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ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE ESTUDIOS
ANGLO-NORTEAMERICANOS
aedean
edita: Antonio Ballesteros

*in
memoriam* J. HILLIS
MILLER

BELC AND
SUBs *from learner
to subtitles corpora*

REVISITING
SYLVIA PLATH
an Interview with Karen V. Kukil

abstract | AEDEAN
DOCTORAL SEMINAR

ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE ESTUDIOS
ANGLO-NORTEAMERICANOS

aedean

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Universidad de Sevilla

IAEDEAN Doctoral Seminar

TRIBUTE | LITERATURE AND CULTURE

SUSANA ONEGA JAÉN
UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA

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UNIVERSITY OF CÓRDOBA

J. Hillis Miller In Memoriam

SUSANA ONEGA JAÉN
UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA

Saying nowadays that the 1980s was the decade that saw the “ethical turn” in the fields of moral philosophy and literary theory would be considered a truism by most academics. To me, however, it represents a fascinating discovery that determined my development as a literary critic. In the 1970s, when I was studying English Philology, the only critical approach that offered exciting new ways of carrying out a comprehensive in-depth analysis of literary texts was Russian Formalism. The Formalists led me to French Structuralism and the Structuralists showed me the way to Deconstruction. I was delving into it when the ethical turn took place.

In 1986, I saw an advertisement in the *T.L.S.* offering grants to attend the summer courses organised by The School of Criticism and Theory at the University of Dartmouth. The Director of the School was Geoffrey H. Hartmann, perhaps the first member of the Yale School of Deconstruction who became aware of the insufficiency of deconstructivist tools to respond adequately to the increasing number of testimonial and fictional texts on the Holocaust then emerging. During the summer course at Dartmouth, Prof. Hartman gave a plenary lecture on Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah*, a totally unknown topic to me and to most of my class mates. But Prof. Hartman was not the only member of the Yale School who was turning from Deconstruction to ethics. The reason why I applied for the grant was that I wanted to listen to J. Hillis Miller, so I did not think much about the title of his seminar: “The Ethics of Reading.” As can be easily guessed, the seminar was based on the book Hillis was currently writing, *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James, and Benjamin* (1987). Thus, I became an unlikely and somewhat unconscious witness to the ethical turn in its making. I will never forget that seminar, not only because of its theoretical wealth but also because of the unpretentiousness of the wise man teaching it. The first thing I had to do to follow the classes was to get used to Hillis’ Southern drawl, the way he mixed together some vowels. This initial difficulty was amply outweighed by the clarity of what he said and the kindness, forbearance and cordiality of his deportment. I remember how he normalised the paralysis of his right arm by telling us half-jokingly that he was the one who washed the dishes at home, things like that. I soon found that the ethics he advocated so eloquently was not limited to the act of reading, that it was an inborn ruling practice. My luggage was lost during the flight to New York, so when I arrived in Dartmouth the only thing I had with me was a small bag with toiletries, an umbrella and the manuscript of a monograph on John Fowles that became a published book thanks to Hillis. He made a point of having a personal interview with every student in his seminar, meant to know us and our personal interests. When I told him about the manuscript, he asked me for permission to read it and then returned it to me with the recommendation that I send it to the “Breaking the Canon Series” of UMI Research Press. It remains a mystery how he found the time and energy to treat every student as if we were unique.

After that summer at Dartmouth, we never lost contact. In December 1987 the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies invited Hillis to give a plenary lecture at the University of León. The lecture, entitled “Prosopopoeia and the Ethics of Reading”, was path-breaking for Spanish Anglicists, who thus became acquainted with a key aspect of the turn to ethics. In 1992, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Department of English, the University of Zaragoza nominated him as *Doctor Honoris Causa*. The solemn ceremony took place on 8th November 1993. A few days before, a wealthy banker who held several Honorary Doctorates in exchange for financing had been tried for fraud and sent to prison. Set against this case, Hillis’ acceptance speech was even more significant. With characteristic modesty, he said that this great distinction had come to him out of the blue, that it was a present without possible recompense or adequate gesture of gratitude.

Then, he elaborated on the differences between earned and honorary titles and concluded that, to him, both types set the same obligation; that the apparent lack of responsibility of an honorary degree is in fact more binding than earned ones because the person who receives it has to set an example for the next generations. With Hillis' speech in mind, the ritual words I pronounced to grant him the Honorary Doctorate reveal their aporetic meaning: *Do tibi facultatem legendi, intelligendi et interpretandi*. During the following years I was to learn that he really meant what he had said in his elocution. Not only was Hillis ready to come to Zaragoza whenever we invited him, he never failed to tell me in advance when he was invited to other Spanish universities in case I wanted him to do something in Zaragoza. He never said what he would prefer to do. He just did whatever I suggested. In November 1996, Hillis came to Zaragoza to participate in an international conference organised by the Spanish Association of Semiotics. I had the honour to chair his keynote lecture, entitled "Catachreses for Chaos: Myth and Irony in Friedrich Schlegel", later published in the Conference Proceedings (1998). In January 2003, Hillis came again, this time with a "Research of Excellence" visiting grant, to act as President of María Jesús Martínez Alfaro's doctoral viva, as she vividly recalls in her contribution. On that occasion, Hillis gave a lecture entitled "Get a Life: The Ways we Live (Now and Then)" on the differences between book and computer reading. But perhaps his best-known academic activity in Zaragoza was his participation with Derek Attridge in the "Dialogue on the State of Literature / Literature and the State" that opened the 7th International Conference of the European Society for the Study of English, organised by our team in September 2004. In 2005, Hillis came again to Zaragoza to deliver a series of lectures as part of the postgraduate course "Coming out of Relativism: The Re-evaluation of History and Ethics in Recent US Fiction". Two members of the team, Constanza del Río and Francisco Collado, interviewed him during this stay. The interview, entitled "On Literature and Ethics", was published in *The European English Messenger* (2006).

Coming to our Department was an important part of Hillis' ethics of responsibility towards the University of Zaragoza, but this was not his only way of making us feel that he really was a member of the Department. He let us reprint part of his book *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines* (1992) in the *Longman Reader on Narratology* (1996) I co-edited with José Ángel García Landa, another member of the team. He wrote an article on Charles Palliser's *The Quincunx* when I asked him for a contribution to the book I was co-editing with Christian Gutleben, *Refracting the Canon in Contemporary British Literature and Film* (2004), and another one on Ian McEwan's *Atonement* for *Trauma and Romance in Contemporary British Fiction*, another book I was co-editing with Jean-Michel Ganteau (2013). What is more, Hillis completely set upside down our relative positions as master and student when he asked me to contribute an essay to a special number of *CounterText* in response to *Thinking Literature across Continents* (2016), a book written by Hillis in collaboration with Ranjan Ghosh, meant to set their respective Western and Eastern literary traditions against each other. This book shows Hillis distilling, in an astonishing *tour de force*, all the knowledge of modern British and American literature and literary criticism he had gathered throughout his academic career. The special issue came out in December 2017, with contributors from Malta, Pennsylvania, Penn State University, Bergen, Cyprus, Hyderabad, Stanford, Irvine, Hamilton College (in Clinton, New York) and Zaragoza. The variety of locations provides clear evidence of the many friends and admiring colleagues he had all over the world.

In *The Disappearance of God* (1963), Hillis wrote that Baroque poetry, and also Baroque architecture with its Salomonic columns spiralling up to Heaven, represent a violent effort by the human imagination to keep open the avenues of communication between human beings and God after rationalism put an end to the possibility of transcendence. His contention that we can reconnect the two worlds and find the *Deus absconditus* through an act of imaginative creation can help us mitigate our grief of loss, for we can imagine Hillis, and his beloved wife Dorothy, living for as long as we remember them in the ancestral crypt of the dead in the company of Plato and the other visionary writers Hillis knew so well and loved so much.

MARÍA JESÚS MARTÍNEZ-ALFARO
UNIVERSIDAD DE ZARAGOZA

Como las cosas humanas no sean eternas, yendo siempre en declinación de sus principios hasta llegar a su último fin, especialmente las vidas de los hombres, y como la de don Quijote no tuviese privilegio del cielo para detener el curso de la suya, llegó su fin y acabamiento cuando él menos lo pensaba.

As nothing that is man's can last forever, but all tends ever downwards from its beginning to its end, and above all man's life, and as Don Quixote's enjoyed no special dispensation from heaven to stay its course, its end and close came when he least looked for it.

Miguel de Cervantes. *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*, Part Two, Chapter LXXIV.

I am starting this short piece with an excerpt from *Don Quixote*, more specifically, from the chapter entitled “Of how don Quixote fell sick, and of the will he made, and how he died”. The quotation above, which tells about death catching the protagonist off guard, makes and fails to make sense. The narrator’s words would have probably attracted J. Hillis Miller’s attention on account of their ambiguity, although the English translation slightly attenuates it. Despite that “como” (“as” in English) at the beginning of the quotation, this is not a good cause-and-effect statement: it is slightly incoherent to say that, *because* nothing is forever in this world, to Don Quixote his end was *unexpected* (“cuando él menos lo pensaba”). Referring to this fragment, John Skelton points out that it is “a Cervantes trick to turn an apparent infelicity of style into a subconscious reminder of how slippery the ground is beneath one’s feet”¹. It has indeed become more slippery of late, compared to pre-Covid times, the pandemic teaching us a lesson in both life and death. I must admit that, during last year’s lockdown here in Spain, I sometimes thought of people that I had met in the past but I had no contact with. Family and friends could be texted, phoned, seen in virtual meet-ups. But there were others that popped into my head as I had so much time to think and a considerable degree of apprehension. Some capricious association of ideas while reading an article by Siri Hustvedt on coronavirus in the U.S. made me think of Miller, so I will borrow Cervantes’s words to state, ambiguously too, that his death was unexpected “[a]s nothing that is man’s can last forever,” all the more so in Covid times.

Miller’s passing away brought to my mind other moments where I had, though for different reasons, a sense of an ending: the final throes of writing my doctoral dissertation and the final stages of my father’s life, which coincided in time. As I was trying to cope with all this, my then supervisor, Susana Onega, told me that I had to conclude my thesis as soon as possible so that Hillis Miller could be Chair of the examining board for the viva, provided he accepted the invitation. He was coming to

¹ “Death in Literature. Different Approaches from Simplicity to Obscurity”. *Métode Science Studies Journal* 8 (2018): 247-53, p. 250.

another Spanish university where he was going to participate in a number of academic events and he had written to Susana asking if there was something he could collaborate with, here in Zaragoza. He felt close to our Department, which had proposed him for the nomination of Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa. He received the degree from the University of Zaragoza in 1993. I still remember how that sense of responsibility called my attention as Susana talked about him: many years had passed since he had been awarded the honorary degree, but he felt that it entailed a lifelong commitment. And so it was that *he* asked if there was something he could do for us when he came to Spain. And so it was that my dissertation became the answer to his question. The web page of the University of Zaragoza listing the names of those nominated for that same honorary degree includes as a heading a quotation from Thomas Aquinas, stating that honour is due to persons of great excellence as a sign of attestation of excellence already existing, not that honour makes them excellent. In his contacting Susana out of responsibility, I already saw, before meeting him in person, another side of that excellence I knew he had as a scholar.

I took long to write my doctoral dissertation, probably because I started teaching full time while I was still writing it, but also because I got stuck with one of the novels I had to study (Charles Palliser's *Betrayals*). Reading Miller particularly helped me with this novel and I amply resorted to his work, which was just apposite as Palliser deftly parodied Deconstructionist criticism (and critics) in *Betrayals*. He built a considerable part of the story on it while he also satirised it. In my analysis I wrote extensively on certain aspects of Deconstruction, and not exactly in praising terms. Little did I know that one of its most famous advocates, Prof. Dr. J. Hillis Miller, member of the Yale School of Deconstruction along with Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, and Geoffrey Hartman, would assess my doctoral thesis. Because, yes, he gladly accepted Susana's invitation, he would read my dissertation, he would come to Zaragoza. I was amazed. I was also in a hurry, because I had to finish it so that the viva could take place near the time of his journey to Spain. Susana must have told him that I was one of those hopeless writers that endlessly rethink, reread, and rewrite, which is true, and that I would have taken longer to finish my thesis were it not for his timely visit. This explains the first thing he jokingly told me when we were introduced: "So, I think I'm the man who saved you from yourself". And he was right. There I was, ready, or sort of, for my viva. I was tired, I was nervous, I had managed to do things in time, and my father had died a few weeks earlier too. It was an honour to count on Hillis Miller for the occasion. It also added pressure, a lot. Not to mention that bereavement and a viva are not a good combination. But I remember this tall man that smiled with his eyes, gentle and relaxed as he talked to me, and his tone and attitude encouraged me to believe that everything would be okay. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "A great man is always willing to be little". Miller was like that, as he proved through all his stay, in the viva and during the time we shared later. After the viva, he wrote a dedication on the title page of my thesis, a lengthy piece even by the standards of those times: "For María Jesús, with all good wishes. I declare I have read every page." And I declare he was telling the truth. Before he left, he asked me if I wanted his annotated copy of my dissertation so that I could write down and think about all his comments with more time. I could send it back to him later. He was so kind, so dedicated and constructive, so wise.

In his Doctor Honoris Causa acceptance speech, which I read when I heard of his death, he explained that his being conferred that degree was a performative act since, on receiving it, one that was a foreigner had ceased to be so. He was, as he put it, a stranger, an American, always using English in his works, where he most often analysed literature also written in English. By being appointed Doctor Honoris Causa by the University of Zaragoza, he concluded, the foreigner had been translated, transformed: we had welcomed him to our intellectual home, we had made him one of us. And so we will remember him: he was one of the best, and he was one of us.

PAULA MARTÍN SALVÁN
UNIVERSITY OF CÓRDOBA

I first met Professor J. Hillis Miller in 2003, when he endorsed my application for a three-month stay as a visiting scholar at the University of California at Irvine. The doctoral seminar he was teaching that Spring was on the Victorian multi-plotted novel and the idea of community. We read Dickens, Trollope and Elliot, and Nancy and Blanchot on community. I was on my second year as a PhD student, and only long afterwards would come to fully realize how exceptional the kind of generosity he bestowed on all his students was. Such generosity was wonderfully enacted in his ritual welcoming into his office, as he would placidly lean on the back of his armchair and ask: “What can I do for you?” Formulaic as it may seem, the expression captures—as much as the Levinasian “After you”—the essence of his openness to others.

Trying to explain the things I learned from him would be entirely pointless. I don’t think I have ever written anything at all without quoting him directly, without having his keen but candid literary sensibility in mind. In his short book *On Literature* (Routledge, 2002) he wrote about the sense of wonder when, as a child, he read *The Swiss Family Robinson*, and felt transported to these people’s adventure world. I think that sense of wonder about literature persists in all his books. At the end of “The critic as host” (1979), he famously described deconstruction as an attempt “to resist its own tendencies to come to rest in some sense of mastery over the work. It resists these in the name of an uneasy joy of interpretation, beyond nihilism, always in movement” (37). In my case, that joy of interpretation is what made possible to turn my own childhood wonder about fictional worlds into a life-long endeavor.

He also had a great taste for the anecdotic, and excelled at telling little stories. These, I’m afraid, have stuck to my memory deeper than the kind of grandiose, sweeping statement one might expect in academia.

I remember his fascination for the kind of transparent, telepathic universe inhabited by Trollope’s characters (he would write about it in *On Literature*, 2002). Trollope was his favorite author, he said, and he was always rereading his novels.

I remember he collected words for “butterfly” in different languages, as he observed there seemed to be no etymological connection between them. Mariposa, papillon, farfalla, butterfly, Schmetterling, babochka...

I remember when he reminisced about the Yale days, and told me about a very respected scholar falling asleep on a department office’s couch after an academic reception.

I remember his confession that only after a long correspondence with Jacques Derrida, whose letters were addressed to John Hillis Miller, did he dare to tell him his first name was actually Joseph.

At the end of the semester I wrote a paper on Conrad’s *Nostromo*. He read and revised it, even if I was not formally enrolled in the seminar and, therefore, he needed not grade my work. His comments were so detailed and constructive he helped me put together what would be one of my first published essays on Conrad. While I was writing it, I would go through the essays Miller had

written on Conrad in the 1970s, and would ask him about them. He would say: “Give me a minute, I wrote that so long ago...” and then, he would offer a re-reading of his earlier reading in that essay, enriching his argument even further.

At the time I was at UCI, Jacques Derrida was teaching his Spring term seminar. In 2003, it was “The Beast and the Sovereign”. Miller would sit among the crowded room and, like the rest of students, take notes. In April, 2003, the Department of English and Comparative Literature organized the conference “J: Around the work of J. Hillis Miller”, in his honor. Derrida gave one of the keynote addresses, and began by telling the story of how he went on calling him John rather than Joseph for two years before his mistake was corrected. Only Derrida could crumble the meaning of “J” into its profound relevance.

In the notes to my essay on Conrad, Miller wrote: “Your paper makes me want to turn back to *Nostromo* myself, perhaps for next year’s seminar”. He did. So I asked to be accepted a second time as visiting scholar, and he said “Of course”. In the 2004 seminar, we read *Nostromo*, and *The Awkward Age* by Henry James. His humbleness never ceased to amaze me, as he confessed he felt intimidated every time he attended a conference on James or Proust, and had to speak before specialists in their work. He published *Literature as Conduct: Speech Acts in Henry James* in 2005, which contains, among others, his brilliant essay on community in *The Awkward Age*.

Derrida’s seminar at UCI had been scheduled, as every Spring, for April. He didn’t come that year. He would die next October. At the 2004 ESSE Conference in Zaragoza, Miller and Derek Attridge performed a most beautiful homage, in the form of dialogue, to Derrida’s intellectual legacy. I owe it to Miller also that he introduced me to the other kindest Professor I have ever met. As I listened to them, I was enthralled by the endearing spontaneity with which they discussed Derrida’s ideas. As usual, I remember the little things more than the grand statements: when the session started, it took them a moment to realize how the microphones in the room turned on, but they would be fully immersed in their dialogue then and managed to solve it without interrupting themselves.

In 2005 Professor Miller visited us at the University of Córdoba. Julián Jiménez Heffernan and myself had the crazy idea to invite him to talk about Cervantes’ “El coloquio de los perros”, as part of a seminar we wanted to organize on Cervantes and deconstruction. Giving us a new lesson in academic generosity and open mindedness, he accepted. He gave a wonderful lecture on community in “El coloquio de los perros” and Thomas Pynchon’s short story “The Secret Integration”. He talked about getting out of one’s intellectual comfort zone. He also lectured on ethics in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. These texts would later be included in the books *Communities in Fiction* (Fordham UP, 2014) and *The Conflagration of Community* (U of Chicago P 2011), respectively.

I took him to El Corte Inglés to buy a stuffed animal for his grandson. The one he chose was, of course, a dog. The dog presided over the table at the Aula Magna as he lectured later that day, and we spent the week in dog-related wordplay and jokes. I remember distinctly our conversation on the way to buy the toy. We talked about “black holes” in fiction, and the impossibility to narrate certain events, about how this happens in Trollope’s *Ayala’s Angel* (to which he devotes a chapter in the book *Black Holes*, 1999) but also in Jane Austen, who withdraws narrative attention from the moment when a character will propose to another. To me, walking with Professor Miller in the familiar streets of my hometown was a surreal experience. I associated him with the time spent researching abroad, which I have always perceived as time out of time, small islands of intellectual privilege interspersed in my reality continuum. And now, as we walked along the Bulevar de Gran Capitán, such moments of exceptionality fused with my daily life.

