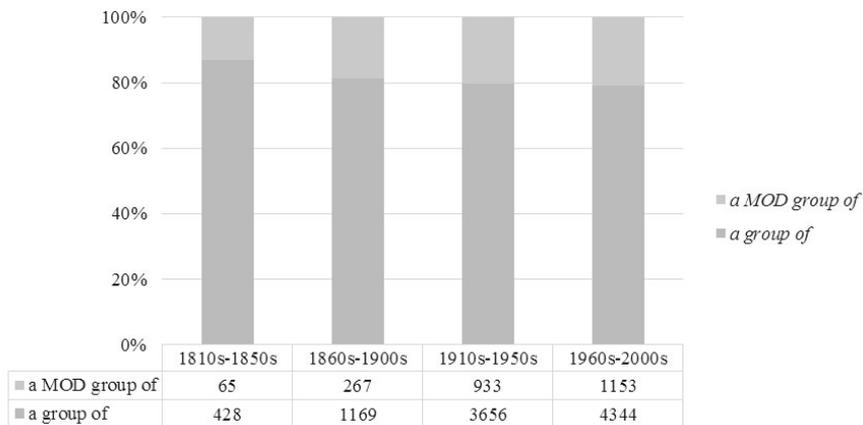


Figure 4. Percentages and absolute frequency of *a group of* with and without premodification in COHA.

A more fine-grained analysis of these data, however, reveals remarkable tendencies that explain such an increase. Figure 5 below presents the frequency of the five most frequent modifiers of *group* across the span of time covered by the corpus.

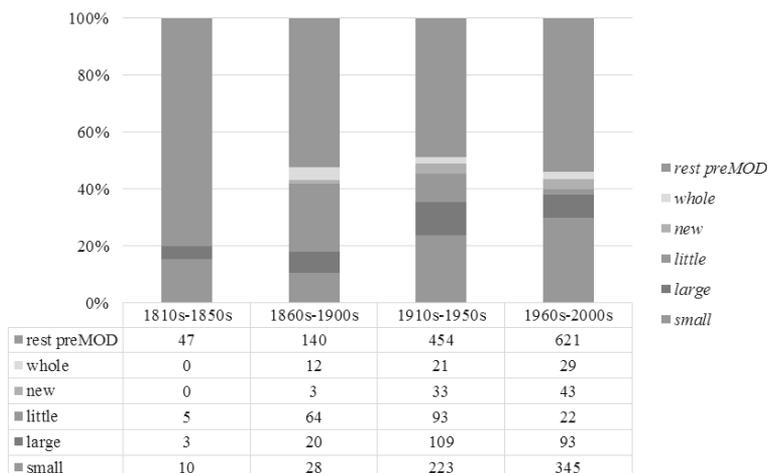


Figure 5. Percentages and absolute frequency of a *MOD group of* in COHA.

As can be observed, there is a clear decrease in the category ‘rest preMOD’ – i.e. that which gathers the less frequent types of modifiers – which correlates with an increase in the frequency in use of one particular modifier: *small*. These tendencies, which find statistical support in COHA ($\chi^2(3)=48.61$, $p<.0001$), lead us to finally claim that *a group of* has suffered collocational restrictions in premodification patterns and, thus, undergone certain syntactic fixation.

In brief, the data obtained for *a group of*⁶ have displayed some significant tendencies which evoke those attested for already grammaticalised quantifiers, especially as far as syntactic fixation is concerned. Besides, considering the general increase of the frequency in use of this construction attested in Fernández-Pena (2015),⁷ the data presented may evince an incipient stage of idiomatisation. Nonetheless, evidence supporting such a claim is not conclusive enough and, thus, only tentative claims can be put forward.

3.2.3 A majority of

Although there are also few references in the literature, in the case of *a majority of*, scholars such as Berg (1998, 54) claim that there is evidence to assert that the construction has assumed “the function of a quantifier such as *most*.” According to the parameters under which idiomatisation takes place and the evidence to be presented here, however, this assertion needs further consideration.

In the first place, and unlike the previous two cases, *majority* is already attested in the OED as an element denoting quantificational (not collective) meaning and selecting plural agreement (s.v. *majority* I.3a).

(11) The *majority*_{SG} of his numerous piano *trios*_{PL} *belong*_{PL} to this early period. (1934)

The data retrieved from COHA corroborate this claim and show how *a majority of* takes plural agreement already in the early nineteenth century.

⁶ Very few tokens have been retrieved for *the group of* (39) and, thus, it will not be considered here.

⁷ From 0.08 (1810s-50s) to 0.12 (1860s-1900s), 0.30 (1910s-50s) and 0.33 (1960s-2000s) (normalised frequencies per 10,000 words in COHA; $\chi^2(3)=355.42$, $p<.0001$).

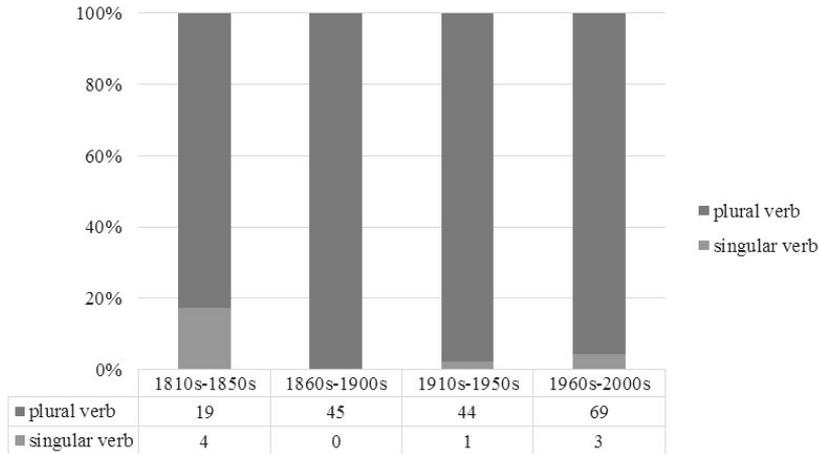


Figure 6. Percentages and absolute frequency of agreement with *a majority of* in COHA.

Hence, the patterns of verbal agreement of *a majority of* conform to those attested for idiomatised structures and, thus, contribute to its syntactic fixation. This observation finds further support in the qualitative analysis of the examples from COHA. As illustrated by (12) and (13), *a majority of* seems to convey a quantificational nuance comparable to that observed for *a number of* (§3.2.1).

- (12) *A majority_{SG} of its supporters_{PL} are_{PL}* still, we presume, Baptists [COHA: 1859 MAG NorthAmRev]
- (13) *a majority_{SG} of his employees_{PL} have_{PL}* freely chosen the bargaining agency. [COHA: 1941 MAG Hapers]

These examples are in keeping with Berg's (1998) findings and claims and, as such, it seems that *majority*, when it collocates with plural *of*-PPs and plural verbs, does in fact function as a quantificational element, as *most* in this case.

Contrary to expectations, however, these tendencies are also attested for its definite counterpart. In fact, *the majority of* does not only show this same quantificational reading (see (14) and (15) below) but it even displays higher rates of plural verb forms (over 97% from 1810 to 2009). Accordingly, these results constitute counterevidence to any idiomatisation process, as the syntactic fixation of verbal patterns is expected only in indefinite constructions (Traugott and Trousdale 2013, 116).

- (14) *the majority_{SG} of men_{PL} look_{PL}* upon all who challenge their attention. [COHA: 1859 FIC AutocratBreakfast]
- (15) *the majority_{SG} of my readers_{PL} have_{PL}* different views [COHA: 1882 MAG Century]

The analysis of the premodification patterns of *a majority of* does not yield support to its idiomatic status either as data show no significant variability in this respect ($\chi^2(3)=2.05$, $p=0.5621$).

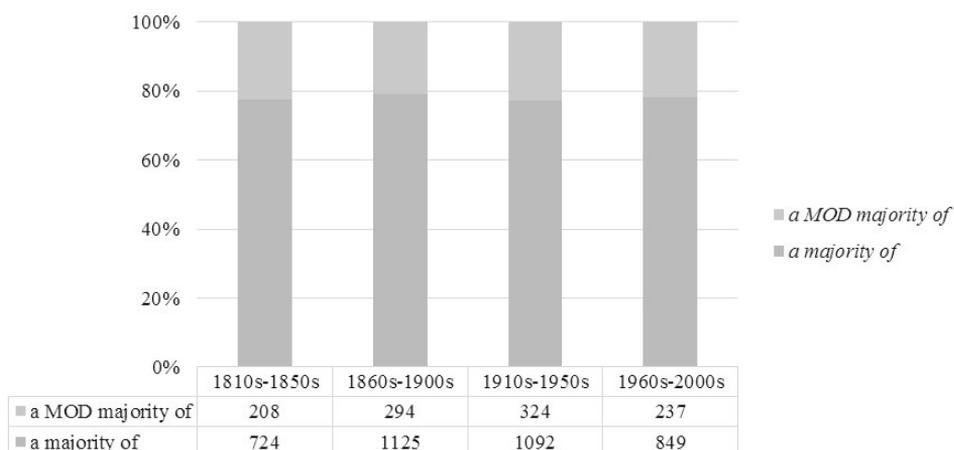


Figure 7. Percentages and absolute frequency of *a majority of* with and without premodification in COHA.

This lack of variability over time makes it difficult to claim the possible syntactic fixation of this structure, especially if we consider that no significant tendencies are found in the analysis of the most frequent modifiers of *majority* either.

In short, despite the apparent syntactic fixation in the patterns of verb agreement and the quantificational meaning that *a majority of* denotes, the tendencies observed for *the majority of* do not allow us to claim the idiomatisation of the former. Further research is thus needed so as to determine whether in this case, contrary to prior studies on binominal quantifiers, we also find indicators of idiomatic status in the definite structure.

4. Concluding remarks

Results have shown that these three collective noun-headed subjects take high rates of plural agreement already since Late Modern English. The conclusions drawn from the indicators of idiomatisation considered – restrictions in patterns of premodification and agreement as well as semantic opacity – are represented in Table 1.

	Semantic opacity	Syntactic fixation	
	Quantificational meaning	Plural agreement	Restrictions premodification
<i>A number of</i>	+	+	+
<i>A group of</i>	+ ²	+ ²	+
<i>A majority of</i>	+ ²	+	-

Table 1. Summary of the semantic and syntactic parameters of idiomatisation observed in *a number of*, *a group of* and *a majority of*.

To sum up, only *a number of* shows enough positive evidence for all the parameters examined and thus it is the only one having a clear idiomatic status. As for the other two structures, further evidence is needed. On the one hand, *a group of* has shown significant data which have tentatively been taken as evidence for potential idiomatisation – i.e. its selection

of plural agreement patterns and the restrictions in premodification but, as yet, such an assertion does not find enough empirical support. On the other hand, for *a majority of* there are more robust indicators of idiomatisation but they apply also to its definite counterpart, an observation which does not allow us to argue in favour of the idiomatisation of *a majority of* and leaves the door open for further factors to be considered in future research.

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The clause-mate condition on multiple remnants

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Abstract

This paper deals with ellipsis phenomena in which more than one remnant survives. I show that multiple remnants are systematically subject to a locality condition that forces them to be finite clause bound. Despite the syntactic flavour of such a condition, I will reject one attempt to capture the facts syntactically, as put forth by Lasnik (2013). In its stead, I sketch a proposal that takes the clause-bound restriction on multiple remnants to be semantic/pragmatic in nature.

Keywords: syntax, gapping, ellipsis, locality, multiple remnants

1. Multiple remnants

In the generative literature on ellipsis, the elements that survive deletion are referred to as *remnants*. This paper deals with phenomena in which more than one remnant survives. One such phenomenon is gapping:

- (1) Charles Dickens wrote *Hard Times* and George Eliot ~~wrote~~ *Middlemarch*.

As (1) shows, gapping involves the non-pronunciation of a finite verb in the second conjoint of a coordinate structure. I assume that the gap is the result of ellipsis,¹ in line with Ross's (1970) original analysis. I mark elided material in strikethrough text in this paper. Gapping may involve ellipsis of material other than the finite verb too. In (2) the gap contains the verb and its direct object. (3) shows that the gap can in fact be discontinuous (Hartmann 2001:146):

- (2) *Gone with the Wind* won the Oscar in 1940 and *Casablanca* ~~won the Oscar~~ in 1944.
(3) Peter caught an eel for Mary in the Charles River and John ~~caught~~ a flounder ~~for Mary~~ in the Missisquoui.

Gapping is not the only phenomenon where more than one remnant survives ellipsis. In this paper I will look at three more cases: multiple sluicing, wh-stripping and pseudogapping. Multiple sluicing (Lasnik 2013 and references therein) involves ellipsis of a clausal node to the exception of (typically) two interrogative operators:

- (4) Some students talked to some professors, but I can't remember who ~~talked~~ to whom.

¹ Johnson (1996, 2009) holds that the observed gap is not the outcome of ellipsis, but rather the result of ATB-movement of the verb outside the vP. See Hartmann (2001) for arguments against Johnson's analysis. Whether gapping involves ellipsis or ATB movement is orthogonal for our purposes.

Wh-stripping (Ortega-Santos *et al.*, 2014) is a construction in which sluicing and stripping (or gapping)² appear to have taken place simultaneously, which explains why one of the remnants is a wh-operator, whereas the other one is not:

- (5) A: One of the professors talked to Peter.
B: And which one ~~talked~~ to Susan?

Pseudogapping (see Gengel 2013 and references therein) is yet another case of ellipsis to the exception of more than one remnant. Like gapping, pseudogapping elides a finite verb (and possibly some other element). Like VP-ellipsis, an auxiliary verb is always a remnant:

- (6) John will select me, and Bill will you. (Lasnik 1999:142)

In this paper I show that these phenomena are all subject to one locality constraint which forces the remnants to be generated under the same finite clause, a condition that I will refer to as the Clause-Mate Condition (CMC). I illustrate the CMC in section 2. In section 3, I reject the standard view that the CMC is a byproduct of the interplay between movement and particular heads licensing ellipsis. In section 4, I briefly sketch an alternative proposal and section 5 contains some notes on further research and concluding remarks.

2. The clause-mate condition

Observe the following example:

- (7) Julia said that Rose speaks Russian and Matthew \emptyset Polish.

In (7), the interpretation of the gap, here represented with an empty set symbol, is unambiguous (see Hankamer 1973 for the issue of unambiguity in gapping). \emptyset can only receive the interpretation in (8a) and not in (8b):

- (8) a. ... and Matthew ~~speaks~~ Polish. Embedded reading (ER)
b. * ... and Matthew ~~said that Rose speaks~~ Polish Matrix reading (MR)

One intuitive hypothesis one can make is that the gap cannot contain more than one instance of lexical verb. However, as noted by Ross (1970), gaps can contain a considerable amount of staked infinitives:

- (9) I want to try to begin to write a novel and you ~~want to try to begin to write~~ a play.

Let us consider another hypothesis, which I state in (10):

- (10) *The Clause-Mate Condition*
Multiple remnants cannot be generated in different finite clausal nodes.

The condition in (10) constitutes an adequate description for the facts observed above. It captures why (8b) is not an available interpretation and why multiple remnants may be

² Some analyses in fact analyze gapping like stripping, except that one of the remnants in stripping is a polarity adverb (see Winkler 2005).

separated by stacked infinitives as in (9). Schematically, (10) bans the following configuration:

- (11) * [CP[+finite] Remnant α —XP— [CP[+finite] —WP—ZP— Remnant β]]

Interestingly, (10) is not an exclusive condition on gapping, and the configuration in (11) is banned in the other phenomena that involve multiple remnants. In his seminal monograph on the syntax of sluicing, Merchant (2001:113) states that “one striking fact about multiple sluices (...) is that they tend not to be separated by a tensed clause boundary”, which is precisely the configuration that (10) is intended to ban:

- (12) a. *One of the students said that Mary spoke to one of the professors, but I can't remember who to whom.
 b. * ...but I can't remember [CP[+finite] who ~~said that~~ [CP[+finite] ~~Mary spoke~~ to whom]].

Remnants can, however, be separated by a non-finite clause boundary (cf. (9)):

- (13) a. One of the professors tried to talk to some of the students, but I don't recall which professor to which student.
 b. ...I don't recall [CP[+finite] which professor ~~tried~~ [CP[-finite] ~~to talk~~ to which student]].

The same asymmetry between finite and non-finite clauses with respect to multiple remnants in ellipsis phenomena can be observed in wh-stripping. The ungrammaticality of (14aB) is therefore explained because it involves the configuration sketched in (11), as (14b) illustrates for this particular case:

- (14) a. A: One of the professors said that Mary had talked to Peter.
 B: * And who ~~said that Mary had talked~~ to Susan?
 b. And [CP[+finite] who ~~said~~ [CP[+finite] ~~that Mary had talked~~ to Susan]]?

But yet the two remnants are allowed to be separated by a non-finite clause boundary:

- (15) a. A: One of the professors has tried to talk to Peter.
 B: And who to Susan?
 b. And [CP[+finite] who ~~has tried~~ [CP[-finite] ~~to talk~~ to Susan]]?

Finally, pseudogapping also exhibits the same pattern. As in the case of gapping shown in (8), the following string is unambiguous in that only the embedded reading (ER, (17a)), and not the matrix reading (MR, (17b)) is allowed. Crucially the MR violates the CMC condition in (10), and it thus produces an output analogous to (11):

- (16) John claimed that Susan loved *The Good Wife* and Peter did *Mad Men*.
 (17) a. ... and Peter did ~~love~~ *Mad Men*.
 b. * ... and [CP[+finite] Peter did ~~claim~~ [CP[+finite] ~~that Susan loved~~ *Mad Men*]].

In this section I have shown that the clause-mate condition observed for gapping in (8) and defined in (10) and (11) actually carries over to other phenomena involving ellipsis to the exception of more than one remnants. Given the generality of the CMC, a non-construction-specific account should be aimed at.

3. On (rightward) movement and ellipsis

3.1 Movement-cum-ellipsis

Merchant (2001), building on work by Ross (1967), convincingly defends that sluicing involves ellipsis of the complement of a $C_{[wh,Q]}$ head to the exception of the *wh*-remnant, which moves to the specifier of that *C* to escape the domain of ellipsis. (18a) is therefore standardly analyzed as in (18b):

- (18) a. Mary has met a famous guy but I don't know who.
 b. Mary has met a famous guy but I don't know [CP who_1 $C_{[wh,Q]}$ [TP ~~Mary has met t_1~~]].

In his analysis, the *C* head is endowed with a feature, the so-called [E]-feature, which instructs phonology not to pronounce whatever material sits at its complement. The E-feature has implications at the interpretative component too, but I leave aside this issue here (see Merchant 2001). Merchant's analysis, which has become rather standard in the syntactic literature on ellipsis, is thus made up of two different operations: (i) movement of the remnant outside the domain of the head bearing the E-feature and (ii) proper ellipsis (non-pronunciation at PF), which is why it is usually referred to as the movement-cum-ellipsis or move-and-elide approach.

In many cases, movement of the remnant is independently attested. In many other cases, however, the remnant does not show displacement properties. Given that under move-and-elide approaches movement of the remnant is obligatory, as otherwise the remnant would stay trapped in the ellipsis-site (and thus unpronounced), for these unexpected cases it is usually claimed that ellipsis interacts in funny ways with affected material and triggers *repair* effects. If a given property *P* is expected when movement takes place and we don't observe it in ellipsis contexts, then it is argued that ellipsis repairs or *neutralizes* *P*. See Abels (2012) and Barros *et al.* (2015) for criticism on island repair, a particular type of repair whereby ellipsis is allegedly able to fix illicit movement chains, and Ott and Struckmeier (2015) and Abe (2015) for criticisms on the move-and-elide approach.

3.2 Rightward movement of the second remnant

Lasnik (2013) claims that the CMC observed for multiple sluicing follows from the fact that the second remnant undergoes rightward movement as well as from the assumption that remnants must escape the domain of ellipsis. His argument runs as follows: it is independently well-known that rightward movement is clause-bound. This is illustrated in the following Heavy NP Shift example:

- (19) * Sue claimed [$CP_{[+finite]}$ that she will give t_1 to Mary] yesterday [DP a big book] $_1$.

Assuming this rightward movement operation, a multiple sluicing example like (12), reproduced in (20) for convenience, should be analyzed as in (21):

- (20) * One of the students said that Mary spoke to one of the professors, but I can't recall who to whom
 (21) ... I can't recall [CP who_1 $C_{[wh,Q]}$ t_1 said [CP [that Mary spoke t_2] [to whom] $_2$]]

Given (21), the ungrammaticality of (20) follows because the rightmost remnant is trapped inside the ellipsis-site, as the E-feature is present in the higher C head. The E-feature instructs phonology not to pronounce its complement, including the second remnant. The fact that rightward movement is only *finite*-clause-bound accounts for the asymmetry between finite and non-finite clauses.

Ortega-Santos *et al.* (2014) extend Lasnik's analysis to the wh-stripping cases in (14). In their view, the non-wh-remnant undergoes rightward movement. If the leftmost remnant belongs in a higher clause, then the E feature on the C head of that higher clause will delete the rightmost remnant.

Similar proposals have been made in order to explain the CMC in pseudogapping. Although not everyone agrees that the second remnant undergoes HNPS or some sort rightward movement, most authors do claim that the second remnant undergoes clause-bound movement, either object shift (Lasnik 1999) or movement to a low Focus projection (see Gengel 2013 for a review). The conclusion is the same: the clause-bound operation of the second remnant in tandem with the assumption that remnants must escape the domain of ellipsis gets the facts straight.

3.3 Some problems

The rightward movement account of the CMC undergenerates.³ Suppose that the two remnants are indeed generated under the same finite-clause node. Suppose further that this finite-clause node is embedded in another finite clause node:

- (22) ?The head of the department pointed out that some students had talked to some professors, but I can't remember who to who.

In Lasnik's analysis of multiple sluicing, the leftmost remnant should undergo leftward, unbound movement to the left periphery of the E-feature-bearing C node. The rightward remnant, on the other hand, should displace rightwards to the specifier of the lower C. However, this predicts that the second remnant will stay trapped in the ellipsis-site as shown in section 3.2, thus predicting that (22) should be as ungrammatical as (20):⁴

- (23) ... I can't recall [_{CP} who₁ C_[wh,Q] t₁ ~~the head of the department pointed out~~ [_{CP} [~~that~~ t₁ ~~had talked~~ t₂] [~~to who~~]₂]].

Further, Lasnik's account poses a problem from a learnability point of view. If rightward movement exceptionally applies to one of the constituents surviving ellipsis, one wonders how the child is able to acquire such an operation. Word order will not help, as the previous string has undergone ellipsis. I take this to weaken the rightward movement account.

Another related inconvenient of the analysis is that it has to make use of rightward movement exceptionally in languages in which such an operation is not attested independently (as in fact argued by Ortega-Santos *et al.* 2014 for Spanish).

³ Lasnik's account has obviously more merits than I have been able to show here. His analysis captures the P-stranding facts on the second remnant correctly. My short criticism in this section merely serves the purpose of introducing an alternative analysis.

⁴ Although (22) was judged slightly degraded by my informants, there is a real contrast between (22) and (20). Crucially, Lasnik's analysis cannot account for such contrast.

4. An alternative account

In the literature on gapping⁵ it is frequently claimed that remnants must be in a contrastive relation to their correlates in the antecedent clause. Winkler (2005:191-194) considers gapping the elliptical counterpart of a multiple-paired answer to a multiple-question with an exhaustive topic-focus structure. Upon hearing the two remnants, the hearer is required to find the parallel topic-focus structure in the antecedent clause. This is equivalent to saying that the hearer must stipulate the possible question that would lead to a multiple-paired answer. Thus, (1) can be a possible answer to a question *who wrote what?*, where Dickens and Eliot are contrastive topics and *Hard Times* and *Middlemarch* contrastive foci:

- (24) a. Who wrote what?
 b. {Dickens_{C-Topic} wrote *Hard Times*_{C-Focus}}; {Eliot_{C-Topic} wrote *Middlemarch*_{C-Focus}}...

Now look at the case in (7). In this example, we can assign two possible multiple-questions to the remnants *Matthew* and *Polish*:

- (25) a. ?Who said that Rose speaks which language?
 b. Who speaks which language?

However, (25a) cannot trigger a multiple-paired answer; only (25b) can. As observed in Dayal (2002), multiple-paired answers require that the in situ wh-operator scope outside the matrix IP at LF. However, this operation is strictly local, mainly finite-clause bound. This explains the unavailability of multiple-paired answers for a question like (25a). The single-paired reading is independently available because such interpretations are assigned without LF movement via choice functions (see Dayal 2002 for the technical details).

The topic-focus structure of the remnants can therefore be satisfied only if the gap mimicks the multiple-question in (25b), which can be assigned a pair-list answer. It is therefore the independent unavailability of multiple-pair answers for a question like (25a) that determines the ungrammaticality of the gapping reading in (8b).