Last time I was in touch with him, in 2019, it was in connection to the book we were preparing, on community and secrecy. I asked him to write a Foreword for it. He accepted, but said he was not sure how much longer he would be able to go on writing new stuff. As he wrote the e-mail, the font was accidentally changed, and the text appears in multi-colored Helvetica 10. He wrote:

I have no idea why the color keeps shifting

I cried and laughed simultaneously when I read it.

He did write the Foreword. Brief, powerful, and focusing on the tiniest bit in the book's title: the close bond between secrecy and community involved in the use of "and". Miller had the ability to infuse the experience of close reading with a sense of wonder, but also, and most importantly, of making the most complex critical insights seem easy to grasp, accessible to all of us rather than the province of an exceptionally gifted mind. This, I think, is the ultimate proof of his intellectual generosity.

RESEARCH PAPER |
LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

JÚLIA BARÓN PARÉS
UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

BELC
and SUBs:

***From learner
to subtitles
corpora***

1. Introduction

This paper presents two corpora that were developed by the GRAL Research Group (Group de Recerca en Adquisició de Llengües – Language Acquisition Research Group): the BELC (Barcelona English Language Corpus) and the SUBs Corpus (the Subtitles Corpus). The GRAL research group was set up by Dr Carme Muñoz in the English and German Department at the University of Barcelona, with the aim to investigate Second Language Acquisition, with a special focus on aspects such as age, input, aptitude, and context. The first corpus that we present in this paper is BELC, a large learner corpus, and the second is the SUBs Corpus, which consists of a database of subtitles of four different TV genres: police drama, comedy, TED Talks, and documentaries.

2. Designing a corpus

When designing a corpus, three main aspects need to be taken into account: representativeness, diversity, and size (Biber, Conrad and Reppen 1998). In addition to this, it is important to consider whether the corpus can be of any use to other scholars in the field, if it is made available online (Tono 2003), since that may determine how data will be organized. A corpus is not simply a collection of texts, but rather it seeks to represent language, or a specific type of language, for example, academic writing, journalistic style, learner language (interlanguage), among others. In line with this, by representativeness is meant what the corpus aims to reflect through the collection of the compiled data. For instance, when dealing with learner corpora, such representation is based on a sample of a population, such as the learners' first languages (L1s), their social status, the types of schools or universities they attend to, the hours of instruction, or any other background information that needs to be considered before sampling is made. With respect to diversity, corpora aim to provide a general description of the language that is represented; therefore, a corpus should provide as many different registers as possible and a detailed explanation of how data were elicited. Finally, as for size, in corpus linguistics we tend to refer to the number of words that the corpus contains; however, in learner corpora we might refer to the number of the learners' productions collected. In the following sections, we will refer to these factors in accordance with the two corpora that will be presented in this paper.

The BELC corpus is a sample of data from the BAF Project (Barcelona Age Factor). The whole sample was formed by learners from thirty schools in Barcelona where English was taught as a foreign language (FL). The participants were Catalan-Spanish bilinguals, and as regards the social status of the participants' families, a mixed population was included: low-middle class, middle class, and professionals.

3. The BELC Corpus

The BAF Project was triggered by a change of an Education Law implemented in Spain which affected both primary and secondary schools. One of the objectives of the new Education Law was to advance the age of learning English from 11 years old (Grade 6) to 8 years old (Grade 3). Researchers of the BAF Project collected data from students who had begun learning English at the age of 11 (Late Starters) and learners who had been first exposed to English at school at the age of 8 (Early Starters), with the new Education law. The aim was thus to investigate whether the Age of

Onset (AO) affected the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in a formal context (see Muñoz 2006).

The data collected were therefore organized into two major groups: on the one hand, the Early Starters (ES) group, and, on the other, the Late Starters (LS) group. In both groups, data were collected at four different moments (Times 1, 2, 3, and 4). At Time 1, the participants had been exposed to English for 200 hours when the ES were 10 (Grade 5) and the LS were 12 (Grade 7). At Time 2, the learners had received 416 hours of English instruction; then the ES were 12 years old (Grade 7) and the LS were 14 years old (Grade 9). At Time 3, data were collected after 726 hours of instruction, when the ES were 16 (Grade 11) and the LS were 17 (Grade 12). Time 4, after 800 hours, was only possible from the ES group because the LS group finished their secondary education at Grade 12.

The BAF Project also included two other groups of Late Starters. One group in which the participants started learning English at the age of 14, since the foreign language that they had studied in Primary Education before that age was French. The other group included adult learners who had begun learning English after the age of 18 and who were attending English classes at official language schools. However, the latter LS groups were small groups as compared to the LS who started learning English at 11 and to the ES. One of the aims was to collect data only from those subjects who had only been exposed to English at school, that is, they were not receiving extra English classes outside the school. Table 1 shows how the subjects from the BAF Project were classified in relation to the OA and the different Times data were collected.

Table 1. The BAF Project (Muñoz 2006: 15)

TIME	GROUP A ES (AO=8)	GROUP B LS (AO=11)	GROUP C LS (AO=14)	GROUP D LS (AO=+18)
Time 1 200 hours	A1 AT = 10;9 N= 281 Grade 5	B1 AT = 12;9 N= 286 Grade 8	C1 AT= 15;9 N = 40	D1 AT = 28;9 N= 91
Time 2 416 hours	A2 AT = 12;9 N= 278 Grade 7	B2 AT = 14;9 N= 240 Grade 9	C2 AT = 15;9 N= 11	D2 AT = 31;4 N = 44
Time 3 726 hours	A3 AT = 16;9 N= 338 Grade 11	B3 AT = 17;9 N= 296 Grade 11		
Time 4 800 hours	A4 AT = 17;9 N= 16 Grade 12			

In 2007, GRAL carried out another project with data from undergraduates who had been exposed to English at school and who had continued studying English at university (participants N=232, L1 Spanish and L1 Spanish and Catalan). The data collection also took place in Barcelona and the participants' social status was kept similar to the BAF Project. Three universities participated in this project, although one of them provided only a few subjects. The other two universities differed in one aspect, which was that in one of the universities English was taught as a foreign language, but in the other English was the language of instruction, since the bachelor degree was in English Studies. The aim of this project was to explore the effects of the onset age, the amount of L2 input, L2 contact, and the influence of cognitive abilities (working memory, attention switching capacity and language aptitude) on L2 proficiency and on L2 oral and written performance (e.g. Muñoz 2012, 2014; Ortega and Celaya 2019).

The tasks that the learners from the BAF project were asked to carry out and which can be found in the BELC corpus were basically five, four of them oral and one written: an *interview*, a *narrative*, a *role-play*, a *map-task*, and a *composition*. Students carried out other tasks, such as a listening and a cloze test, but the data gathered through these tasks were not included in the BELC corpus. Regarding the *interview*, it consisted of a series of questions made by the researcher to the participants about themselves. They were asked to talk about what they liked to do in their free time, about what they did on the previous weekend, about their families, and at the end of the interview they were allowed to ask questions to the researcher. As for the *narrative*, the learners were supposed to look at some pictures and described what had happened. While telling the story, the learners were allowed to look at the pictures, and the researcher tried not to intervene in the telling of the narrative. In the case of the *role-play*, the task was carried out by two participants, where one played the role of the parent and the other one played the role of the child. The participant playing the role of the child had to ask for permission to the parents to have a birthday party at home, and then some discussion was required. When this task was carried out by adult learners, the roles played were of roommates. The last oral task was the *map-task*, also a dialogic task as the *role-play*. In this task, one student had to give instructions to the other so as how to go to his/her house. As mentioned earlier, the written task included in the BELC corpus was the *composition*, which was an essay with the title '*Me: my past, present and future expectations*'. In this task, the students were asked to write about themselves, always as closed as possible to what the title suggested. In the case of the composition, the task was timed, so participants were given fifteen minutes to write it. In the project carried out in 2007, oral production was elicited through two different tasks: an *interview* which enquired about their experience with the L2 and a *video-retelling* task ("Alone and Hungry" episode from the Charlie Chaplin movie). In the latter task, the participants watched the episode twice, but the second time, they watched the first part and were asked to retell it; and then they watched the second part of the movie, and were asked to retell it as well.

A sample of the corpus is available at the Childes Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES), which was originally a corpus of L1 acquisition and of child speech, but over the years other data sets have been included: L2 acquisition, bilingual speakers and language disorders. Nowadays, this large database is known as the Talkbank System (<https://talkbank.org/>). Moreover, CHILDES have developed their own software tools for data processing and analysis, and in order to share a corpus on Talkbank, it needs to follow the conventions of the CHAT coding system, so that it is compatible with the CLAN software (see MacWhinney 2000). Therefore, the BELC corpus can be found at <https://slabank.talkbank.org/access/English/BELC.html>, with two samples of corpora: one with the data from the BAF project, which includes interviews, narratives, map-tasks, role-plays and compositions (190 transcripts), and another sample with the data collected from the undergraduate students, but, in this case, it only includes transcripts from the first part of the video-retelling task (83 transcripts).

4. The SUBs Corpus

The second corpus that we present in this paper is the SUBs Corpus, also developed by the GRAL research group. This corpus was created as part of the SUBTiLL Project, whose aim is to investigate the role of subtitling in EFL contexts. The project started in 2014, and it is still in progress. The participants who have participated in this project are from different ages (children to adults), different proficiency levels (from beginners to advanced), and with different learning conditions. Within this project, several studies have been carried out in order to explore the effects of subtitling on vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, pronunciation and pragmatics (e.g. Gesa 2019; Khazdouzian, Celaya and Barón 2021; Pattemore and Muñoz 2020; Pujadas and Muñoz 2019; Pujadas and Muñoz 2020; Pujadas 2019; Suárez and Gesa 2019; Wisniewska and Mora 2020).

As opposed to BELC, the SUBs project is not a learner corpus, but a large database of English subtitles coming from a variety of TV series and documentaries. In a moment in which people have access to a wide range of audiovisual material through online platforms such as Netflix, HBO, Prime, among others, we thought it would be of interest to create a corpus with different TV genres. In fact, one of the studies carried out in the project sought to investigate the effects of the type genre on language learning (Gilabert, Suárez, Moskvina, Levkina, Barón, Vasylets and Feijoo 2018). Therefore, we developed a corpus of different genres in order to identify how language differed from one genre to another. Four genres were therefore included: comedy, police drama, animal documentary and TED Talks. The criterion for selection of the TV series and documentaries was always the same: we took 10 different series per genre and the first ten episodes of the first season. The corpus consists of 1,286,611 words. Table 2 shows an overview of the SUBs corpus:

Table 2. SUBs Corpus.

Genre	Comedy	Police Drama	Documentary	TED Talk
Number of episodes	118	98	9	15
Number of words	332,932	883,869	260,227	219,583
Time episode	25' / 40'	40'	60'	25'

The corpus is still not available online, but it will in the future. We would like to include more genres, so that we can get a more detailed description of the language used in the different TV genres. We also think that a corpus like this might be of interest not only to researchers in SLA but also to scholars from a variety of disciplines, who might be interested in analyzing the language used in the TV series and documentaries that people have access to nowadays.



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INTERVIEW

ANA MARÍA MARTÍN CASTILLEJOS
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Revisiting Sylvia Plath:

*An Interview with
Karen V. Kukil,
Former Associate
Curator of Special
Collections at Smith
College, Northampton,
Massachusetts, USA*

Karen Kukil is a Research Affiliate in the Department of English Language and Literature at Smith College, previously working for thirty years as the Associate Curator of Special Collections where she curated the Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath Collections (1990-2020). For over a decade, Kukil taught courses on editing Sylvia Plath's correspondence and poetry for Smith's Archives Concentration Program. She edited the unabridged *Journals of Sylvia Plath* (Faber, 2000); *Woolf in the Real World: Selected Papers from the Thirteenth International Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson, 2005) from a conference she co-hosted at Smith in 2003; and co-edited with Peter Steinberg *The Letters of Sylvia Plath* in two volumes (Faber, 2017-2018). Her recent scholarly chapters and articles on Plath and Woolf appear in many publications, including *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive* (Ashgate, 2013), *Sylvia Plath in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), *The Hudson Review* (2019), and *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Sylvia Plath* (2021). Exhibitions co-curated by Kukil with related publications include "No Other Appetite": *Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes and the Blood Jet of Poetry* (Grolier Club, 2005) and *One Life: Sylvia Plath* (Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, 2017-2018). As a recognized international authority on Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf, Karen Kukil has recently been invited to give lectures at the British Library (2018), the Charleston to Charleston Literary Festival (2019), the Modern Language Annual Convention (2020), and at Boston University (2021). <https://www.smith.edu/academics/faculty/karen-kukil>

ANA M^a MARTÍN CASTILLEJOS: Karen, you started working at Smith College in 1990, is that right? At what point did you become responsible for Sylvia Plath's papers?

KAREN KUKIL: When rare book curator Ruth Mortimer—a graduate of Smith College and classmate of Sylvia Plath—interviewed me at Smith College, she was particularly impressed that I studied Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath in the early 1970s as an undergraduate at Trinity College and worked for over a decade at Yale University as a rare book librarian at the Lewis Walpole Library and a literary archivist at the Beinecke Library after earning my Master of Library Science degree. Since Woolf and Plath are the two most famous authors in the Mortimer Rare Book Collection, I began right away in November 1990 to process their papers, teach classes with their manuscripts, provide reference services to scholars, curate exhibitions, and eventually host international conferences focused on Woolf and Plath. For the past thirty years as Associate Curator of Special Collections, I have also added significant new manuscripts and books to the Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf collections at Smith College and served as the primary curator of both authors' papers. Now that I am a research affiliate in the Department of English Language & Literature, I can continue to take advantage of the extraordinary resources of the Smith College Special Collections, edit books on Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, and answer research questions from scholars.

Many publications about Sylvia Plath have taken place since you became Plath's papers' curator at Smith College: many critical revisions of her work but also publications that have released new personal correspondence or a more complete version of her private journals. For instance, you edited the unabridged *Journals of Sylvia Plath* in 2000 and co-edited the two-volume edition of *The Letters of Sylvia Plath* for Faber and Faber in 2017 and 2018. Who decided upon these new releases?

In May 1998, Sylvia Plath's daughter, Frieda Hughes, telephoned me from London to see if I would be interested in editing an unabridged edition of *The Journals of Sylvia Plath* for Faber & Faber. Frieda limited this project to the one thousand pages of adult journals written by Sylvia Plath between 1950-1962 that were at Smith College and explicitly requested that nothing be deleted from her mother's texts. Before the project began, I provided two ten-page samples of

transcribed journal entries from different periods in Plath's life and wrote factual endnotes based upon primary source information to identify people and places mentioned in the text. Frieda was pleased with my approach to the project. We also agreed that I would provide a preface and an exhaustive index as well.

In 2012, Frieda Hughes and Paul Keegan, the former poetry editor at Faber & Faber, asked me to edit *The Letters of Sylvia Plath*, which I did over a number of years with my co-editor Peter K. Steinberg. Since we included every letter by Sylvia Plath that we could find at various institutions and in private collections, the 1,400 letters to over 140 recipients were published in two volumes with detailed footnotes. In addition, Peter Steinberg and I provided prefaces, introductions, chronologies, and exhaustive indexes. Frieda Hughes wrote heartfelt forewords to both volumes. I worked out all the details for the project in my course for Smith's Archives Concentration Program—Editing Sylvia Plath's Correspondence. *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* edited by my first mentor, W. S. Lewis, in 48 volumes was my model for the project. Students learned how to accurately transcribe and proof the 170 Plath letters at Smith. Many recipients of these letters visited the class to answer questions and supply information for the footnotes. All of the students who participated in my course from 2008–2013 are credited in the acknowledgements.

According to the article you wrote for The British Library, “Reviving the Journals of Sylvia Plath” (2016), the unabridged version of the *Journals* offers us the possibility to read about aspects of the writer as a human being and as a woman that were deleted in the first version. I believe that the *Journals* published under Ted Hughes' supervision in 1984, were more concerned with the professional image of Plath as a writer. Have I understood your meaning correctly? I am referring to this precise extract from “Reviving the Journals”: “I believe the unabridged *Journals*, more than the selected *Journals* published in 1982, also reveal her zest for life. She savoured it all: ‘children, sonnets, love and [even] dirty dishes’ (Unabridged *Journals*, 225)”.

Yes, I do believe that Ted Hughes wanted Frances McCullough, who edited the 1982 edition of *The Journals of Sylvia Plath* for the Dial Press in New York, to select journal entries that related to Plath's writing and her creative process. This is similar to Leonard Woolf's focus in 1953 when he published extracts from the diaries of Virginia Woolf in a volume he entitled *A Writer's Diary*. Hughes and McCullough were not as focused on Plath's daily life and were careful to protect the reputation of people mentioned unfavorably in Plath's journals. As a result, only one third of Plath's existing adult journals at Smith College were published. Readers of the 1982 edition were frustrated by all the omissions and deletions. Before he died, Ted Hughes suggested to his daughter, who now owned Plath's copyrights, that she authorized the publication of a complete, unabridged edition of her mother's journals. I was particularly honored that the Hughes family, Smith College, and Plath scholars trusted me with this important publication. Because Plath's voice had been so doctored in the past, I was particularly careful to make sure my colleagues (Barbara Blumenthal and Susan Barker) and I faithfully transcribed each word from the original journals preserved at Smith College and provided only factual context with endnotes. I wanted to give readers direct access to every aspect of Plath's journals—a similar experience to reading the original manuscripts at Smith College. Unlike Virginia Woolf, who suspected her diaries would be published and wrote with posterity peering over her shoulder, I believe Sylvia Plath is completely uninhibited in her journal writing. Indeed, reading the unabridged *Journals of Sylvia Plath* is like communing with her mind and reading Plath's autobiography.

From my point of view, and despite the emphasis that Plath put on the aspect of household chores in her life, in her *Journals*, there is always a tension between what she was expected to do as a woman in the 50's and what her real goal was in life: becoming the best writer of her generation after outshining Adrienne Rich. Would you agree on this? Can you see this tension as well?

Sylvia Plath was very ambitious. She wanted it all as she wrote in her journal on 25 February 1957—“Books & Babies & Beef stews”—and characterized herself in a 9 April 1957 letter as a “triple-threat woman: wife, writer & teacher (to be swapped later for motherhood)” (L2 110). But I believe creative writing was her ultimate focus. She was particularly worried that marriage would sap her creative juices until she met Ted Hughes, who inspired her. With tremendous dedication and skill, she organized their life together: typing and routinely submitting both of their creative work to magazines and publishers, applying for grants and fellowships, paying their bills, cooking, cleaning, gardening, and mothering their two children. She even organized a schedule that allowed each of them to write uninterrupted for part of each day: Plath in the mornings and Hughes in the afternoons.

In the first *Journals of Sylvia Plath*, released in 1982, where Frances McCullough acted as main editor and Ted Hughes as consulting editor, Plath’s husband wrote a “Foreword” where he said:

The journals exist in an assortment of notebooks and bunches of loose sheets. This selection contains perhaps a third of the whole bulk, which is now in The Neilson Library at Smith College. Two more notebooks survived for a while, maroon-backed ledgers like the ’57-’59 volume, and continued the record from late ’59 to within three days of her death. The last of these contained entries for several months, and I destroyed it because I did not want her children to have to read it (in those days I regarded forgetfulness as an essential part of survival). The other disappeared (*The Journals of Sylvia Plath*, 1982, Foreword, XV).