Recall that multiple remnants can be separated by a non-finite clause boundary:

- (26) John is trying to buy *Aspects*, and Bill ~~is trying to buy~~ *LGB*.

In this case, we can posit a multiple-wh question that induces multiple-paired readings:

- (27) a. Who is trying to buy which book?
 b. {John_{C-Top} is trying to buy *Aspects*_{C-Foc}}; {Bill_{C-Top} is trying to buy *LGB*_{C-Foc}}...

Again, the availability of a relevant multiple-question that yields a multiple-paired answer correlates with the possibility of having a bigger gap.

⁵ In this section I deal with gapping for expository reasons, but the explanation should carry over to the other phenomena previously mentioned.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper I have shown that ellipsis phenomena involving multiple remnants are subject to a locality condition which establishes that the two remnants must be finite-clause bound. Although the empirical observation is not new, I believe the current paper is the first to make an explicit suggestion that this condition be treated in a unified manner across phenomena. Although previous attempts have been made to account for the CMC in syntactic terms (Lasnik 2013, among others), I have noted that Lasnik's analysis raises empirical and theoretical issues. I have proposed instead to derive the CMC from semantic considerations. In particular, the two remnants must form a topic-focus structure able to answer a relevant multiple-paired question. Because questions in which the two wh-operators are separated by a finite clause boundary (see fn.5) cannot yield such readings (Dayal 2002) gapping is expected to be unavailable. The obvious outcome of this is that what looks like a locality issue turns out to be a semantic/pragmatic problem instead.

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Discourse Types and Functions in Popular Romance Fiction Novels ('Work in Progress')

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Abstract

This paper offers an overview of the aims of Research Project FFI2014-53962, which analyzes from the perspective of discourse a corpus of popular romance fiction novels totally or partially set in the Canaries (also in other Atlantic islands). Firstly, the project examines the way these texts contribute to the construction, maintenance and diffusion of the imaginary of these islands as a paradise. Secondly, it deals with the gender stereotypes they tend to present. Thirdly, the contrast between the sociocultural identities of local vs British English heroes and heroines is also studied, whenever mixed couples are included in the plots. Finally, from the linguistic perspective, we prove that while showing awareness of language and cultural differences in many of their plots, these works also serve as vehicles to spread Spanish words and expressions among their wide international readership. The functions this vocabulary seems to play in the texts is also approached.

Keywords: discourse, gender, identity, hispanicisms, sociopragmatics, popular romance fiction

1. Introduction

This paper describes the aims of a research project recently funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, under the title *Discursos, género e identidad en un corpus de novela rosa inglesa ambientada en canarias y otras islas atlánticas*. This project adopts an innovative and interdisciplinary approach to the study of romance fiction novels, typically a stigmatized genre which enjoys wide readerships globally, despite being denigrated by literary critics. The project emerges from my previous research on the Anglo-Canarian sociocultural, linguistic and literary relationships, particularly from my studies on the wide English bibliography on the Canaries (González-Cruz 2002, 2014), as these islands have inspired an array of publications. This bibliography constitutes an invaluable legacy which reveals the enormous interest this place has aroused in the Anglo-Saxon world, due to the many connections established throughout history (González-Cruz 1995, 2012). It comprises more than 300 titles, published from 1583 till the present mostly by British but also some American authors. In 2002 I offered a first bibliographical repertoire and categorized it into six main types of texts, namely, travel books, tourists guides, sociocultural and historical works and even works with a literary or linguistic orientation, as well as all kinds of scientific studies, covering disciplines such as anthropology, astronomy, biology, botany, entomology, geology, ornithology, etc., together with a wealth of research related to health and climatic issues.

Although some works of fiction were included, romances did not appear in the 2002 compilation, as it is only recently that I learned about their existence (González-Cruz 2015). My interest in the study of this type of text increased as I realized that they belong to a growing field of research within the academia, linked to the discipline of Popular Culture.¹

This stated, I must admit that the impetus for the project and for my work in this flourishing yet still stigmatized field emerges not so much from my interest in this particular type of texts, but from their specific connection with the Anglo-Canarian bibliography. The Project will be developed under my leadership by four scholars working in the Department of Modern Languages at my university, and three scholars belonging respectively to the universities of Madeira Island (Portugal), Rhode Island (USA) and Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (Argentina). In the following sections I will briefly describe the project aims, the works in the corpus and their different types of discourses.

2. Research Project Aims and Description of the corpus

Our two main purposes are the following:

- (1) to keep searching for more books in order to enlarge the corpus, especially the one referring to other Atlantic islands, which is now much smaller than the corpus dealing with the Canaries.
- (2) to carry out an interdisciplinary study of the texts we have compiled so far and those we may presently find, focusing on a number of issues which we will describe below.

The works in the corpus follow the typical pattern of this denigrated genre, a sub-literary form that has been doubly stigmatized for being both popular and female oriented (Sánchez-Palencia 1997). The protagonists are oftentimes a native islander hero, or an Englishman with local ancestors, who falls in love with an English heroine who either visits or settles temporarily on one of the islands. These are typically described as a paradise with very different sociocultural traditions. Both the narrator and the characters are aware of the sociocultural and linguistic differences and tend to make reference to them. This provides an interesting framework and material to carry out a variety of analyses related to a number of challenging issues, including paradise discourse, identity and otherness, intercultural and even linguistic contact, since the texts, though written in English, are interspersed with Spanish and Canarian (also Portuguese) terms and expressions. These words and phrases

¹ There is an *International Association for the Study of Popular Romance* (<http://iaspr.org>) which next June 2016 will hold their 6th International Conference in Utah (USA). This is the only organization devoted specifically to the study of popular romance, together with the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* (<http://jprstudies.org>), involved in the study of theoretical and practical issues, including the teaching of the popular culture of romantic love. Other important resources for research on romance are the Romance wiki (<http://www.romancewiki.com>), and the Romance Scholars mailing list, (<https://mailman.depaul.edu/mailman/listinfo/romancescholar>); they both offer constantly updating information on everything happening in the field. Finally, the vitality of romance studies is also proved by the existence of the *Romance Writers of America* (<https://www.rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=1691>), a non-profit genre writers association, which provides networking and support both to top authors and to individuals seriously pursuing a career in romance fiction.

perform different communicative functions and reach a wide international readership who become familiar with them. This may contribute, to some extent, to their diffusion and eventual adoption by readers of English or other speech communities, as we have argued elsewhere (González-Cruz 2011a, 2011b, 2013). All these topics add to the more frequent perspective from which this type of texts have been dealt with so far, that of gender stereotypes and feminism, a point of view we will also include in our analysis of the corpus.

3. Approaching discourse types in the corpus

Let's now approach each of the four discourse types we have just mentioned. Note that oftentimes they seem to be closely intertwined.

3.1 Paradise discourse

Since their plots include a trip and a stay in one or more of the Atlantic islands, the texts tend to offer representations of the places visited, as well as of their local people. We will examine the ways these texts contribute with their discourse to the construction, maintenance and diffusion of the imaginary of these islands as a paradise. In some cases, the very title of the novels overtly reveals this preconceived idea of the paradise islands. It happens, for instance, in works such as Arbor's *An Apple in Eden* and Thorpe's *Golden Apple Island*. This is an aspect we have just partially studied elsewhere (González-Cruz 2015) with a sample of 12 novels of the corpus to confirm that, despite occasional mention of some minor drawbacks, the image of the islands that is predominantly offered in these texts is that of a paradise. Mythological references appear sometimes on the back cover of some books, but it is mostly through the characters' comments and references that the idea of paradise is constructed. Below we show some examples:

In ancient times one of the labours of Hercules was to go to Golden Apple Island to bring back a golden apple. In our time, so did Fran go to this romantic island – and found it equally difficult to attain the prospect she yearned for. (Arbor 1967, back cover)

...they were dubbed the Fortunate islands by the Romans, and I agree wholeheartedly with that title. (Mayo 1988, 23)

... he liked her and wished her to know more of the golden islands of this lost Atlantis where he had made his home. (Airlie 1958, 17)

3.2 Gender discourse

The discourse of difference and gender stereotypes is obviously present in our corpus of romances. As González-Mínguez (2010, 186) states, “romances reflect the different female characteristics that are predominant in certain decades, although not necessarily embody the feminine type in society”. In her opinion, “Mills and Boon heroines are far from the stereotypes of feminine passivity that their critics led us to expect. They are usually working women who are not prepared to take their men as they are, with all their masculine imperfections, but who seek to transform them through love, to bring them into the feminine value system”.

Vivanco and Kramer (2010) stress the role played by romance novels as “cultural agents, primarily for women, for the transmission of gender ideologies” because of their dealing so explicitly “with sexuality and men's and women's roles within sexual

relationships". They quote HM&B author Sandra Marton's claim that, because of their popularity and wide readership, romances can contribute to opening "readers' eyes to many things, including an understanding of feminism" as a fight for "equal opportunities in all phases of life". Regis (2003, 207) confirms that, despite the undeniable stability in their form, romances have always experienced changes; thus, "although the base plot remains constant, themes vary from decade to decade and author to author" (Dixon 1999, 8). Part of the change has to do with the writers' treatment of the lovers' relationship: human sexuality is now portrayed more explicitly than in the past, a more chaste time when authors simply did not handle sex. This evolution of romances simply reflects "cultural changes" (Rose 1985, 264). In fact, cultural differences permeate many of the works in our corpus, where different customs regarding love relationships are constantly underlined, especially in the early novels published between 1958 and 1980. We even find examples of arguments caused by the characters' differences regarding their own behaviour and expectations in love relationships, as shown below:

'Now', he said, 'we'll have one thing made clear between us. Tonight you are with me and under my protection, which gives me the right to squash flat any such advance as made by the man we have just left. No Spanish girl would think of acting in the way you did!

'But I'm not Spanish', she returned with some heat, 'I'm English. And in my country a man usually credits a woman with the ability to do her own squashing'. ... 'Your ways are not our ways', she flashed back. (Thorpe 1973, 109-10)

'I would not have dreamt of asking your sister to become my *novia* without first seeking your permission. You must believe this'...

'She doesn't need permission' she said in as light a tone as she could manage. 'She's fully of age'.

'Perhaps in your own country. Here ...' he paused, smiled a little. 'Our girls marry even younger, and yet in many ways they are far older than your sister'. (Thorpe 1973, 26-27)

In Spain you would already be the mother of three at your age. Our girls marry young and stay married ... The little ones keep them out of mischief. (Thorpe 1973, 11)

3.3. Identity and otherness discourse

We are particularly interested in the depiction of the contrast between the sociocultural identities of Canarian Spanish vs British English heroes and heroines, whenever mixed couples are included in the plots. It is not unusual to find comments that highlight differences in British and Spanish attitudes and beliefs during the 1970s, mostly emphasizing the Spaniards' traditionalism and conservatism so strongly prevalent at that time. Examples of how the opposing mentalities and socio-cultural differences are overtly acknowledged abound. Thus, in Arbor's book, *Abuelo* tells Fran, the heroine, "I thought we should get to understand each other, granddaughter, as you may find our life very different from your own in England until you grow used to it. As of course in time you will. You understand what I am saying? If not, I could perhaps speak in English instead" (34). Similarly, another character, Jervis Rendle, an English site agent working for Fran's Canarian family, notices "if we had both been Spanish, we shouldn't have been left alone together" (29). Later on Fran observes that "with him she could relax and, listening to him talk 'England' to the disparagement of anywhere else, she could almost persuade herself she would be glad to go back. In Rendle's view the civilized world only began at the cliffs of Dover or London Airport..." (147). However, despite the obvious drawbacks, in time Fran finds herself "longing passionately to

belong here too with as sharp a pride as she had felt glad to be English” (128) and rejects the idea of leaving “this alleged paradise” (133), where there was “no night chill in the air as there would have been in England” (33).

The stereotyped festive nature of both Spaniards’ character and of life in Spain is oftentimes brought forward, as the following dialogue illustrates:

Driving homewards along the dark coast road, Lynn gave a contented sigh. ‘I’ll say one thing, you people certainly know how to celebrate! Life here is one long holiday! ‘Don’t you believe it’, Juan smiled. ‘We work hard, so we deserve to play hard too. Two days of festivities followed by weeks of unremitting toil. Would you begrudge so little?’ (Thorpe 1973, 112)

3.4 Language contact: switching and borrowing

Last, but not least, when approaching the texts from the linguistic perspective, our aim is two-fold. Firstly, we want to build up a glossary of all the Spanish words and expressions used, in order to prove that, while showing awareness of language and cultural differences in many of their plots, these works also serve as a vehicle to spread hispanicisms among their wide international readership. This vocabulary seems to play a number of socio-pragmatic functions beyond merely providing the writing with some local colour. Although it is not an easy task, our second aim is to categorise the hispanicisms which appear in these texts according to the main discourse or socio-pragmatic functions they perform. With this purpose we have just begun to digitalise the texts and will resort to *Antconc*, a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis in order to obtain reliable data about the frequency and patterns of use of the Spanish words and phrases.

Among the discourse functions that Hispanicisms seem to play, we have identified the following in a preliminary analysis of the texts:

- To make readers aware of the sociocultural and linguistic differences between the characters:

... and it was easy to imagine *señoritas* peeping over them. (Corrie 1980, 124)

Broad streams of lava lay greyly arrested in silent *barrancos* that were grimly devoid of life. (Airlie 1958, 27)

- To enrich and provide the writing with more realism, more “local colour”, claiming for authenticity, and, sometimes, to give the impression that the characters are using Spanish for their interaction.

‘*Buenas tardes, señorita. The Señor Marqués awaits you in the salón.*’ (Britt 1977, 9)

All right, *querida*, he said. (Airlie 1958, 99)

- The need to refer to an object, entity or concept for which there is not an adequate lexical ítem in English:

... a line of women, some wearing black *mantillas*, others with huge satin bows... (Arbor 1967, 61)

Then, not far from the cable-car station was a *parador*, a government-owned hotel where they had a simple meal of *paella*, cheese [...] ‘Lily, my wife, was descended from the Guanches on her mother’s side...’ (Lane 1978, 56-58)

- To express a positive attitude towards the other language and culture, as well as to indicate the character’s degree of involvement with the local socio-cultural context:

I rather envy them here all their *fiestas* and *ferias* that save them the trouble. [...] I strolled down for a drink in the *plaza*. [...] Then I parked her with a large *limonada*... (Arbor 1967, 65-66)

Eventually she came to a square with lots of tables outside a *bodega*. (Wentworth 1984, 149)

This usage of Hispanicisms can be seen as instances of lexical codeswitching, for which several researchers (Gumperz 1992; Lipski 2014; Poplack 1980) have listed a number of more specific sociopragmatic functions, such as direct quotes, emphasis, elaboration or clarification, parenthetical comments, change of topic, interjections, idiomatic expressions, tags, exclamations, repetitions, symmetric alternation, linguistic routines, lexical need, triggers, stylistic changes, and discourse markers. These categories will surely be helpful for a deeper analysis of the functions played by the Hispanicisms in our corpus.

4. Final remarks

All the ideas and examples offered above are just the result of a preliminary study of the texts. Obviously, more research needs to be done in order to corroborate the initial impressions and to provide conclusive findings with more precise data on each of the aspects we want to cover. Finally, when our research is completed, further work may include a comparative analysis of the features of the novels set in this Atlantic area with those of books set in other well-travelled locations where romances are situated, such as Greece, Italy, the Caribbean, etc.

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Structural Overlap and V-Raising in L2 English

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to study if an L1 which contains, as one of two options, a construction that is the only option in an L2 can enhance its acquisition. More specifically we want to test if knowing two languages which have optional V-raising (and thus allow both verb-adverb-object (VAO) and adverb-verb-object (AVO)) can have a positive effect on the acquisition of L2 English (which only allows AVO order). The work is inspired by Hulk & Müller's (2000) proposal which takes syntactic overlap as an internal factor triggering cross-linguistic influence. In previous studies of L2 English by L1 French learners (White 1989, Delatouche 2014) the (negative) transfer of French word order resulted in high percentages of VAO orders in L2 English. Our aim here is to check if the number of errors diminishes among learners of flexible word order languages, such as Spanish and Catalan.¹

Keywords: second language acquisition, verb-raising, adverb placement, structural overlap

1. Introduction

The acquisition of word order by learners of a second language has been considered less problematic than the acquisition of other aspects of the grammar of the target language. Klein and Perdue (1997), in their analysis of the language system developed by adult learners of different nationalities in contact with a variety of different languages, conclude that there seems to be no transfer of the L1 order to the L2:

The concrete form of utterances is determined by general organizational principles which are the same for all learners irrespective of the source and target language. (Klein & Perdue 1997; 332).

Gràcia (2007), who also considers the production of different populations of adult language learners of different nationalities, compares inflectional errors and word order errors and concludes that inflectional learning is harder; i.e. the amount of morphological errors is higher than those of word order. It is important to state, though, that this seems to be true of the acquisition of basic sentential elements as S, V and O. When it comes to other elements, a different picture emerges and more errors are found. Consider the examples in (1) and (2):

- (1) Aquesta nena seu i molt plora.
this girl sits and a-lot cries

¹ This research has been partially supported by the project financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation *Variación, complejidad y experiencia lingüística en la adquisición de lenguas y el bilingüismo: más allá de la división entre morfosintaxis e interfaces* (FFI2012-35058). A first version was presented at the XXXIX AEDEAN conference. The authors wish to thank the participants of the Language Teaching and Acquisition Panel and Aurora Bel for their helpful comments and suggestions.

- (2) Otro trabajo aquí igual sirve.
 another job here equally helps
 (Gràcia 2007, p. 33)

What we observe in these examples is that the modifier and the verb appear in non-target positions. In both examples the modifier precedes the verb whereas in the target languages of the examples, Catalan (1) and Spanish (2), the verb should precede the modifier. Both of these languages are [+V-raising] languages, the focus of analysis of this paper. If the language is [+V-raising], verbs will precede certain sentential elements such as VP-adverbs, if the language is a [-V-raising] language, then verbs will follow VP-adverbs. English is an example of a [-V-raising] language, as exemplified in (3):

- (3) a. Children always ask questions.
 b. *Children ask always questions.

The acquisition of V-raising has been the subject of study of researchers such as Pollock (1989) and White (1989, 1991, 1992). Delatouche (2014) continued this line of research and examined the acquisition of adverb placement in L2 English by French speakers. The research focused on the English restriction adverb-verb-object and revealed persistent errors in the L2 English production of French L1 monolingual speakers. The experiment included two groups of L1 French learners of English. Group 1 comprised 24 fourteen year-old students (A2 level of English) and group 2 included 24 seventeen year-old students (B2 level). Two tasks were administered: an acceptability judgment task and a translation task. The results revealed that the learners allowed both the English and French word orders. Thus, they suggest that even at a relatively advanced level (B2 level in group 2), native French speakers have not fully acquired the syntax of adverb placement in English.

In this paper we analyse the production of sequences of verb-adverb-object constructions in both monolingual French learners and bilingual Catalan/Spanish learners. We relate our analysis to the proposal by Hulk and Müller (2000), who assume that cross-linguistic influence is determined by language-internal factors. The language internal factor that we build on is *syntactic overlap*, which in our case relates to the fact that only Catalan and Spanish allow the English order (adverb-verb-object) while French does not (it only allows verb-adverb-object). In section 2 the main syntactic differences between the languages we study are exemplified, in section 3 the study is presented and in section 4 results are analysed. We conclude the paper with a brief note on the acquisition of word order in section 5.

2. The syntax of adverb placement

The position of the adverb in a clause is regulated by different factors. One of them is the process of V-raising, which has been conceived as a parametric difference among languages. The properties of the features of *inflection* in a language (as strong or weak) determine whether or not verbs move from their original V position to a higher functional category (I) thus triggering verb-adverb order. English tense on verbs is weak and thus this process is not triggered, which results in a general and compulsory adjacency of verb and object while VP-adverbs precede the verb, as exemplified in (4):

- (4) a. Maylin **always speaks** Chinese.
 b.* Maylin **speaks always** Chinese.

French is a language with the opposite setting, tense on verbs is strong and thus verbs must move to a higher position in the clause so that the only order allowed in the language is verb-adverb-object, as illustrated in (5):

- (5) a. * Maylin **toujours parle** chinois.
 Maylin always speaks Chinese
 b. Maylin **parle toujours** chinois.
 Maylin speaks always Chinese

As a result of this parametric difference, English allows only AVO orders in transitive structures, (4a), and French allows only VAO structures, (5b).

The syntax of adverb placement in Catalan and Spanish is different from both English and French: these languages allow both orders. This implies that the movement of the verb to higher functional nodes is optional. In other words, adverbs can precede the verb in both Spanish (6a), and Catalan (7a), but the verb can also precede the adverb in both languages, as (6b) and (7b) illustrate:

- (6) a. Maylin **siempre habla** chino.
 Maylin always speaks Chinese
 b. Maylin **habla siempre** chino.
 Maylin speaks always Chinese
- (7) a. La Maylin **sempre parla** xinès.
 Maylin always speaks Chinese
 b. La Maylin **parla sempre** xinès.
 Maylin speaks always Chinese

Bearing in mind the different possibilities of adverb, verb and object order in the four languages included in this study, we conducted an experiment which we explain in the following sections. Our aim was to provide an answer to the following research question:

- (8) Does the presence of the [-V-raising] option in the L1/L2 syntax enhance the acquisition of the negative setting in L2 English?

Our hypothesis is that the answer will be positive since structural overlap, a language-internal factor, triggers cross-linguistic influence (Hulk & Müller 2000, 2001). In other words, we expect to find more instances of verb-adverb-object orders in the production of bilingual subjects since their languages allow this option.

3. Study

3.1 Participants

The experiment included one group of Catalan students who were Catalan and Spanish bilinguals and another group of monolingual French students. They were all learning English as a foreign language. The first group comprised 28 fourteen year-old Catalan students with skills corresponding to an A2 level in English, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The other group included 43 sixteen year-old learners who had reached a B1 level when tested. Both groups attended regular English classes in secondary school. The Catalan group had started learning English as an L2 in

primary school and the French group had been exposed to English on a regular basis for five years. None of them attended extracurricular English classes.

The English teacher from each group confirmed that the participants had been explicitly taught adverb placement a few years earlier. Indeed, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) programs in schools both in France and in Spain include instruction on adverb placement and word order. However, the subjects did not receive direct English instruction on adverb placement at the time of the experiment. Table 1 summarises the differences between the two groups chosen for the experiment.

Participants	Number of subjects	Average age	Level of English
Group1 Catalan/Spanish (bilinguals)	28	14	A2 (elementary)
Group 2 French (monolinguals)	43	16	B1 (intermediate)

Table 1. Differences between the two groups.

3.2 Task

A translation test was designed in order to examine Catalan/Spanish bilingual and French monolingual students' knowledge of adverb placement in an English written task. Each test included simple frequency adverbs that were well-known by the students. This particular type of adverb was chosen because the participants used frequency adverbs on a regular basis in the English class. The subjects were not supposed to have difficulties to translate them. Adverbs such as *mai* (never), *sovint* (often) or *sempre* (always) in the test designed in Catalan and adverbs like *jamais* (never), *souvent* (often) or *toujours* (always) in the French version of the task were included.

The bilingual Catalan/Spanish subjects were asked to translate twenty sentences from Catalan into English and the monolingual French participants had to translate the same sentences from French into English. The task was designed on paper and was the only material allowed.

The test designed for group 1, which was composed of Catalan/Spanish bilingual subjects, comprised four AVO sentences and six VAO sentences since Catalan allows both word orders. Group 2, the French monolingual subjects, had to translate 10 sentences including adverbs followed by a direct object and preceded by a verb, since French does not allow AVO sentences and VAO sentences illustrate the common word order used in the language. Regarding the type of sentences presented, the twenty items consisted of simple declarative sentences, such as (9) for Catalan and (10) for French:

- (9) Després de sopar, el Joan sempre mira la televisió.
 after of dinner, the Joan always watches the television
 S ADV V O
After dinner, Joan always watches television.

- (10) Elle écoute toujours de la musique classique.
 She listens always to the music classical
 S V ADV O
She always listens to classical music.

Distractors were used in both the Catalan and French translation tasks. These had the same characteristics as the non-distractors regarding the type of sentence presented, i.e. simple sentences that required basic vocabulary in English. Of the twenty items to translate, ten sentences were used as distractors.

Instructions were given orally and in a written form to make sure both groups understood clearly what they had to do. The test in Catalan was administered to the Catalan students at the end of the academic year 2014/2015 and the French subjects performed the test in September 2015 in their regular English classroom.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results

The following table compares the participants' use of AVO constructions with their use of VAO in the translation test from Catalan or French into English. Percentages were calculated on the basis of the number of times students used AVO or VAO word order. Overall, the results show that both groups preferred AVO word order as they chose it more often than VAO, respectively 92.1% for group 1 and 64.4% for group 2. Those percentages reveal a clear contrast with VAO results that reached 0.7% in the bilingual group and 21% in the monolingual one.

	AVO	VAO
GROUP 1 Bilingual Sp/Ct	92.1%	0.7%
GROUP 2 Monolingual French	64.4%	21%

Table 2. Results of the translation task.

4.2 Discussion

Regarding the production of AVO, the results indicated that the two groups differ significantly ($p = .0001$). As suggested by the results, group 1 clearly preferred AVO word order. The higher percentage of AVO in the bilingual group suggests cross-linguistic influence. In other words, the fact that both L1s also allow AVO seems to have an impact on the results.

In considering our hypothesis, the following question may be raised: How is the relatively high presence of AVO in French L2 English explained? It cannot be the result of cross-linguistic influence because French does not allow AVO word order. Thus, one may wonder whether the higher proficiency level of the monolingual French subjects influenced their choice. A previous pilot study conducted a few months earlier seems to confirm this

hypothesis. Twenty-six 14 year-old monolingual French students of English with a lower level of English (A2) participated in the experiment. The results revealed a lower percentage of AVO, as shown by the table below.

Participants	AVO	VAO	Others
Monolingual French students (A2 level)	51.50%	19.20%	29.20%

Table 3. Results of the pilot study.

Crucially, in this pilot study, the presence of outliers was rather high, as indicated by the percentage in the table. We considered outliers incomplete tasks, with words and full sentences missing. The presence of a large amount of incomplete tasks in the production of the French monolingual speakers indicated that it was necessary to test French students with a higher level of English because students seemed not to be confident enough to be tested on their knowledge of the English AVO restriction at this stage of acquisition.

Concerning the production of VAO in the final experiment summarised in table 3, the two groups also differ significantly ($p=.0001$). As indicated by the higher percentage of VAO in the monolingual French group, the native French speakers still use the L1 option in English. By contrast, the bilingual group is not using the raising option when translating into English (0.7%), although it is part of their L1 grammar, despite the fact that their proficiency level is lower than the French monolingual group.

Some limitations can be identified in the study. Specifically, and regarding methodology, the fact that only one task was used reduces the reliability of results but the fact that they revealed statistic significance implies that this is a line worth pursuing in future research.

5. Conclusions

As mentioned in the Introduction to this paper, the acquisition of word order is not as straightforward as previous research has assumed, especially as regards the order of verbs and adverbs. The V-raising parameter, when positively set, seems to induce negative transfer in L2 acquisition but may be overcome given instruction at higher proficiency levels. Nevertheless, if the V-raising parameter is not negatively set, and includes the option in the L2, negative transfer is (practically) inexistent.

Therefore, from the results of the translation task we have presented, we can tentatively conclude that syntactic overlap seems to enhance the acquisition of the target language construction as regards the V-raising parameter.

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Regressive Transfer from L4 German to L3 English: the Case of *that*-deletion

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Abstract

This study explores the notion of regressive transfer. This type of transfer has been suggested to occur when an L3/Ln is acquired assuming that a new system might have either a positive or negative effect on any previously acquired language. In this paper we aim at investigating whether regressive transfer is found in the non-native grammar of English as an L3 by L4 speakers of German. To do so, we conduct an investigation of the *that*-deletion phenomenon in L3 speakers of English with and without German as their L4. The phenomenon of *that*-deletion implies the omission of the complementizer *that*, which is allowed in both German and English and disallowed in the native languages of our subjects, Catalan and Spanish. Our aim is to see whether regressive transfer enhances the acquisition of the *that*-deletion phenomenon in L3 English.^{1,2}

Keywords: Regressive transfer, *that*-deletion, L3/Ln acquisition, German, English

1. Introduction

L3/Ln acquisition and language transfer have been the focus of investigation in the past ten years. Much of the research on it has considered on the initial stage of L3/Ln acquisition and especially the source of transfer in L3/Ln acquisition: Is it the L1? The L2? Or both? (Cabrelli-Amaro and Rothman, 2010; Rothman, 2011; Falk and Bardel, 2010; Flynn, Foley and Vinnistkaya, 2004; etc.).³ As noted in García-Mayo and Rothman (2012), fewer studies have looked at developmental stages. Even fewer studies consider the effect that an L3/Ln has on previously acquired languages. To our knowledge, there are four studies (Cabrelli-Amaro and Rothman, 2015; Cabrelli-Amaro, in press; Hui, 2010; Mathew, Cheung, and Tsang, 2014) which explore regressive transfer.

¹ The first author's research has been partially supported by the project financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation *Variación, complejidad y experiencia lingüística en la adquisición de lenguas y el bilingüismo: más allá de la división entre morfosintaxis e interfaces* (FFI2012-35058). The second author acknowledges funding of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (*13a Convocatoria Beques PIF – Personal Investigador en Formació*).

² A first version of this paper was presented at the XXXIX AEDEAN conference. The authors wish to thank the participants of the Language Teaching and Acquisition Panel for their helpful comments and suggestions.

³ These are just a selection of studies which focus on the Initial Stage, see García-Mayo and Rothman (2012) for an overview of the field.

The notion of regressive transfer captures the influence a language has on any previously acquired languages, be it the L1 or the L2.⁴ Cabrelli-Amaro and Rothman (2015) suggest that an L2 might be more likely to be affected by an L3/Ln than and L1. This latter claim is tested in Cabrelli-Amaro (in press), where she finds that an L2 is more susceptible than an L1. In the present study, we investigate whether German acquired as an L4 has an effect on L3 English, and to do so we look at *that*-deletion in non-native English.

In section 2 the main syntactic differences between the languages of this study are presented and exemplified, in section 3 we comment on two language acquisition proposals that make specific claims about the phenomenon of *that*-deletion, in section 4 the study we conducted is explained and results are discussed and section 5 concludes the paper and suggests a positive answer to our main research question.

2. The *that*-deletion phenomenon across 4 languages

Complement clauses of verbs like *say* or *think* are optionally introduced by the complementizer *that* in English. The omission of the complementizer can be analysed as the possibility of the language to have a null *that* in CP (Radford, 2009), and if this is done, this linguistic phenomenon can be conceived of as a parametric difference: [+/- null *that*]. Assuming this analysis,⁵ the four languages we will focus on in this paper have the following parametric options. English has a positive setting, as exemplified in (1).⁶ Spanish and Catalan have a negative setting, so (2) and (3) are ungrammatical. Finally, German has a positive setting, so a null complementizer is possible as in (4), even though its productivity is much more restricted than in English (see Whittle et al. 2011):

- (1) I think (**that**) this topic is interesting.
- (2) Pienso ***(que)** este tema es interesante.
- (3) Penso ***(que)** aquest tema és interessant.
- (4) a. Ich glaube, **dass** dieses Thema interessant ist.
b. Ich glaube, dieses Thema ist interessant.

In sum, what we observe is that the two Germanic languages under analysis have a null complementizer whereas the two Romance languages, Spanish and Catalan, do not. The typological feature [-null *that*] characterises the two native languages of our subjects. The language sequence we will analyse is the following:

- (5) L1 (Catalan) ---- L2 (Spanish) ----- L3 (English) ---- L4 (German)
[- null *that*] [- null *that*] [+null *that*] [+ null *that*]

3. *That*-deletion in multilingual language acquisition

The phenomenon of *that*-deletion, or, in other words, the use of the null *that* option in English, has been analysed in a number of different studies. We will consider two of them which

⁴ The term Language Attrition has been used to describe this effect in SLA: the influence of an L2 on the L1.

⁵ We are aware that the phenomenon has been analysed differently by a number of researchers (cf. Pesetsky and Torrego (2001), Rizzi and Shlonsky (2007), Franks (2005), among many others) but we assume this analysis to simplify exposition and to focus on the study of the specific L4/L3 process we consider here.

⁶ We have not provided glosses of the non-English examples as they are translations of (1).

reveal transfer from an L1 option, thus providing evidence of how this phenomenon is affected by a previously acquired (native) language (or languages). The two studies we summarise below suggest that speakers of German and Spanish behave differently with respect to this phenomenon.

Llinàs-Grau, Pladevall and Capdevila (2013) analyses the written production of *that*-deletion in texts by 15-17 year old bilingual Catalan/Spanish L2 learners of English. 184 students in high-school with pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate proficiency levels were asked to write an essay and given 20 minutes to do it. The objective of the study was to see if the null complementizer option had been acquired and the results revealed that it had not, since the total amount of null *thats* reached only to almost 30%, while the amount of overt *thats* was more than 70%. The data actually indicated that students from all groups used null *thats* in their written *that*-clauses but clearly much less than they used overt *thats*. This could be a signal of the fact that they might have started acquiring the syntax of *that*-deletion but still showed a strong preference for their L1 option, namely the obligatory presence of *that*. The essays analysed revealed L2 development, shown by the fluency measure of number of words per essay. The mean number of words per essay significantly increased from the second to the third course and from the third to the fourth, which illustrated progress. Nevertheless, what clearly did not show development was the use of null *that*.

Wulff, Lester and Martínez-García (2014) analyses the factors involved in the production of *that* and null *that* (for instance, formality, structural complexity or verb type). The authors compare the written production of native speakers and L2 learners of English and more specifically the learner production of German and Spanish intermediate/advanced learners of English. They observe that learners adopt a more conservative strategy with regard to complementizer omission. Nevertheless, and despite this overall conservatism found in learners, their results show that the German learners use more null *that* than the Spanish learners. This fact indicates that the parametric setting of the native language may have an effect on the production of the construction under analysis in learner English. More specifically, these studies show that Spanish and Catalan influence the production of L2 English, thereby inducing retention of over *that*'s, but German has a contrary influence on L2 English, in that German learners behave like native speakers in their production of *that*-deletion.

4. Study

In this study we aim to find out whether L4 German can enhance the acquisition (or production) of the null *that* option in L3 English (i.e. whether regressive transfer occurs in multilingual language acquisition). Based on this research question, we hypothesised two possible scenarios:

- a) Regressive transfer from L4 German will occur, and so we will find more null *that* production in the participants who know German than in those who do not.
- b) Regressive transfer from L4 German will not occur, and so there will be a similar rate of null *that* production in both groups.

4.1 Participants

The participants of this study were divided into three groups: 1) native speakers of English (n21), advanced learners of English with no L4 [- German] (n28) and advanced learners of English with German as an L4 [+ German] (n22). Most of the participants were either young professionals or university students, some of them were enrolled in English studies and some

others were doing humanities degrees. In order to get more participants in the [+ German] group, we collected some data in an official language school subsidised by the government.

The participants were all Catalan/Spanish bilinguals with the exception of 2 Spanish monolinguals. The participants also took an adapted version of the Cambridge Online Placement Test. As we were targeting advanced students, we decided to exclude any participant whose level was not, at least, a high B2 in the CEFR. For the [+ German] group, we asked for the self-perceived level of German. The following table summarises the information of the participants.

	Age (Mean)	Sex	Level of English	Level of German
[+ German] group	26	F(14) / M (12)	High B2/C1/C2	B1-B2
[- German] group	28	F (23) / M (5)	High B2/C1/C2	NA
Control group	31	F (20) / M (11)	NA	NA

Table 1: Detailed information of the participants.

4.2. Materials

The main experimental task consisted of a written production task where participants had to combine two sentences. In order to elicit sentences with or without *that*, we chose three common verbs that elicit the use of a finite embedded clause (*think, say, know*). For each verb, we had four experimental items. The participants saw two sentences and a prompt on a screen for 30 seconds (see figure 1). They were instructed to use informal and spontaneous utterances.

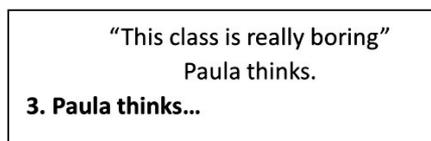


Figure 1: Example of one experimental item.

4.3. Results and discussion

Trimming the data consisted of looking at whether they got the distractors right; if they had more than 2 mistakes, their answers were excluded. Then, the data were coded according to whether they had produced *that* or null-*that* in their responses. We then calculated the percentages of deletion. The descriptive statistics of the results are presented in the following table.

	think	say	know	Total
Control (n21)	62.50	71.88	81.25	71.88
[- German] group (n21)	21.43	39.01	30.36	30.65
[+ German] group (n28)	47.12	65.38	71.15	61.22

Table 2: Descriptive statistics.

The following boxplot and the descriptive statistics already show that there is a difference in the behaviour of the groups towards the *that*-deletion phenomenon. It can be seen that the percentage of deletion in the [-German] group is lower than the [+German] group, and it is also much lower than the one of the controls.

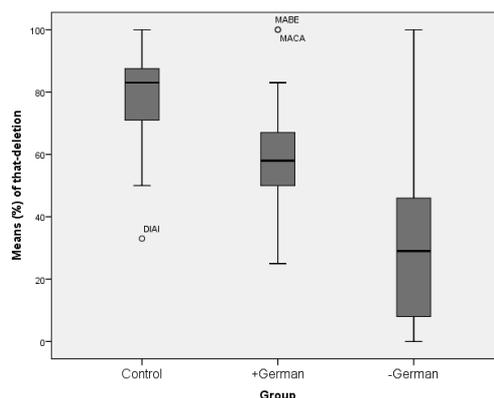


Figure 2: Boxplots of means of *that*-deletion on all the groups.

An analysis was conducted on percentages of the total of *that*-deletion. We ran three separate independent T-tests to explore whether the difference between groups was significant:

- Control * [+ German]: $t(43)=2.95, p=.005$
- Control * [- German]: $t(47)=3.63, p=.001$
- [+ German] * [-German]: $t(50)=6.07, p=.0001$

If we go back to the research question and possible hypotheses, we anticipated two possible scenarios: regressive transfer would or would not occur. The results show that the [- German] learners have lower rates of deletion and that they have not overcome negative transfer.⁷

As for the possible effects of regressive transfer from German to non-native English, the [+German] group has a higher percentage of deletion than the [-German] group, so this difference is significant. This is a result of regressive transfer from L4 German to L3 English – the possibility of having null-C in German enhances their production of *that*-deletion in L3 English.

However, a question which might arise is why participants cannot overcome negative transfer in their non-native English if (supposedly)⁸ they have overcome it in their non-native German? A possible suggestion for this could be discussed along the lines of current L3/Ln models of acquisition. If we assume that the Typological Primacy Model (Rothman, 2011, 2015) is on the right track, then we would predict that these learners transferred null C⁹ into their German at the initial stage as English is typologically closer to German than the two Romance languages. Then, we could say that the English and German of these participants differ in a key aspect with respect to the *that*-deletion phenomenon, so that whereas in English there is negative transfer from Romance, in German there is positive transfer from English.

⁷ These results contradict Llinàs-Grau and Bel (In prep.). Their study looked at a very similar population to the [-German] group and they found that their participants behave native-like. It is important to highlight that the methodology in both studies is different. They used a Grammaticality Judgement Task and they tapped into the linguistic competence of their participants and in this study, we aimed at looking at production.

⁸ Note that this is a speculation as we do not have evidence from their non-native German. However, if we see that there is positive transfer from it, then we assume that they do have complementizer deletion in their non-native grammar. This is left for further research.

⁹ As seen in Llinàs-Grau and Bel (In prep.), advanced speakers of English seem to have restructured their grammars allowing null-C where native controls allow it.

This would explain why their production rate in German could be much higher, thus regressive transfer would occur.¹⁰

5. Conclusion: Implications for the study of regressive transfer

The main findings of this paper show that regressive transfer occurs in multilingual language acquisition. We looked at whether L4 German would have any effect on L3 English with respect to the *that*-deletion phenomenon. The results show that those participants who know German produce many more instances of deletion than those who do not know German. Some implications for the study of multilingual language acquisition are: a) regressive transfer occurs and so it is important to consider it when studying L3/Ln acquisition and b) in this study the two languages under consideration (English – German) are typologically related, thus, this might play a role in the occurrence of regressive transfer. However, this last statement is just a speculation and left for further research. Our next step is to look at a similar population with French as the L4 instead of German. Additionally, it would also be interesting to explore the grammar of German, as complementizer deletion in German is much more restrictive than in English.

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¹⁰ It is important to highlight that this is a speculation as we are yet to test the initial stage of L4 learners of German. This is also left for further research.

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The Expression of Evidentiality in English, Basque and Spanish: Cross-linguistic Perspectives and Criteria for a Database of Evidential Markers

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Abstract

This paper presents results of research on the expression of evidentiality in English, Basque and Spanish carried out within the EUROEVIDMOD project, aimed to establish an account of evidentials in European languages based on unified criteria, and to create a Database of evidential and modal markers following these criteria. The paper includes a description of the structure of the Database and an account of its coverage of the three languages concerned, which shows a number of similarities between them as regards the expression of evidentiality: availability of expressions for all the basic subdomains and values, multifunctionality, derivation from non-evidential expressions through processes of conventionalization, and strong relation between evidentiality and epistemic modality.¹

Keywords: evidentiality, EUROEVIDMOD database, epistemic modality, English, Spanish, Basque

1. Introduction

This paper presents results of research on the expression of evidentiality in English, Basque and Spanish, carried out within the project ‘*The expression of Evidentiality and Modality in English and other European Languages: Cross-linguistic perspectives*’ (EUROEVIDMOD), (Ref.: FFI201-23181, Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, Spain). The EUROEVIDMOD project has aimed to establish a unified account on the basis of comparable criteria, and to create a database of evidential and modal markers in English, in the languages of Spain and in other European languages. The paper addresses the following

¹ Acknowledgments: Research Project FFI2011-23181: La expresión de la evidencialidad y modalidad en inglés y otras lenguas europeas: Perspectivas interlingüísticas. The expression of Evidentiality and Modality in English and other European Languages: Cross-linguistic perspectives. (EUROEVIDMOD), (Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad. <http://www.ucm.es/euroevidmod/>

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(c) Other European languages: Tanja Mortelmans (Antwerp University), Paola Pietrandrea (University of Tours & CNRS LLL), Katerina Stathi (University of Hanover), Aurelija Usoniene (Vilnius University), Björn Wiemer (Universität Mainz).

research issues: (i) the formulation of criteria for a unified lexico-grammatical and semantic-pragmatic description of evidential markers, and the development of a comparable and reliable system of annotation (cf. Wiemer and Stathi 2010); (ii) the design and creation of the database of evidential and modal markers (<http://www.ucm.es/euroevidmod/database>).

2. The Domain of Evidentiality

Studies on the domain of evidentiality have for the most part centred on non-European languages (Chafe and Nichols 1986; Aikhenvald 2004, *inter alia*). Within the literature on evidentiality, the focus has traditionally been on those systems of languages in which marking the information source is obligatory, and where evidentiality is a grammatical category in its own right (Aikhenvald 2004). However, in Germanic and Romance languages, like English or Spanish, we find a broad array of expressions along the lexico-grammatical continuum to signal the information source, which may be accounted for if we adopt a functional-onomasiological perspective, as has been pointed out by Wiemer (2010). In this respect, there is increasing interest in the study of the domain of evidentiality in the various European languages, and the range of lexico-grammatical markers (affixes, evidential uses of the tense, aspect and mood systems, auxiliary verbs, and lexical elements) which express evidential meanings (Wiemer 2010; Diewald and Smirnova 2010, *inter alia*).

Evidentials primarily indicate the source of information, and the evidence on the basis of which the speaker/writer feels entitled to make a claim (Anderson 1986). There is a considerable consensus regarding the functional values of evidentiality, derived from the different sources and modes of access to the evidence, which have traditionally been identified as ‘direct’, ‘indirect inferential’, and ‘indirect reportative’ evidence, or similar classifications (Willett 1988; Plungian 2001, Cornillie et al. 2015, *inter alia*).

3. EUROEVIMOD Database

The Database developed within the EUROEVIDMOD project provides criteria for a unified lexico-grammatical and semantic-pragmatic description of evidential markers, and a comparable and reliable system with which to compile the relevant information for evidential and epistemic modal expressions in some of the main European languages (cf Wiemer and Stathi 2010). We assume that the application of these criteria to evidential markers in the languages studied in the project will reveal both relevant similarities and variation in features of the various evidential systems in these languages.

id	language	genealogical affiliation	areal affiliation	crosslinguistic hypercategory	archi unit	entry	formal variants	representative examples	other function 1
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SEEM	irudi	irudi	iduri	Badrudi bihar euria egingo duela	Noun: concrete ('figure' or abstract (image)).
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	MUST	behar	behar	behar, biar, biar, ber	Honi, buruan dauzan zapelagatik, euskalduna	deontic
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SAY	omen	omen	emen (Gipuzkoan), umen and umen	Pati ementaria arabateko gaiztoa omen	QMIEN is also a noun meaning 'fame'.
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SAY	ei	ei		Euskaldunontzat barmian altzor haundiak ei	Noun: 'ame', but its use is very restrictive and n
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SEEM	eman	eman	emon (Biscayan dialect)	Ematen du bihar euria egingo duela (It seems	Lexical verb 'Give'. Emotiaux muxutuek
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SEEM	bide	bide		Laster argitaratuko bide da Kimen Urberen	Noun ('path, way')
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SEEM	nonbait	nonbait	nonbait	Gizon hori da hiltzailea, nonbait	"Somewhere" (adverb c place)
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SEE	ikusi	ikusi		Jon hasak zeharkatzen ari zela ikusi dut.	Warning: To notice someone or something
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SAY	esan	esan	ESAN (Biscayan and Gipuzkoan), ERRAN	Three possible translations of Ane says	Idu ad. decir; coetar, rdatar
	Basque	isolate non-IE	Iberian Peninsula	SAY	arabera	arabera	arabera	Aneren arabera, gizon bat hil da emepidean.	In the same way as Spanish 'según', when

Figure 1. Fields in the EUROEVIDMOD Database.

The Database template comprises a series of obligatory fields, and consecutive or subordinate fields, as well as optional fields. Figure 1 illustrates some of the basic classificatory fields, which include information about each language and its genealogical affiliation (Baltic, Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Isolate IE, Isolate non-IE) and areal affiliation (Balkan, NE Europe, Circum Baltic, Iberian peninsula, Mediterranean), as well as the crosslinguistic hypercategory under which we can classify each of the evidential expressions. Central components of the database are the entry or lemma, and the corresponding archi-unit (or abstract unit representing all the evidential meanings/functions with the same form), in cases of polysemy or other kinds of meaning alternation. For each entry, examples are provided for all the attested evidential functions and subfunctions (direct perceptual or other sensory, indirect inferential perceptual or conceptual, and reportative).

The relational database has been stored using Filemaker Pro, which allows access to various subfields with pre-set labels by means of a drop-down menu, and incorporates search options on the basis of the various fields and subfields. Figure 2 illustrates the results of the search option 'inferential'.

entry	formal variants	representative examples	other function 1	other function 2	subfunction 1 layer 1	subfunction 1 layer 2	subfunction 1 example
apparently		the political turbulence	you have heard or read;		inferential	- perceptual	section of the Spanish
appear	none	David Kelly did not live or belong in this world.	1. Come into sight; become visible or	1. Present oneself formally in a court or	inferential	+ perceptual	Members of the Taliban and al-Qaeda were
behar	behar, biar, bier, ber	Horrek buruan daukan txapelagatik, euskalduna	deontic	Three functions:	inferential	+ perceptual	Ahosiagatik eta hitz egiteko moduagatik
Deber (de)	Deb* (Debo, debes, debe, debemos, debéis,	<H2> Yo quiero una cama de esas. <H1> Pues así se hacían	1. Root: deontic modal	2. 'To owe/To have a debt'	inferential	- perceptual	SOA-20*1.TXT: 85. ... monición de un
eman	emon (Biscayan dialect)	Ematen du bihar euria egingo duela (It seems	Lexical verb 'Give'. Emotixtaux muxutbuek	Suppose Eman dezagun Athletio-	inferential	+ perceptual	Nekatuta zaudela ematen du
habrán/n	habrá, habrán	Así que ustedes, que habrán <IE>	1. aux. U. para conjugar otros verbos en los	3. tr. Dicho de una persona: Apoderarse de	inferential	- perceptual	Como habrán podido comprobar, el informe
irudi	iduri	Badirudi bihar euria egingo duela	Noun: concrete (figure) or abstract (image):		inferential	+ perceptual	Zure jokatzeko moduagatik, badirudi ez
müssen + INF	muß/müssen/mustte/müste	ich muss es wohl verloren haben	1. Root: Deontic modal müssen => you must (go)	2. Epistemic (= 'be certain to') : he	inferential	- perceptual	da habe ich wohl geträumt
musieć	none	Nabrafiamy na kalfużę, która utworzyła się w	dispositional, deontic	dynamic	inferential	- perceptual	Czytalem cienkim glosikiem, chrzakajac
must	none	Twelve of its haunts include the word	1. Root: Be obliged to; should (expressing	2. Epistemic Expressing an opinion about	inferential	- perceptual	Tony Blair? Let us assume that he takes
parece		y suele estar asociada a distintas alteraciones de	1. intr. Dicho de una cosa: Aparecer o dejarse	2. intr. Opinar, creer. U. m. c. impers.	inferential	+ perceptual	Evidentemente entendemos que no
schein/s	scheints	Das Mädchen scheint krank; wir müssen	North-South differentiation is also		inferential	+ perceptual	(1) Alles an ihr war weiß; ihre Haare, ihr
se conoce		Y advierte de la extrema ambigüedad de la ética	1. tr. Averiguar por el ejercicio de las	7. tr. desus. Confesar los delitos o pecados.	inferential	- perceptual	A lo mejor se dejarían un grifo abierto o algo. No
se diría		En un 80%, se dedican a restringir la entrada, la	1. tr. Manifestar con palabras el	5. tr. Dicho de un libro, de un escrito, etc.:	inferential	- perceptual	Mayormente, los abusos que se cometen
se ve	no	Porque se comprometieron a	1. tr. Percibir con los ojos algo mediante la	17. prnl. Hallarse en algún lugar, estado o	inferential	- perceptual	La realidad es que la falta de coherencia
seem		William Hague went repeatedly for the high	1 Give the impression of being something or	1.1 [with infinitive] Used to make a	inferential	- perceptual	This was the first time I met X, and it seems

Figure 2. Results for search option 'inferential'.