Could you clarify Hughes’ words when he mentioned that he destroyed one of the notebooks and made the other disappear?

In another version of this same foreword entitled “Sylvia Plath and Her Journals”, published in *Grand Street* (spring 1982), Ted Hughes held out the prospect of the reappearance of the earlier of these two journals: “The earlier one disappeared more recently (and may, presumably, still turn up)” (*Grand Street*, page 86). I do believe this maroon-bound notebook of lined paper like the one Plath wrote when she was teaching at Smith in 1957–1958 will be discovered one day. This journal, written between 1960–1962 will document her life in London with Hughes at 3 Chalcot Square, the birth of their children, and later their family life in the country at Court Green in North Tawton, Devonshire. It will also describe her dinners with T. S. Eliot and other writers, publishing *The Colossus*, and writing *The Bell Jar* and her *Ariel* poems. My guess is that this journal was removed from Court Green by someone who was unfavorably mentioned in Plath’s text and may eventually surface among their papers. The last maroon-backed notebook kept by Plath in the final months of her life, will probably document her move to her flat at 23 Fitzroy Road in London with her children, the end of her marriage to Ted Hughes, the creation of her final poetry and prose, and her descent into depression and suicide. In an undated draft letter to biographer Jacqueline Rose that Stephen Enniss and I displayed in our joint exhibition at the Grolier Club in New York in 2005—“*No Other Appetite: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry*”—Hughes raises the possibility that he may not have destroyed Plath’s final journal after all. In a passage he later struck, he admits to Rose: “First you must believe me when I tell you—I have never told this to anyone—I hid the last journal, about two months of entries, to protect—possibly to my utter foolishness—somebody else” (Grolier exhibition catalog, page 62). The Ted Hughes Papers (MSS 644) at Emory University do not contain Plath’s final journal, but it may turn up one day in another collection.

Regarding her personal papers, can we expect further publications with new material? My impression is that most of her private papers have already been published, is that true? In the last publication of *The Letters of Sylvia Plath* you affirm that further correspondence exists, although according to what you say in the introduction, it seems unlikely that they will come to light:

Other letters are presumed to remain in private hands, such as a postcard sent from McLean Hospital in December 1953, which was offered for sale at Sotheby's in 1982. Plath wrote letters and notes to many other acquaintances, Smith classmates, publishers, teachers, and mentors, as well as to family friends. We attempted to contact many of these recipients; a majority of these requests went unanswered. Those who did respond yielded some positive results. After this edition of *The Letters of Sylvia Plath* is published, additional letters that are discovered may be gathered for subsequent publication (Plath, Sylvia. *The Letters of Sylvia Plath* Vol 2 (p. xxix). Harper. Kindle edition).

Plath may have written as many as 700 additional letters that Peter Steinberg and I were not able to locate. Over the years, as more and more original letters by Sylvia Plath are discovered, they could be woven into a one-volume edition of *The Selected Letters of Sylvia Plath* similar to *Congenial Spirits: The Selected Letters of Virginia Woolf* edited by Joanne Trautmann Banks in 1989. If both journals that Plath wrote at the end of her life are discovered, they could be published as *The Last Journals of Sylvia Plath, 1960–1963*. Plath's childhood diaries in the Lilly Library at Indiana University, Bloomington, could also be published. Scholars would also like complete, scholarly editions of Plath's poetry and prose.

Why do you think Frieda Hughes agreed to the last publication of Plath's Letters that you edited (2017-2018) when that publication harmed Hughes' image? After all, Frieda Hughes lived with her father after her mother's suicide ...

There is no question that Frieda Hughes adored her father, who raised her after her mother's death. I am sure the fourteen letters that Plath wrote to her Boston psychiatrist, Dr. Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse Beuscher, during the last three years of her life, between February 1960–February 1963, were very difficult for Frieda to read. But since they were acquired by Smith College in 2017 for the Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse Papers in the Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History and already open to scholars for research, it made sense for Frieda to authorize their inclusion in volume 2 of *The Letters of Sylvia Plath* and write her own foreword to contextualize these sensitive letters about the dissolution of her parents' marriage.

In 2005 I was at Indiana University's Lilly Library myself trying to update my thesis for publication. I then thought of how interesting a collaboration between Lilly and Smith would be, as both libraries contain most of Plath's papers, pictures and artwork. In a word, the products of her life. Did Lilly and Smith ever collaborate on any project together?

International Sylvia Plath Symposiums have been hosted by Oxford University (2007), Smith College (2008), Indiana University (2012), and Ulster University in Belfast (2017). Ted Hughes Conferences have also been held at Emory University (2005) and Pembroke College, Cambridge (2010). Scholars from all over the world and I have given illustrated lectures at all these conferences. Smith has also loaned select items from our Sylvia Plath Collection to exhibitions at these various venues, including some of Plath's artwork to the *Eye Rhymes: Visual Art and Manuscripts of Sylvia Plath* exhibition at the School of Fine Arts Gallery, Indiana University, Bloomington (2 September–22 November 2002). A few items from Indiana University were loaned to the Grolier Club for the exhibition Stephen Enniss and I co-curated in New York in 2005, as well as to the *One Life: Sylvia Plath* exhibition that I co-curated with Dorothy Moss at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery (30 June 2017–20 May 2018), which included 35 items from Smith. I imagine as more Plath manuscripts from the Lilly and Smith collections are digitized; it will be possible for both institutions to collaborate on future Digital Humanities projects with the permission of the Estate of Sylvia Plath.

Also in 2005 you helped to organize “No Other Appetite”: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry (Grolier Club, 2005), where Emory University and Smith worked together to show Plath and Hughes’ mutual support as writers. Considering that Plath wished to be known as a writer I find the idea of this exhibition extremely interesting. Nevertheless, as many people nowadays do not like to see Plath’s and Hughes’ oeuvre side by side, how was the exhibition received?

Stephen Ennis organized the exhibition at the Grolier Club, which was on display 14 September–19 November 2005 to celebrate Emory University’s recent acquisition of the Ted Hughes Papers and reunite them with material from the Sylvia Plath Collection at Smith College. “No Other Appetite”: *Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes and the Blood Jet of Poetry* focused on the creative marriage of Plath and Hughes. Frieda Hughes was a guest of honor at the opening and was particularly thrilled to see the writing of her parents celebrated together. There is no doubt that when the marriage was healthy, Plath and Hughes inspired each other and were each other’s best critics. Plath launched Hughes’s career in America by typing and submitting *The Hawk in the Rain*, which won the Poetry Center’s First Publication Award on 23 February 1957. After Plath’s death, Hughes was responsible for publishing *Ariel* (1965) and *The Collected Poems* (1981), which won a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1982 and helped secure Plath’s reputation as one of the great poets of the 20th century. Judging by entries in the guest book that visitors signed at the end of the show, including busloads of students from New York high schools, the exhibition was greatly appreciated. As the co-curator of the show and co-author of the catalog, it was enlightening for me to place Plath’s writing and manuscripts in dialogue with Hughes’s work, including *Birthday Letters* (1998).

As a result of the exhibition at the Grolier Club 2005 in New York, drawn from the Sylvia Plath Collection at Smith College and the Ted Hughes Papers at Emory University, a catalogue was issued. The exhibition showed the books, manuscripts, letters and photographs documenting the personal and artistic relationship of the two poets, and was collected in a book that is now worth \$354.72 in Amazon. Considering that Plath always struggled financially, it is a pity she was not rewarded in life for her incessant work. Life is ironic. What is your opinion about this irony?

Sylvia Plath knew that her papers were valuable after she sold 130 pages of her poetry manuscripts in November 1961 to a bookseller in London who was buying material for Indiana University, Bloomington. One of the reasons Aurelia Schober Plath sold her daughter’s early papers to Indiana University in 1977 was because they already owned some of Sylvia Plath’s manuscripts. After November 1961, Plath was careful to save and date all the drafts of the poems she included in her *Ariel* book. These drafts—sometimes ten versions of each poem—document Plath’s creative process and are the main reason Ruth Mortimer and president Jill Ker Conway decided to purchase Sylvia Plath’s late papers from Ted Hughes in 1981 for Smith College. Ruth Mortimer knew these drafts would be an extraordinary teaching tool as well as an inspiration to aspiring poets. When Plath left her final book manuscript for *Ariel* on her desk before she died, she was purposely giving her children, Frieda and Nicholas Hughes, a rich inheritance. It is a shame that Knopf editor Judith B. Jones, who published *The Colossus*, rejected *The Bell Jar* on 28 December 1962, just when Plath needed an influx of income and support from her American publisher the most. But even the money that Plath’s aunt Dorothy Schober Benotti and others gave her in December 1962 did not save Plath’s life when she and her children moved to their new flat in London. Over the years, the value of Plath’s papers, annotated books, and publications has steadily increased and continue to support Frieda Hughes and other members of the Plath family.

Besides collaborating on the ‘No Other Appetite’ exhibition, you have also worked on “One Life: Sylvia Plath”, organized together with Dorothy Moss, curator of painting and sculpture at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington D.C. (June 30, 2017 – May 20, 2018). In this second

exhibition in Washington D.C. it was surprising for me to see the idea of the asphyxiating bell jar that Plath describes so well by means of real glass bell jars. When I saw the bell jars I immediately thought of the connection between Plath and Louise Bourgeois, an amazing artist born in France who had lived most of her life in the USA and who has several drawings and sculptures of women trapped inside bell jars. I have studied both writer and artist, and have found many similarities between both women. The two seemed to feel trapped in their lives at some point, and there was also the feeling of frustration because they had to live as housewives when in fact, both were incredible artists and needed to express themselves as such. Very recently, a well known Spanish film director, Isabel Coixet, filmed “Nieva en Benidorm”, where there is a reference to Sylvia Plath since she and Ted Hughes visited the city when they came to Spain to enjoy their honeymoon in the summer of 1956.

According to you, why is there so much interest in Plath nowadays, considering that she died in 1963? Could it be related to the idea that women nowadays are still very much inside bell jars, despite the obvious changes lived after the women’s lib movement and nowadays?

The interactive, multi-media art installation by composer Jenny Olivia Johnson at the heart of our show at the National Portrait Gallery created an incredible mood for visitors to the *One Life: Sylvia Plath* exhibition. *Glass Heart (Bells for Sylvia Plath)* was organized around three American cities in which Plath had experienced important life events: Wellesley, Boston, and New York City. As visitors touched each of the glass bell jars in Johnson’s art installation, a visual and sound response ensued. Many artifacts related to Plath’s novel *The Bell Jar* were also on display including her journal entry when she was a guest editor at *Mademoiselle* in 1953 about the execution of the Rosenbergs. This tragic political event begins the novel, which is equated later by Plath with Esther Greenwood’s suicide attempt after receiving improperly administered electroconvulsive therapy at the wrong voltage. Plath first encountered the bell jar as a metaphor for melancholia when she read *Generation of Vipers* by Philip Wylie in July 1951. Later in her journals she expressed her determination to lift “a bell jar off a securely clockwork-like functioning community.” In addition to a metaphor for depression, the bell jar also represents the glass cage of femininity and powerlessness in which many women were imprisoned in the 1950s. Plath was determined to assert her voice in the 1950s and 1960s, a time when ambitious women often faced intimidating obstacles as they tried to make their way in the professional world—and when “polite” women were commonly discouraged from speaking critically and openly about politics, sex, death, or misogyny. I believe it is Plath’s honesty and remarkable fearlessness in addressing many of these topics in her writing that still attracts readers today.

If you had to choose between the version of *Ariel* published according to Ted Hughes’ criteria in 1964 and the version published in 2004 following Sylvia Plath’s own desires and with a foreword by Frieda Hughes, which one would you choose and why? I have to say that I very much like Ted Hughes’ selection, considering that it was meant to be Plath’s last work and, in fact, Hughes’ version was very much acclaimed by the public. In my view, *Ariel* is Plath’s best work.

There is as much liveliness and light as there is death and darkness in Sylvia Plath’s writing. In the beginning of 1963, Plath was fighting very hard to reinvent herself and survive the breakdown of her marriage. She wrote both “Edge” (a very dark poem) and “Balloons” (a sweet poem about her children) on 5 February 1963. No one knows which poem was her last poem. Dorothy Moss and I decided to end our *One Life* exhibition with “Balloons”, which is more uplifting instead of “Edge”, while Ted Hughes ended Plath’s *Collected Poems* with “Edge.” Because “Edge” ends with the “crackle and drag” of the moon, I believe Hughes ended his version of *Ariel* with Plath’s poem “Words”, which has a more pleasant ending: “From the bottom of the pool, fixed stars / Govern a life.” However,

“Words”, “Edge”, and “Balloons” were all written by Plath for a later book of poetry. She left a complete manuscript of *Ariel* on her desk when she died. Her book begins with the word “Love” in “Morning Song”, a poem about baby Frieda, and ends with the hope of spring in “Wintering”. This seems very intentional to me and is why I am so happy that Frieda published *Ariel: The Restored Edition* in 2004. The restored edition of *Ariel* also includes a facsimile of Plath’s title page, which tells a story. Plath seems to be working out her rage about the breakdown in her marriage, beginning with “The Rival”, and then “A Birthday Present”, in which she wants the truth on her thirtieth birthday, followed by her determination to be done with the patriarchy in “Daddy”. She then settles on the title for her book, “ARIEL / and other poems / by / Sylvia Plath”, which she dedicates and writes “for / Frieda and Nicholas”. In her title poem, she claims the power, determination, and drive of a horseback rider with a quiver of arrows who chooses her own future and target in the rising sun.

I remember distinctly reading Ted Hughes’s version of *Ariel* in 1973 in my English course at Trinity College and was completely overwhelmed by the book’s nihilistic ending. It was almost too sad to bear. While it is a great book, it is Ted Hughes’s version of Plath’s life and poetry, which seems to indicate that Plath’s ending by suicide was “fixed” or predetermined. For this reason, I prefer the restored edition because it honors the author’s intention. If she had survived her final depression, Plath may have made some adjustments as her version of *Ariel* went through the publishing process, but the message of her version of *Ariel* would have been more uplifting. In general, all my lectures, exhibitions, and publications related to Plath have been devoted to revealing Sylvia Plath in the round and not just focusing on the tragic end of her life.

You travelled to Yorkshire and went to Heptonstall to visit Sylvia Plath’s grave. Many years ago I did exactly the same. I always thought that considering that she was such a young woman when she died (she was only 30), Sylvia Plath has had a very powerful effect on many people, mainly women. Was that trip for you a sort of pilgrimage?

In June 2016 I was invited to give a lecture on “Curating Virginia Woolf and Her Associates” at the 26th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf at Leeds Trinity University, which is why I was in Yorkshire. On my way to the conference, I spent time in Hebden Bridge and walked up to Heptonstall to visit Sylvia Plath’s grave and see the Beacon where Ted Hughes and his family had lived. I also walked through the moors above Hardcastle Crags and felt like I was walking in the footsteps of Sylvia Plath. Seeing the landscape that influenced so many of her poems was inspiring. I particularly appreciated the care of the village gardener, who planted flowers on Sylvia Plath’s grave. Instead of encountering a pile of pens and other mementoes, I was greeted by a spray of pink columbine in full bloom filled with bees. All the women I met in town that day were there like me to visit Sylvia Plath’s grave. I felt a similar sense of peace when I visited Virginia Woolf’s Sussex landscape in 1992 during the first Charleston Summer School. As I walked through the meadows below Monks House toward the River Ouse where Virginia Woolf committed suicide by drowning on 28 March 1941, I was greeted by a flock of swans swimming on the salt tide toward Lewes in the afternoon sun. Both experiences were so uplifting that I began writing my own memoirs with an essay entitled “In the Footsteps of Sylvia Plath” and recorded an illustrated lecture that I gave on “Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath” in November 2019 at the Charleston to Charleston Literary Festival in Charleston, South Carolina (<https://libraries.smith.edu/news/2020/08/podcast-talking-woolf-and-plath-c2c-literary-festival>).

Regarding nature, it has always caught my attention, the fact that Plath lived in cities most of her life but she very often alludes to nature in her writings. In my PhD thesis of 2000, which dealt with landscapes in Sylvia Plath’s life and work, I sustained that nature gave her the opportunity to translate her mood into a living organism and that you can “read” her state of mind by reading

her poems. Perhaps this is the reason why, when reading “Edge”, “Contusion”, “Tulips”, “Elm”, all those poems that *Ariel* collects, we feel so moved. In that sense, it is very feasible to make use of ecocriticism when reading her work. Had you considered that? What is your opinion about the presence of nature in Plath’s writings?

Nature is an important presence in Plath’s writing, particularly the ocean in her childhood and the British moors in her adult years. Because Plath was also a talented artist, she had a keen eye and was able to translate the landscape into very visual experiences in her writing. Colors were often used to create mood, such as the progression from dark to light or blue to red in “Ariel”. She uses the color and attributes of certain flowers like poppies and tulips to shock the reader with associations to fire and blood. Since her father, Otto Plath, was an entomologist and an authority on bees, the habits and social structures of insects are prevalent in Plath’s poetry. After Plath became a beekeeper herself at Court Green, bees, particularly female bees, advance her poetic narrative. To survive, female bees get rid of the men over the winter in “Wintering”, and Plath is particularly attracted to the power of the queen bee in “Stings”.

In your view, how much has Plath’s image changed in the last 30 years? When I was working on my PhD thesis, around 1998, Plath was thought to have been schizophrenic, but now there is the tendency to consider her as bipolar, which could very well explain her moments of profound depression and others of ecstasy, which may well be the reason for her mental instability and tendency to depression.

One of the reasons I have compiled such detailed indices to my work on Plath—noting her various emotions, personality traits, circadian rhymes, diet, drinking, suicidal phantasies, and feelings of depression, madness, and panic—is I was hoping medically knowledgeable readers could reassess Plath’s psyche in a more holistic way. I started working on Plath’s journals fearing that her dark moods would depress me and discovered instead that Plath could be equally funny and upbeat. In fact, she seemed very normal to me. The only thing I could not relate to were some of her intense nightmares. As Plath’s writing has been restored to her original words and she has been allowed to speak for herself, a reassessment of Plath has taken place. Instead of approaching her through death and suicide, readers are engaging with her through a more well-rounded approach. She definitely had a complex personality, but she was fully engaged in all aspects of life, had an extraordinary intellectual capacity, and possessed a ferocious creative talent.

Even though you have studied Virginia Woolf’s work during your career as well, for instance, you edited *Woolf in the Real World: Selected Papers from the Thirteenth International Conference on Virginia Woolf* (2005), you seem to have preferred to publish about Plath. Is that a personal choice?

I actually began my career at Smith publishing articles about Virginia Woolf since I had met some of her relatives at the first Charleston Summer School and was able to obtain the necessary permissions from the Society of Authors. I published articles about Smith’s Virginia Woolf holdings, including “The Frances Hooper Collection of Virginia Woolf Manuscripts and Books” in *Humanities Collections* 1:1 (1996) and “Paper Hearts: The Correspondence of Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey” in *Charleston Magazine* 23 (spring 2001): 23-30. My book of selected papers from the Virginia Woolf conference that I co-hosted at Smith in 2003 followed. My book chapter “Teaching the Material Archive at Smith College” published in *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation* (London: Ashgate, 2013) actually focuses on both Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath. But after my edition of the unabridged *Journals of Sylvia Plath* was published in 2000, most of my subsequent articles and books have focused on Sylvia Plath. For example, my article on “The Genesis of *Mary Ventura and the Ninth Kingdom*” was published in the spring 2019 issue of *The Hudson Review*.