The option 'inferential', in subfunction 1 layer 1, yields database entries from all the different languages, and provides cross-linguistic information about markers with an inferential value based on comparable criteria.

4. Database: Evidential expressions in English and Spanish

In this section we briefly exemplify the English evidential expressions *appear* and *must*, and Spanish *al parecer*, as shown in the EUROEVIDMOD database. English is a Germanic language, with North-Western European affiliation, and Spanish is characterized as a Romance language in the Iberian Peninsula. In the database, evidential expressions are categorized according to their crosslinguistic hypercategory, as in the following examples of predicate types and adverbials in English and Spanish:

- Category SEEM: *seem +INF; it seems + that.COMP; seem as if/though; seem parenthetical; appear+INF; it appears+that.COMP; look like/as if/as though; look +to be P; apparently; clearly; evidently; obviously; seemingly; ...parece + que.COMP; parece +INF; aparentemente; evidentemente; ...*
- Category SEE: *see+that-COMP; see+ACC+INF/PTP; ... se ve+que.COMP.*
- Category MUST: *must; debe (de).*
- Category SAY: *they say+that.COMP; he said+to be P; according to; allegedly, reportedly; ... se dice+que.COMP; según dicen; al parecer; ...*

For each entry in the database, in addition to general information about the language and the expression, as mentioned above, we include semantic-pragmatic information, such as the evidential functions and subfunctions, including the multiple values possible, as we can see in Figure 3.

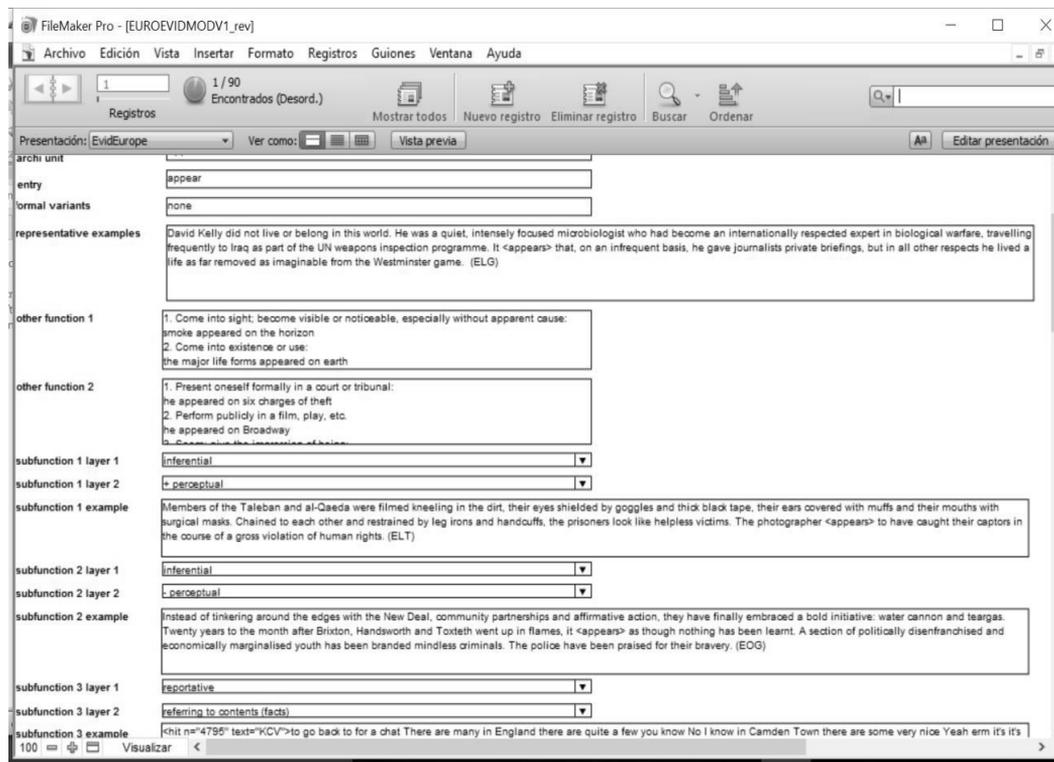


Figure 3. General information and functions of English *appear*.

Structural information regarding the morphological format and status, as well as the syntactic class, is also included for each entry, together with distributional and diachronic information, as well as notes on restrictions or preferences in usage, and data sources and references.

In the case of *appear*, the database provides a number of examples, such as the following with an indirect inferential (IIE) (+perceptual) value (from: Marín-Arrese 2015)

- (1) Members of the Taleban and al-Qaeda were filmed kneeling in the dirt, their eyes shielded by goggles and thick black tape, their ears covered with muffs and their mouths with surgical masks. Chained to each other and restrained by leg irons and handcuffs, the prisoners look like helpless victims. The photographer **appears** <IIE> to have caught their captors in the course of a gross violation of human rights. (ELT)

English modal auxiliary *must* has been at the centre of controversy regarding its status as epistemic or evidential. Van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) note that English *must* is best situated in the overlap between the semantic space of inferential evidentiality and that of epistemic necessity. A representative example in our database is the following with an indirect inferential (-perceptual) value:

- (2) Tony Blair? Let us assume that he takes Britain to the polls next summer. If terrorists did try a large-scale attack on Britain, could that push Blair out of power? It **must** <IIE> be a tempting target. As things stand, even in the absence of a fully formed and vigorous Opposition, there is still an air of vulnerability around Blair. (ENT)

Boye (2012: 24) takes an integrative position and observes that “both notions (epistemic necessity and inferential justification) need to be invoked” in order to account for the meaning and use of epistemic modal *must*, and also for Spanish *deber* (*de*).

Reportative evidentials are commonly coded by adverbial expressions, as in the Spanish *al parecer*, or English *apparently*, which typically exhibit multifunctionality, as can be seen in the following examples (from: Marín Arrese 2015)

- (3) Las relaciones internacionales de la era global se siguen jugando, **al parecer** <IIE>, en la química de las impresiones y los afectos. A pesar de la facilidad para establecer contactos interoceánicos instantáneos, nada como mirarse en la pupila sin intermediarios electrónicos, nada como olerse la fragancia varonil mezclándose con las fibras del tejido y los humores corporales, nada como rozarse la piel, pulsar el timbre de voz, hacer un comentario jocoso para ver cómo respira el otro. (SOA)
International relations in the global era are still played, it seems, in the chemistry of impressions and affect. In spite of the ease in establishing instant interoceanic contact, nothing like looking into each other's eyes without electronic intermediaries, nothing like smelling one another's manly fragrance ...
- (4) Aunque muchos de los casos aún no han sido diagnosticados como legionelosis, el brote, **al parecer** <IRE> originado en el centro de la ciudad, puede haber afectado a más de cien personas. (SLA)
Though many of the cases have still not been diagnosed as legionnaire's disease, the outbreak, apparently originating in the city centre, may have affected more than a hundred people.

5. Database: Evidentiality in Basque

Basque is the only non-Indo-European language registered in the database. The entries of the Basque evidentials are backgrounded by theoretical studies of evidentiality in general, especially Boye (2012), and descriptive studies about concrete Basque evidentials, such as Arteatx (2012), Artiagoitia (2003), Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2012), Korta and Zubeldia (2014) and Zubeldia (2013), among others. The entries have been elaborated with the aid of a corpus created by Karlos Cid Abasolo, which consists of four types of sources:

- Contemporary Basque literature;
- Older written texts, most of them obtained from a website run by Susa publishers, and from the *Orotariko Euskal Hiztegia - Diccionario General Vasco*;
- Contemporary written journalistic texts, on paper and digitized;
- Spoken examples from Euskal Telebista 1 (ETB1, public TV channel that broadcasts in Basque).

When authentic examples are cited, the source is indicated. Those cases with no specified source correspond to examples constructed by the compilers of the database.

An entry was created for each of the individual expressions cited below. The entries may be classified as follows, according to the crosslinguistic hypercategory they belong to:

- Category SEEM:
 - the verbs *irudi* and *eman* ‘seem’;
 - the particle *bide* ‘apparently’
 - the adverb *nonbait* ‘apparently’.
- Category SEE:
 - the verb *ikusi* ‘see’.
- Category MUST:
 - the noun *behar* ‘obligation, necessity, duty’, accompanied by the auxiliary for transitive verbs and a participle.
- Category SAY:
 - the verb *esan* (or *erran*, depending on the dialect) ‘say’;
 - the postposition *arabera* ‘according to’;
 - the particles *omen* and *ei* ‘it is said’.

As is the case with the English and Spanish evidentials, a reading of all the fields of an entry permits a characterization of the evidential expression concerned. Conversely, a look at the same fields across entries lends itself to an overview of features of evidentiality in Basque. Following this last perspective, we will give a cross-entry account of the evidentials, based on a subset of the fields:

(a) **Formal variants:** dialectal varieties are frequent in Basque, due to the historical weakness of unifying influences such as communication roads or prestige dialects. Not surprisingly, most items have formal variants. Some cases are: *iduri* for *irudi*; *behar*, *biar*, *bier* and *ber* for *behar*; and *emen*, *umen*, *ümen*, *emon* and *men* for *omen*.

(b) **Other (non-evidential) functions:** many of the Basque evidentials are polysemous. *Irudi* is also a noun, meaning ‘figure’ or ‘image’; *eman* is also a lexical verb meaning ‘give’, and may also be used as an equivalent of ‘let’s suppose’ (first person plural) in imperative clauses; *behar* may express necessity ‘to need’, deontic modality and intentional future; *omen* and *ei* are also nouns meaning ‘fame’; *bide* is mainly a noun meaning ‘path, way’, from which the evidential developed; *nonbait* is also an adverb of place meaning ‘somewhere’, and *arabera* with non-reportative verbs has a meaning equivalent to the comparative correlative, as in the English construction ‘the more/-er ... the more/-er’ (e.g. *The thinner you get, the weaker you become*).

(c) **Subfunctions**, which correspond to subdomains of evidentiality: the only expression used with a direct evidential value is *ikusi*, which, like its equivalents *see* in English and *ver* in Spanish, can have under its scope a proposition referring to a fact that the speaker/writer has directly witnessed, as in (5). *Ikusi* also resembles its English and Spanish equivalents in that it may have inferential uses, where the evidence is indirect, as in (6):

- (5) Jon kalea zeharkatzen ari zela ikusi dut.
 Jon street.the crossing PROGRESSIVE AUX.COMP see AUX
 PARTICLE

I have seen that Jon was crossing the street.

- (6) Taldean giro ona dagoela ikusi dut.
 team.the.in atmosphere good.the there is.COMP see AUX
I have seen that in the team there is a good atmosphere.

For the expressions belonging to the category SEEM, the evidentiality is always inferential; that is, the state or event is not perceived directly, but retrieved through a process of mental reasoning. The inference may be drawn with the aid of external evidence; the subtype (perceptual or non-perceptual) is registered in the fields signalled with the ending ‘layer 2’. For the expressions belonging to the category SAY, namely *esan/erran*, *arabera*, *omen* and *ei*, the evidence is always reportative.

An example of how the non-evidential functions and the evidential subfunctions are registered is Figure 4, which corresponds to the verb *irudi*.

Figure 4. Functions of Basque entry for *irudi*.

(d) **Epistemic component:** this field registers whether the expressions have a meaning of epistemic modality (degree of probability) apart from the evidential meaning. In some cases, the epistemic meaning is a conversational implicature, which can be cancelled or suspended, and in others it is a permanent semantic feature. *Behar* has an epistemic component of this last type, which can be seen in Figure 5 together with an example of the subfunction 2 (inferential, non-perceptual evidentiality).

The screenshot shows a FileMaker Pro window titled "FileMaker Pro - [EUROEVIDMODV1_rev]". The interface includes a menu bar (Archivo, Edición, Vista, Insertar, Formato, Registros, Guiones, Ventana, Ayuda) and a toolbar with buttons for "Registros", "Mostrar todos", "Nuevo registro", "Eliminar registro", "Buscar", and "Ordenar". The main content area is titled "Presentación: EvidEurope" and displays a hierarchical structure of subfunctions for the entry "behar".

- other funcion 2:** Three functions: need (with the auxiliary "edun, it is translated as the verb 'need')
Dirua behar dut
'I need money'
- subfunction 1 layer 1:** inferential
- subfunction 1 layer 2:** perceptual
- subfunction 1 example:** Ahotzagitik eta hitz egiteko moduagatik adinekoak izan behar zutela pentsatu nuen.
'By their voice and their way of speaking I thought they must be of a certain age.'
Anjel Lertxundi, journal Berria, 29-3-2005.
- subfunction 2 layer 1:** inferential
- subfunction 2 layer 2:** perceptual
- subfunction 2 example:** Baiiteke, dena den, gertaeretara nolabaiteko hurbiltze poetikoa izatea; honela balitz ere, 1650. urtea baino lehenagokoa izan behar du, zeren eta bakarrik urte horretara arte bait dugu egilea –poemaren sareraren alpatzen den bezala– Arteako benefiziadua.
'In any case, it may be that there is a sort of poetic approach to events; even though it were so, it must be dated before the year 1650, because the author, according to the citation at the entry of the poem, is beneficiary from Artea only until that year'
Anjel Lertxundi, "Crimenaren Lertxundiaren Iniziatibak", ACIII, IV, 4, 78-149, Cuadernos de la UCLM, 2008.
- subfunction 3 layer 1:**
- subfunction 3 layer 2:**
- subfunction 3 example:**
- epistemic component:** yes
- epist. comp. example:** Status: semantic. It cannot be cancelled or suspended.
High, but not total, degree of certainty:
Piztaren gorputak Siberiako izotzean egon behar du.
'The poet's corpse must be under Siberia's ice.'
Anjel Lertxundi, Paper-festa, 2012, 203.
- associated component 1:**

Figure 5. Epistemic component in the entry for *behar*.

6. Conclusion

The evidential expressions in the three languages briefly described in this paper show certain similarities, especially between English and Spanish, in several respects. Firstly, we find evidential expressions for all the basic subdomains and values (direct, indirect inferential and reportative), very often displaying multifunctionality. Secondly, evidentials are typically derived from non-evidential expressions through processes of conventionalization. And thirdly, there appears to be a strong relation between evidentiality and epistemic modality.

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The Morphological Constraint in Agreement Computations: the case of production errors in English and Spanish

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Abstract

The potential informational sources lying behind the workings of the agreement system have been largely discussed and scrutinized in experimental studies, pioneered by Bock and Miller's (1991) seminal work. There exists a variety of interactive theoretical accounts that acknowledge the undeniable interference of conceptual structure in the system, but nevertheless these do not coincide in the way in which morphology can affect agreement computations. Through a set of cross-linguistic error-elicitation tasks that will be carried out in two languages that greatly differ in their morphological architecture, i.e. English and Spanish, this study intends to ascertain the role of morphology in agreement production and draw theoretical implications that help to solve the conflicting premises proposed by the two theoretical approaches under scrutiny, namely the *maximalist model* and the *constraint satisfaction approach*.

Keywords: subject-verb agreement, production, attraction errors, morphology

1. Introduction

The potential informational sources lying behind the workings of the agreement system have been largely discussed and scrutinized in experimental studies, pioneered by Bock and Miller's (1991) seminal work. The main debate has been revolving around the idea of agreement as either a purely syntactic phenomenon - following classic generative views (Bock and Eberhard 1993, Franck et al. 2002, among others); or contrariwise, as an interactive process whereby syntax and semantics both play a crucial role in the implementation of agreement markings, as supported by Vigliocco et al. (1996), Haskell et al. (2010), among others. In the experimental domain, it has been demonstrated that conceptual structure is an undeniable source of information that interferes with agreement operations (*vid.* Eberhard 1999; Thornton and MacDonald 2003; among others), which in turn reveals that the grammatical encoding of agreement is set within a syntax-semantics interface.

However, there exists a variety of interactive theoretical accounts that acknowledge the aforementioned potential semantic interference but nevertheless do not coincide in the way in which morphology can affect agreement computations. Therefore, the point of departure of this piece of research will be based on the concept that the architectural morphology of a language is susceptible to become a relevant constraint which interferes with the agreement system. Therefore, what this preliminary experimental study intends to examine is: how agreement morphology behaves during agreement implementation and to what extent it constitutes a relevant constraint in influencing agreement operations in production. In order to accomplish this purpose, a set of cross-linguistic error-elicitation tasks will be carried out in two languages that greatly differ in their morphological architecture, i.e. English and Spanish. This methodology has been inspired by Foote and Bock (2012) whose

study focuses on the comparison of two varieties of the same language, namely Dominican and Mexican Spanish.

2. Theoretical framework

As mentioned above, there exist different interactive theories of agreement production that acknowledge the potential influence of semantics as well as morphology during agreement implementation, but they do differ in their arguments in explaining such interference when agreement errors arise. In the first place, the *maximalist approach* advocates for an agreement system characterized by its porosity, which allows interaction between syntax and semantics through a process labelled *unification* (Vigliocco and Franck 2001, Vigliocco and Hartsuiker 2002). When comparing the results of several experimental studies (Vigliocco 1995, Vigliocco et al. 1996a, Vigliocco et al. 1996b, Eberhard 1999, Humphreys and Bock 2005), they found relevant cross-linguistic differences inasmuch as they found that the occurrence of agreement errors was higher in poor-morphological languages like English (**The label on the bottles are white*) than in rich-morphological languages like Spanish (**La etiqueta de las botellas son blancas*). Therefore, they elaborated a hypothesis to explain the role of morphology as a constraint which affects the occurrence of errors in languages with different morphological architecture. Their hypothesis is based on the *symbolic thesis* (Langacker 1991) which states that every linguistic form has an associated meaning. Thus, the more morphological cues a language explicitly marks, the more connection with the conceptual structure it would allow. That is why they argue that morphologically redundant languages have a stronger connection with the conceptual structure.

Then, the *constraint satisfaction approach* is another theory that considers the possibility that agreement operations are prone to be influenced by different sources of information, either syntactic or extrasyntactic (Haskell and MacDonald 2003; Haskell, Thornton and MacDonald 2010). According to this model, there exists constant interaction and competition between the factors, which opportunistically affect agreement operations if it is advantageous for the parser (Acuña-Fariña 2012:16). *Syntax* and *semantics* are regarded as the two major sources in interaction which compete in order to rule in the agreement process. Within this competitive context, minor factors such as *morphology* may emerge to affect agreement opportunistically. Contrary to the *maximalist approach*, this model argues that a rich morphology strengthens the syntactic force, and that a poor morphology favors notional interference since the lack of morphology weakens the syntactic force. This means that they expect to find more errors in poor-morphological languages like English (**The label of the bottles are white*) showing a higher degree of semantic interference than rich-morphological languages (**La etiqueta de las botellas son blancas*) whose redundant morphology would block such a strong conceptual interference.

3. Method

Participants.

The population sample recruited for carrying out the experiments were 20 Spanish-speaking participants and 20 English-speaking participants within an age range comprised between 20 and 30 years old.

Materials.

As a whole, the materials for this two-experiment project are constituted by a set of four sentence completion tasks organized in the following way: two are used to test the influence of one semantic variable, namely distributivity (Experiment 1), and the other two are used to

test another semantic variable, namely concreteness (Experiment 2). Then, as the experiments are to be performed cross-linguistically, the two tests conforming each experiment correspond to an English completion task along with its Spanish analogue so that the experiments can be comparable and carried out across the two groups of participants described above.

The materials used for Experiment 1 on distributivity consist of 30 experimental items in the mismatch condition (sg. head noun + pl. local noun) organized in two experimental conditions: 15 of them are distributive (i.e. they allow a multiple-token interpretation), and 15 are non-distributive (i.e. they have a single-token referent) similar to the ones illustrated in the following examples in Table 1.

MISMATCH CONDITION (SG. HEAD NOUN + PL. LOCAL NOUN)		
	ENGLISH	SPANISH
DISTRIBUTIVE	(1) The door of the houses...	(2) La puerta de las casas...
NON-DISTRIBUTIVE	(3) The home of the ladies...	(4) El hogar de las mujeres...

Table 1. Examples experimental conditions for Experiment 1 on distributivity.

Then, 45 preambles constitute the group of the filler preambles in the match control condition - within which 22 follow the sg. + sg. setup and 23 follow the pl. + pl. setup exemplified in Table 2 below.

MATCH (CONTROL) CONDITION		
	ENGLISH	SPANISH
SG. + SG.	(5) The ball of the boy...	(6) La pelota <u>del chico</u> ...
PL. + PL.	(7) The collars of the dogs...	(8) Los collares de los <u>perros</u> ...

Table 2. Examples control conditions for Experiment 1 on distributivity.

Afterwards, one list of 75 preambles combining the 30 experimental items and the 45 fillers was designed for each language.

As regards Experiment 2 on concreteness, the experimental items in the mismatch condition amount to 30: 15 of them contain a concrete head noun and a concrete local noun (C + C condition), opposed to the other 15 headed by an abstract noun and followed by a concrete local noun (A + C condition) as the following examples show.

MISMATCH CONDITION (SG. HEAD NOUN + PL. LOCAL NOUN)		
	ENGLISH	SPANISH
A + C	(9) The meaning of the kisses...	(10) El significado de los besos...
C + C	(11) The cabin of the explorers	(12) La cabaña de los exploradores

Table 3. Examples experimental conditions for Experiment 2 on concreteness.

The 45 remaining preambles constitute the group of the filler preambles in the match control condition in which both constituents of the complex NP are either singular or plural (vid. Table 4). For each language, one 75-preamble list was created.

Match (control) condition		
	ENGLISH	SPANISH
SG. + SG.	(13)The button of the shirt...	(14)El botón de la camisa...
PL. + PL.	(15)The uniforms of the soldiers	(16)El uniforme de los soldados

Table 4. Examples control conditions for Experiment 2 on concreteness.

Procedure.

The participants were asked to read the preambles aloud and to provide an ending to create a complete sentence, and to continue doing the same with the rest of the preambles as quick as possible. It is important to note that they were told to complete the sentences using the verb *to be* so that the detection of subject-verb number agreement errors could be detected in English. They were recorded individually. First, each participant was recorded completing Experiment 1 on distributivity, and then Experiment 2 on concreteness with a 10-minute break in-between.

Scoring.

Subsequent to the execution of the tasks, they were all transcribed. As a result, I had a total amount of 80 completion tasks, 40 from each experiment within which 20 corresponded to the English-speaking participants and 20 to the Spanish native speakers. Each of the sentence completions provided for the experimental items was inserted into one of two scoring categories. The first category corresponds to *correct agreement*. This means that the inflected verb used by the subjects agrees in number with the head noun of the subject complex NP. The second category is labelled *incorrect agreement*, within which I included the sentence completions whereby the verb does not agree in number with the head noun of the subject complex NP. This category will be the relevant one for the purposes of the present study. The sentences that do not fit in these two categories will be ruled out from the analysis. Finally, after obtaining the results, the chi-square goodness-of-fit test will be applied in order to ascertain the statistical significance of the error agreement data using SPSS.

4. Data analysis

The cross-linguistic results exposed in figure 1 and figure 2 below show that there exists variability in the extent to which conceptual structure interferes in the agreement system across languages. English and Spanish show a noticeable difference in the magnitude of errors especially in the conditions revealing conceptual interference: these being the errors committed in the distributive preambles (fig.1) and in the abstract-headed preambles (fig.2). Figure 1 exhibits the error data obtained in Experiment 1 on distributivity from a cross-linguistic perspective. Particularly relevant is the difference between the percent of errors in the distributive preambles (26%) by the English as opposed to the percent of errors committed in the same condition by the Spanish (14%).

- (17) *The label on the bottles are white. (DISTRIBUTIVE. 26%)
 (18) *La etiqueta de las botellas son blancas. (DISTRIBUTIVE. 14%)

These differences have proved to be statistically significant (i.e. $p \leq 0.05$). This is suggestive of the fact that the influence exerted by the variable of distributivity is not evenly balanced across languages which differ in their morphological architecture.