My chapter “Beyond *Letters Home*: Sylvia Plath’s Unabridged Correspondence” was published in *Sylvia Plath in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), and “Sylvia Plath in the Round” will be published later this year in *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Sylvia Plath*.

As a person who has spent so many years of her life dedicated to the study of Sylvia Plath and her oeuvre, which book about the writer do you find missing? What different aspects of the writer are yet to be explored?

When my edition of the unabridged *Journals of Sylvia Plath* was published in 2000, the faculty at Smith College were particularly impressed by how intellectual and well-read Plath was about a vast array of subjects. Heather Clark’s new biography *Red Comet: The Short Life and Blazing Art of Sylvia Plath* (2020) does a brilliant job of documenting the personal and literary influences on Plath’s poetry and prose, which she wrote from the age of five until she was thirty. With the support of her editors at Knopf, Heather Clark is the first biographer to secure the necessary permissions from the Estate of Sylvia Plath to quote substantially from Plath’s poetry and prose and address the full arc of Plath’s creative work. Many of these early poems and prose manuscripts housed at various institutions and libraries, including Smith College, Indiana University, Emory University, the British Library and the Morgan Library have not been published. Complete, scholarly editions of all the poetry and prose of Sylvia Plath still need to be published. Plath carefully preserved the various drafts of her Ariel poems, which document her creative process. It would be lovely to publish a variorum edition of Plath’s late poetry based upon the manuscripts preserved in the Sylvia Plath Collection at Smith College. Once these kinds of primary texts are published, scholars will be able to quote more easily as they address every aspect of Plath’s life and work.

Last question: according to you, which is the best contribution of the recent documentary *Sylvia Plath; Inside the Bell Jar* (2018) to get to know the writer better? I must say I was particularly impressed to see so many people who knew Plath personally considering that she would be nearly 90 years old if she were still alive.

It was such an honor for me to provide some of the background images from our Sylvia Plath Collection at Smith College for the documentary *Sylvia Plath: Inside the Bell Jar*. I also loved helping many of the contributors to the project. It has been a couple of years since I saw the documentary, but I think together the speakers provided important information about Plath’s internship at *Mademoiselle*, the social norms during the 1950s, and inside information about the composition of Plath’s novel. Two of the guest editors during Plath’s time at *Mademoiselle*, Neva Sachar and Laurie Glazer, gave moving accounts of the serious consequences their time in New York City had on the rest of their lives. Plath’s school friends from Wellesley, Massachusetts, including Betsy Wallingford, Philip McCurdy, and Perry Norton, explained how intelligent and creative Plath was during this period in her life. Her Smith College friends, Elinor Klein and Janet Rosenberg, relayed stories that revealed many aspects of Plath’s complex personality. J. Melvin Woody, who was later portrayed as a character in the novel, described how depressed Plath was when she came back from New York and how he may have prevented one of her suicide attempts. Frieda Hughes spoke about her mother with great empathy and was sorry to learn that her mother actually experienced many of the incidents that were portrayed in *The Bell Jar*. Tristine Skyler, who wrote a brilliant screenplay based on *The Bell Jar*, and Plath biographer Heather Clark commented in great detail about Plath’s life and the literary merits of the novel throughout the documentary. As always, it was such a treat to hear audio excerpts of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes woven into the film. But the novel came alive through the expert readings of passages by professional performers, including Maggie Gyllenhaal. In my opinion, this documentary under the direction of Teresa Griffiths, supported by producers Clive Flowers and renowned Plath scholar Professor Tim Kendall, provides viewers an extraordinarily rich experience.

I would like to thank Ms Karen Kukil for her valuable help during the time I spent at Smith College working on Plath's papers for my PhD thesis' update and publication (2005). Also, I would like to thank her for the recent support she offered me (2020) when applying for a scholarship to travel to Boston again, not forgetting the suggestions she made on my last article about the writer ("The Weight of the Past and the Role of Loss and Nostalgia in Sylvia Plath and Louise Bourgeois' Ouvre", in *Landscapes of Loss*, UCJC, 2020). To have been offered the chance to interview her about a writer I have spent so many years studying is an honor I will never forget.

Madrid, June 8th, 2021.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Renaissance Utopias and the Problem of History

Leslie, Marina

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Twenty-two years after its original publication, Marina Leslie's brief but rich monograph has found an afterlife within the ever-expanding 'library-utopia' of digitally re-published books. Despite the apparent remoteness of its objects of study and (relatively speaking) of its publication too, Leslie's *Renaissance Utopias and the Problem of History* (1998, 2020) still speaks to potentially timeless, fruitful debates about utopian literature, returning its readers to three foundational works of the (sub-)genre: Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), and Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World* (1666). Although reviewers at the time of its original publication objected to Leslie's book being "clever if elusive" (Prescott 596) and "obscure and difficult to penetrate" (Davis 237), I would lean towards an evaluation of the book as "especially provocative" and "a lively rereading" (Boesky 35) of supposedly—but perhaps only superficially—well-trodden texts. Although this monograph is constructed upon "a privileging of the suggestive insight over the fully documented" (Davis 237), I believe that Leslie's work can serve as a thought-provoking point of entry into the many-sided ambiguities of not only More, Bacon and Cavendish's texts, but also the origins of a genre as hybrid, eclectic, and historically ambivalent as the utopian/dystopian. It is probably redundant to re-emphasise the mass popularity and the critical attention that the utopian/dystopian genre attracts nowadays—perhaps more than in Leslie's time—, but it should still not go without saying that the genre's importance within academic and popular discourses makes Leslie's book a key forerunner to which historically minded readers may wish to return. In general, this is a book that will inevitably resonate with contemporary debates within utopian and speculative/science fiction studies, and it will undoubtedly offer points of comparison and theoretical re-connections with the genre's early modern roots.

Opening the book with a frequently (ab)used Oscar Wilde quotation that speaks to the ever elusive, unreachable nature of Utopia—understood as course rather than destination—, Leslie’s introduction offers a sophisticated re-visitation and re-definition of the genre which—like Wilde—openly rejects defining utopias as any sort of static, totalising blueprints of the better society. Being more suggestive than conceptually prescriptive, Leslie proposes to examine utopia as a fictional mode that predisposes “a kind of edgy, multiple, and palimpsestic way of reading” (2), thus calling for an open-ended, dialogic mode of reading and interpretation. In her basic assumptions at least, Leslie does not differ from the mainstream of utopian studies theorists (from Louis Marin through Fredric Jameson to Tom Moylan), all of whom define utopia with reference to its quasi-ludic ambiguities and its ideological double-edges. *Renaissance Utopias* in this sense contributes towards understanding utopia as a speculative critique of historically hegemonic ideologies which nonetheless remains informed and limited by its own ideological-historical contingencies. What is perhaps most original and innovative about *Renaissance Utopias* is Leslie’s attempt to transcend the supposed status of utopia as history’s dialectical double. In other words, Leslie’s study aspires to offer an alternative to the (mis)conception of utopia as history’s ‘fantastic’ or ‘unreal’ counterpart—a conception that emerged from Hegel’s and especially Marx’s philosophies of history, and arguably became hegemonic after the establishment of history as an objective, scientific discipline of study. Furthermore, as Leslie contends, the dichotomous opposition of utopia and history has also been sustained—partially, but much in spite of themselves—by historicising readings of utopia, since these approaches still tend to assume that utopia is a superstructural or ideological reflex (however distorted or mediated) of the ‘objective’ and ‘material’ conditions of history. Therefore, Leslie’s own interpretative proposition, overtly presented as an amendment to the new historicism of Stephen Greenblatt and the Marxism of Fredric Jameson, is “to consider history not as the answer to or antithesis of utopia but as a question posed by and in Renaissance utopian fiction” and, more specifically, “to examine the problem of history as it is raised by three early modern authors *within* their utopian fictions” (9). In short, it seems that Leslie’s overarching aim is to consider how utopias function not only as allegories of historical conditions themselves, but also as allegories of different metanarratives of historical change.

Chapter One, “Praxis Makes Perfect: Utopia and Theory”, serves as a bridge between Leslie’s theoretical proposal and her interpretive practice, since it is presented as a critical commentary of Jameson’s and (especially) Greenblatt’s readings of More’s *Utopia*. Leslie’s argument here is that these texts are not simply “either carnivalesque contestations of power or ceremonial ratifications of the reigning monarch’s sovereignty” (23). Instead, her suggestion is that we should see how utopia simultaneously *reifies and revises* historically existing structures of power and, in so doing, these texts allegorise plausible (even if problematic) narrative paths for historical change. To put it in a formulaic manner, Leslie’s proposal is to turn from reading utopias “as historical effects,” to reading them “as complex commentaries on historical method” (13). In line with her arguments, much of the chapter is spent in a critique of Greenblatt’s interpretation of *Utopia*. Referring to his celebrated study *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Leslie contends that Greenblatt is over-reliant on a biographic reading of More’s *Utopia* and that he over-emphasises how More’s life and his ideological commitments overdetermined his fictional production. Leslie’s subsequent chapters effectively act on her critique here, since they complement and compensate for Greenblatt’s biographic focus, as her analysis gives a central importance to the production and reception of the collaborative paratexts that accompany *Utopia*—the maps, poems and alphabets which were composed by his friends, colleagues and editors. With regard to Leslie’s engagement with Jameson, I believe that she generally reproduces much of his theoretical approach to *Utopia* (and to utopias), and that her own promise of a critical or at least revisionist engagement with Jameson’s work is ultimately disappointed. This is not necessary a flaw, however, since to my view Leslie’s monograph adds much nuance and texture to Jameson’s thorough but often-too-abstract theorising. Nonetheless, I also believe that *Renaissance Utopias* often appears to mistake Jameson for an orthodox Marxist whose understanding of utopia still relies on a strict

dichotomy of infrastructure and superstructure, even though this dichotomy is not even respected by Karl Marx himself in most of his writings. Furthermore—and this is not a critique but a suggestion to future readers—, *Renaissance Utopias* could also benefit from being compared with a more up-to-date corpus of Jameson's theorisations of *both* utopia—recently collected in his *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005)—and allegory—in his recent *Allegory and Ideology* (2019)—, given the centrality of these two notions within *Renaissance Utopias*.

In Chapters Two and Three, Leslie moves into her own interpretation of Thomas More's *Utopia*. Leslie's general argument here seems intriguingly sophisticated and perhaps most original, especially as it detects a sort of 'proto-postmodern' concern with historiography running through *Utopia*. As she puts it, More's text (along with its paratexts) "captures, without resolving, the divide between the humanists' recovery of history as coherent and verifiable, traceable to its universal origins, and their reinvention of history as a rhetorically open form, drawing on the copia of language arts" (26). It is from this standpoint that Leslie invites us to re-examine the shifting cartographies and the multilingualism of *Utopia*, devoting one chapter to each matter. Comparing various 16th-century versions of maps of Utopia, Chapter Two shows us how More's geographic 'nowhere' is (despite popular preconceptions) not perfect, at least in the etymological sense of being unfinished, since it is perpetually open to cartographic revision, and it stands upon a complexly ambiguous set of analogies with European and 'New World' geography. In the next chapter, Leslie turns our attention to the role of translation in the production and reception of More's text. Through a provocative commentary on the text's narrative polyphony, on More's Greco-Latin neologisms, and on the samples of a utopian alphabet, language and literature, Leslie contends that Utopia functions as an allegory of the humanists' textually-mediated relationship with history, both past and present. Against frequent characterisations of *Utopia* as a merely playful or even slyly cynical text, *Renaissance Utopias* thus suggests that More posits utopia as neither a perfected blueprint nor an impossible destination, as neither a nostalgically neo-Classic model nor a communitarian millennial vision, but rather as a complex and meandering discursive path—as a political bearing that requires readers (and political actors) to constantly engage in collective acts of translation and mediation.

Fast-forwarding a century within the 'Renaissance'—a period that Leslie's book renders somewhat vague in details and delimitation, especially given its inclusion of a Restoration text like *Blazing World* as one of the central objects of study—, Chapter Four discusses Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*. In here, Leslie tries to complement and to nuance some common interpretations of the text as a supposedly transparent reflection of Bacon's New Science projects. Above all, the chapter dwells upon the apparent contradiction of Bacon's turn to a speculative, quasi-religious form of fabulation after being a life-long, staunch propagandist of empiricism and experimentation. Seeking a solution to this conundrum, Leslie puts forward the hypothesis that Bacon's text could be suggesting that science could help in literalising (and potentially superseding) Christian metanarratives of revelation and salvation—showing how once-mystical aspirations could be realised through technological progress. Besides, Leslie also makes a compelling case against regarding the text as a 'realised utopia'—that is, as a vision that was presumably materialised with the foundation of the Royal Society some decades after its publication. Instead, Leslie warns that such a reading would go against the grain of the text, since it would amount to transforming an inherently future-oriented, reformist narrative into a nostalgic origin story of post-Enlightenment scientific institutions.

Last but not least, Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World* is the subject of the concluding chapter in the monograph, as there is (quite remarkably but somewhat cohering with Leslie's insistence on interpretive open-endedness) no conclusion as such. Again beginning with a critique of previous interpretations, Leslie deconstructs readings of the text that over-emphasise Cavendish's supposed eccentricity. As she clearly demonstrates, over-emphasises on *Blazing World* as a 'mere' product of

the mind of “Mad Madge” tend to skim superficially over the text and instead recur to misogynist characterisations of the author, her textual alter-ego, and the empress’s character—this utopia’s protagonist. Moreover, against once-common critiques of *Blazing World* as an obscure pastiche of genres, Leslie counterargues that “Cavendish is nowhere more orthodox a utopian than in her revision of others’ utopian models” (124), given how every utopia is implicitly or explicitly set in opposition to past utopias. Thus, Chapter Five examines Cavendish’s reworking of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* as well as, especially, Cavendish’s reworking of the “woman-on-top as a cultural narrative that continues to discover a symmetrical identity in female power and male paranoia, female utopia and male dystopia” (130). According to Leslie, Cavendish’s text would be an allegory of how “history is not generated or constructed by a gendered or a genetic principle but through the singular performance of world-historical individuals” (146)—all of which regardless of whether these individuals are a king or an empress, or of whether they are public, action-oriented characters or private, intellectual characters like Cavendish herself. In these ways, *Blazing World* is here read as proposing that historical agency and power need not be exclusively masculine nor exclusively physical, and hence that it can also be spiritual-intellectual and feminine—a partly emancipatory, partly essentialising proposition that is not without its own ideological ambivalences, of course.

With this whole monograph, Marina Leslie thus offers its readers multiple forms of (re)interpretation of three foundational texts within English utopian literature. Although the book often remains somewhat suggestive and oblique, it is perhaps for that same reason even more intellectually rewarding, since it offers readers many questions and hypotheses for future debates and research. *Renaissance Utopias and the Problem of History* indeed contributes to a deeper examination of utopia’s ambiguity as a genre, and it shows how, in Leslie’s words, “From its inception in the Renaissance, the utopian form was Janus-like” (118). Moreover, Leslie challenges its readers—even readers who are familiar with the field—to question their preconceptions of utopia as a relatively ahistorical, escapist fantasy, and for that purpose she demonstrates how such fictions are not only “transparent and opaque” (5) refractions of historical conditions, but also function as allegorical metanarratives of historical transformation. With such political connotations, it is not surprising that Leslie suggests that we read these Renaissance texts not only ‘backwards’ in time, but also “forward against the various strategies of reading, recovery, and revision embedded in the historicizing impulses of current literary theory. This is the double vision that produces even as it annihilates all those hauntingly familiar and brave new worlds” (11). Whether or not More, Bacon, Cavendish and Leslie succeed in pushing us to think forward is up for their readers to decide, but the invitation seems worth considering. Past utopias may be ‘dated’—but they are not dead.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Contemporary Rewritings of Liminal Women : Echoes of the Past

Borham-Puyal, Miriam. 2020

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The revisionist and metacritical zest of contemporary works on and off screen has made possible to delve deeper into the representation of seemingly new-fangled outsiders that are shaped by their literary predecessors, creating new paths for them to make visible the complexity and ambivalences of their experience. Most of these liminal figures have been and continue to be women who are often made to inhabit the fringes of society, as Miriam Borham-Puyal notes in her book *Contemporary Rewritings of Liminal Women: Echoes of the Past* (2020). Borham-Puyal's contribution provides an exhaustive and comprehensive study of characters that can be traced back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, living on today in contemporary representations of female vampires, prostitutes, quixotes, and detectives. These figures, who embody past and present anxieties that emerged with the cultural advance of The New Woman, are key to understand the past and where we are headed towards nowadays. Their liminal identities, which accentuate their modern subjectivities (Thomassen 2014, 11-12), often offer a new perspective that challenges and transgresses prescribed societal norms and limitations. Female vampires, prostitutes, quixotes and detectives populate narratives in which they exert agency by "questioning societal norms and pre-liminally choosing to become outsiders" (10). As Borham-Puyal claims, it is through and in spite of their gender oppression and its intersectional constraints that these women acquire a vantage position on the threshold that, although not exempt from problematics, bestows them with a sense of perspective over human history and time (35). The present volume, included in the series "Among the Victorians and Modernists", edited by Dennis Denisoff for Routledge, is neatly organised in five chapters, each of these dedicated to a selection of literary and onscreen works concerned with one of such figures, except for the first introductory chapter.

Presenting the concept of liminality as a “sense of *transition toward, in-betweenness, or ambiguity*” (2) that provides the liminal subject with a unique point of view, the first chapter outlines the main theoretical background that vertebrates this monograph. The feminocentric narratives that the author sets herself to analyse offer an opportunity to trace these women throughout past and present, helping address the polytemporality of feminist history—that is, its double orientation towards past and present so as to build a truly new and different future. Conveniently, the subsequent chapters also contain their own concise, well-informed theoretical introductions to the literary figure that they are set to analyse afterwards. The second chapter briefly addresses the tradition and ambivalences surrounding the figure of the female vampire, and the in-betweenness of their supernatural bodies, which incarnate cultural fears of the uncontrollable and “destructive nature of female sexuality” (Hobson 2016, 12). Borham-Puyal puts forward how these concerns “voice Victorian fears about women’s mutability, unruly appetites, and thirst for power” (12). Contextualising the works of Sheridan La Fanu, Bram Stoker, or Mary Elizabeth Braddon, among others, as well as some of their adaptations, this second chapter analyses contemporary re-interpretations of female vampires that seem to highlight the resilience, vantage position and agency of these liminal characters instead of reinforcing stereotypes about their abhorrent and destructive sexual appetite or power drive. These examples include the films *Let the Right One In* (2008), *Byzantium* (2012), *Only Lovers Left Alive* (2013), and *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014). These films’ protagonists subvert acquired notions of masculinity and femininity, making explicit the need to be oriented towards past narratives or cultural conceptions of the vampire in order to move forward, and stress the empowering potential of women’s liminal position by showing how it is no longer contained at the margins of society, but now reclaims a central space.