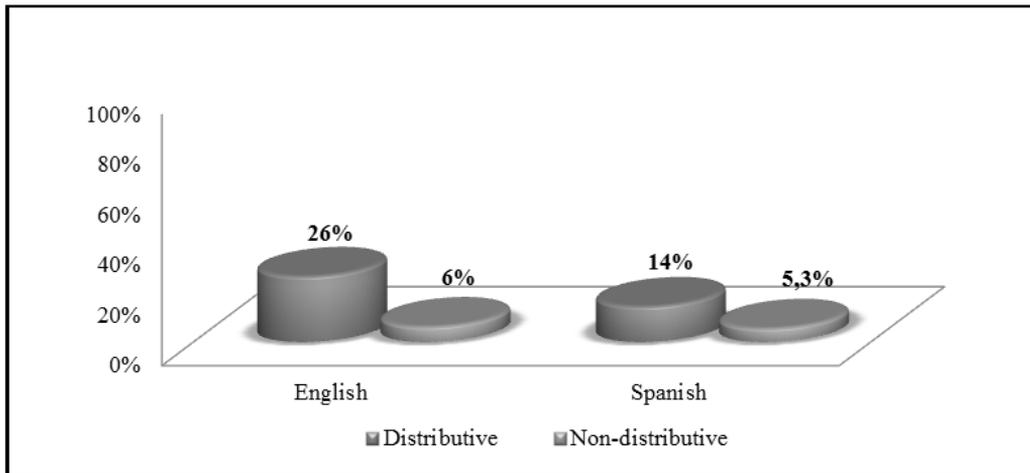


Figure 1: English vs. Spanish distributivity errors (Exp.1)

Likewise, figure 2 below – which illustrates the rates of errors committed in Experiment 2 on concreteness from a cross-linguistic perspective – seems to point in the same direction as the cross-linguistic comparison of Experiment 1. The percentage of errors in both experimental conditions is considerably higher in English than in Spanish. This difference is again more accentuated in the experimental condition that would reveal the potential influence of the semantic variable, in this case it is the A + C condition: 15% errors in English against 8% of errors in Spanish.

- (19) *The size of the presents are big. (A+C. 15%)
 (20) *El tamaño de los regalos son grandes. (A+C. 8%)

Again, these differences across languages proved to be statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$).

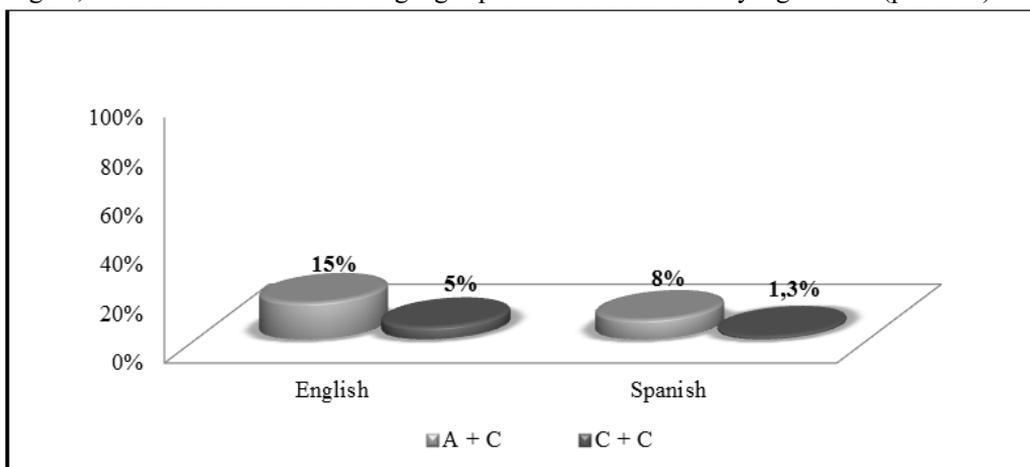


Figure 2. English vs. Spanish concreteness errors (Exp.2)

Neither on distributivity nor on concreteness are the differences of the errors evenly balanced across languages; moreover on the contrary, there is an appreciable difference among the percentages. Considering the differences between English and Spanish morphological

architecture, this uneven distribution of errors across languages may indicate that morphology is another constraint to be taken into account when analyzing the workings of the agreement system. The possible implications of these results related to the morphological component are to be examined in the discussion.

5. Discussion

In light of the cross-linguistics results exposed above, it seems that *morphology* is a potential constraint to take into account during agreement implementation, whose influence is especially noticeable when syntax and semantics are competing. Already Berg (1998) seemed to point in the same direction as the present results regarding the role played by the morphological component of a language during agreement computations:

If the syntactic influence is relatively weak, it may be overridden by the semantic influence. [T]his appears to be a fair description of the English system. What, then, weakens the syntactic factor in this language? Agreement presupposes a morphology to express the relationship between target and controller. As is well known, the inflectional morphology of English is highly impoverished. Thus there is hardly any opportunity for (syntactically based) agreement processes to operate in English. It is a general cognitive principle that frequency impacts upon the strength of a phenomenon. The less frequently it occurs, the weaker it is. As a consequence, the limited opportunity that the language provides for expressing syntactically based agreement relationships involves a weakening of the syntactic force. The situation is quite different in German. (Berg 1998: 60)

In line with Berg's explanation, these results seem to indicate that when the morphology of a language is redundant, such as Spanish, the morphological factor favors formal agreement inasmuch as the redundancy of morphological cues strengthen the syntactic force and block the interference of conceptual structure. However, in languages characterized by their morphological attrition, the shortage of morphological cues weakens the syntactic strength, letting semantics leak more easily in the system. Therefore, these results seem to acknowledge the opportunistic behavior of the agreement system since it opportunistically exploits and takes advantage of the morphological architecture of the language to favor either syntax, as it happens in Spanish, or semantics, as in the case of English.

Furthermore, these results let us draw several significant theoretical implications concerning the two theoretical frameworks explained in the very beginning of the study, namely the *maximalist approach* and the *constraint satisfaction approach*. To begin with, the cross-linguistic results of the present study do not match the arguments proposed by the *maximalist approach* as regards the role of morphology inasmuch as they would predict that rich morphological languages would allow more conceptual penetration than poor morphological languages on the basis of the symbolic thesis. However, the present results point towards the opposite direction, which seems to go in accordance with the premises of the *constraint satisfaction approach*. The latter approach relies on several premises that coincide with the findings of the present work. Agreement morphology – which is endowed with a morphosyntactic function – arises as a minor constraint when the two major sources are competing, namely syntax and semantics. Therefore, the richer the morphology of a language is, the less conceptual penetration it would allow inasmuch as rich morphology favors syntax in such a competition context. Contrariwise, this morphosyntactic function loses strength in languages with poor morphology. That is why we find more conceptual interference, i.e. more errors, in poor-morphological languages.

6. Conclusions

The results and findings obtained out of this experimental study conclude that the agreement system is opportunistic in that it opportunistically exploits the morphological architecture of the language to favor either syntax, like Spanish, or semantics, like English. More importantly, this establishes *morphology* as a constraint determining the magnitude of notional effects in agreement implementation. Besides, the present results evidence the appropriateness and psychological adequacy of the *constraint satisfaction approach* and reject the premises of the *maximalist model* concerning the role of morphology.

As it has been proved that agreement operations are sensitive to the influence of morphology, it seems necessary to extend this study and try to measure the size of the morphological component of different languages and make a gradient of influence. Besides, it would be very enlightening to extend this study to other populations like second language learners in order to ascertain if this opportunistic behavior of natives also applies when the same mind makes use of two strikingly different morphological architectures.

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Propositional *ish* as a syntactic Speech Act Phrase

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the analysis of the morphosyntax of the propositional free morpheme *ish*. The main goal of the paper is to outline a morphosyntactic configuration for propositional *ish* that incorporates recent semantic analyses that treat this morpheme as a metalinguistic degree operator, and is compatible with the analysis of the bound adjective-forming morpheme *-ish*, i.e. with a unified analysis of *ish/-ish*. I propose that *ish* spells out a Sentience/Evidentiality projection in the scope of an attenuated Speech Act functional head that immediately c-commands it. This accounts for the double hedging effect of propositional *ish*, which expresses (i) a lack of full commitment to the illocutionary force of the speech act and (ii) a lack of full commitment to the proposition expressed.¹

Keywords: propositional *ish*, morphosyntax, degree morphology, speech act, hedging

1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the free morpheme *ish* appearing in (1).² This is a relatively recent innovation of the bound morpheme *-ish*, a cross-categorial bound morpheme that forms adjectives. As illustrated in (2), it is commonly found attached to adjectives, nouns, verbs, numerals or adverbs, and it can even take a phrase as a complement, as in (3).

- (1) a. Korbel: “Starting tomorrow.”
Colleen: “So we have until midnight?”
Korbel: *Ish*. (CASO)
b. I liked the movie ... *ish* (Bochnak & Csipak 2014, 433)
- (2) blueish, childish, skitterish, sluggish, thirtyish, nowish (Bauer et al. 2013, 304)
- (3) a man-in-the-streetish sort of opinion (Morris 2009, 208)

The main goal of this paper is to suggest a morphosyntactic analysis of propositional *ish*, which has the semantics of a (metalinguistic) degree operator (Bochnak & Csipak 2014)

¹ My deepest thanks to Antonio Fábregas, Ángel Jiménez-Fernández, and Javier Fernández for their generous suggestions. Thanks also to the audience of the 39th AEDEAN Conference. I am the only one responsible for any remaining mistakes. The research underlying this work has been partially supported by projects FFI2013-46987-C3-2-P (MINECO), FFI2012-32705 (MINECO) and grant SGR 1546-2014 to the Funded Emerging Research Group GRELALIC (AGAUR).

² I use *ish* when describing the free morpheme in (1), and *-ish* when referring to the suffix appearing in examples (2)-(3) above.

and is compatible with Oltra-Massuet's (2016) morphosyntactic analysis of the bound morpheme *-ish*.

In a nutshell, as suggested in Oltra-Massuet (2016), *ish* is a syntactically unselective or cross-categorial morpheme that spells out a functional head F^0_1 selected as the complement of a functional head F^0_2 containing a feature [approx]. Such an underspecified morpheme and a late insertion realization of syntactic structures advocated for in the Distributed Morphology framework (Halle & Marantz 1993 and related work) are the main ingredients to derive the polysemy of *ish*, as well as its external syntax. In all cases, the semantics of *ish* refers to a degree that is slightly less than the standard, as proposed in Bochnak & Csipak (2014). This degree variable need not be syntactically present, but can be coerced in the semantic component. In the case of propositional *ish*, its syntactic behavior patterns with speaker-oriented adverbs, and, its semantic contribution is "typically speaker-oriented, in that its attenuating flavor reports on a subjective judgment of the speaker" (Bochnak & Csipak 2014, 435). Thus, I propose to identify the two F^0 involved in the structure of *ish/-ish* with Speas & Tenny (2003) Speech Act Phrase and Sentient/Evaluative Phrase.³

Next, I sketch the main features of previous works on *ish* that are relevant for the analysis. In §3, I briefly summarize those aspects of the theoretical model that are relevant for my analysis, and spell out my proposal. §4 concludes and suggests further directions.

2. Previous accounts

Building on work by Sugawara (2012), Bochnak & Csipak (2014) [henceforth, B&C] suggest that propositional *ish* is a general precision-regulator in (1a) and a clause-final particle that hedges on a speaker's degree of commitment to a proposition in (1b). In all uses, *ish* is a degree operator with a flexible semantic type of the form $\langle\langle d, \alpha \rangle, \alpha \rangle$, i.e. it just requires to bind a degree variable. When attached to adjectives, *-ish* targets the scale lexically encoded in gradable adjectives and identifies a degree that is slightly less than the standard for the constituent it applies to. For propositional *ish*, they adopt Morzycki's (2011) PREC, a type-shifting mechanism that makes the degree of precision available through lambda abstraction, so that *ish* targets a scale of precision. This type-shifting function applies to a proposition of type $\langle s, t \rangle$ and transforms it into a type $\langle d, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle$ proposition, thus providing an appropriate degree variable for *ish*, whose interpretation is "I'm being less than fully precise when I say that P".

- (4) a. $\llbracket \text{PREC } \alpha \rrbracket^d = \lambda d. \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^d$
 b. $\llbracket \dots ish \rrbracket^{d,c} = \lambda p \langle d, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle. \{ \lambda w. \max \{ d' | p(d')(w) \} < d \text{ small}_c(d-d') \}$

As for the syntax of *ish*, to the best of my knowledge, Duncan (2015) is the only syntactic-oriented analysis of *ish*.⁴ Duncan identifies the main properties of *ish* listed in (5)-(9).⁵

³ Thanks to Ángel Jiménez-Fernández (p.c.) and Javier Fernández (p.c.) for pointing out this work to me.

⁴ Cf. Bauer et al.'s (2013) distribution of *-ish*.

⁵ Duncan also mentions that, unlike approximative *almost*, *ish* can appear with atelic predicates as in (1b), which could seem at odds with my proposal of an [approx] feature determining insertion of *ish*. Note, however, that there are different types of approximating hedges, and *ish* seems to rather parallel with *sort of/kind of*, *sorta/kinda* (see B&C for the contrast; see also Kay 1984), as exemplified in (i).

(i) But you know, I sort of like to know about the deal. (COCA)

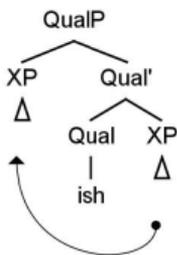
- (5) It cannot appear in yes/no questions.
 - a. *Have you finished your paper *ish*?
- (6) It cannot be negated by a matrix clause.
 - a. *It is not the case that John finished his assignment *ish*.
- (7) It cannot appear within various projections of auxiliaries.
 - a. *I will have *ish* been beaten by Mary.
- (8) It cannot be fronted.
 - a. **Ish*, Katie answered my question.
- (9) It displays island effects.
 - a. It was a [a paper]_i that John finished t_i.
 - b. * It was a [a paper]_i that John finished t_i *ish*.

B&C also note property (6), and add that *ish* cannot be embedded under an *if* clause either, although they can appear under reportative or attitude predicates, as illustrated in (10)-(11).

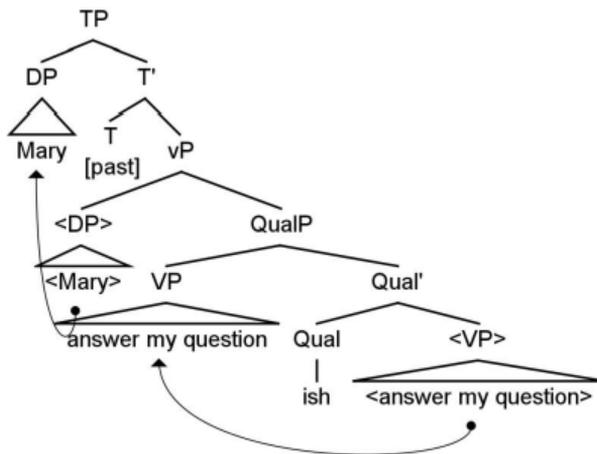
- (10) It resists embedding under conditional *if*.
 - a. ??If Lee draws a circle ...*ish*, he will get a gold star.
- (11) It can be embedded under reportative or attitude predicates.
 - a. Lee told me that Kim liked the movie ... *ish*.
 - b. Lee believes that Kim liked the movie ...*ish*.

Although Duncan (2015) mentions the hedging function of this structure, he does not delve into the semantics of *ish*. He proposes that *ish* spells out the head of a Qualifier Phrase that can take a VP, a PP, or an AP complement, as represented in (12), and exemplified in 0.

- (12) General structure for QualP, where XP is VP or PP



- (13) Mary answered my question ish. QualP with VP complement.



The main problem with this proposal is that it appears as unrelated to current theories of syntax, and it is unclear what this QualP stands for or refers to, as it does not account for the resulting category of the *-ish/ish* form, nor is it explanatory of its function and interpretation in the various positions where it appears or the morphosyntactic properties resulting from them.

3. *Ish* as SpeechAct^o with Sentient/Eval^o properties

I propose that the properties of *ish* identified in Duncan (2015) and B&C (2014), briefly described in (5)-(11) above, derive from the speaker-oriented status of propositional *ish*. So, note that, as in (5), speaker-oriented adverbs like *frankly*, *honestly* or *truthfully* cannot appear in yes-no questions, either.⁶ As pointed out in Ernst (2009), speaker-oriented adverbs are positive polarity items, and, like *ish* in (6), cannot follow negation.⁷ Likewise, their syntactic position is restricted to the Left periphery, so that, like *ish* in (7), they do not appear within auxiliary projections. With respect to (9), we can establish a parallelism with speaker-oriented parentheticals, which also show island effects (Corver 1994). Likewise, B&C already point out that (10)-(11) are properties of typical speaker-oriented elements. Pending a deeper analysis, I take the constraint in (8) to be related to the morpho-phonological status of *ish*, i.e. despite its appearance as a free morpheme, it has still properties of a bound morpheme.

The next questions are (i) what is the syntactic characterization of propositional *ish*? and (ii) how can the speaker-oriented status of *ish* be made compatible with the morphosyntactic properties of *-ish* in examples like (2)-(3) above? More generally, it is necessary (i) to account for the polysemous and polycategorial status of *ish*, and (ii) to try to derive it from a single vocabulary item *ish*.

As suggested in Oltra-Massuet (2016), *ish* is an approximative or attenuative unselective morpheme. Syntactically, it is a categorially weak morpheme, i.e. it does not specify category or category selection; these are contextually determined. It only requires to be inserted under the immediate scope of [approx]. These properties are best accounted for in a framework like Distributed Morphology, a syntactic theory of morphology that assumes a

⁶ Thanks to A. Fábregas (p.c.) for this observation.

⁷ This is also in accordance with Cinque's (1997, 124) observation that adverbs above an epistemic modality phrase cannot be interpreted under negation.

single generative engine for all structure-building, with Late Insertion of underspecified morpho-phonological material.

Oltra-Massuet (2016) suggests that *ish* spells out F^0_1 in a configuration like (14).

(14) [FP F^0_2 [approx] [FP F^0_1 [...]]]

This proposal allows Oltra-Massuet (2016) to integrate syntactically and semantically idiosyncratic denominal and deverbal *-ish* adjectives, e.g. *very* {*childish*, *feverish*, *bookish*, *bullish*, *skitterish*} into regular and productive *-ish* formation, e.g. **very* {*reddish*, *fortyish*, *downish*}, whereby *-ish* can either spell out an adjectival relational head or the head of its extended projection DegP (Corver 1997, Kennedy 1999). The degree variable required by *ish* is syntactically provided in cases like *reddish*, lexically coerced in *childish*, and supplied through the type-shifting function PREC in *fortyish* (see Oltra-Massuet 2016 for details).

My claim is that in the case of propositional *ish*, the same vocabulary item is the spellout of a Sentient/Eval head that is selected as the complement of a SpeechActP (Speas & Tenny 2003; cf. Cinque 1997) specified with the feature [approx], as in (15).

(15) [SpeechActP Speech Act^o [approx] [Sentient/EvalP Sentient/Eval^o [...]]]

Insertion of *-ish* in Sentient/EvalP makes it acquire the properties of evaluative mood, which relates the truth of the state of affairs described in the propositional complement to some sentient mind that evaluates it on the basis of some knowledge or evidence. In the default case, the Sentient and the Speaker will be co-referential, so that the Speech Act controls the reference of Sentient/Eval under a c-command relation. However, they may be non-coreferential, as in (11) above, where *ish* is ambiguous, as it may modify the matrix or the embedded proposition. The fact that it also relates to an [approx]-specified Speech Act Phrase accounts for the lack of full commitment to the illocutionary force of the speech act, i.e. we are dealing with an attenuated or weak assertion contributed by the hedging function of *ish* in this position. More importantly, it accounts for the syntactic parallelism of *ish* with speaker-oriented adverbs.

As argued for in B&C, semantically, *ish* identifies a degree that is slightly less than the standard for the constituent it applies to. It is semantically flexible, in that it does not select a fully specified semantic type; it just requires a degree variable, which in the case of propositional *ish*, can be obtained through a type-shifting operation that provides a degree of precision. In cases like (1), such degree of precision states that “the degree to which the speaker is committed to a proposition *p* is less than maximal”, that is, the speaker is being imprecise (below a standard of precision) in evaluating the truth of the proposition.

Thus, *ish* always receives a regular interpretation of a degree that is slightly less than the standard for the constituent it applies to. Variation depends on the type of degree variable it binds and the syntactic category it spells out in each configuration.

I leave open the issue of the contextual categorization and syntactic properties of propositional *ish*. I assume that propositional *ish* is contextually categorized as an adverb,⁸ which seems the most plausible characterization of *ish* in this position. Cinque’s (1997, 22) analysis of adverbs as “the overt manifestation of (the specifier of) different F^0 ” would support my assumption for the categorial status and hedging function of free *ish*. However, I have not spelled-out the details of this proposal, for it requires a thorough analysis of the

⁸ It is interesting to note that adjectives and adverbs have been argued to belong to the same category, e.g. in Emmonds (1970, 1976). Under this assumption, the interpretation of a structure as an adjective or as an adverb would be determined by the larger configurational domain where it appears.

status of affixes, specifically those that can appear unbounded. That is, providing an answer to the more general question on the morphosyntactic status of *-ish*. The examples discussed in this paper, where the suffix *-ish* can stand on its own, seem to challenge the status of affixes as bounded derivational morphemes, and are especially appropriate to assess recent proposals in Lowenstamm (2010) and Creemers et al. (2014) that argue against the analysis of derivational affixes as categorizers and treat (all or some) affixes as roots. It would be worth exploring a treatment of *ish* as a root, unspecified for category, so that it can merge with another root, a head, or a phrase, as suggested in Lowenstamm (2010). Being a root would probably simplify the status of *ish* as a bound morpheme that can stand on its own. However, at this point it is unclear to me what merging a root to a clausal phrase would imply in cases like phrasal *ish* in (3).

3. Concluding remarks

To conclude, I have claimed that *ish* is syntactically underspecified for insertion in an F° dominated by an F° specified with [approx], which means that its insertion is contextually determined. It is semantically flexible, so that it just needs a degree variable to bind. If not syntactically contributed, as with gradable adjectives, nor lexically coerced in cases where some gradable property can be evoked, a type-shifting operation can provide a degree of precision. The latter applies in the case of propositional *ish*. Hence, semantics restricts the combinatorial possibilities of *ish*, a conclusion that supports a syntactic view of morphology with underspecification and late insertion. That means that a unified analysis of *ish* is possible, where the polycategorical and polysemous nature of *ish* derives from a set of closely interrelated factors:

- (i) source of the degree variable: syntactic, lexical, coerced;
- (ii) categorial underspecification of *ish*;
- (iii) late insertion of *ish*;
- (iv) syntactic context of insertion.

When *ish* spells out a Sentience/Evidentiality projection in the scope of a weakened Speech Act head that immediately c-commands it, *ish* gets a dual hedging effect that expresses both a lack of full commitment to the illocutionary force of the assertive speech act and a lack of full commitment to the proposition expressed.

I have left a number of open issues. For instance, the apparently unconstrained context of insertion needs revision, since *ish* can apparently be inserted anywhere, as long as it is in the immediate scope of an [approx]-specified head, and a degree variable can be provided in the semantic computation. The specifics on the insertion of [approx] have not been discussed either. Likewise, the dual status of propositional *ish* requires a more detailed analysis within the context of analyses of the Speech Act Phrase and speaker-oriented adverbs.

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Topic/Focus Fronting and Factive Clauses

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Abstract

We analyze the differences between English and Spanish with respect to the application of the operations of Topicalisation and Focalisation to main clauses and its possible extension to subordinate clauses, bearing in mind the distinction assumed here between factive and non-factive clauses. This task will help us find out the reasons that explain the parametric variation detected in the two languages in light of the different syntactic positions that the languages use for the topic and focus elements. We suggest that discourse movement implies different landing-sites in English and Spanish. Consequently, both languages interact with factivity in a different way. To be more precise, discourse movement is more constrained in English factive clauses than in Spanish ones. This restriction is due to intervention effects and the distinct syntactic positions used in each language.

Keywords: Topicalisation, Focalisation, factivity, intervention

1. Introduction

Following Hooper & Thompson (1973), English Topicalisation and Focalisation are possible in the complement clauses of non-factive predicates and of the semantic class of the main predicate. In this regard, Haegeman & Ürögdi (2010) propose that factive complements are derived by leftward movement of a TP-internal clause-typing operator to the left periphery of the clause. Under this analysis their incompatibility with Topicalisation and Focalisation will be due to intervention. However, according to Jiménez-Fernández & Miyagawa (2014), factive complement clauses are compatible with CLLD. Indeed, Camacho-Taboada & Jiménez-Fernández (2014) argue that Spanish focus fronting is also compatible with all types of subordinate clauses. The purpose of our study is to find out the reasons that explain this parametric variation in light of the different syntactic positions that the languages use for the topic and focus elements.

2. English Topicalisation/Focalisation

In the literature it has often been observed that English Topicalisation is not compatible with factivity. In this connection, in English the priority is that the subject receives nominative case in the specifier of TP. Thus, the specifier of this phrase is not an available landing site for topic constituents. Instead, we suggest that topics have to move to CP since topic features are not lowered from C to T. However, on their way to CP, topicalised constituents would have to move across a factive operator. Such a movement would cause intervention. Hence, topic movement in English factive clauses is illicit. In this sense, non-factive complements are expected to admit Topicalisation, while factive complements resist it.

- (1) a. The researcher explained that each part he had examined very carefully. (adapted from Hooper & Thompson 1973: 474)
 b. [_{CP} each part_i [_{TP} he [_{VP} had examined each part_i very carefully]]]].
-
- (2) a. *Peter resents that this book John read. (adapted from Maki *et al* 1999: 3)
 b. [_{CP} OP_i [_{FP} OP_i [_{TP} John [_{VP} read this book]]]]].
-

Interestingly, in English focus movement is permitted with non-factive verbs but not with factives. In particular, since the factive operator is hosted by CP, it will block focus fronting, which also involves CP. Such a result would be deviant. Thus, English factive clauses are incompatible with Focalisation.

- (3) a. We are sure that MEDICINE Peter will study next year (not psychology).
 b. [_{CP} MEDICINE_i [_{TP} Peter [_{VP} will study medicine_i next year]]]].
- (4) a. *I am surprised that MATHS John has passed (not chemistry).
 b. [_{CP} OP_i [_{FP} OP_i [_{TP} John [_{VP} has passed MATHS]]]]].
-

3. Spanish CLLD/Focalisation

At the same time, there are crucial contrasts between Spanish and English, and therefore the mechanism we assume for English Topicalisation cannot simply be transposed to Spanish:

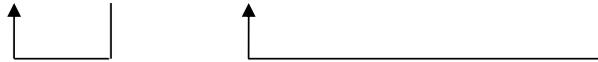
- (5) a. Me alegra que esta canción la cantarás en la fiesta.
 CL glad-PRES-3SG that this song CL sing-PAST-2SG in the party
I am glad that you have sung this song in the party.
 b. [_{CP} OP_i [_{FP} OP_i [_{TP} esta canción_j la cantarás [_{VP} pro esta canción_j en la fiesta]]]]].
-

As we can see in (5), Spanish clitic left dislocation (CLLD) does not give rise to the same intervention effects as English Topicalisation and it is allowed in factive clauses. According to Haegeman & Ürögdi (2010), the reasons for why Romance CLLD is allowed and English Topicalisation is disallowed in factive clauses are unclear. In line with them, one possible reason could be that CLLD is actually base-generated in its surface position. However, we use some arguments to justify that CLLD also undergoes movement in factive clauses. Instead, we propose that English Topicalisation and Spanish CLLD imply different landing-sites. Consequently, both languages interact with factivity in a different way. To be more precise, in Spanish, since the subject agrees with the verb and does not undergo movement to TP, topic elements can move freely into the specifier of such a projection. In this case, the factive operator is higher up and topic elements do not have to move across it. For this reason, we claim that CLLD is possible in Spanish factive clauses since these discourse constituents do not create intervention effects and the resulting sentence would be grammatical.

Similar to CLLD, embedded focus is readily available in Spanish factive clauses without restriction. More precisely, in Spanish, since the subject agrees with the verb and

does not undergo movement to TP, focus elements can move freely into the specifier of such a projection and satisfy the EPP. In this way, we have a straightforward explanation for the fact that this low focus does not result in an intervention effect the same way as English focusing does.

- (6) a. Pedro lamenta que ESTE LIBRO haya leído Juan (no ese).
 Peter regret-PRES-3SG that this book have-PERF-3SG read John not that
Peter regrets that John has read this book.
 b. [_{CP} OP_i [_{FP} ~~OP_i~~ [_{TP} ESTE LIBRO_j haya leído [_{VP} Juan ~~este libro_j~~]]]]].



4. Experimental evidence

In order to guarantee this descriptive analysis, we have selected ten native speakers of English and some others of Spanish in such a way that we can determine the degree of acceptability of the different word orders in both languages. We have used two tests in order to study factivity in English and Spanish. Specifically, the first test is concerned with English Topicalisation and Focalisation in factive clauses. The second test deals with Spanish CLLD/Focalisation in factive clauses.

5. Theoretical explanation

As far as English Focalisation is concerned, the test seems to show that factive and non-factive verbs behave in a similar way. More specifically, factive verbs show a high degree of incompatibility with the operation of focus fronting in English. At the same time, English Focalisation is compatible with only some non-factive verbs. In this sense, English is considered a fixed word order language. Therefore, focus displacement should be very restricted even with non-factive verbs. Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that it is factive complement clauses that resist discourse movement, and that this is related to the fact that non-factive clauses have different syntactic structures. In this respect, Hooper & Thompson's (1973) account for the restricted distribution of MCP drew essentially on pragmatic/semantic factors, that is, they associated the licensing of MCP with the concept of assertion. In this connection, we could state that the complement of these non-factive predicates may be asserted or non-asserted. More concretely, the absence of assertion would explain why non-factive verbs are incompatible with focus fronting. However, factive clauses require special attention. More precisely, as can be observed in Table 1, the experimental results provide evidence that English Focalisation is not possible in factive clauses. In this connection, the ungrammaticality of focus fronting in factive clauses arises from intervention. More particularly, English Focalisation does give rise to the typical intervention effects of other types of movement to the CP domain. In this respect, tensed factive complements contain a null factive operator in their left periphery. Such an operator in the left periphery is merged in a TP-related position and moved to the left periphery. The ungrammaticality of focus fronting thus arises from intervention. Specifically, if the factive operator is hosted by CP, it will block focus fronting, which also involves CP. In this case, the focused constituent would have to move across the factive operator. Such a result would be deviant. Hence, a movement analysis of factive clauses allows us to analyse this restriction in terms of an intervention effect. This situation corroborates our previous claim that focus movement in English is non-argumental.

Type of verb	Acceptable	Marginal	Unacceptable
A (non-factive)	0 (0%)	14 (28%)	36 (72%)
B (non-factive)	4 (8%)	12 (24%)	34 (68%)
C (non-factive)	2 (4%)	14 (28%)	34 (68%)
D (factive)	1 (2%)	12 (24%)	37 (74%)
E (factive)	1 (2%)	13 (26%)	36 (72%)

Table 1: English Focalisation.

As regards English Topicalisation, the judgements are quite similar (see Table 2). Specifically, the degree of acceptability of topic fronting in factive and non-factive clauses is very low. Indeed, this is predicted if we assume Miyagawa's idea that English is an agreement-prominent language, since in that case discourse is not so frequently reflected in the syntax of the language. However, factive clauses need further scrutiny. To be more precise, the ungrammaticality of topic fronting in factive clauses arises from intervention. In this sense, the lack of topic fronting derives from an intervention effect between a moved operator and the topicalised constituent. More concretely, since the factive operator lands in CP, it will block topic fronting, which also targets CP. In this situation, the topic constituent would have to move across the factive operator. The result would be ill formed. This situation corroborates our previous claim that topic movement in English is of a non-argumental nature. Notice also that Topicalisation is less degraded in factive clauses than in non-factive ones. As already commented, the complement of non-factive predicates may be asserted or non-asserted. In this way, the absence of assertion would explain why non-factive verbs may not be compatible with topic fronting.

Type of verb	Acceptable	Marginal	Unacceptable
A (non-factive)	0 (0%)	13 (26%)	37 (74%)
B (non-factive)	2 (4%)	14 (28%)	34 (68%)
C (non-factive)	1 (2%)	11 (22%)	38 (76%)
D (factive)	3 (6%)	14 (28%)	33 (66%)
E (factive)	3 (6%)	17 (34%)	30 (60%)

Table 2: English Topicalisation.

Regarding Spanish, the situation is quite different. In this case, as can be seen in Table 3 and 4, factivity correlates with Focalisation and CLLD in a better way. This circumstance leads us to think that discourse movement is language particular. Let us begin with the CLLD construction. In this sense, we have to say that Spanish is less restrictive than English, as a consequence of its being a discourse-prominent language. Besides, take into account that Spanish is considered a free word order language. Consequently, CLLD in Romance has a wider distribution than Topicalisation in English. More precisely, topicalised structures can be embedded quite freely in Spanish in such a way that the range of factive verbs that admit embedded phrases with a topicalised constituent is very wide. So, it is obvious that Spanish CLLD does not give rise to intervention and is grammatical. If both types of fronting involve the same projection CP, then it is not clear how one can be ruled out while the other is grammatical. In the test, CLLD is apparently licensed in factive clauses. It would appear that these clauses also refer to events/states of affairs and cannot be plausibly argued to differ interpretively from their English counterparts. Though the test shows differences among factive verbs, we will assume, based on the available data, that CLLD is at least more easily available in factive clauses in Spanish than Topicalisation would be in English, showing it is

not subject to the same licensing requirements. These findings confirm our previous claim that Spanish CLLD is of an argumental nature. To be more precise, since topics move to [Spec, T] they do not have to move across the factive operator. Consequently, the fronted argument in the CLLD construction does not lead to intervention.

Type of verb	Acceptable	Marginal	Unacceptable
A (non-factive)	44 (88%)	1 (2%)	5 (10%)
B (non-factive)	46 (92%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)
C (non-factive)	45 (90%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)
D (factive)	41 (82%)	2 (4%)	7 (14%)
E (factive)	37 (74%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%)

Table 3: Spanish CLLD.

Regarding Spanish Focalisation, it must be noted that for most informants it is at least marginally possible in factive clauses. More concretely, Spanish Focalisation is compatible with most non-factive verbs. In the same way, factive verbs show a high compatibility with the operation of focus fronting in Spanish. Thus, we demonstrate that Focalisation does not give rise to the typical intervention effects of other types of movement to the CP domain. Nevertheless, unlike what has been noted by Jiménez-Fernández & Camacho-Taboada (2014), Focalisation is more restricted than CLLD in factive clauses. In this regard, factive and non-factive predicates may be asserted or non-asserted. The absence of assertion would explain why in some cases these verbs may not be compatible with Spanish Focalisation.

Type of verb	Acceptable	Marginal	Unacceptable
A (non-factive)	13 (26%)	22 (44%)	15 (30%)
B (non-factive)	14 (28%)	23 (46%)	13 (26%)
C (non-factive)	8 (16%)	19 (38%)	23 (46%)
D (factive)	8 (16%)	26 (52%)	16 (32%)
E (factive)	15 (30%)	25 (50%)	10 (20%)

Table 4: Spanish Focalisation

6. Conclusion

To conclude, we have seen that factive clauses resist topic or focus fronting in English while remaining compatible with discourse movement in Spanish. This asymmetry follows from intervention. It implies that discourse elements behave in a different way and have a different location in English and Spanish.

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Motivation and Mistakes in the Oral Competence of Future Teachers of English

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Abstract

The oral performance of Spanish future teachers of English is an essential linguistic aspect that requires a thorough attention. Emotional stress in the form of anxiety or frustration and mistakes related to their mother tongue influence and determine the use of pedagogical strategies. In order to tackle these two issues, a classroom intervention was performed. Before attempting any pedagogical innovation, a semi-structured questionnaire to elicit data about their difficulties and motivation was passed around. Its outcome led to a twofold intervention. Firstly, a set of pedagogical strategies were tailored to improve their attitudes for participation in oral English instruction. Secondly, a battery of participatory activities were designed and put into practice in order to correct their most common oral mistakes. The successful outcomes indicate that improving the classroom's engagement as well as working on the students' oral competence help fostering a better attitude towards a more confident use of oral skills.

Keywords: motivation, feedback, oral skills, anxiety, ELT

1. Introduction

As trainers of future teachers of English, we are concerned about our students' ability to express themselves in English. According to the literature, there is evidence of the close relation between anxiety and oral performance among Spanish future teachers of English (Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzardo 2014). Also, motivation and anxiety have been reported as elements with opposite effects in foreign language learning. Thus, the implementation of motivation strategies may contribute to lessen the effects of anxiety in the learning of a foreign language.

This article explains a one semester intervention with a group of 20 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Teacher Education programme at the University of Burgos. The module "English Language I" was a requisite to achieve an English Professional Skills Diploma that would enable them to become teachers of English. Although the required level was B-2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, not all of them were fluent and confident enough in the second language, as previous teaching experience had shown.

As some studies indicate, motivation may be enhanced by an adequate learning environment which would comprise the instructor's performance as much as the nature of the activities performed. Therefore, the purpose of this intervention was threefold. First, it aimed at enhancing the students' motivation and attitude towards their oral skills. Second, it sought to improve their level of oral English through feedback and self-correction activities. Finally, the students' independent production was fostered. For an accurate intervention, detection of the students' fears and uncertainties was achieved through a semi-structured questionnaire.

Once the intervention was finished, a second questionnaire was passed around in order to evaluate whether the measures taken had contributed to the class improvement both in terms of motivation and oral performance.

2. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments used for this research consisted of an initial semi-structured questionnaire, a motivation enhancement phase, an activities implementation phase and a final semi-structured questionnaire. This circular format allows an assessment of the progress obtained after the implementation of the different phases.

2.1. Initial Semi-structured Questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire was designed in order to tackle the students' perception about their motivation and performance in oral English. Anxiety levels, motivation and difficulties in speaking were the three topics selected. The students' answers indicated that some of them usually feel nervous because they are afraid that people make fun of them, others express worry about their accent and others are not used to speaking in public. Regarding motivation, their answers showed that they feel more comfortable when they are developing an activity they enjoy, such as role play or debate. Finally, their difficulties in speaking activities were due to their shyness, their lack of vocabulary and their insecurity with English grammar. In order to improve their motivation and oral competence in English, appropriate action was taken in two phases

2.2. Motivation Enhancement phase

There is evidence of the close relation between anxiety and oral performance among Spanish future teachers of English to the detriment of the students' self-perception (Arnaiz and Pérez-Luzardo 2014). Motivation and anxiety have been reported as elements having opposite effects in foreign language learning (Gardner et al. 1992). Motivation has traditionally been related with desire and favourable attitudes to learn a language (Gardner 1985). In fact, it is a construct that comprises cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics (Gardner 2007). Although Gardner developed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to measure motivation, this model has some deficiencies when testing foreign language learning contexts (Dörnyei 1994). Other authors such as Rodríguez and Abreu (2003) have defended the stability of general foreign language classroom anxiety. However, the implementation of motivation strategies may contribute to lessen the effects of anxiety in the learning of a foreign language. Some studies indicate that motivation may be enhanced by an adequate learning environment which would comprise the instructor's performance (Noels et al. 1999) as much as the nature of the activities performed (Kim 2009; Young 1991).

Due to time restrictions, action focused on external motivation and more specifically, on Gardner's (2007) conception of educational context and classroom motivation. "The educational context refers generally to the educational system in which the student is registered and specifically to the immediate classroom situation" (Gardner 2007, 14). More particularly, "the educational context can play a role [...] in the individual's level of integrativeness" (Gardner 2007, 15). Therefore, in order to lessen anxiety and enhance motivation among the students, our intervention focused on increasing group integration to facilitate the students' oral performance, "since speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning" (Horwitz et al. 1986, 132). Taking

into account that some of the most common sources of anxiety in conversation classes are improvisation of speech, public performance, fear of negative evaluation (Kim 2009) and communication with a native speaker (Çagatay 2015), a set of pedagogical strategies were tailored to improve their attitudes and motivation for participation in oral English instruction. Two aspects were selected. First, the setting was analysed and changed into a more friendly, relaxing and motivating environment. Second, the trainers' attitudes and performances were reviewed and modified. The combination of these two strategies helped to orientate the course towards a more engaging and participatory praxis.

To start with, it must be acknowledged that average classrooms at university still consist of rigid walls, parallel lines of desks and chairs facing a stage at the front where the teacher is expected to give a lecture, and a fixed blackboard and audiovisual devices as teaching tools. Unfortunately, these physical spaces do not favour movement, dialogue or democracy. On the contrary, they align with a banking concept of education (Freire 1970) that has repeatedly been criticised as non-effective, hierarchical, obsolete and above all, not motivating (Graman 1988; Shor 1993). In view of the foregoing considerations, finding a suitable space was a priority to enhance extrinsic interest among the future teachers of English. Management arrangements were needed in order to request a new and more flexible space where frequent distribution changes could take place. A department seminar room turned out to be the best option. There, a mobile blackboard and the tablet arm chairs could be easily sorted according to the needs of the different activities. Also, the big size of the classroom would allow the development of simultaneous activities, and the absence of a stage was also a plus. Unlike the previous setting, the physical possibilities of this seminar would be more likely to warrant collaborative tasks and communicative interaction. A careful selection of the classroom setting and its atmosphere is relevant to improve the students' external sources of motivation (Dörnyei 2007; Wu 2003).

Secondly, the teacher's attitude and performance during the oral instruction period is also a relevant source of motivation. Friendliness, tone of voice, self-presentation, active participation and attitude are some intangible elements that help to modify the students' degree of anxiety. Motivation is enhanced when the trainer is an accompanying, advisory figure (Jorgensen et al. 2005; Young 1991). For this purpose, the new classroom proved suitable to develop group, pair and individual activities. Also, the very absence of a stage forced a more democratic and learner-centered array of performances. Unconsciously, the distance between the instructor and the students was shortened, the physical closeness between the teacher and the students was increased and the frequency of spontaneous interaction on the side of the students grew. The teacher's role focused on encouraging students to communicate, thus nullifying any authoritarian attitude. The activities designed were student-oriented and they were based on peer interaction. In sum, less stress in oral performance correlated with the teacher taking the role of facilitator.

2.3. Activities Implementation Phase

To start with, a battery of oral warming up activities was planned in order to obtain the necessary information about the mistakes made by the students. Three of these activities are included here due to their relevance. Debate is an appropriate development activity for improving discussion skills in speech. Using this activity students have the opportunity to practice their ability to express and defend their ideas in the foreign language. Thus, debate promotes the expression of personal opinions while anxiety takes a second place. Role play is a successful speaking activity too. The students have the opportunity to put themselves into somebody else's shoes in credible situations. Role play is motivating because it uses real situations. The instructors act as facilitators and their role becomes secondary. Finally,

storytelling is also a very useful activity to improve oral skills. Telling stories is important in everyday communication. Students are asked to create and tell a story so that they have the opportunity to develop their accuracy and fluency in the foreign language.

In a second phase, the most common and frequent mistakes needed to be analysed and some feedback tasks were tailored to monitor and practice the outcomes. To better analyse the students' deficiencies, their performance had been recorded with their consent. At the end of each production, oral feedback was included. This feedback was implemented in two different ways. First, the instructors listened to the recordings and the students were asked to score all the mistakes they noticed. The recordings were heard twice and then they were asked to check their findings. In this sort of activity, changing mate once or twice is very useful. Moreover, listening to the recordings helps students to monitor progress and provides diagnostic information. Once students are aware of their mistakes, they are in a better position to see what they need to improve. In pedagogical theory feedback is important to provide effective support to learners and fosters motivation to continue learning (Ellis 2010). Second, the most significant errors were collected and they were handed out to the students. Then, they were asked to work in pairs to find the errors. These feedback activities helped them identify errors more easily.

After the feedback stage, some reinforcement activities were designed in order to consolidate their progress and foster accurate production. Due to space restrictions, a selection of these activities is included in this article. "Reconstruction of conversation" is a controlled speaking activity to focus the attention on a particular linguistic form. The aim is to invite students to reconstruct a very short dialogue or a sentence. They are asked to formulate hypothesis about what the speaker(s) meant to express and to exchange cognitive and linguistic knowledge. It also helps students to reflect on the structure of the target language. This activity is individual and focuses on particular mistakes. "Listening with quiz" contributes to the development of oral skills and grammar accuracy reducing anxiety by means of game competition. The class is divided into two groups. The students listen to a spontaneous conversation four or five times and then each group formulates questions about the listening. The opposing team is invited to correct the questions before answering. Peer correction takes place through play. "Draw a story" consists of telling the students a story while they are asked to draw an event or a passage related to it. They cannot write any words, just draw. At the end of the story telling they work in pairs and they have to reconstruct the story following their drawings.

In sum, this production phase combined feedback and reinforcement activities alternating obvious and subliminal correction of oral performances. As a plus, variation of individual, pair and group methodologies enhanced peer interaction and correction in a very natural way.

2.4. Final semi-structured questionnaire

Once the activities implementation phase was completed, a final semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to elicit the results of the interventions. According to the students' answers, the following issues have been selected in order of relevance:

- Personal perception of stress in oral performance: a majority of the students felt more motivated, less anxious and more self-assured. They felt active in their English classroom and they had less fear to make mistakes and correct their peers. Only a few students indicated very little or no improvement at all.
- Methodology for oral skills development: a vast majority preferred working in groups.

- Feedback tasks and feedback on feedback: these tasks were perceived as very effective to improve their oral performance.
- Reinforcement activities: while some indicated that they had not been very interesting, others affirmed that they had made them aware of their mistakes and had helped them predict mistakes.

3. Conclusions

When the instructors step aside and the focus is placed on interaction among peers, students' motivation and interest increase. Facilitating reflection through the use of the students' oral performance contributes to a more meaningful and natural interaction among peers. Anxiety levels decrease and self-assurance is heightened. Also, an adequate physical space is relevant as it may stimulate a more dynamic interaction.

A careful analysis of the data extracted from the initial questionnaire illuminated the type of work required. Feedback tasks and reinforcement activities helped students reflect on their language performance. These were useful to understand that oral English is a means of communication that needs to be adapted to each situation. This type of work helped students to increase their autonomy and to correct each other with the tools provided by the teachers.

Results indicate that the use of frequent speaking activities followed by feedback can be of great help to overcome typical obstacles such as the repetition of fossilized mistakes. In fact, the correction of reinforcement activities has shown that previous feedback had already helped the students to improve their spoken English.

In the end, some students showed improvement and developed *problem solving* skills while others showed reluctance to correction. In particular, correction was perceived as a means to help learners on their way to mastering English for communicating purposes, not as a tool for reaching perfection. A fearless attitude towards oral performance is essential and the combination of the steps detailed above significantly decreased anxiety and enhanced participation. The more the students engaged in the production, feedback and reinforcement phases, the more positive their perception of their oral skills became.

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Part IV.

Round Tables: Cultural Studies

Major Scales for Minority Groups: Music, Identity and Voices in the American West

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Abstract

This multifaceted essay aims at showing a multicultural (and often neglected and silenced) West that is approached from a musical vantage point. The authors here provide new and disparate visions of the American West, by introducing music as the object of cultural analysis. African-American, Basque-American and Mormon cultures will be considered within the frame of Western American Studies. Music and text, ethnicity and setting, culture and society are all combined to bring forward a penetrating insight into the American West and its composite cultural and historical evolution.¹

Keywords: Western American Studies, music, lyrics, minorities, the American West

1. Introduction: *Music, Voices and the American West*

The American West could be understood as a vast expansion of land that held the coming-of-age process of a new nation. Today, revisionist approaches to the American West tend to underline the significance of different active subjects and their ideologies in the construction of a cultural paradigm that has traveled beyond geographically-defined borders. However, it is not only now but also then that this occurred, as Clyde A. Milner II highlights when he describes the origins of the American West “as an international borderland between native peoples” (1994, 6). This region became a zone of tension where different peoples (cultures, communities, ethnicities) met, coexisted and negotiated that gathering and blend; sometimes, in unfair or unbalanced terms. The region, both as an ideal and as setting, was shaped by “traditional views of the conquest of this territory” (Río 2014, 20) and one way to revise those “traditional views” was by giving voice to those that were neglected. In that line, Michael L. Johnson has stated that any approximation to the American West requires the incorporation of other voices: “Indian women, Chinese, Basques, and others ‘not all blue-eyed sons of Albion’” (1996, 69).

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The visibility of western American fiction and the appreciation of those revisionist perspectives have improved in recent years. It has been customary to illustrate this revisionist spirit through the analysis of different cultural products, mainly literature and films. We believe that there is a necessity to approach and vindicate other genres and cultural products as sources and targets that enrich and complicate multiform approaches to the American West. It is our belief that music has the lineament and flexibility to provide a stimulating and elaborate perspective on this new West that Neil Campbell called rhizomatic and for which he contemplated music as a powerful filter of analysis: “the entangled and complex architecture of westness I have described in this book comes closest to these poetic renditions of music as an ambivalent form with no single trajectory, creating instead a series of lines and rhythms, always moving, crossing, and folding” (2008, 321).

Thus, Ángel Chaparro focuses on Mormonism in the first section, providing a general overview of how certain bands have married their faith and their art. Then, Amaia Ibarraan engages in a study of African-American work songs to disclose how music develops through different historical circumstances that alter their content, social function and emotional charge. Finally, Monika Madinabeitia analyses the connection of music and the Basque-American identity construct through the case of Boise, Idaho. These three supplementary views illustrate the statements that we make in this introduction.