On a similar note, Borham-Puyal vindicates the prostitute’s liminal identity and the discourses revolving around its defence and repudiation in the third chapter. The author emphasises how the eighteenth-century in particular “marks a moment of transition ... that would determine much of the contemporary approach to sexuality and prostitution” (47). In the figure of the prostitute, gender and class notably interact (Walkowitz 2017, 19), resulting in her social and political construction as a libertine, seducer, good/bad, private/public persona. These images are reinforced by ideas of gender performativity that veer between masculinity/femininity according to the social position of the prostitute, which notably varies from precarious street-walker to courtesan and mistress. Borham-Puyal observes how twenty-first century cultural products have turned their attention to the figure of the prostitute in a similar fashion to what they have done with the female vampire. Her body—part human, part commodity—is rewritten as a site of resistance and resilience that denounces its objectification from the social threshold. Recovering the eighteenth-century prostitute might be then a powerful act of social criticism, nonetheless, as Borham-Puyal puts it, often “the prostitute’s tale is one of survival, but also of economic betterment, which implies repeating the cycle of corruption that the prostitute once experienced and supporting a fierce capitalist system of demand and supply, even if of human flesh” (57). With this in mind, Chapter 3 studies the films *Frankenhooker* (1990), *Dangerous Beauty* (1998) and *Slammerkin* (200), as well as the television show *Harlots* (2017-2019). In general terms, these revisions of the figure of the prostitute grant her centre stage in her story so that she can have a voice and a say in her own experience, celebrating the female gaze instead of a patriarchal view of women’s bodies. Borham-Puyal proposes, however, that this does not mean that society is criticised in a transformative way, especially when the hypersexualisation and commodification of women’s bodies is mistaken for sexual liberation.

Drawing on her previous work on female quixotes (2018; 2017; 2016; 2015), chapter four presents the liminality of this character as an “in-between state, located between illusion and reality, freedom and submission” (13). In other words, female quixotism allows to explore women’s

complex relationship with gender dichotomies, which fuel their quixotic aspirations and also a disillusionment with them. In this context, the act of reading appears as a politically and morally charged activity that triggers conservative fears about the corruption of women, whilst providing a space for women to become readers, writers and philosophers. These female quixotes are in a liminal position due to the meanings attached to them by themselves and others that encompass old and new routes for women to follow in society. The inherent conflict of female quixotes makes them susceptible to an excess of passion and frustration that not only ostracises them, but also causes a problematic disruption similar to that of the vampires. Yet, their alleged madness allows for “a period of subversion in which gender, and even class, restrictions are defied” (79). Female quixotes have another liminal characteristic that continues to be exploited in contemporary narratives: “their double nature as *butt* and *instruments* for the author’s satire” (83). This satirical view has often been used to reinforce gender stereotypes and ridicule women’s aspirations, reducing them to overly passionate romantic quests. This proves to be the case to some extent for *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (2001), Netflix’s *Isn’t It Romantic* (2009), and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* (2015–19). In *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2006) and *Bridge to Terabithia* (1977), however, the fantasies that are built in the protagonists’ minds challenge the idiosyncrasy of the patriarchal world they live in, pointing at its incomprehensive brutality. Borham-Puyal goes on to examine *Sucker Punch* (2011), scrutinising its post-feminist politics and dissecting how the illusions of its protagonist are based on “a false sense of revenge at the patriarchy, which never actually occurs” (96). Concluding this chapter, *Amélie* (2001) and *The Bookshop* (2017) are taken as examples of how the individual’s isolating idealism grants them an agency to power change and make visible the sharp contrast between what *should* be and what *is*.

In the last chapter, Borham-Puyal contends that the female sleuth largely remained on the threshold between private and public, conforming or subverting gender expectations whilst writing their own identity at the turn of the century. Connected to the Gothic and sensation fiction, female detective stories proved more advanced than society by providing a space to represent the experience of marginalised women such as working mothers, lesbians, racialised figures that had no space nor voice elsewhere. Furthermore, Borham-Puyal suggests that, by shifting the attention towards the female gaze whilst defying the status quo, the genre of the female detective could be considered narratively disruptive (107). Be that as it may, throughout her discussion of contemporary representations of female detectives, Borham-Puyal attempts to demonstrate how the duality between the public and the private still prevails. Although these detectives more clearly embody authority and power now, they continue to be “the recipients of most violent acts”—sexual and otherwise (116). *The Pinkertons* (2014) and the graphic novel *My Favorite Thing Is Monsters. Volume I* (2018) feature skilled and professional detectives that are still affected by sexism, which emphasises their status as outsiders. In recent takes on nineteenth-century female detectives, such as the television series *Houdini & Doyle* (2016) and Kerry Greenwood’s *Honourable Phryne Fisher* novels, the tensions between the changing roles and expectations of women are delved into, shedding light into the pressing need for women to move forward. *The Bletchley Circle* (2012–14) similarly reclaims the figure of the female spy in the Second World War context, putting forward how women’s work was often invisible and unacknowledged, but had a great impact on society. Finally, Borham-Puyal discusses Dolores Redondo’s *Baztan Trilogy* (2012–14), arguing that it can be read as a contemporary instance of the female Gothic that offers a realistic approach to police work whilst linking the spiritual awareness of the protagonist to the relationship between past and present.

Borham-Puyal opens *Contemporary Rewritings of Liminal Women* mentioning how writer and philosopher Mary Hays described herself as an “‘alien being,’ a liminal subject, for her hope in progress and women’s advancement” (2). In direct relationship with this statement, the

liminal figures analysed in this volume speak for the necessity of identifying their sociocultural construction and evolution throughout times and spaces. Re-evaluating the contexts in which they were envisioned is key so that these characters can move forward without being unproblematised or stereotyped in contemporary narratives. The selection of works explored in this book show how we always run the risk of perpetuating old patterns that obscure the complexity of women's experience and erase the potential of their liminality. With this monograph, Borham-Puyal paves the way to see contemporary narratives as an opportunity to reflect on women's journey, and how fiction can project a better future by vindicating the ongoing struggle for women's rights and reclaiming the power of the liminal subject to enact true change. In this respect, the potentiality of new media is highlighted in the volume's Afterword, as they provide new spaces and orientations for contemporary narratives to explore the "innovative/conservative tensions that are inherent to our conception of multidirectional feminist history, together with the idea of genre as hybrid and unstable" (133). In the era of the #MeToo movement, which has propelled an interest in women's voices and stories in the film industry and beyond, these contemporary narratives about liminal women will continue to challenge society by recognising our intrinsic status as outsiders in the face of imposed and oppressing norms that annihilate certain bodies, perspectives and stories.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Geographies of Girlhood in US Latina Writing: Decolonizing Spaces and Identities

Fernández-García, Andrea

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. 198 pp. ISBN:
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Andrea Fernández-García's *Geographies of Girlhood in US Latina Writing: Decolonizing Spaces and Identities* concentrates on the traditional genre of the bildungsroman as a suitable space of negotiation for US Latina young women. The book presents a perceptive and thorough analysis of well-known works within the Latina tradition by building upon the theoretical model of spatiality, particularly by foregrounding the attention to an under-researched area, that of children's geographies. Furthermore, Fernández-García proposes the *decolonial* bildungsroman as a key vehicle of resistance and as a tool that can better inform multiple realities and imaginaries. By blending feminist and spatial theory, the author not only engages with the most recent insights which inform identity and the increasing phenomenon of globalization in our societies, but also provides an innovative lens to read the corpus. As is perfectly reflected in the analytic chapters, the conceptual and methodological approaches delineate a carefully-thought spatiotemporal framework that functions as a promising literary model. Fernández-García offers a concentric structure zooming out from everyday settings to largest spaces: the school, the home, the Barrio, the city, the nation and the border. This choice smartly endorses that no space is trivial in configurations of identity and, more importantly, showcases women's experiences in sites where they are commonly absent. In this vein, one of the book's greatest accomplishments lies in visibilizing the particularities and problems of girlhood

in both US Latina literature and society at large. All the young female protagonists analyzed encounter and defy colonial and patriarchal legacies that strongly shape their full development into adulthood. Specifically, Fernández-García shows their agency in the still necessary process of *decolonizing spaces and identities*.

Chapter 2, “Latina Girls: Questions of Identity and Representation”, provides an outline of the main discourses that have contributed to Latina girls’ gender oppression and invisibility, thus defining central concepts such as marianismo, machismo, and malinchismo, which reappear in most of the book’s analyses. Later, Fernández-García argues for an alternative framework within which female identity can be properly represented and understood, which justifies her theoretical and methodological approach. Notably, an emphasis in decoloniality emerges as a new paradigm or epistemology that can effectively redress dominant structures of power such as those created by traditional patriarchal and Eurocentric thought. For example, Fernández-García exposes the contradictory de-territorialized and essentialist conceptions of space that have commonly coexisted within immigration contexts and have recently intensified with globalization, phenomena which never occur in isolation but intersect fundamentally with ingrained social dynamics of power such as gender oppression.

Chapter 3, “Space of Flows vs. Space of Places: Negotiating the Paradoxes of a Global Age in Julia Alvarez’s *Return to Sender*”, analyzes the unresolved problem of undocumented immigration in the global era characterized by multiple contradictions. As the title explicitly emphasizes, states face the paradox of increasing de-regulation while still preserving nativist feelings that work against some of the new economic and global demands. As a result, goods and information circulate freely, whereas certain citizens continue to encounter discursive as much as material borders. The physical exclusion is mostly obvious in that the so-called “Operation ‘Return to Sender’” on which Alvarez’s novel is based meant the deportation of immigrants in 2005 and 2006 (54). This causes that the protagonist, Mari, an undocumented Mexican, and her family live in constant fear of being caught by the border patrol. Other practices reinforce racial discrimination such as the local villagers’ suspicions based on white superiority and against the flow of immigration that fills a necessary labour demand. While many current thinkers have identified the discontents of globalization, Fernández-García goes beyond such problematic forces generating exclusion by looking at interrelated power dynamics operating at different scales, namely the home as an enduring site of gender oppression. More importantly, she envisions an empowering interpretation that allows to posit the disenfranchised characters as capable actors that refashion the very categories that define them. Particularly, the notion of “world citizens” demonstrates that affiliation and solidarity evade geopolitical borders, and that identities are forcibly in negotiation and relationality despite, or perhaps because of, continuing tendencies towards the opposite “in the present stage of global coloniality” (42).

The fourth Chapter, “Life on the Mexico-U.S. Border: Femininity, Trans- borderism, and the Reinscription of Boundaries in Norma E. Cantú’s *Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera*”, examines a quintessential borderland space, the *frontera* between Mexico and the United States, to highlight the real implications for those who actually live in the margins. Rather than simply discussing a discursive space to signal the complexity of hybrid identities, this chapter retakes a materiality that is as unequivocal as is also dialectical in that, notwithstanding its overpowering presence, the border is also liable to be challenged and transcended. One of the most convincing points lies in detecting and exploring the “feminine quality of this territory” (96). In fact, the chapter further explains the study of child-centered accounts from a female perspective, particularly the use of the word “girlhood” rather than “childhood” as an appropriate term to refer to women’s lives in certain in-between states in terms of identity formation and

occupation of specific spaces. Furthermore, the analysis of the different acts of negotiation that destabilize the materiality of the border builds on a long-established critical tradition that privileges the fluidity of cultural and gender identities. By borrowing on the so-called “mestiza consciousness”, Fernández-García demonstrates the potentiality of precisely such an in-between space (“a new third element”) as a valid interpretive framework to transcend and reconfigure major border issues (106).

Chapter 5, “The Barrio as a Hybrid Space: Growing Up Between Nationalism and Feminism in Mary Helen Ponce’s *Hoyt Street: An Autobiography*”, deals with the much debated tensions between Chicano cultural nationalism and Chicana feminism. To illustrate the difficulty of navigating between conflicting ideologies, the chapter concentrates on the barrio as a hybrid space of both belonging and exclusion, particularly for Chicana authors who have more readily identified the gender dimension being often downplayed due to more pressing claims of racial unity. In this vein, Fernández-García offers an interesting reading of Ponce’s work by counteracting a seemingly celebratory account of barrio life. As far as women are concerned, the analysis displays their subordinate position yet contemporarily presents them as actors within the confinement carved for them. To prove this point, Chapter 5 contemplates, once again, critical approaches that seek negotiation and underpin fluid alliances or identities; here the notion of “differential consciousness” emerges as a satisfactory tactics to achieve the necessary political unity to tackle oppression without reifying any fixed paradigm of identity or coalition.

The last chapter, “Continuities and Discontinuities Between Home and School: Toward a Multi-layered Understanding of Social Spaces in Esmeralda Santiago’s *When I Was Puerto Rican* and *Almost a Woman*”, shifts attention to a dual and dynamic focus on microspaces (the home and the school) as primary sites of multiple identity negotiations due to their important socializing function. Fernández-García persuasively argues that home-school relations have significantly shaped children’s geographies in ethnic contexts and that US Latina authors have particularly engaged in articulating alternative spaces of transformation. Their works feature an aesthetics of conflict, resistance and, ultimately, rupture and reconfiguration. In this sense, Fernández-García characterizes narratives of this kind as a “discursive battle” that reflects “the protagonist’s ambivalent and complicated self-development (characterized by a continuous grappling with multiple power relations)” (160).

Fernández-García’s *Geographies of Girlhood in US Latina Writing: Decolonizing Spaces and Identities* offers a critique of the decolonial bildungsroman in which characters can resist and resignify their lives through an inevitably ongoing dialectics between coexisting inequalities and the effective interstices for agency. This is one of the book’s best advocated messages, given that all chapters share common strategies against existing power structures where children negotiate multiple and often conflicting elements of cultural and gender identity in the social spaces they inhabit. As a consequence, Fernández-García’s book presents a multidimensional picture through a plurality of scenarios and subjectivities that coalesce into a new thinking, contemporarily painful and successful, thus opening avenues for a rounded exploration of the girlhood experiences depicted by US Latina authors. Fernández-García displays considerable theoretical exuberance and great mastery in her exceedingly well-written and compelling book. It is a brilliant study and a breakthrough, since her solid and insightful theorization on the bildungsroman as a decolonial tool offers a far-ranging inquiry into vexing issues of Latino history and entails a major theoretical contribution to US Latina writing applicable to further research.

BOOK REVIEWS

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New Forms of Self-Narration : Young Women, Life Writing and Human Rights

Martínez García, Ana Belén. 2020

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In their seminal work *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*, Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith note the political potential of testimonial life narratives, as they argue “for the efficacy of story-telling in advancing the ongoing and constantly transforming pursuit of social justice” (2004, 233). Ana Belen Martínez García has inscribed her work within this exploration of the captivating stories of those who use life writing as a mean to develop their human rights activism, and the volume under review, *New Forms of Self-Narration: Young Women, Life Writing and Human Rights*, represents an excellent contribution to the booming area of human rights life writing. The culmination of a productive period of research, the volume pertinently brings together the life narratives of Malala Yousafzai, Hyeonseo Lee, Yeonmi Park, Bana Alabed, Nujeen Mustafa and Nadia Murad, six young women from the Global South who gained recognition in the 2010s as human rights activists. The volume is part of the Palgrave Studies in Life Writing series, and it undeniably honours the series editors’ purpose to “address key concepts and subjects” and “further the political engagement of life writing” (Brant and Saunders n.d.).

Defined by its author as the “first-ever attempt at reading side by side life-writing projects of current key icons of human rights activism” (1), Martínez García’s first book offers readers a distinct and comprehensive view of new trends in life writing practices. The subject of the volume is of raging topicality: young women’s stories of human rights’ violations matter. Besides, *New Forms of Self-Narration* addresses some significant “gaps in what we know about testimonial narratives from the Global South” (3), and it provides an audacious and undoubtedly pertinent choice of materials.

Additionally, the skilful combination of the narratologist's thorough examination of rhetorical devices and the latest insights of the twenty-first century life-writing scholar results in a sound and original methodological approach, which Martínez García employs to elucidate how these young activists move their audiences and “deploy empathy as a call to action” (12).

Structure-wise, the volume consists of an introduction, along with seven other chapters, where the life-writing projects of the seven activists are separately examined, and a conclusion, which summarizes the main results of the previous sections. Interestingly enough, the nine chapters in the book include an abstract, keywords, and follow an introduction-body-conclusion structure; hence, they function as complementary parts of a larger research project, but also as independent research papers. The volume is updated and innovative, as Martínez García proves in chapter 1, where she offers a concise and truly instructional literature review that situates *New Forms of Self-Narration* at the crossroads of some pivotal ongoing debates in the field of life writing.

In the last decade, studies in testimonial and human rights narratives seem to have enlivened the never entirely deserted debate over the authenticity and legitimacy of life writing. As Martínez García suggests, the collaborative nature of many self-representations and their increasingly frequent mediatisation can raise suspicions about the narrating “I”, leading critics to question whose identity is actually under (re)construction, and to accuse authors of relying “on sensationalist agendas” (62). Martínez García acknowledges that the personal and collective dimensions of the activists' testimonial projects are inevitably intertwined in countless ways, particularly as their “I” narrates a collective plight. Her refreshing look at the debate proves that co-construction and mediation not necessarily discredit the author's credibility; on the contrary, they can be empowering and help individuals extricate themselves from the position of victimhood and reframe “their story as that of an empowered survivor” (13).

New Forms of Self-Narration is also cutting-edge in its recognition of the mutating and multiplying shapes that self-representations tend to adopt nowadays. Certainly, the concept of autobiography “as a genre” was long ago destabilized in furtherance of the wider notion of “discourses of self-representation” (Ashley, Gilmore and Peters 1994, 10). Hence, as the scope of the field continues to spread, scholars are challenged to map uncharted materials, venues and subjects. Martínez García provides an innovative eclectic selection of materials: memoirs, TED Talks, award speeches and performances in social media platforms are taken “as belonging to a unique, single, though multifaceted, project” (3). Bearing witness to “the obvious possibilities that the combination of both the online and offline life-writing processes may offer” (134), she shows that the effectual activism of these young women, their construction of iconic activist personas, and the viral reach of their humanitarian narratives are decidedly dependent on their deployment of visual and online venues.

In chapters 2 to 7, Martínez García's critical analysis of the activists' life-writing projects pursues a parallel course of action. Each chapter opens with a short biographical introduction which contextualizes each activist's fight. Henceforth, the author lists and unpacks the activists' performances of self-construction, online and offline, visual and verbal, with an emphasis on their virality and their effective engagement of audiences. On the one hand, Martínez García successfully exemplifies how collaboration and mediation are exploited by the activists to reclaim agency. Along these lines, the activists' conscious capitalization of the “technological and affective affordances” of social media platforms is proved to enable the narratives to persist and adapt, as well as to be searched, shared and replicated (105-107). Ultimately, Martínez García discusses the impact of these affordances on the configuration of real-life identities: having entered “the public sphere as girls”, they have grown up both “as individuals and as collective selves” (135).

Chapter 2 features Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban following her condemnation of Pakistan's ban on girls' education. Malala welcomed the exogenously created identity of "a girl shot by the Taliban", as she appropriated the Twitter tag "#IamMalala" after the Taliban attack (25). Chapters 3 and 4 deal respectively with North Korean defectors Hyeonseo Lee and Yeonmi Park. Both women faced identity crises following their escape from a childhood of ideological indoctrination. On the one hand, Martínez García argues that Hyeonseo's viral TED Talk transcended the boundaries of her activist enterprise and became "the single event her newly formed identity hinges upon" (49). On the other hand, Yeonmi's identity reconfiguration also hinges upon her pervasive presence online, although she opts for a malleable self-presentation which fluctuates according to the occasion and platform deployed (65).