2. Mormons and Popular Music: *From The Osmonds to The Killers*

Mormons have been often forgotten when emphasizing the importance to hear neglected voices in the American West: “no history of the United States nor of the American West fully incorporates the Mormon experience and its relevance to understanding of the broader American Experience” (May 1999, 9). It is necessary to unveil Mormon participation in the culture and history of the American West, also by focusing on their engagement in the field of music.

Mormon music plays a very important role in Mormon culture and it has been like that since the very beginnings of the Church. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir (a Grammy and Emmy Award winner choir that has been inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame) is the symbol of Mormon music, together with the imprint of the Mormon hymnal book, whose songs are part of Mormon literary tradition: “Those hymns in the Latter-day Saints hymnal which have been written and composed by Latter-day Saints authors and composers represent a distinct religious heritage to the members of the Church of which they can be justly proud” (Cornwall 1980, vii). Music is also a very important part of the Mormon way of life, as author Phyllis Barber explains: “this safe shore I was experiencing: the friendly faces, the music, the families sitting together in the congregation, and the sacrament” (2009, 262). Music, in short, is a fundamental item of Mormon culture and society.

From The Osmonds, a family band that started by singing barbershop music and has now sold more than 100 million records worldwide to Fictionist, finalists in *Rolling Stone* magazine’s 2011 “Do You Wanna to Be a Rock & Roll Star?” contest, there is a long tradition of Mormons who have been involved with popular music and the business. If we understand The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as a Christian Restorationist church, then Mormon Rock & Roll could be compartmentalized within Christian Rock, and emerging part of the worldwide market since the mid-1990s: “... at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century Christian rock can be heard on general market radio stations, seen at general market concert venues and festivals (such as the Van’s Warped Tour), read about in general market magazines, and found at general market retail outlets” (Shepherd 2012, 141).

Rock & Roll becomes an interesting scenario in order to study to what extent their religious beliefs are visible in their lyrics. Bands such as The Killers or Low can be approached within this frame.

Low is an American indie-band from Duluth, Minnesota, active since 1993, and led by Alan Sparhawk and his wife, Mimi Parker. They have been described as an iconoclastic band for their experimental fondness. Sparhawk has stated, when questioned about his faith, that “all things are ultimately spiritual, so there’s really no line between faith/spirituality and everything else. We recognized the spiritual nature of the music right away when we started, and have tried to stay faithful to that.”² His Mormon faith is not directly addressed, but we can find references to spirituality in, for instance, their latest work, *Ones and Sixes*, from 2015:

You want religion
 You want assurance
 A resurrection
 Some kind of purpose
 You had the vision
 You opened your eyes
 A complication
 You should have looked twice. (Low 2015, n.d.)

Brandon Flowers, a Mormon resident of Las Vegas and lead vocalist in The Killers, did also have to answer questions about his faith in connection to his music and career: “I can’t ever escape my Mormon roots. Even on the first album, *Hot Fuss*, it informed songs like *All These Things That I’ve Done*” (Kent 2006, n.d.). Flowers has collaborated in the Church-sponsored video project *I’m a Mormon*, a series of videos that attempted at changing stereotyped visions on Mormonism. However, focusing on his lyrics, a good example of how faith and music are combined in his work is to be found in *Sam’s Town*, an album that Nick Kent described as “the world’s first Mormon rock concept album” (2006, n.d.). Before that, in their debut studio album from 2004 (and the one that catapulted them to fame), we find the example that he himself proposes, “*All These Things that I’ve Done*”, where references to “perfection” and the general poetic and uplifting tone of the verses can be read and interpret within a Mormon frame:

I want to shine on in the hearts of men
 I want a meaning from the back of my broken hand
 Another head aches, another heart breaks
 I am so much older than I can take
 And my affection, well it comes and goes
 I need direction to perfection, no no no no (The Killers 2004, n.d.)

Beyond hymns and their historical repercussion, we have an opportunity to study the complex balance between faith and literature in the lyrics-writing of modern rock bands. Sometimes, we refuse to consider supplementary variables that alter potential readings on both poetry and lyrics. This was one single example.

² In a youtube.com video for MN Original: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXj15I6DBIQ>

3. The Effect of Oral Transmission in African-American Popular Songs: *Some Examples*

One of the essential characteristics of popular music is its oral transmission and its process-like nature. In other words, the way such constant mouth-to-mouth transaction affects its “pure” maintenance and essence. It is somehow compulsory to depart from the premise that music is not only a cultural event but also a sociological one, “which reflect(s) the real-life experiences of real people, singing about things that mattered. Ballads told stories of people’s lives, work songs set the rhythm of toil, spirituals voiced sorrow and hope, and reels offered a respite from the toil” (Roy 2011, 3).

Popular music can, as a sociological act, be analyzed in terms of its ontology, meaning and function. These three parameters change when songs are transmitted and reproduced orally from generation to generation, in different contexts and with different purposes, because

Music can be treated as something always becoming that never achieves full objective status, something unbounded and open. When music is shared by a collectivity, its evolution is more readily observable and the mechanisms that objectify it are typically weaker. Shared music, as seen in the folk music process, passes from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth, adapting, elaborating, unfolding and simplifying. (Roy 2011, 11)

For this purpose, some African-American work songs which have been collected in different anthologies like the very much praised *American Ballads, Folk Songs* (John Lomax) have been selected here. They all have been transmitted orally and sang once and again from generation to generation, and have traveled not only through the ages, but also, across genres.

A clear example of the relevance of music as a sociological act, its pure cross-generational essence, but also of the effect that its process-like nature, may affect its form, function and meaning is that of the song “Black Betty,” which originated in a Texas Prison and made reference to the whip with which convicts were forced to work. The song was later recorded in 1939 by Leadbelly (Huddie William Ledbetter, one of the most prominent blues and folk singers of the beginning of the 20th century). Years later, in the 70s, the same song was versioned by Bill Bartlett, lead singer and founder of Ram Jam, and became a top selling hit. It was considered racist by the NAACP (The National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People), a controversy which made it even more famous and prominent. However, there is no hint in Ram Jam’s version of racism, which proves that the meaning and function of popular music arises from the fact that it is a sociological act which is embedded in a particular social context. In Roy’s words, “the meaning is never purely in the music because there is never *a* meaning. Meanings emerge in interaction as people do music (including listening and discussing) and are often about music” (2011, 14).

The song has after that been played and sung by several musicians and bands of diverse nature and style, such as Sheryl Crow and Meat Loaf. He already transformed Black Betty into a dark, exotic (white) woman, a *femme fatale*. Tom Jones, later on, turned Black Betty into an exotic, sensual black woman, materialized in a videoclip with a clear sexual connotation.

In sum, this and other examples prove that the orality and process-like essence of popular music, may alter the original song in its essence, function or meaning making it

become something different, provided with a different meaning and often times, total devoid of its first aim and purpose.

4. Basques Choosing to Be Basque: *The Case of Boise Basques Represented in Music*

In theories of ethnic identity and maintenance, music is often conceived as an ethnicity marker for further generations in their attempt to preserve aspects of their intergroup distinctive features (Toticagüena 2003, n.d.). First-generations Basques found music as a means to *go home*; indeed, it was for them a way to feel “home away from home” (Echeverria 1999). However, although generally unaware of it, they were putting into practice home practices in what had already become their *home*. “It ain’t my country any more” (Laxalt 2007, 158), says Dominique Laxalt—the writer’s father—in *Sweet Promised Land* (1957), referring to his homeland; “I’ve lived too much in America ever to go back” (Laxalt 2007, 158). Dominique’s anguish envelopes the reality of Basques becoming American and feeling that in truth they had found *another new home*, although they had been longing and mourning for the home they had left behind years back.

Despite the fact that for a long time the identity maxim of *either/or* was experienced by Basque-Americans, contemporary Basques nowadays claim their *both/and* paradigm; they feel *both* Basque *and* American and this new hybrid identity has become their own space and being. The musical expression of the Basque-American West lies on a liminal zone, on a third-space, a passage that crosses and allows cross-cultural and cross-identities to emerge in the “in-between’ reality” (Bhabha 2004, 19), in a hybrid identity. Americans have developed a way to fight “geographies of exclusion” (Sibley 1999) and have been able, once again, to exercise practices of adaptation, creativity and resilience. Indeed, the Basque community in Boise is elaborating an identity that is guided by two core motives: the need to be unique and the need to belong (Brewer 1991). This new identity unfolds a new hybrid identity, which opposes and combats conceiving diaspora Basques and their music as a diluted version of the homeland Basque identity; or an attempt to simply produce a replica or copy of the practices in the homeland. In other words, diaspora Basques are not to be considered as attempting to be like the homeland Basques; diaspora Basques are constructing their own identity/ies, both, with and without the homeland.

Music is a way to hold onto Basque ethnicity and a means to celebrate one’s own individual and collective ethnic identity. Basque diaspora members are making identity and musical choices that suit them and their audiences; that is, they choose to act and react bearing in mind their individual and collective voluntary affiliation choices. That is the case of the music band in Boise, *Amuma Says No*. This band, ASN, is the result of the *both/and* identity paradigm and it represents the evolving identity construction; they cross boundaries and create a strong sense of belonging. They also engage in a sense of collective and individual ethnic belonging. Thanks to reinventing narratives and creation stories, “it has become ‘cool’ to be ethnic, and the positive social status is reinforced at each [music] event” (Toticagüena 2000, 577). Besides, through music performers and the audience itself learn about their history and their roots.

Boise Basques, as recreated by *Amuma Says No*, undoubtedly represent some of the identity choices and affiliation practices through the music they create. These creations envision the voluntary choice to be Basque and express the different ways and representations of being and feeling Basque. The identity construction of Boise Basques and their music illustrates the fact that Basqueness and its configuration is not just a task that “belongs” and is

exclusive to homeland Basques; the debate lies on whether the core for Basque identity is in the homeland, and whether diaspora Basques need to evolve around this core, in its periphery. Boise Basques are certainly an example of the contrary.

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Views of the Spanish Civil War from Some Forgotten Texts

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Abstract

The content of this contribution is the result of a round table which discussed the interim results of a research project currently under way at the University of Alcalá to recover testimonial material written by English-speaking intellectuals about the Spanish Civil War, with a view to providing specialists and general public alike with a range of critical editions of first-hand accounts of the war. The participants of this roundtable focused on four different testimonies by two Britons, Katharine Atholl and Florence Farmborough, one Canadian, Ted Allan, and one Irishman, Peadar O'Donnell. They offered different views of the Spanish Civil War, from the Republican and the National sides, and employed different rhetorical strategies to convey ideas, emotions and experiences about the Spanish conflict.¹

Keywords: Spanish Civil War, Katharine Atholl, Florence Farmborough, Ted Allan, Peadar O'Donnell

1. Introduction

Right from the start, the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) aroused the interest of a considerable number of journalists, writers and intellectuals around the world who, aware of its potential world-historical transcendence, wanted to witness and write about the conflict at first-hand. Although the literature on the history of this conflict is abundant, many documents, chronicles, newspaper articles and written accounts have yet to be studied. These either lie neglected in archives or document collections of difficult access or came to light during the war years, enjoyed immediate success, but were never published again and consequently never came into the hands of the Spanish readers.

The content of this contribution is the result of a round table which discussed the interim results of a research project currently under way at the University of Alcalá to recover that kind of testimonial material written by English-speaking intellectuals about the Spanish Civil War, with a view to providing specialists and general public alike with a range of critical editions of first-hand accounts of the war. These books will be published as part of the

¹ The research leading to the publication of this essay was supported by funding from the Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad under the 2013 programme of grants for research projects (Reference FFI2013-47983-C3-1-P).

series “Armas y Letras” (Amarú Ediciones), which already includes studies on texts by Esmond Romilly, John Sommerfield, T. C. Worsley, Frank Pitcairn and Keith Scott Watson. This series of critical editions is the result of the combined efforts of various members of a research group working at the University of Salamanca under the leadership of Professor Antonio Celada.

The participants of this roundtable focused on four different testimonies by two Britons, Katharine Atholl and Florence Farmborough, one Canadian, Ted Allan, and one Irishman, Peadar O’Donnell. They offered different views of the Spanish Civil War, from the Republican and the National sides, and employed different rhetorical strategies to convey ideas, emotions and experiences about the Spanish conflict.

2. Fernando Galván: Duchess of Atholl’s *Searchlight on Spain* (1938)

This contribution deals with Katharine Atholl’s book *Searchlight on Spain*, which was released as the fourth volume in a collection called “Penguin Specials” of books described by the publishers as “of urgent topical importance.” Although now largely forgotten, Atholl’s book was initially published in June 1938 and reprinted within the month, which proves its great success. A third and enlarged edition, with revisions, additions, new maps and an index was issued in September 1938.

Its author, Katharine Marjory Ramsay, Duchess of Atholl, was at the time MP for the Conservative Party (then known as the “Unionist Party” in Scotland) for Kinross and West Perthshire, Scotland. She was extremely conservative in her views about feminism (she opposed the female vote and the suffragettes’ movement) and was also firmly anti-communist. Her knowledge and travels in central and eastern Europe made her aware of the rise of Nazism, so that she became an anti-fascist who strongly disapproved of the official British policy of appeasement towards Hitler and Mussolini.

As a member of a delegation of female British MPs, she visited Spain (Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona) between 13–24 April 1937 with Ellen Wilkinson (Labour), Eleanor Rathbone (Liberal) and the nurse and social reformer Dame Rachel Crowdy. During the visit she met high-profile politicians, such as Azaña, Martínez Barrio, Federica Montseny, Lluís Companys, “la Pasionaria” and General Miaja. She also visited the Madrid front, prisons, shelters, orphanages and hospitals. Arturo Barea depicts her and the other MPs in the third part of his novel, *The Forging of a Rebel*.

Upon her return to Britain she made public statements in favour of the Republic and organised and chaired relief committees for Spain, helping particularly women and children, such as the refugees from the Basque Country fleeing the destruction of Guernica and the fall of Bilbao to Franco’s troops.

Her book *Searchlight on Spain* (promptly translated into French and Dutch) is not, however, a simple account of her trip to Spain, but a full and detailed analysis of the circumstances that led to the Spanish Civil War, its development up to 1938, the implications of foreign intervention (German and Italian support for Franco) and of the Non-Intervention policy adopted by UK, whose lead was followed by other European powers. Even though she did not have access to all the documents and information available to later historians, Atholl did a lot of research and tried hard to check her sources, consulting many documents and newspaper reports from all sides. The book contains a positive message in favour of the Republic and in opposition to all the negative propaganda about the Spanish Government spread by the Francoist side among Conservative British politicians and media.

The immediate political consequence of her position regarding the conflict and the publication and success of the book was that the Conservative press and many members of the Conservative Party criticised Atholl for her disapproval of Prime Minister Chamberlain's policy towards Germany, Italy and the Spanish War, to the extent that she had to withdraw from the Tory whip in early 1938 and ultimately resign her seat in Westminster. She was then unfairly named "the Red Duchess" or "Kitty the Red" by her own fellow party-members. A by-election was held in her constituency on 21 December 1938 in which the Conservatives presented another candidate, who won the election, even though the Duchess had paradoxically been supported by the Labour party and some Liberals, as well as by the writer Gerald Brenan.

3. Jonathan P.A. Sell: *Florence Farmborough's Life and People in National Spain* (1938)

Nurse, teacher, occasional journalist and photographer, Florence Farmborough was born into a family of Buckinghamshire landowners in 1887. As a Red Cross nurse to the armies of the tsar, she witnessed the horrors of the Great War and the Russian revolution of 1917, her graphic account of which was published *Nurse at the Russian Front* (1974) and inspired a BBC documentary.² After working for about ten years as an English teacher at the University of Valencia's Language Institute, it was probably her visceral hatred of Communism together with her religious convictions that led her in autumn 1937 to volunteer to work for *Radio Nacional*, from whose microphones, in her capacity as Franco's "locutora inglesa", she broadcast daily war bulletins to her English audience and on Sunday evenings gave them her weekly talk.

Some of those talks form the basis of her book, *Life and People in National Spain* (1938), a work of propaganda containing adulatory chapters on Franco, Millán-Astray y Terreros, Mola, Moscardó, Primo de Rivera, the Siege of the Alcázar of Toledo, the National youth and women's movements, and so on. Everything in the New Spanish garden is rosy: cabbages boast 108 centimetre circumferences and the "cave-folk" of Almería have electric lighting (1938, 6, 160). Farmborough's book is of interest as testimony to the manifold links between the National Movement, the English religious and political communities, and the world of literary production: its publisher was Catholic firm Sheed & Ward, whose list of authors included Chesterton, Belloc and Waugh, all admirers in different ways of Franco and the New Spain. It is interesting too for the paradoxical stance it evinces towards gender issues: on the one hand, like many of her generation Farmborough was a fiercely independent woman, unafraid to enter conventionally male domains and assume conventionally male roles; on the other, her book's depiction of women as willing helpmeets of a rigidly patriarchal order is loyal to National sexual pieties.

Farmborough had at her disposal all the documentary resources of the State Delegation for Press and Propaganda. Her work draws on press releases, speeches by leading figures in the National Movement, a variety of newspapers, and National hagiographies. Her style, too, is derivative, often a straight translation of the epic elocution favoured by the Movement's leaders and *literati*. Accordingly, the book's contents and, on the whole, its rhetoric are of less interest than the way Farmborough mediates to transmit the National message to an English audience. This mediation is apparent in her translations. Her omissions or paraphrases subtly

² The documentary, *English Nurse with the Tsar's Armies*, directed by Christopher Cook y produced by Stephen Peet, was first shown on BBC2 on 25 September 1974.

render Primo de Rivera's "Twenty-Six Point Programme of the Falange" more palatable to her readers by removing its references to a totalitarian state, its repudiation of capitalism or its contemplation of the enforced recruitment of young manpower (1938, 47-51); similarly, she shears General Mola's political manifesto of its religious histrionics (107). It is also apparent in her network of allusions, which includes such staples of late Victorian and early twentieth-century culture as Charles Lamb, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Wilfred Owen and Robert Lawrence Binyon, as well, of course, as Shakespeare and the Bible—none of them too highbrow, all of them contributing to domesticate the National Movement's message. Thus, Franco in virtual exile on Tenerife is transformed from the Napoleon on Elba of National propaganda into Richard II meditating on his imprisonment and a fusion of Henry IV and Henry V, for whom the burdens of office mean sleepless nights and prematurely greying hair (13-19).

4. Juan Manuel Camacho: Ted Allan's *This Time a Better Earth* (1939)

Although approximately 1,700 Canadians volunteered and fought in the Spanish Civil War, 400 of which died in battle, the Canadian literary contributions to the anti-fascist cause have not, unfortunately, enjoyed the same critical appreciation as those of British and American authors. Ted Allan's first novel, *This Time a Better Earth*, has been a victim of this obvious oversight. Originally published in 1939 with a very limited amount of copies, the novel was barely noticed among readers and had not been reprinted until January 2015.

Alan Herman, later known as Ted Allan, was a Jewish-Canadian who grew up in the midst of the turmoil caused by the Great Depression in Canada. Recent immigrants to Canada, like Allan's own family, had become subject to the racist anxieties that stemmed from the profound and widespread economic misery caused by the Depression. A hitherto unknown spirit of fascism found its way into the hearts of many in Canada as well as throughout Europe and was channelled toward what was locally considered "the foreign threat," the Jewish community being especially alienated. Ted Allan determined to fight these forces and Fascism became his main target. At the age of nineteen, Alan Herman, already a journalist for the Canadian-based paper *The Daily Clarion*, changed his name to Ted Allan in order to infiltrate and expose the Nazi funded National Socialist Party of Canada—a bold and outstanding endeavour for a teenager who could well have got himself and his family into a serious predicament had he been caught.

Contrary to the ideological voids many volunteers had on joining the International Brigades, Ted Allan was thus quite clear on why he came to Spain. He was twenty and like most English-speaking Canadians, he was put into the Abraham Lincoln Battalion. Allan soon met up with Dr. Bethune, the famous Canadian medical doctor very involved with the needy in the poorer parts of Montreal, in charge of the mobile blood transfusion unit for the Republican fighters, who had previously helped Allan make up his mind about partaking in the War. Eight months later, after serving as a news radio broadcaster for the U.S., Allan returned to Canada and wrote *This Time a Better Earth* wherein he fictionalised his experiences of the Spanish Civil War.

This Time a Better Earth, written while Allan was still in his early twenties, is a youthful novel filled with the anxieties, unrest and doubts of becoming an adult in the midst of worldwide upheaval. It is a kind of autobiographical novel that relates Bob Curtis' relationship with the young men of his Battalion and with Lisa Kammerer (a fictionalised representation of Gerta Taro, the famous female German photographer, icon of the Republican spirit of bravado during the Spanish Civil War). In the novel, Bob is constantly

taken up by memories of home, family, friends and childhood. Flashbacks, songs and poetry, and the girls he knew and dated inhabit his thoughts and heart, and help distract him from the harsh reality of war. Allan's style, as the journalist he was, spins on swift and short sentences filled with the natural colloquialisms and slang that pertain to the young. Language is mostly that of low to middle-class American and Canadian youths who try to avoid talk of the atrocities of war and are fixated on girls, jokes, beer and home. Thus, rather than bitterly and blatantly attacking and denouncing the enemy, as might be expected from a vengeful youth wanting to expose the horrors of Fascism through writing, Allan chooses to tell a story of friendship among idealistic volunteers who fight for a better world and of the love between a young couple who struggle to believe that life can bring better things than hatred and death.

5. Alberto Lázaro: Peadar O'Donnell's *Salud! An Irishman in Spain* (1937)

The Spanish Civil War sparked a heated debate in the recently created Irish Free State, as the Republic of Ireland was then called, between those who supported the left-wing democratic Spanish Republican government and those who favoured Franco's "crusade" against atheists and Marxists. Both sections were often swayed by the news, accounts and interpretations of the Spanish war that emerged at that time. Peadar O'Donnell (1893-1986), a prominent Irish socialist activist and writer, contributed to the dissemination of information and ideas about the Spanish conflict with his eyewitness account entitled *Salud! An Irishman in Spain* (1937).

O'Donnell had not come to Spain as a volunteer in the International Brigades or some other militia, but was simply an observer. In fact, he was already in Spain when the conflict broke out, staying at Sitges, a fishing village near Barcelona, where he had come with his wife Lile and some friends on a writing holiday early in July 1936. After the military uprising, O'Donnell remained in Barcelona as an eyewitness of the first clashes of the war, the burning of a church, the enthusiasm of the volunteers in a column heading to the Aragon Front and the revolutionary spirit that took hold of the Catalan society. All this, together with many anecdotes and experiences, formed the basis for his book *Salud! An Irishman in Spain*.

From the first pages of his memoir, O'Donnell acknowledges the difficulty of providing a fair and complete view of the Spanish Civil War. He states that no eyewitness account can ever claim to cover "the whole field of the Spanish Civil War" and, what is more, he is well aware of how easily the written word can be turned into propaganda: "all wars are fought between devils and angels; war propaganda remains the most monotonous of all human cries. Pens-of-war sprinkle soot or haloes" (1937, 9). Then, in a review of O'Donnell's book, Peter Belloc highlights the author's effort at providing a balanced picture: "He is trying to be fair to both sides, which is patently impossible. ... Being a Catholic he sees the direct attack on the Church, but in spite of that he remains on the side of the workers who are carrying out the looting and persecution" (1937, 742). One wonders, then, to what extent O'Donnell was able to present an accurate and truthful picture of the Spanish war, or whether he drew on his previous experience as a fiction writer³ to craft scenes, bring anecdotes alive and portray people as he would in his fictional writing.

A careful analysis of *Salud! An Irishman in Spain* shows how O'Donnell himself used his pen as a weapon to counter the effective pro-Franco propaganda that dominated the Irish media. His concern was as much to provide observations on the situation in Spain as to elicit the right response from the Irish community that was being bombarded with accounts of

³ His political activism inspired him to write several novels and short stories that reveal an understanding of ordinary country people, their lives and struggles.

horrible attacks on priests, nuns and churches. The eyewitness protagonist of this first-person narrative appears convincing and factual, but he colours and shapes the presentation of events, whilst justifying the regrettable behaviour of some militiamen with the Spanish Catholic Church. The astute reader should be aware of the significance of some narrative strategies and rhetorical devices used by O'Donnell, such as caricaturesque descriptions of characters, the use of fabricated dialogues and the inclusion or exclusion of specific sources for the legitimacy of those events that the author did not witness himself.

6. Final remark

Taken as a whole, and despite their diversity, the four works presented at this round table raise crucial questions about such basic issues as representation and the historiographic value of the written record. As well as reminding us of the importance of establishing a context of readership and publication when considering the message and motives of a given author, the four works raise obvious questions about the relations between fact, fiction and truth; their common rhetorical strategies, meanwhile, suggest that propaganda is equally well served by reportage and literary artefact, if indeed any such distinction is worth maintaining in times of war and beyond. This round table showed, then, how these four neglected texts, written at the front-line between fact and fiction, are not simple historical curiosities but offer insights into issues that concern students of literature and culture alike.