Chapters 5 and 6 tackle the life-writing projects of a child, Bana Alabed, and a teenager, Nujeen Mustafa, who fled from the war in Syria. Bana's unusual life-writing project is truly representative of Martínez García's thesis: as her analysis persuasively shows, were it not for the affordances of Twitter, a seven-year-old could hardly have become a "peace icon" (81), "an Internet sensation and a viral phenomenon" (82). According to Martínez García, mass-media "intensive coverage of Nujeen's journey" to Germany in her wheelchair was imperative in the success of her memoir and TEDx Talk (98). Finally, chapter 7 addresses the testimonial narratives of Nadia Murad, who was enslaved and raped by members of self-declared Islamic State. Martínez García effectively links the success of her activist project to several external factors, such as the mediation of human rights advocate Amal Clooney and the popularity Nadia gained after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

On the other hand, Martínez García explores the discursive strategies deployed by the activists to "provoke ethical engagement with the cause they relay" (135). With this purpose, the author draws on Suzanne Keen's theory on "strategic narrative empathizing techniques". Although Keen initially conceived her theory to explore narrative empathy in fictional texts, in a later revision she acknowledged "the potential of nonfiction narrative, especially life-writing and testimonio, to expand the empathetic circle of readers through varieties of authorial strategic empathy" (2016, 10).

According to the mechanisms employed to generate empathy, Martínez García distinguishes between two different types of rhetorical devices. First, she examines devices which emphasize the "geographical, sociocultural, and/or political distance" of the author's standpoint, and thus elicit "ambassadorial strategic empathy." On this matter, the cases of Nujeen and Nadia are especially significant. Nujeen's narratives merges her Kurdish "I", teenager "I" and refugee "I" with her disabled "I", being the only activist to defend "the rights of people who cannot move" (107). On the other hand, as a victim of sexual slavery, Nadia relies on the template of "the sex prisoner 'ur-story' frame" (115).

Second, Martínez García discusses the devices which elicit "broadcast strategic empathy" through their "appeal to universal emotions and experiences" (135). This section of her rhetorical examination returns in every chapter to a finite set of devices. Apart from the "strategic use of English as a rights lingua franca" (13), every woman deploys universal templates such as "the tropes of the girl in need, the woman coming of age and a rags-to-riches storyline" (70). Martínez García underlines that, "in the tradition of the diarist Anne Frank", even the oldest activists use the word "girl" to articulate the image of "a vulnerable subject", the universal "voice of the child suffering from human rights abuses" (47).

Similarly, these young activists make repeated use of "rhetorical questions emotionally loaded and with nuanced repetition" (29). Malala's various speeches are illustrative in this regard: she repeats the words "child", "women", "rights" or "education" (22), and reiterates the rhetorical question "Why is it?" which "bears no response, thus challenging readers ethically" (29). Other features are the

inclusion of “imagery to convey trauma” (77), as evinced by Bana’s use of war “pictures of victimized or endangered women and children” (84); and the combination of the first-person singular and first-person plural pronouns, which “switches for strategic narrative purposes” (100). The recurrence of these features, which occasionally makes the chapters reiterative, lays the foundations for Martínez García’s delineation of a new trend in human rights life writing.

New Forms of Self-Narration success in its attempt “to underscore the multiplicity of approaches to life writing and mediation these young women take, showcasing relevant trends in twenty-first-century life writing” (134). As acknowledged in this review, Martínez García exemplifies with determination how the life-writing projects of the seven young women under scrutiny “claim a testimonial collective voice, [...] deploy rights discourse, [...] excite humanitarian emotions” and “link up their context-bound plight with bigger social justice causes” (2). Furthermore, the volume persuades us of the potential political impact of these activists’ self-constructions, giving “proof that life writing, broadly understood, may shape people’s consciousness, encourage empathy, and so eventually lead to social justice.” (96).

New Forms of Self-Narration is highly readable and engaging, as well as enlightening and well-articulated. The author is to be congratulated on her effective selection of topic and materials, along with her versatile implementation of narrative empathy theories to life writing in arguably the most illuminating sections of her study. Undoubtedly, scholars interested in following her lead will find her methodological approach accessible and possible to replicate. As a final note, the reader may notice that Martínez García refers to her abundant previous publications with frequency. Although the compilatory nature of the volume is anticipated by the author in the acknowledgements, I see in the articulation of *New Forms of Self-Narration* the constitution of a research project that nods to the life-writing projects addressed. The technological affordances of e-books are capitalized with hyperlinks that send readers to the cited work at the click of a button. Furthermore, the volume strings together the author’s previous academic accomplishments as it weaves a new, larger project.



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BOOK REVIEWS

INÉS PARÍS

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Transmodern Perspectives on Contemporary Literature in English

**Aliaga-Lavrijsen, Jessica and Yebra-
Pertusa, José María, eds.**

Routledge. 254 pp. ISBN-10: 0367188619. ISBN-13:
978-0367188610

This book is a collection of essays edited by Jessica Aliaga-Lavrijsen and José María Yebra-Pertusa, published in 2019 by Routledge. It consists in a compilation of critical writings by fourteen authors. The main topics are ethics, capitalism, identity, spirituality, and femininity. All these ideas are framed by the theoretical paradigm of the transmodern. The term was coined by Rosa María Rodríguez Magda. She defines “trans” first, but not only, as a prefix or the synthesis in between modernity and postmodernity. It is also the description of a globalised society, rhizomatic and technological. The transmodern individual, as well as the transmodern narrative, are in constant confrontation with its Other. In addition, it is the struggle to transcend this hyperreal, relativistic closure that comes from the postmodern criticism.

The book points out the importance to confront literary criticism and literary studies not in isolation but each text as part of a globalised world. Each theory applied to the texts is showed as part of a universal dialectics. As it is explained in the introduction to the collection, the aim is to show how contemporary texts are responding to this paradigm shift, bearing in mind that this does not imply a break with the historical tradition: “Transmodernity would be characterized by a critique of the two earlier period entailing a change in human perception and thus in the understanding and representation of reality” (1).

The collection is transmodern in the sense that its holistic organization under this term gives the reader the possibility to confront the different topics of study from a glocal perspective. This

collection is a necessary critical project considering the trend of the academia to still rely on postmodernism. It opens a space for the texts and their analysis that allows to the rethinking of narratives as well as the way we look at them. The book is organised in six parts:

Part I: Transmodernity. A Paradigm Shift in Horror Films

This section is divided into three chapters which give the reader a profound explanation of the concept of transmodernity. It does so thanks to the brilliant translation by Jessica Aliaga-Lavrijsen of a plenary lecture given by Rosa María Rodríguez Magda at the University of Zaragoza in April 2017. The key element of this first part is that it sets the tone for all the essays. The transmodern is shown as the space in which subaltern realities can find a voice; it escapes the neo-liberal conception of the world that already shadows the postmodern theory. It also allows a broader understanding of the coming analysis as well as the society we live in. Transmodernity escapes the western conceptualization of difference which is, in Rosa María Rodríguez Magda's own words, "an exercise of power and control" (Rodríguez Magda 2017, 53; my translation). This first section guides the reader through other key concepts like, for example, capitalism and globalization, and it is in tune with other philosophical discourses. As explored in David Alderson's chapter, there is a link in between the possibilities that transmodernity gives to escape the "constant revolution of capitalism and its own existential conditions" (Zizek 1992, 84; my translation). Transmodernity comprehends the globalised world, it understands all possibilities of it, already defined "trans", and it opens the space of the liminal. This is something that the dialectic of capitalism is unable to do. Neo-liberal discourse destroys or dominates, but it does not leave any space outside itself. The highlight of this section would be the exemplification of what transmodernity can mean for new narratives in the conception of universal and complex voices, as Susana Onega exemplifies by means of the novel *Ghostwritten* by David Mitchell, where there is an emphasis on connectedness of individuals while trying to avoid *totalisation* and universalism.

Part II: Transmodern Ethics

The focal point of this part is the tensions in between the narratives of celebration and narratives of the limit, developed in Bárbara Arizti's essay. It can also be expressed through the dichotomy of the transmodern individual vs. the postmodern individual: "the change of the paradigm must come from the reevaluation of relationality" (97). The transmodern individual is the one that embodies the mix and diversity, and is able to adapt to past behaviours. It allows the mobility that the postmodern individual has lost. Jean-Michel Ganteau's essay is remarkable from a critical point of view for its understanding of the "eternally updated present" and how it allows a narrative of montage. This constant tension in between the new paradigm and the old one shows the importance of rethinking the narratives of this century and the different voices that we have put the focus on.

Part III: Transnational Identities and Spaces

In terms of literary criticism, this is one of the most relevant parts of the book, in the sense that it proves how the transmodern also means the broadening of the individual consciousness, and the narratives opening to a communal narrative that escapes the establishment. As shown by Barbara Puschmann-Nalenz, the new paradigm allows the bordered narratives to take the centre of society. The climax of this part is the essay by Dolores Herrero, in which, taking into account this new conception of the world, she studies the differences in between the concepts of the cosmopolitan

subject vs. the migrant subject, as well as its relation to terrorism in the western world. Herrero points out that the new transmodern subject cannot belong to any place, and that, in so far as the binary reality that the establishment still forces on us is prevailing, this can be a big problem for the construction of identity.

Part IV: Transmodern Poetics of the Spiritual Self

By applying a transmodern reading to spiritual texts (from Richard Rodriguez's *Darling: A Spiritual Autobiography* to Buddhist related poetry), we can find an alternative form of exploration; a universal spiritual understanding that goes beyond a fixed religion; a dialectic of non-duality, far from the spiritual hierarchy that can be found in the western canon. However, I think the concept of spirituality in Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz's chapter is rather limited to the text he analyses, while in Monika Kocot's contribution I find the theory—as in the case of Transmodernism in relation to the lack of hierarchy of Buddhism—more applicable to other readings that do not necessarily have to coincide with eastern spirituality.

Part V: Transcultural Femininities

This is one of the most engaging sections of the book, because in terms of literature analysis it takes into consideration some ideas that have been previously left out from postmodern analysis. With this I do not mean that they have not been studied, but that, if they have, it has been in isolation. For example, in Marc Amfreville's essay, silence is considered a crucial piece of information in the same way as Duce demonstrates with Adichie's texts. At the same time, "adaptation is seen as an adoption" (208). This idea is excellent in the sense that it gives adapted texts a whole new intention without forgetting the original text. It also opens the possibilities of criticism when analysing adaptations. The second essay of this section by Violeta Duce seems to follow the conversation that Amfreville had started by considering globalisation as the main narrative of the contemporary world and the main trend of the transmodern. This implies a movement towards otherness. Furthermore, as Duce perfectly points out in her essay, one of the opportunities that transmodern theory brings about is the possibility for women to be subjects of history that the postmodern did not allow. This section is brilliantly constructed, since there is a constant dialogue between both chapters. As Duce points out, these transmodern narratives, and this new way to confront them, are transforming women's genealogy.

Part VI: Conclusion

Considering that there is a common thread linking all the essays collected in this volume, its conclusion is not only necessary from an editorial perspective, but it also gives sense to the whole book as a transmodern text; it aims to go beyond what has been said, and it opens a utopian conception of this paradigm. It is a final thought on how Transmodernism appropriates postmodern and modernist concepts by shedding new light into them.

On the whole, this collection allows readers to get an overview of the new transmodern paradigm as well as the different possibilities that arise when using it in literary criticism. The way in which it is structured, dealing with key concepts, makes the text accessible to the readers without losing its main intention.



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BOOK REVIEWS

VANESA ROLDÁN ROMERO

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Spanish Thinking about Animals

Carretero-González, Margarita, ed. 2020.

East Lansing: Michigan State University Press,
2020. xxviii + 205 pp. ISBN: 978-1-61186-362-8.

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argarita Carretero-González has compiled a collection of essays on the broad topic of animal studies as regarded by Spanish academic thinkers. This is not Carretero-González's first edited collection on animal studies, as she has previously co-edited *Representaciones Culturales de la Naturaleza Alter-Humana* (2019) together with José Marchena Domínguez. Apart from these two volumes, Carretero-González is a fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics and President of the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment.

In 1975, Peter Singer published his ground-breaking book *Animal Liberation*, bringing under the spot the generalised abuse and oppression of nonhuman animals for the exclusive benefit of the human species and the animal turn. Henceforward, scholarly reflexions about animal rights exploded and there has been a high number of volumes and articles on the animal turn in the English-speaking academia. The lack of more scholarly discussion in Spanish could suggest that the Spanish academia has little to contribute to the field. The present work suggests, however, that Spaniards are far from disconnected from ethical considerations on animal rights, via a collection of Spanish scholars from a variety of backgrounds that converge in the need for the renegotiation of the human/nonhuman relations and interactions.

The volume *Spanish Thinking about Animals* comprises thirteen chapters, distributed in four parts, as well as a foreword and a preface. Topics range from the animal trope in Spanish literature to Spanish laws against animal abuse, and cover an array of areas including medieval texts, contemporary fables, films, artistic performances, ecofeminist ethics, and Spanish legal practices. Within this diversity, the collection is integrated by its “antisppeciesism” gaze at the animal question without aiming at being an exhaustive compilation of academic writings of scholars currently working about animals in Spain.

The volume is inaugurated by Jorge Riechmann's "Foreword", whereby he eloquently challenges its readers to engage with the enquiry of the animal rights through the mythical image of the lost Garden of Eden, and by setting under the spotlight the irrationality of the human illusion of domination, albeit not of control, over nature, always defending a politics of friendship, of regarding the nonhuman other as a fellow. Next, Margarita Carretero-González defies readers, especially perhaps those with a Spanish background, to ponder upon the animal abuse that is culturally constituent of the Spanish history and reminds them that bullfighting is far from the only way Spanish culture is cruel towards the nonhuman animal.

Within part one, "Animals and Literature", the volume's opening chapter, "Affection, Literature, and Animal Ideation", is a brief exploration of the medieval symbolic *topoi* as well as of the de-animalised and humanised talking nonhumans in fables in Spain. Here, José Manuel Marrero Henríquez analyses a number of animals that appear in texts, including dogs, cats, donkeys, cows, flies, lizards, vultures and nightingales, among others, seeking the affection for animals that would enable to grasp some of the real nonhumans that exist behind their literary appearances in poems, short stories, novels and plays.

Part one continues with Diana Villanueva-Romero's "Antispeciesism and Environmentalism in the Spanish Fable: The Case of José Antonio Jáuregui's *Juicio a los humanos*". Here, Villanueva-Romero presents how Jáuregui's fable is structured around a trial in four sections, in order to bring forward the modern preoccupation about the environmental decline of the planet, the abuse nonhuman animals have suffered, and the role humans have played in it, with clear references to the Anthropocene. The chapter concludes that the fable can be used for pedagogical purposes and that the hearing is presented as a dream, as a divination of the future humans must face.

Next, Carmen Flys-Junquera highlights the general absence of wolves in contemporary Spanish literary texts with their never-ending presence in environmental activism in Spain, and proceeds to analyse one of the very few current novels clearly centred on wolves, *Beatriz y la Loba*, as well as the collection of short stories *Espejo Lobo*, both written by Concha López Llamas. Flys-Junquera scrutinises how López Llamas' texts attempt indeed to represent the corporeal wolf while improving readers' knowledge of the issues affecting wolves, as well as the conflicting interests of wolves, ranchers, hunters, environmentalists, and public authorities.

Part two, "Animal Ethics and Aesthetics", opens with Marta Tafalla's "Animals as Ornaments: On the Aesthetic Instrumentalization of Animals", looking into how artistic appreciation of animals often reduces them into mere instruments for human visual pleasure. Tafalla, instead of rejecting the aesthetic dimension of animals, draws a difference between a superficial and instrumentalising aesthetic and a deep, critical, aesthetics which, far from instrumentalising the nonhuman, could help humans to rediscover animals in their own terms, which is based on knowledge and respect towards the animal fellow.

Claudia Alonso-Recarte and Ignacio Ramos-Gay continue the part on animal ethics and aesthetics with the chapter titled "A Passionate Call for Murder. Dying and Suffering in Spanish Film and Filmmaking", dealing with the aesthetic instrumentalisation of animals in films, where real-real animals were actually tortured or killed in their directors' search for verisimilitude. They select a number of films —*Las Hurdes*, *Tierra sin pan* (1933), *La caza* (1966), *Furtivos* (1975), *Pascual Duarte* (1976), and other more recent films such as *Hable con ella* (2002) or *Blancanieves* (2012)— and explore how the nonhuman animal is indeed instrumentalised through the aesthetics, while their lives and sentience is simply disregarded by anthropocentrism. As the two scholars explain, the Spanish legal system has become stricter in showing animal suffering or actual death in films, and yet animal death continues while the images of dead animals are increasingly concealed by the cinema industry.

Next, José Marchena Domínguez brings the reader back to one of the most controversial examples of animal abuse in Spain, bullfighting, in his chapter “Usurped Strength, Stolen nature: The Literature on the Fighting Bull”. Marchena Dominguez presents not only Spanish works denouncing bullfighting, but also texts defending it in the nineteenth century, when it was heavily strengthened. In a sophisticated and precise discussion, the author dissects these writers’ texts and the role of anthropocentrism in literature dealing with tauromachy.

The last chapter in the section on ethics and aesthetics, “Wear My Eyes: Driving Empathy through Artistic creation”, by Verónica Perales Blanco, continues by examining how audio-visual creations—Laurie Anderson’s *Heart of a Dog*, Beatriz da Costa’s *Pigeon Blog*, Lisa Jevbratt’s *Zoomorph*, as well as Barnaby Steel and Robin McNicholas’ *In The Eyes of the Animal*—expose nonhuman animals in arguably non-anthropocentric and anti-speciesist fashion. Perales Blanco argues that audio-visual art holds the potential to posit its audience inside the body of the nonhuman animal and foster the empathy towards animals.

Part three delves more deeply into the theme of bodily violence. Alicia H. Puleo links violence against female and animal bodies by patriarchal men; animals and women are reified, dominated, and instrumentalised to construct masculine identities through pornography and their reduction to their sexual dimension. On the same basis, dealing with bodily violence, bullfighting becomes central in Jesús Mosterín’s chapter. “Failed Arguments in Defence of Bullfighting” undertakes the task to dismantle the most often used arguments in defence of bullfighting. He tackles this issue in great detail, point by point, and provides an exceptionally clear dismantling of each of the often fallacious arguments used to defend the “fiesta nacional”.

Lydia de Tienda finishes part three with an exploration of Ortega y Gasset’s perspective on Animals in “Ortega y Gasset’s Thoughts on Animals”. The author examines hunting, bullfighting, and birdsongs as observed by Ortega y Gasset, and finds the common grounds for the philosopher to choose such activities in the search for the sense of being. The chapter entails an exploration of how these three activities are strongly intermingled with that search, whether by raising human awareness of their own animality, by providing an apparent penetration into the nonhuman mind, or by showing the anxiety of not understanding animals. Part four, “The Fight against Specieicism”, perhaps the least cohesive in the volume, starts with “Animals in Spanish Law: Changing the Legal Paradigm to Consider Animals as Sentient Beings”. Nuria Menéndez de Llano takes into consideration the Spanish legal system concerning animal issues and the relationship between humans and nonhuman animals, which predates the first English laws against animal abuse, as well as the legal reforms that are taking place so far, for her readers to be able to easily familiarise themselves with the current legal situation of animals in Spain.

The second chapter in part four, “Defending Equality for Animals: The Antispeciesist Movement in Spain”, by Estela Díaz and Oscar Horta, delves into the evolution of the activism concerning animals, especially in Spain. Dealing with the first association on “animal rights”, the Asociación para la Defensa de los Derechos de los Animales (ADDA) in 1976, and the more recent formation of a political party, the Partido Animalista Contra el Maltrato Animal (PACMA) in 2003, among other organisations, this chapter provides a general view of how activism—occasionally entailing ethical vegetarianism or veganism—has grown in Spanish-speaking countries, and particularly in Spain in the last decades, and to what extent Spanish activism is different from activism in other western countries because of its tendency to avoid violent acts.

The volume ends with a chapter entitled “The Literature in Spanish on the Question of Speciesism: An Annotated Bibliography”, by Daniel Dorado. This final chapter contributes an annotated

bibliography on the most relevant literature published in the Spanish-speaking world regarding the animal turn. Dorado contrasts a number of authors and their texts on the matter, defending that, despite the variety of perspectives and arguments, most of the catalogue he presents in the chapter defends the ethical consideration of the nonhuman animal.

The lapse between activism and artistic production —be it literature, film, or painting—and scholarly production makes it difficult for the academia to keep pace with current events in animal activism. And yet this volume presents illuminating viewpoints on contemporary thinking about nonhuman animals by Spanish thinkers, providing fresh perspectives on activism and academic analysis concerning animal studies, generally controlled by the English-speaking world. As this volume proves, Spanish-speaking scholars have enriching insights on animal studies that should be incorporated into the general discussion, no matter the kind of artistic creation through which the activism is channelled.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Libros Álbum que Desafían los Estereotipos de Género y el Concepto de Familia Tradicional

Moya, A. Jesús y Cañamares, Cristina, coords.

Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2020. 348 pp. ISBN: 978-84-9044-406-1

En la Literatura Infantil tradicional abundan los personajes femeninos indefensos, sumisos y entregados al amor, que esperan a un “príncipe azul”, valeroso y aventurero, que los rescate de cualquier peligro. Los estereotipos de género se han perpetuado en la LIJ desde el nacimiento de esta, contribuyendo al mantenimiento de sociedades sexistas y discriminatorias. Asimismo, el concepto de familia ha sido recalcado tradicionalmente como grupo de personas formado por un papá, una mamá, y uno o varios hijos. No obstante, desde mediados del siglo pasado, se han ido abriendo paso en la LIJ nuevas obras cuyo objetivo principal es desligarse

de los estereotipos de género y familia tradicionales, mostrando con ello una realidad actual, viva, tolerante e inclusiva.

Precisamente sobre este tipo de productos literarios versa *Libros álbum que desafían los estereotipos de género y el concepto de familia tradicional*, obra compuesta por 10 capítulos y un total de 348 páginas en las que se analizan 54 libros álbum infantiles. Nos encontramos ante una obra colectiva coordinada por A. Jesús Moya-Guijarro y Cristina Cañamares Torrijos, pertenecientes ambos al proyecto I+D “La construcción del discurso en los libros-álbum infantiles que cuestionan estereotipos de género y el concepto de familia tradicional. Un análisis multimodal”, referencia FFI2017-85306-P (2018-

2021) y, a su vez, al grupo de investigación Literatura Infantil y Educación Literaria, en la UCLM. Moya-Guijarro y Cañamares reúnen en esta obra los trabajos de diversos estudiosos que versan sobre el motivo común de los libros álbum infantiles que rompen con los estereotipos tradicionales de género y familia. La obra se divide en tres secciones: “Personajes femeninos en libros álbum que rompen estereotipos de género”, “Personajes masculinos en libros álbum y estereotipos de género”, y “El libro álbum y su apertura a las familias homoparentales”.

El primer capítulo de este libro se plantea como una introducción en la que Moya-Guijarro y Cañamares trazan diversos objetivos, entre los que podemos destacar la definición del libro álbum como objeto editorial formado por texto e imagen en constante interrelación. Esta complementariedad requiere de una perspectiva multimodal para su análisis. En este sentido, la semiótica social de Kress y van Leeuwen y su desarrollo llevado a cabo por Painter, Martin y Unsworth para el análisis del libro álbum será la base de buena parte de los estudios incluidos en este volumen. Ahora bien, el volumen abraza, a su vez, otros enfoques de carácter literario e intertextual y teorías de género que enriquecen el enfoque esencialmente lingüístico al que se acaba de hacer referencia, proporcionando así al lector análisis empíricos e interpretaciones que ayudan a entender el potencial comunicativo de la interrelación texto-imagen en la construcción del libro álbum infantil.

Tras la introducción, la primera sección del volumen se inaugura con un trabajo desarrollado por Carmen Santamaría García. La autora se basa en la semiótica social para revelar las relaciones entre los personajes de las obras seleccionadas, y entre estos y los lectores. De manera sucinta, Santamaría expone el marco teórico del que parte para analizar las ilustraciones, que cuenta con el sistema de contacto visual (distinguiendo ilustraciones de *oferta* y *demanda*), de focalización (mirada *frontal* o *invitada* y participación *mediada* o *sin mediación*), la distancia social (planos cortos, medios y largos, que acercan o alejan al lector de los personajes) y la actitud (perspectiva de *implicación* o de *poder*). Posteriormente, la autora lleva a cabo el análisis de la interacción en dos libros álbum infantiles: *Arturo y Clementina* y *Los tutús no son mi estilo*, obras que retratan personajes femeninos que no se adaptan a los estereotipos tradicionales. El análisis muestra de una forma clara las diferencias entre las dos obras elegidas, pues las ilustraciones de *Arturo y Clementina* manifiestan una relación más estrecha entre los personajes representados y logran que el lector se implique más al utilizar una mayor cantidad de planos cortos y medios y empleando el ángulo visual horizontal.

En el capítulo tercero, Francisco J. Rodríguez Muñoz y María del Mar Ruiz Domínguez analizan tres libros álbum cuyas princesas protagonistas no se ajustan al modelo establecido en la literatura tradicional: *La princesa vestida con una bolsa de papel*, *La princesa rebelde* y *La princesa Isabella*. Una primera parte del análisis se centra en los elementos narratológicos: narrador, estructura narrativa, situación espaciotemporal, personajes y estructura actancial, que quedan alterados de tal forma que se subvierten los estereotipos ligados a princesa y príncipe, en muchos casos a través de la parodia y alusiones a cuentos tradicionales. En un segundo apartado, los autores realizan un profundo análisis lingüístico-discursivo, mediante el que se estudian, entre otros aspectos, los diferentes actos de habla presentes en las obras analizadas, que contribuyen a la ruptura del estereotipo, representando princesas que no quieren ser tales, pues son valientes, independientes y guerreras.

Cerrando la primera sección de este volumen, encontramos un trabajo de Jesús Díaz, centrado en analizar un corpus formado por libros álbum que reescriben paródicamente los cuentos tradicionales, los cuentos de hadas y maravillosos. Díaz Armas se basa en el análisis morfológico del cuento popular maravilloso de Vladimir Propp, en los que el protagonista masculino se presenta como héroe que recibe como premio el casamiento con la indefensa princesa. Basándose también en Genette, expone las formas de la *transtextualidad*, ocupándose en este caso de la *hipertextualidad*. Entre los libros álbum analizados por el autor se encuentran: *Princess Smartypants*, *The Princess Knight* o *Prince Cinders*, ya

que “pretenden invertir el esquema narrativo comentado anteriormente, haciendo que la mujer desempeñe en la ficción narrativa un papel importante y, sobre todo, que su actuación no refleje una situación de desigualdad o injusticia” (120). Díaz Armas afirma acertadamente que estas reescrituras pueden llevarse a cabo a través de imitaciones serias, como sería el caso de *The Princess Knight*; no obstante, la mayoría de las obras analizadas son variantes paródicas, que requieren lectores atentos y activos que detecten esas desviaciones respecto al hipotexto.

La segunda sección del volumen se inicia con el trabajo de Izaskun Elorza, quien realiza un análisis de cinco libros álbum con protagonistas masculinos, para desentrañar su identidad y rasgos de atribución, que no concuerdan con los estereotipos tradicionales. Para tal objetivo, se apoya en el enfoque teórico de Halliday y, dentro de él, en el análisis de los patrones de atribución hallados en los grupos nominales para referirse a los protagonistas masculinos, así como en el sistema de transitividad, teniendo en cuenta los participantes y procesos descritos en las obras. A su vez, y puesto que en el libro álbum el texto establece interrelaciones con las imágenes, la autora se apoya también en el modelo de Painter, Martin y Unsworth, analizando, por tanto, los recursos utilizados en el plano léxico-gramatical y en el semiótico-visual que establecen la identidad de los protagonistas de libros álbum como *Ballerino Nate* y *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*. A través de este análisis interdisciplinar se puede constatar la importancia de los recursos empleados por escritores e ilustradores para definir, de una forma positiva y tolerante, los rasgos de identidad de personajes tradicionalmente estigmatizados.

Por su parte, Emanuel Madalena y Ana Margarida Ramos son los autores del capítulo sexto de este volumen, cuyo motivo principal son los llamados *libros de vestidos*. Los autores dedican un apartado a las cuestiones de género en la literatura infantil, pues:

Todos recordamos algunos personajes clásicos que tenían una expresión de género no normativa [...] Sin embargo, estas “marimachos” [...] siempre han sido utilizadas para reforzar los roles de género tradicionales y la dualidad niño/niña, mediante la excentricidad de su subversión (184).

Contra esto, muchas obras contemporáneas, entre las que se encuentran los *libros de vestidos*, abordan, con deseo de otorgar visibilidad a los niños trans, las cuestiones de identidad de género. Los autores seleccionan las obras *El niño perfecto*, *Os vestidos de Tiago* y *Julián Is a Mermaid*, que tienen en común el motivo de la identidad de sus protagonistas, manifestada a través de la indumentaria tradicionalmente femenina que ellos toman como propia. A partir de aquí, los autores analizan los peritextos, los protagonistas y sus preferencias, manifestadas a través de una apariencia que no concuerda con los estereotipos de género tradicionales y, por último, el papel de la familia y sus reacciones, fundamentales en el proceso de desarrollo y autoaceptación de los niños.

En el capítulo siguiente, A. Jesús Moya-Guijarro y Cristina Cañamares Torrijos estudian los ambientes y localizaciones plasmados verbal y visualmente en este tipo de obras infantiles, mediante una selección de cinco libros álbum con protagonistas masculinos, entre los que se encuentran *Willy the Champ* y *My Princess Boy*. Para ello, también se basan en el modelo de la semiótica social visto anteriormente. Distinguen, por tanto, entre ilustraciones con variación en el grado de detalle (entre las que puede darse una *descontextualización* o *recontextualización*) e ilustraciones con el mismo grado de detalle (en las que puede, o no, cambiar el contexto), siendo estas últimas las más abundantes en el corpus. Asimismo, dedican un breve apartado a la información circunstancial en el modo verbal, para concluir que todos estos recursos “ayudan a crear un mensaje progresista a favor de la inclusión y el respeto a los niños que no se adaptan a los estereotipos masculinos hegemónicos” (237).

La sección tercera se inicia con un artículo de María Martínez Lirola cuyo objetivo es analizar la ideología de género y los nuevos rasgos de masculinidad plasmados a través de los padres gays representados en cinco libros álbum, entre los que podemos destacar *Daddy, Papa and me* o *Stella Brings the Family*. Para ello, Martínez Lirola se basa en el Análisis Crítico del Discurso en un primer apartado, que dedica a estudiar las maneras a través de las de las que los hijos se refieren a los padres: *nominación* o *caracterización*, primando la segunda, ya que “a los padres no se les suele llamar por sus nombres propios, sino con apelativos” (265-266), así como las muestras de afecto entre los padres, abundantes en los cinco libros álbum, y entre estos y sus hijos, que “expresan afecto a su descendencia más abiertamente de lo que tradicionalmente se esperaba de padres heterosexuales” (266). A continuación, la autora dedica un apartado al análisis de las estrategias utilizadas para fomentar la aceptación y normalización de familias homoparentales, siguiendo el modelo de Sunderland y McGlashan, abriendo así una nueva perspectiva de análisis del libro álbum.

Por su parte, María Jesús Pinar-Sanz elabora un trabajo de una temática semejante al anterior, dedicado al estudio de los recursos visuales y verbales llevados a cabo por los creadores de libros álbum, con el objetivo de establecer relaciones interpersonales, tanto entre los personajes, como entre estos y los lectores. La peculiaridad de los libros álbum seleccionados es que plasman situaciones con familias homoparentales formadas por dos madres. Partiendo del modelo sistémico-funcional de Halliday y de la semiótica visual de Kress y van Leeuwen, la autora analiza los libros álbum titulados *Asha's Mum*, *Molly's Family* y *Flying Free*, atendiendo a cinco aspectos: las estructuras de modo verbal, los actos de imagen y mirada, la distancia social e intimidad, y los ángulos horizontales y verticales en relación con la participación y el poder, respectivamente. Además de la complementariedad entre texto e imagen, Pinar-Sanz destaca las tres obras como ejemplos de construcción de discursos tolerantes y progresivos.

Por último, en el capítulo décimo, Guillermo Soler Quílez, Arantxa Martín-Martín y José Rovira-Collado se ocupan de diversos espacios de Internet donde se encuentra información sobre una selección de diez libros álbum infantiles que retratan familias homoparentales o personajes trans. Para comenzar, los autores exponen la situación del libro álbum sobre familias LGBTQ, subrayando la importancia de la labor docente y la censura que han sufrido muchas obras como *Heather Has Two Mommies*. Posteriormente, se centran en el concepto de *epitexto*, planteado por Genette como todo elemento físicamente alejado del texto, pero referente al mismo. Tras una breve presentación de las obras seleccionadas, entre las que podemos destacar *Con Tango son tres* y *Mi princesito*, libros álbum de reconocido prestigio a nivel internacional, los autores dedican las páginas siguientes a mostrar los resultados obtenidos en relación con los epitextos virtuales más destacados: búsquedas en *Google* y *Google Scholar*, entradas en *Wikipedia*, la presencia de las obras en *Goodreads* y vídeos sobre ellas en *YouTube*.

En síntesis, *Libros álbum que desafían los estereotipos de género y el concepto de familia tradicional* es una obra profundamente reveladora, que demuestra la vitalidad de estas creaciones para el público infantil. A través de las páginas de este volumen, nos hemos acercado a libros álbum elaborados desde el respeto, la tolerancia y la inclusión hacia colectivos tradicionalmente oprimidos y estigmatizados: mujeres, homosexuales y transexuales. La lectura de este volumen puede resultar de gran ayuda tanto a estudiantes universitarios y a investigadores, como a mediadores y padres que busquen lecturas enriquecedoras y de calidad para los más pequeños.

BOOK REVIEWS

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The English Phrasal Verb, 1650–Present. History, Stylistic Drifts, and Lexicalisation

Rodríguez-Puente, Paula. 2019.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 312 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-107-10174-6

This book is concerned with phrasal verbs, which are one of the most genuine features of the grammar of the English language, providing it with expressive elements that, most of the times, escape principled accounts due to their varying degree of idiomaticity. They are, thus, part of the group of idiosyncrasies of the language to be learnt by heart by the students of English as a foreign language, whose task becomes very hard since their presence is ubiquitous in the language.

This volume is engaging and readable by any reader who possesses basic knowledge of grammar and will be provided with a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis of phrasal verbs in English. The perspective taken by the author is twofold: synchronic and diachronic, covering almost 400 years of their development in the language, from Late Modern English till nowadays.

The contents are arranged in two parts: after the first two introductory chapters, Chapters 3 and 4 compose the first part, which engages the reader with the theoretical analysis of phrasal verbs. Chapter 3 reviews the syntactic features and semantic interpretation of phrasal verbs and particles, while Chapter 4 accounts for the formation and evolution of phrasal verbs through the well-known processes of grammaticalization, lexicalisation and idiomatisation, providing an alternative model for phrasal verbs along with their diachronic evolution. As a result, phrasal verbs are thought of

as gradable categories defined by two clines: one syntactic cline grounded on the extent of the lexicalization process on the compound, and one semantic cline defined after the extent of the process of idiomatisation on the compound. The second part is made up of Chapters 5 and 6, which provide the reader with an empirical study of the evolution of phrasal verbs from 1650 to the present. The data are taken from several corpora and show how phrasal verbs have evolved from Late Modern English till Present-Day English, and how this evolution has varied across genres.

The first chapter introduces and discusses the category of phrasal verb, giving a first and tentative definition —combinations of a verb and a post-verbal particle, which function as relatively unitary structures lexically and semantically. Also, some of the research questions that will be tackled in subsequent chapters are introduced. They vary between synchronic issues —the composition and interpretation of phrasal verbs and their relation with the phenomena of grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and idiomatisation, among others— and the diachronic evolution in a long and particular period of the English language: from Late Modern English till Present-Day English. A first glimpse is offered here of one of the central hypotheses that will guide the rest of the book and that will be fully developed in Chapter 4: the gradable nature of the category of phrasal verbs.

The sources of data and the methodology of the empirical corpus-based analyses that will be developed are described in the second chapter. The empirical data have been taken from a series of corpora, of which the ARCHER (A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers) is the main source. This is complemented by other corpora, mainly the OBC (Old Bailey Corpus) and the ICE-GB (International Corpus of English, Great Britain), in order to get enough data for the whole period and range of registers under study. A reclassification of the genres covered by ARCHER and OBC is proposed, locating the genres along a scale of (in)formality and distinguishing three main types: speech-like texts (letters and diaries), speech-based texts (trial proceedings) and speech-purposed texts (drama and sermons). As for the methodology, a semi-automatic procedure is described, consisting of automatic searches in the corpora, manual extraction of examples, and data codification and storage in a database. Finally, the statistical tests used in the data analysis are briefly discussed.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the description of phrasal verbs and their components —the verb and the particle—, as well as to their delimitation and differentiation from other multi-word categories. It opens with the description of the verbal elements of phrasal verbs. It is argued that no limitation is found in the set of verbs that can be part of these compounds. Certain tendencies can be identified, though, such as their Germanic origin, their being mono- or disyllabic with the accent on the first syllable, and their semantic underspecification. This chapter also deals with the characterization of the particles, which can be either prepositional or adverbial according to their position and stress pattern. Several types are defined according to their semantics: literal particles that retain their basic spatial meaning, aspectual and aktionsart particles that mark different aspectual distinctions —e.g., perfectivity, terminativity, resultativity— and telicity —aktionsart, metaphorical and figurative particles that have developed metaphorical meanings from their original connotations of movement, and idiomatic particles with a non-compositional meaning. Here, a new type of particle is defined and presented as one of the contributions of the book: the emphatic particles, which had been previously analysed as telic or reiterative particles. According to the aforementioned types of particles, a new classification of phrasal verbs is put forward: literal, semi-idiomatic, idiomatic, aspectual/aktionsart combinations, reiterative and emphatic phrasal verbs. The latter are built upon the newly identified emphatic particles.