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Reading Postcolonial Crime Fiction: a Non-Canonical Approach to Detecting Social Change

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Abstract

This round table assesses the research carried out to date by the Australian Studies Centre at the University of Barcelona within the postcolonial crime fiction project *POCRIF*, which looks at crime fiction written in English in the postcolonial settings of a wide variety of countries affected by decolonising processes. As the *POCRIF* team recognises both historical continuity and change in the post-colonial era on the assumption that colonial perceptions continue to pervade post-colonial societies after their formal independence from the Metropole, it aims to assess to what extent crime fiction produced in these areas may be considered postcolonial, in the sense of challenging colonial ways of seeing and knowing.¹

Keywords: crime fiction, postcolonialism, post-colonialism, neocolonialism, postmodernity

1. Introduction

This round table assesses the research carried out to date by the Australian Studies Centre at the University of Barcelona within the postcolonial crime fiction project *POCRIF*, for which the Centre has recently achieved ministerial funding. *POCRIF* looks at crime fiction written in English in the postcolonial settings of settler nations as well as formerly settled nations, but also includes contributions from and/or about Gibraltar, China, Russia which are affected by decolonising processes. As the *POCRIF* team recognises both historical continuity and change in the post-colonial (hyphen intended) era on the assumption that colonial perceptions continue to pervade post-colonial societies after their formal independence from the Metropole (cf. McLeod 2000, 33), it aims to assess to what extent crime fiction produced in these areas may be considered postcolonial, in the sense of challenging colonial ways of seeing and knowing. In this round table our project members reflect upon their progress regarding these issues so far.

2. Discussion

¹The authors wish to acknowledge the support provided by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness for the writing of this article (Research Project FFI2013-45101-P).

Isabel Santaularia analyses crime fiction set in China and Russia. Taking into account the permanence of negative stereotyping, she aims to explain the monstrous rendition of countries such as China and Russia in crime fiction written in English, which includes the continuity of neo-Orientalist discourses in relation and as a response to the economic and political clout of Russia and China and their threatening potential as forces capable of overwhelming the West's military and economic might. Examples analysed for Russia are Andrew Williams' *To Kill a Tsar* (2011), Sam Eastland's *Eye of the Red Tsar* (2010), William Ryan's *The Holy Thief* (2010), Tom Rob Smith's *Child 44* (2008), Boris Starling's *Vodka* (2005), A.D. Miller's *Snowdrops* (2011) and Jason Matthews' *Red Sparrow* (2013); and for China, Qiu Xiaolong's *Death of a Red Heroine* (2000), Lisa Brackmann's *Rock, Paper, Tiger* (2010) and works by Lisa See, Peter May, Catherine Sampson and Duncan Jepson. These novels counteract the discomfort Russia and China may generate by doggedly demonstrating that China and Russia remain the same old communist monsters of the past.

Santaularia shows how depictions of Russia and China during the Cold War period highlighted their otherness by emphasising the backwardness of their lifestyles as compared to stories of Western success. These constant comparisons helped reinforce the notion the West was better. Contemporary, post-Cold War crime fictions do not resort to contrast and comparison since Westerners are probably too aware of the ills and deficiencies of their own societies and an open eulogy of the West would sound too propagandistic, not to say fake. However, China and Russia are still observed through the lens of Western culture and, indirectly, these narratives still ratify the supremacy of the West, since they do not allow Russia and China to emerge as anything but atrocious—without having to resort to the West for comparison. This, according to Santaularia, allows for some smug self-satisfaction on the part of Western readers: our societies are depicted not without their ironies and deficiencies but infinitely better than those in countries such as China and Russia.

Catalina Ribas Segura addresses the Miss Phryne Fisher Mysteries by award-winning Australian author Kerry Greenwood (Melbourne, 1954), and their TV adaption, *The Phryne Fisher Murder Mysteries*. The Phryne Fisher Mysteries are set in Victoria, Australia in the late 1920s and centre on a female detective who displays the liberal and independent behaviour of the upperclass flapper—the profession boosting the attitude. Ribas Segura's focus of analysis is Greenwood's seventh novel, *Ruddy Gore* (1995) and its homonymous TV episode (2012), in which she explores the psychological construction of the detective. Contrary to many other detectives, Phryne does not solve crimes and mysteries to increase her ego or to show off her abilities but to avenge the victims of unfair treatment and provide closure, which is central to the genre of crime fiction in its aim to restore the silenced voice of the victim to justice (Reardon Lloyd 2014). Through crime fiction, Kerry Greenwood explores from a post-colonial point of view "our moral confusions and the indeterminacy of guilt" (Horsley 2005 in Reardon Lloyd 2014, 102). In *Ruddy Gore*, Greenwood deals with unrequited love, revenge and ambition through the lens of racism by introducing a secondary character, the Chinese Mr Lin Chung, who turns into a dear friend. As Phryne and Lin's relationship becomes firmer, they also become the target of racist comments from their respective communities. While in this novel Greenwood's rendering of Phryne questions the construction of Australian identity and belonging, its TV series adaptation glosses over race as well as class issues, and shows itself heir to a more conservative vision of Australian reality.

Cornelis Martin Renes focuses on the godfather of Indigenous-Australian crime fiction, Philip McLaren. Australian crime fiction vaunts special features resultant from the continent's particular history of colonial invasion and settlement as a penal colony; at a great distance

from the Metropole, it has generated narrative genres and modes to address (neo)colonial society from a white settler point of view, which Indigenous authors have started writing back to only very recently. A good and long solitary example of the latter is the crime fiction produced by the Indigenous author Philip McLaren, which vaunts a strong sense of place and a shifting use of characters and detection options that in combination are an enabling of the Indigenous community. Philip McLaren has published six novels, four of which are within the crime genre: *Sweet Water—Stolen Land* (1993), a novel about frontier violence and Aboriginal dispossession and displacement; *Scream Black Murder* (1995), a police procedural boasting a male and female Aboriginal detective; *Lightning Mine* (1999), a novel about the impact of mining on country and community at the Top End; and *Murder in Utopia* (2009), which addresses tribal violence and payback in a remote Central Desert community.

Stephen Knight celebrates the publication of Philip McLaren's crime novels in the 1990s as a watershed moment. He highlights McLaren as one of those few Indigenous voices who "have found the genre a highly effective instrument to question the uses of racialised power in the country" (1997, 176). Without sticking to one particular setting or character, and refusing the epithet 'crime writer', Philip McLaren has often 'naturally' recurred to crime fiction to address the engrained tensions between Indigenous Australia and mainstream society and the endemic violence this generates, e.g. the policy of the Stolen Generations, Aboriginal deaths in custody, the Northern Territory Emergency Response etc.. Yet, rather than investigating (individual) Indigenous identity formation as many Indigenous authors do, McLaren employs fiction to address the grand picture of disempowerment and disenfranchisement of Australia's First Nations, whether this is through the crime novel as a vehicle for story-telling or not, and has so set the pace for Indigenous crime writers to come.

William Charles Phillips addresses the representation of Aboriginality in the novels of Australian crime fiction writer Peter Temple. There are only three Aboriginals portrayed at any length in Peter Temple's novels. Firstly, Cameron Delray, enforcer for a shady gambler in the Jack Irish novels, is dark and handsome, powerful, dangerous and feared, yet cultured and knowledgeable, successful with women and an aficionado of fine wines and good food. In short, he is rather too good to be true, an apparent attempt by Temple to present an Aboriginal in as positive a manner as possible. Secondly, Ned Lowey, a smallholder from rural Victoria in *An Iron Rose* (2007), is also depicted as something of a stereotype, in this case that of the wise black man, the noble savage, the man with a gift for nature, animals and quiet wisdom; a not uncommon white perception of blackness and Aboriginality. Thirdly, Detective Sergeant Paul Dove in *The Broken Shore* (2007) and *Truth* (2010) is more complex, as though the author were aware of the stereotypical nature of his earlier attempts. He has a chip on his shoulder, is both defensive and aggressive and mistrusts his white colleagues while, at the same time, the reasons for his behaviour are quite obvious—the police force and virtually every white Australian that he encounters are ingrained racists. Phillips makes clear that the representation of Aboriginality by white writers is fraught with danger and that Temple is well aware of this. Phillips concludes, however, that Temple is clearly determined to seize the nettle, deciding that the absence of Aboriginals in his writing would be a falsehood and a capitulation to white Australia's history of denial with regard to the country's first people.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, all the team members highlight that crime fiction, as a genre that scrutinizes the margins of post-colonial law and order, is by definition bound to reflect social strife in the interconnected and mutually re-enforcing fields of race, gender and class, whose tensions are

ultimately responsible for the appearance of violence on the individual and communal levels of society. Such a cultural studies approach positively feeds into the perception of postcolonial crime fiction as an exciting and challenging area of literary study, which is all the more justified by the popularity the genre has reached amongst authors and readers over the last decades. Whereas traditionally crime fiction is deemed non-canonical, we argue this precisely enhances its capacity to investigate and critique what is central in the making of a society, dis-covering the very discourses which uphold its internal power structures, privileges and injustices. The team members wish to take the opportunity to invite readers to visit the postcolonial crime fiction website the team has been working on, and to indicate that the team's future foci of interest, that is, fiction from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, New Zealand, the Caribbean and Mexico, has already seen the light in papers, presentations and journal publications.

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Women's Tales of Dissent: Exploring Female Experience in the Short Fiction of Helen Simpson, Janice Galloway, A.S. Byatt, and Jeanette Winterson

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Abstract

Feminist literary criticism concerned with exposing the masculinist ideology reproduced and subverted in works of fiction has privileged the novel over shorter narrative modes as the main focus of interest, thus marginalising the short story whose consideration as a full-blown literary genre is never secure. However, evidence shows that contemporary women writers in English, most of whom publish also novels, have contributed and go on contributing massively to the genre of the modern short story. The idea that guided our approaches to short fiction by contemporary women writers was that, apart from material or historical reasons, the unremitting development of short story has to do with the genre's intrinsic qualities and the experimental possibilities it offers.¹

Keywords: short story, women writers, Helen Simpson, Janice Galloway, A. S. Byatt, Jeanette Winterson

1. Introduction

Feminism is a political movement for which social transformation depends on the effective subversion of patriarchal power. Feminist literary criticism explores the ways women's subjection and marginalisation are reproduced and contested in literary works. In the realm of fiction, there is an irrepressible tendency to consider the novel as the truly worthy object of study in detriment of the short story. Short fiction continues to be, as critic Thomas H. Gullason (1964) said more than half a century ago, an underrated art in spite of the fact that high-quality short stories continue to be written and published every year and that women writers have excelled in it. As a separate full-blown literary genre, the short story is an apt medium for the expression of feminine and feminist concerns and anxieties, or, at least, it

¹ This roundtable is part of the Research Project "Women's Tales': The Short Fiction of Contemporary British Writers, 1974-2013", funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (FEM2013-41977-P). We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Research Group "Discourse and Identity", funded by the Xunta de Galicia (GRC2015/002, GI-1924).

communicates them in ways different from other literary modes. Indeed, the short story is hospitable to experimentation, of what is outside or against *the norm*, the unexpected/unfamiliar/repressed/strange/uncanny. Flexible and mutable, on the one hand, and condensed and focused, on the other, the short story is a powerful vehicle for the exploration of new modes of feminine selfhood different from those enforced by dominant ideology, and this may be one of the reasons why great literary artists like the ones discussed at this round table write short fiction.

2. Reassessing Motherhood and Professional Life in Helen Simpson's stories (Laura Torres Zúñiga)

Helen Simpson's stories reflect the "conspiracy of silence . . . about life and work with young children" afflicting contemporary women (Simpson 2006). In this section, I explore how such "silence" and the (in)compatibility of motherhood and professional fulfilment are formulated in her collection *Hey Yeah Right Get a Life* (2001). The stories "Café Society," "Hey Yeah Right Get a Life" and "Hurrah for the Hols" depict full-time mothers, whereas mothers in "Burns and the Bankers" and "Wurstigkeit" have liberal professions outside the home.²

The jobless mothers in "Café" and "Hey"/"Hurrah" show their frustration at the impossibility to share their emotions either with their husbands or with friends. In "Café," Sally and Frances *supposedly* converse but most of their dialogue consists of unspoken feelings typographically marked by italics. In "Hey" and "Hurrah," Dorrie's talks with other mothers feel equally superficial. Home is another place for lack of communication, as "parents said nothing to each other" (161). These women recognize their powerless position and the effects of an ideological burden forcing silence upon them as "faces close in censorship at the merest hint of such talk. Put up and shut up is the rule" (13).

The question arises whether this forced silence is related to these women's financial role in their home: "Once she'd stopped bringing in money she knew she'd lost the right to object," Dorrie acknowledges (49). Mothers who do bring in money into the household, like Nicola in "Burns" and Isobel and Laura in "Wurstigkeit," should then be able to speak up. In the company meeting in "Burns," swapped power positions make women the speakers and men the object of discussion, while a young woman's speech clearly voices women's desires: "Women want love and they want work, just the same as men" (102). In "Wurstigkeit," Laura and Isobel converse easily and share intimacies even before becoming close friends, openly criticizing the impossibility to juggle children and work, and the deceitful discourse of husbands that encourage wives to "fit work around the edges" (14, 54).

However, certain details suggest that these women have not really found their own voice and reveal a subtler influence of an ideology which considers that professional women have supplanted men's place, and so act like them. Accordingly, Nicola acknowledges: "She loved her children ... *and so did Charlie* in his way; but, *like him*, she preferred to subcontract ... the work of parenthood" (91; italics added). Also, she "assured her children" with an argument "*Which was probably just what these three men ... said to their wives*" (105; italics added). The gender reversal surfaces unmistakably through one simile: "What every woman needs is a wife," Nicola concludes (102), and Isobel clarifies: "Nannies ... now she's like my wife" (150). Consequently, it seems it is the masculine norm that they are adopting to fit in

² I refer to the stories by the first word in their title and include just page numbers after quotations as they all belong to a single collection.

the professional world. Contrary to selfless mothers, Nicola, Laura and Isobel “never did cross the ego line. *Like men*, they stayed the stars of their own lives” (37; italics added).

In conclusion, while apparently these stories about professional mothers offer role models of independent women who combine home and work successfully, the underlying discourse implies that, within the options of the “mother-in-the-house voice” and the “woman-in-the-workplace voice” (15), the latter proves to be a mere reproduction of the man's: there is still no genuine *mother-in-the-workplace* voice.

3. Unmasking Male Violence in Four Stories by Janice Galloway (Jorge Sacido Romero)

The exposure of illegitimate male brutality at the heart of the patriarchal system is part of Janice Galloway's feminist project, and the short story (because of its brevity) narrows the scope and sharpens the critical edge of her indictment. For Carole Jones, Galloway introduces the figure of the “post-patriarchal youth, [who] prioritises partnership over domination” (2007, 217) and “symbolically suggests the disruption of the transmission of patriarchal power from fathers to sons, setting the stage for new positively imagined gender relations” (2009, 69). For Cristie L. March, however, Galloway's women characters do defy gender assumptions but end up hopelessly lost and unhappy (2002, 118). Indeed, massive textual evidence in Galloway's stories shows the persistence of patriarchal oppression in contemporary Scottish society, and education has a lot to do with it. Violent male power transmitted the hard way from father to son in the realm of the home is the theme of “Scenes from the Life No. 23: Paternal Advice” from the 1991 collection *Blood*. Sammy, the divorced uneducated working-class father of a six-year-old son, Wee Sammy, is resolved to teach his boy a lesson presumably out of love and out of duty. He places his mystified son in the mantelpiece and tells him to jump down: “For me. Jump and I'll catch you” (16).³ Wee Sammy jumps, the father steps aside, and he crashes against the tiles. The story closes with the father's advice: “Let that be a lesson to you son. Trust nae cunt” (16).

Toughness turns into sadism in “someone had to” from *Where You Find It* (1996). This time violence is inflicted upon a superhumanly resilient six-year-old girl, a version of feminine spirited resistance against patriarchal oppression found elsewhere in her stories. Here Galloway takes the logic of action to an extreme conclusion as a hysterical man plunges his small step-daughter into a bath of boiling water yet cannot do away with her gaze, which figures recurrently in Galloway as a source of feminine counterpower.

The last two stories—both from *Blood*—feature women forced to deal with pervasive male violence that determines gender relations and assumptions in the adult world. In “Need for Restraint”, a woman tries to stop a fight but clashes against masculine expectations regarding women, including those she had internalised. She tries hard to change her subjective position by forcefully speaking up her mind against male violence, to overcome guilt and shed an identity that entails being oblivious to human pain. She struggles literally to make her voice heard, a voice that strives to come out yet seems to get stuck in her throat when she tries to approach her man: “The words jammed. They stopped. ... She had not even said what she wanted to say” (87). In “Fair Ellen and the Wanderer Returned”, however, Galloway rehearses an openly feminist rewriting of the traditional plot of the woman who breaks her bow of fidelity to a man that returns home from the war. Galloway subverts the

³ As I quote from a single volume (Galloway's *Collected Stories* [2009]), I include just page numbers between parentheses.

traditionally grave tone and omits any reference to the war, which she substitutes with deflating details about domestic life. The lover's solemn pronouncements and claims are sardonically debunked by Fair Ellen's pragmatic rebuffs and by her ethical decision to be free once her aging husband dies. When the man leaves calling her "hard bitch" (75), she stands looking till it is dark, now a woman in possession of an empowering gaze.

4. Unconventional Art, Feminine Experience, and Feminist Discourse in A.S. Byatt's Short Fiction (Carmen Lara Rallo)

In her short fiction, Byatt portrays female characters that reveal themselves to be subversive artists; significantly, their non-normative exercise of artistic expression brings to the fore a reflection on women's concerns and feminist issues. This contribution focuses on two of Byatt's stories depicting these unconventional female artists: "Art Work" (1993) and "Body Art" (2003), from the perspective of the intersection of female experience, artistry and feminist discourse. Here, the discovery of an unconventional artistic talent is accompanied by the exploration of issues of marginalisation, silence, invisibility and even physical violence.

All these issues emerge in connection with the unconventional artist in "Art Work," Mrs Brown, the cleaning lady in an artistic family. Described as a victim of domestic violence, Mrs Brown was given the job by Debbie, a designer, who has subordinated her artistic talent to her husband's pride in his own unsuccessful art. As the representative of patriarchal authority and conventional art, Debbie's husband (Robin) sees Mrs Brown as a source of distraction and noise, criticising her unusual juxtaposition of colours and fabrics in collage-like patterns: "She makes all her own clothes, out of whatever comes to hand, ... awful rainbow jumpers in screaming hues, candy-striped jumpers" (Byatt 1994, 59).

In contrast with Robin's fruitless art, Mrs Brown transcends the level of domestic creation, as she is discovered to be an inspired artist who stages a feminist installation in a prestigious gallery. Mrs Brown gives free rein to her original colour theory, putting together all kinds of recycled materials to create a collage-like statue of mythical characters with feminist overtones (Byatt 1994, 78-80). This female act of creation is productive, as it entails a transformative effect: while ordinary Mrs Brown turns to exotic Sheba Brown, Debbie brings her thwarted vocation alive, becoming successful in the world of book illustration.

Mrs Brown's ability is echoed in the artistic curiosity of the protagonist of "Body Art." Daisy Whimple, an art student, is introduced as the author of an original Christmas decoration for a gynaecological ward, who is given the task of cataloguing a bizarre collection of medical instruments and specimens. Although feeling grateful to her protector (Damian Becket, a doctor) and to her supervisor (the art historian Martha Sharpin), Daisy fails in the arrangement of the exhibits, and instead, she pilfers some of them to make a collage-like statue out of medical prostheses and even human specimens. This installation has special connotations for Daisy, who has suffered in her own body the destructive potential of the creative process of maternity: "It was a representation of the goddess Kali, who was constructed like an Arcimboldo portrait out of many elements. ... Her legs were constructed of interlaced forceps and probes. Her feet were prosthetic" (Byatt 2003, 103-104).

Like Mrs Brown's installation, Daisy's work awakens mixed reactions: while Robin feels enraged at Mrs Brown's success, Damian reacts furiously to the point of being ready to denounce Daisy. In contrast, Martha, like Debbie in "Art Work," feels identified with the artist's achievement, creating a bond of female solidarity. In this way, Daisy's art, like that of Mrs Brown, conveys a feminist message of change with a state of dissatisfaction, either with the personal or with the professional situation. Both installations allow for the discovery of

imaginative and original artists hidden behind the appearance of an ordinary cleaning lady and a marginalised art student. By doing so, and breaking the silence that presided over the artists' house and the hospital, these two stories reveal the significance of the correlation between unconventional art, feminine experience and feminist discourse.

5. 'What Do [Picasso and Sappho] Do in Bed?' The Subversive Role of Art in Jeanette Winterson's "The Poetics of Sex" (Isabel M^a Andrés Cuevas)

I propose here to read the discourse of art present in "The Poetics of Sex" as Winterson's strategy to accomplish the defilement of traditional standards connected with gender roles. Structured in a series of sections with headings that reproduce traditional myths about same-sex love, the story takes the form of an interview that seemingly responds to questions such as "What do Lesbians do in Bed?" In spite of its fragmentariness, a storyline can be established: two women meet, experience a time of bliss, break up and later reunite.

Winterson's particular aim to vindicate lesbian love in a predominantly homophobic society is reinforced by means of the discourse of art intertwined throughout the story and which imprints the text with powerfully suggestive images that reduce *ad absurdum* any sex-tied preconceptions. The story is narrated in the first person by Sappho, one of the protagonists of the love affair. Like her literary namesake, Winterson's Sappho allegorically places herself and her lover on an island, to which lesbian women are sent in an eminently patriarchal society (40-41).

Heterocentric prejudices against lesbians are also attacked by means of pictorial images and allusions. Particularly significant are those associated with Picasso, the name of the other main character. At the very beginning, a pun on the word "period" (31) playfully fuses the different creative phases in the famous painter's work and the woman's menstrual cycles. The blending of the two meanings of "period" establishes a connection with the female body and its characteristics of fluidity, openness and change.

The function of these pictorial images in the story adds support to the legitimacy of same-sex love and sexuality beyond fixed gender categories. In the midst of an early scene of passionate sex, Picasso suddenly turns into a bull in the narrator's eyes. As the intercourse between the two women progresses, it becomes impossible to distinguish fighter and bull, as in some of Picasso's cubist recreations of bull-fighting.

Picasso's "Guernica" also finds its place in Winterson's story. Sappho recalls the time when she and her lover met at Art School and had their first sexual encounter. In this scene, presided over by dramatic contrasts between light and darkness, Picasso is depicted as "look[ing] tubercular, so thin and mottled" (35), in resemblance to the characters of the cubist painting. Likewise, the dusty bed—suggestive of absence and ghostliness—and the unsettling presence of the "newspaper ... advertising rationing" (35) are a pictorial echo of "Guernica".

A mock version of the Annunciation also enables the narrator to ridicule any homophobic preconceptions about lesbian women's identity. In Winterson's patently subversive interpretation, Archangel Gabriel is in fact "a fairy in a pink tutu" (37) who visits Picasso in order to give her a message. In spite of the transgressing tone of Winterson's recreation of the Biblical account, it highlights the purity and authenticity of the love between the two women: "[Sappho] had nothing to offer but herself, and Picasso, who thought she had seen it all before, smiled like a child and fell in love" (38).

In the discourse of art, Winterson finds for her story a rich source of images and allusions that allow her to design an often sarcastic composition in which many of the homophobic myths against lesbians emanating from patriarchal society definitely crack and

fall. Yet, beneath that varnish of mockery and lampoonery, the reality of a pure, honest, and time-defying love comes to the surface in its true colours.

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This volume brings together a selection of the papers and round tables delivered at the 39th AEDEAN Conference, held at the University of Deusto in November 2015. The essays in *On the Move: Glancing Backwards to Build a Future in English Studies* often begin with typically-academic gestures such as retrieving a classic text and finding new ways of studying its genre or characterization; or remarking how certain ungrammatical constructions have gone frequently unnoticed—even in well-known texts—for various reasons; or entangling oneself in contentions about the adequacy of dissecting a literary text or linguistic problem by using innovative analytical tools. In all cases, though, there is the intention of putting forth certain views and notions that will help future scholars to deal in a better light with the dilemmas regularly encountered in literary, linguistic and cultural studies.

The book opens with three essays by professors Bartholomae, Pullum and Río, who demonstrate not only their mastery in their respective subjects but also their ability to tailor their contents to multifarious audiences. The next two sections represent the main body of the e-book, with nearly forty contributions on both literature and cultural studies (Part II) and language and linguistics (Part III). These short academic pieces are a representative showcase of the research being done lately in the different areas of expertise. The last section of the volume gathers together the results of four research projects dealing with such engaging topics as postcolonial crime fiction or forgotten texts by Anglo writers about the Spanish Civil War. It is hard to think of any potential reader schooled in English Studies who will not find something suitable to their interests and tastes in this volume.



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