Furthermore, a description of the tests used in the literature to identify phrasal verbs is undertaken in this section and only four are argued to be useful for the purposes of identification —the definite NP test, collocational restrictions before relatives and interrogatives, particle placement with object pronouns and insertion of adverbial. The hypothesis introduced in the first chapter —that phrasal

verbs are gradable— is pursued here and different degrees of cohesion and syntactic bondedness between the verb, the particle and the object are identified by a series of syntactic tests previously identified in the literature —insertion of *all*, *clean*, *right*, *straight*, *the heck*, *the hell*; insertion of other adverbs, passivation, particle preposing, particle coordination, verb gapping and cleft formation. Finally, phrasal verbs are provisionally defined as “a sub-type of multi-word verb consisting of a verb and an (originally) adverbial particle bearing a strong semantic unity typical of a single-word verb” (on page 104, until this issue is revisited in the next chapter).

Chapter 4 moves on to analyse the relation between the formation and diachronic evolution of phrasal verbs and the processes of grammaticalization, lexicalisation and idiomatisation. The first process makes a full lexical item become a grammatical item or increase its grammatical features. Through lexicalisation, a certain syntactic construction or word is used as a new form with formal and semantic properties that are not completely derivable from its constituent elements. By means of idiomatisation, an item or construction loses some literal meaning and increases its idiomatic status. Idiomatisation provides different results, depending on whether it accompanies a process of grammaticalization or lexicalisation.

The chapter argues that whereas particles have grammaticalised, the verb and the particle have lexicalised and idiomatised to form a single semantic and lexical unit. The extent of the effect of lexicalisation originates differing degrees of syntactic bondedness between the verb and the particle, whereas the extent of the effect of idiomatisation produces varying degrees of idiomaticity. This allows the definition of two clines for the development of phrasal verbs: a syntactic one, defined by the lexicalisation of the compound, and a semantic one derived from the process of idiomatisation. The extent of how the first process has affected the combination, on the one hand, can be measured through the syntactic tests reviewed in the previous chapter, and defines three stages characterized by partially fixed phrasal verbs like *eat up*, semi-idiosyncratic phrasal verbs like *take up*, and analysable idiosyncratic phrasal verbs like *bring up*, respectively. The degree of the idiomatisation process, on the other hand, defines the degree of transparency of the meaning of the compound. This shows that phrasal verbs are gradable categories, as hypothesized ever since the first chapter. Some of the tests previously reviewed in Chapter 3 are proposed to measure the extent of the process of lexicalisation on the compound by assessing the degree of cohesion and bondage between either the verb and the particle, or between the phrasal verb and the object NP.

Chapter 5 offers an analysis of the linguistic characteristic of phrasal verbs between 1650-1990 building on empirical data from the ARCHER and the OBC corpora. The verbal element, the particle and the combinations are described, as well as their evolution in that time span. Besides the linguistic processes previously discussed —grammaticalization, lexicalisation and idiomatisation—, prescriptive attitudes of the time and cross-genre effects are identified too as factors affecting the development of phrasal verbs. The data show that the syntactic characteristics of phrasal verbs during the period under study have kept relatively stable and quite similar to PDE, except for the elements allowed to intervene between the verb and the particle and their order. Finally, the data show too that the use of *-ing* nominalisations of phrasal verbs seems to have decreased over time, whereas that of other derivatives has increased. This may indicate a growth of the degree of unity of phrasal verbs, which would support, in turn, the claim that the verb and the particle of a phrasal verb combination form a single lexical unit.

Finally, the effect of language register is the focus of Chapter 6, which analyses the use of phrasal verbs from Late Modern English till Present-Day English across genres. The goal is to cast some light on the question of whether they have been —as they are argued to be today— more common in speech-based and informal text types or they were rather stylistically neutral in earlier stages.

The analysis of the empirical data from the corpora focuses on the type and frequency of particles, verbs and combinations that appear in the different genres and how they differ between them. Two general conclusions are reached: first, the frequency of phrasal verbs in a text does not generally depend on one single factor, but rather, several variables must be considered, and second, phrasal verbs significantly distinguish spoken from written registers, and informal from formal registers.

The unexpected frequencies in particular registers can be accounted for by other factors. For example, the data from the corpora show that phrasal verbs are less frequent than expected in letters during the earlier periods. This can be explained by the fact that at that time letters observed the standards of the written language and were thus more formal, becoming more colloquial and less formal over time. Conversely, phrasal verbs were more frequent than expected in earlier scientific and medical texts because they were author-centred and did not follow any standard format, being usually in the form of diaries and letters. The frequency of phrasal verbs lessened as these texts became more formal, object-centred and adopted a written-like style, which caused a decrease in the frequency of phrasal verbs in these genres.

Besides the spoken-like and informal character of the text, other factors are identified that have an effect on the frequency of phrasal verbs in a text, such as the subject matter and the particular idiosyncrasies of the writer and the prescriptivist attitudes towards these verbs.

In conclusion, this book offers an excellent overview of phrasal verbs in English. Although the author claims that her study focuses mainly in diachrony, the truth is that she offers not only a diachronic study that characterizes their evolution from Late Modern English to nowadays, but also a comprehensive review of the main theoretical analyses to be found in the literature.

One of the factors that, perhaps, brought about the presence of phrasal verbs in the grammar of Germanic languages in general, and of English in particular, is the fact that they are satellite-framed, in Talmy's (2000) terms. This means that these languages convey the path of motion through particles while the verb itself usually expresses the manner of motion—with the exception of verbs derived from Latin. As the author notes, the basic meaning of the particles that made up phrasal verbs in Old and early Middle English seems to have been essentially spatial and thence developed into a more lexicalised and idiomatised meaning ever since.

The question at stake, and the focus of the book, is how the meaning of those particles have evolved from that point onwards and how they have become semantically dependent on the verb that governs them to the point that they have formed a unity. The review offered in Chapter 3 is quite thorough in general, but has some shortfalls as regards the literature in Cognitive Linguistics. For example, some influential works like Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) on phrasal verbs and other compounds are omitted.

All in all, this book gives the reader a comprehensive overview of phrasal verbs in English, covering their formation and interpretation, as well as their evolution from the 17th century onwards. It is, to conclude, a valuable contribution to our understanding of phrasal verbs as a result of the confluence of several strategies found across languages: grammaticalisation, lexicalisation and idiomatisation.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Orality in Written Texts: Using Historical Corpora to Investigate Irish English 1700-1900

Amador-Moreno, Carolina P. 2019

London and New York: Routledge. 211 pp. ISBN: 978-1-138-80234-6 (hbk). ISBN: 978-1-315-75432-1 (ebk).

When analysing the language of the past it is often difficult to reconstruct what it would have sounded like. In other words, without recorded materials of people's conversations, it is fairly complex to know how people actually spoke. The materials that linguists have to rely on and that are available for analysis are mainly written texts. Despite being written, some of these texts include features of spoken language because of their being closer to orality. In this respect, letters are a way to approach the oral language of the past to a certain extent. This

is precisely what Amador-Moreno does in this inspiring book that brings the reader closer to the language spoken by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish emigrants. Not only does she present the topic in a very easy-to-read way, but she also immerses those who read this book into the personal ambience of so many who very often felt obliged to leave their beloved Ireland. In the author's own words, the study of "how speech-like features are recorded in writing" (3) is what the book focuses on, to which she further adds that it offers a "study of some of the features that were present in the English spoken in Ireland between the 1700s and the 1900s" (3), both from a historical and a socio-pragmatic perspective.

The two broad areas of study concern the analysis of correspondence and a very specific variety of the English language: Irish English. Both topics have been discussed in literature from several

perspectives and the author presents a very accurate description of the different studies in both fields not only in the introduction but also in the several chapters in connection with all the topics that she deals with. The language of letters has attracted much research lately (e.g. Dossena and del Lungo Camiciotti 2012). With the arrival of the twenty-first century, the interest in the period of language under analysis increased (Beal 2004). Similarly, other varieties of English, apart from British and American, that had received little attention until then started to attract more research towards the end of the twentieth century, and the concept of World Englishes became more common (Kachru 1992). Within these varieties, Irish English has been the object of attention for scholars who have identified its main features and have tried to locate the origins of Irish English peculiarities (e.g. Hickey 2007). It is important to highlight that what has certainly contributed much to the understanding of these varieties is the compilation of corpora, among which the Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (CORIEGOR) is an extremely valuable source to learn both about the Irish variety of English and the features of private correspondence.

The book is organised in seven chapters, the first and the last being the introduction and the conclusion respectively. Of the remaining five chapters, the first two include more theoretical aspects of the study, whereas the other three concentrate on specific case studies regarding three characteristics of orality found in the letters of the corpus and connected to Irish English, namely discourse-pragmatic markers, deictics and inversion in embedded questions. Despite the cohesiveness of the whole book and the way that Amador-Moreno connects each chapter and each subsection to the next very clearly, the fact that each chapter contains its own section of list of references makes each of them independent from the rest. This facilitates its reading and it implies that single chapters can be read without losing the thread of the book.

The Introduction offers a clear description of what will be presented in the subsequent chapters in the book. It includes a detailed explanation of the connection between pragmatics and sociolinguistics. The many options that are available for socio-historical studies from a linguistic point of view are also explained, including a description of tools for corpus-based studies. In addition, the author justifies her choices of materials, tools and specific words —e.g. the use of the words “(letter) writer or author” (18)— for each occasion extensively. A detailed account on the justification for CORIEGOR and the numerous studies on Irish English is also provided. This is perfectly linked to the explanation of the historical corpora available for this type of studies as well as the gaps that contributed to the compilation of CORIEGOR. This corpus is described in detail and, very importantly, Amador-Moreno acknowledges both the problems that the analysis of letters in corpora in general entail and specifically in CORIEGOR due to their having been compiled from already printed and/or edited letters rather than transcribed from original manuscripts. This idea is present in several other sections, particularly when referring to punctuation.

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive description of the context in which the letters were written together with the socio-historical and linguistic aspects of the language of the time. The author has a particularly appealing way of opening each chapter, in this case she makes use of a photo that allows her to set the context of emigrant letters even for those who may not have been familiar with this topic before. As in all chapters, an acknowledgement of the shortcomings is provided in the final paragraphs, including, for instance, the fact that the letter writers represented in the corpus are not balanced in terms of gender, as there are more men than women, or of the geographical area within Ireland, as there is an abundance of letters from the Ulster province.

Once the background for the source material to use is described, Chapter Three is devoted to how private correspondence reflects aspects of oral language. For example, one of these can be observed in the phonetic representation in the written language in words such as “sarvant” for servant (67).

Other features of speech observed by the author that can be found in letters are redundancy and repetition. However, the letters under investigation also include fixed formulae, which would not be connected to the spontaneity that characterises oral language, but which, the author argues, based on other research, would have been used in the spoken language of the time (76). Another justification included here concerns the possible alteration of the punctuation by the editors of the letters, which would not affect the analysis much, considering that “punctuation practices were not fully standardized” at the time under investigation (80).

Case studies are presented in the following three chapters. These combine qualitative and quantitative analyses, and compare some features of orality present in the Irish English letters with other varieties around the world. Each of the chapters focuses on very specific aspects and the author chooses the tools, including dictionaries such as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), and corpora that she considers more suitable for each case. Although she also acknowledges the need for further research in the concluding paragraphs of each chapter, there are some methodological issues that need addressing and that would probably benefit these studies.

Chapter Four analyses the use of five discourse-pragmatic markers (90) in the letters. The five words (*so*, *anyhow*, *anyway*, *like* and *sure*) are thoroughly explained in their connection with Irish English, and a clear account on the different uses, meanings and discarded examples is provided. The explanations are constantly supported by the examples provided, and the qualitative analysis is always extremely meticulous, detailed and clarifying. However, each of the words is analysed in different ways, and this is something that some readers may find unexpected and confusing. For instance, the use of *so* in CORIEGOR is compared to the use of *so* in the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), but since the latter only starts in 1810, no earlier instances from CORIEGOR can be compared. Also, although the analysis could have been extended to the 1940s, as both corpora cover that time, the analysis was restricted to the nineteenth century. On the contrary, the uses of *anyhow* and *anyway* are compared to the Corpus of Late-Eighteenth Century Prose, a British English corpus more similar to CORIEGOR because of the types of texts but appreciably smaller, which might explain the absence of tokens in this corpus. In addition, a tendency towards increase in the use of *anyway* is observed within CORIEGOR after the 1890s; however, this result should be taken with caution as no normalisation of data is provided in Table 4.2 (107). In the case of *like*, the author opts for a comparison with other studies on this, and the uses of *sure* in CORIEGOR are compared with the uses in the Corpus of Irish English (CIE). The information provided by the OED is always included, and this clarifies the origins of these words in the uses analysed.

Deictics are the focus of analysis of Chapter Five. A very detailed and exemplifying explanation of what deictics are and why to consider them examples of orality is provided at the beginning. In order to analyse the presence of these elements in the corpus, Amador-Moreno restricts it to one subcorpus, the Argentina one (letters written by Irish emigrants who settled in Argentina), which is limited to the second half of the nineteenth century. She then compares the uses of some of the deictics with those found in the American subcorpus (letters written by Irish emigrants who settled in America) and others with two other Irish English corpora. In this chapter, all the data are normalised when establishing comparisons, and limitations regarding the differences in the corpora used are duly acknowledged. The author justifies that “the small-scale analyses [sic] was necessary because of the time it would have taken to analyse these features in the full CORIEGOR manually” (163).

The final topic of analysis, inversion in embedded (or indirect) questions, is dealt with in Chapter Six. The chapter begins with a clarifying explanation of the clauses under investigation and the possible reasons for their relatively high presence in Irish English even until the present time. A

comparison with other corpora is carried out. For this purpose, the author chooses the embedded questions after certain verbs, with a special focus on *wonder*. While the Corpus of Late [sic] Modern English Prose did not provide any examples, the Corpus of Late Modern English Texts and the Corpus of Modern Scottish Writing did, but Amador-Moreno explains that these results must be carefully examined, as Irish influence can be observed in these two corpora. For this reason, she also compares the results with two more corpora from other two varieties, COHA and the Corpus of Oz Early English (COOEE), American and Australian, respectively, but further analyses are also observed to be required.

The concluding chapter is brief and very clearly summarises all the points that are discussed in the book. The work presented has been very ambitious and the author has definitely covered it all with the tools that are readily available to this day. The repeated acknowledgement of the limitations of the study, mainly due to the lack of comparable corpora and some of the specific characteristics of the corpus, increases the value of the analyses that have been carried out and opens the door to further studies on different issues, including the language of letters in different varieties of English and language change across time and regions, among many others. This is definitely a book that researchers and students alike can learn much from and, most of all, that can open their appetite for more sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge of older periods of the English language.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Reconciling Synchrony, Diachrony and Usage in Verb Number Agreement with Complex Collective Subjects

Fernández-Pena, Yolanda

London: Routledge. 2020. 226 pp. ISBN: 9780367417154.

This book by Yolanda Fernández-Pena, the 29th in the *Routledge Studies in Linguistics* series, aims to explore the factors that determine verb number agreement with collective nouns that take prepositional phrases headed by *of* as oblique dependents. Although, as is well-known, collective nouns such as *bunch* or *number* by themselves offer variability in subject verb agreement, especially in British English, Fernández-Pena sets the very precise goal of elucidating how this well-known variability is affected by the presence of *of*-dependents. Setting this goal in mind may sound arbitrary, but her contribution shows that the microscopic examination of a large number of possibly-interacting constraints at work in a very circumscribed domain (a complex NP) may actually cast light on fundamental aspects of the general functioning of grammar. In that sense, there is a lesson to draw from the very methodology the author used. The book focuses on structures like those in square brackets in (1)–(2) below:

- (1) But [a couple of new books] are now making some best-seller lists (Levin 2001, 141).
- (2) [A number of buildings] are, doubtless, destroy'd (Dekeyser 1975, 56).

These contain ‘quantifying collectives’ (Biber et al. 1999, 249) and so-called ‘number-transparent’ nouns (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 503), “two types of nominal elements which have a general (potentially quantificational) meaning and combine with a (mainly plural) *of*-PP to specify the type of entities comprised by the collective” (7). The sample included 23 singular collective nouns: *band, batch, bunch, class, clump, couple, crowd, flock, gang, group, herd, host, majority, minority, number, pack, party, rash, series, set, shoal, swarm* and *troop*.

The general questions Fernández-Pena set out to answer were the following (4–5):

1. Is there evidence of a diachronic evolution? Have there been any significant changes in relation to complex collective subjects or collective nouns more generally which may have influenced their current verbal patterning and meaning?
2. What is the quantifying potential (if any) of complex collective subjects? To what extent does the interaction between the *of*-PP and verb agreement contribute to this use?
3. Is lexis a determining factor? Is verb number agreement affected by the type of verb, type of collective noun or type of noun in the *of*-PP?
4. What determines verb number choice in the case of complex collective subjects: the collective noun, the prepositional phrase or the structure as a whole?
5. To what extent (if at all) do the form and/ or the semantics of the *of*-PP and/ or the other elements in the subject affect the use of singular or plural verb number?

These questions were explored descriptively by adopting a usage-based perspective and a corpus-based methodology. As the title makes clear, the data (from COHA, the BNC and COCA) were analysed from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. Binominal collective subjects were scrutinised in four levels of analysis: their morphology, syntactic structure, semantic structure and lexical profile. The corpus search yielded a total of 5,204 tokens that were analysed in reference to no less than 25 different variables. The rough mathematics of it all (some 5000 tokens x 25 variables x 23 nouns ...) may well serve to form an idea of the impressive amount of work that writing this book entailed. Data were initially exploratorily examined via a conditional random forest. After that, the measured role of the predicting variables on verb number agreement variation was examined in greater detail by fitting a generalised linear mixed-effects model (Tagliamonte and Baayen 2012, 159).

The book has five chapters. After an Introduction (chapter I), Fernández-Pena presents the “state of the art” in chapter II (“Complex collective subjects and verb number agreement in English”). The review of the literature focuses on crucial work by Depraetere (2003), Biber et al. (1999), Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 503), Selkirk (1977), Brems (2011), Keizer (2007), Langacker (2016, 21–22), or Corbett (1979, 2006), among others. The chapter seeks to prove that the basic syntactic template [collective NP₁ of NP₂] is not enough to accommodate the agreement facts and it presents a large number of intervening parameters. It discusses issues having to do with the partitive and pseudo-partitive nature of the construction and the nouns involved, structural ambiguity (which largely hinges on the specific constraint ‘type of Det 1’, as definite determiners (*the number of...*) promote more singular agreement than indefinite ones (*a number of...*), the latter having being reclassified as quantifiers), headedness, formal complexity (including size), animacy, verb type, and region (e.g. Britain vs The States).

Chapter III (“Insights from Diachrony”) presents the results of a qualitative and quantitative study on the historical evolution of complex collective noun phrases and it starts from the hypothesis that

some of these constructions exhibit colligational and collocational preferences which impact potential verb number variation. The chapter charts the idiomatic or even grammaticalised status of these constructions on their way to becoming periphrastic quantifying expressions. A crucial explanatory factor that the chapter evinces is the particular role that the lexical choice of collective noun plays in the establishing and variation of agreement patterns vis-à-vis the degree of idiomatisation (i.e. syntactic fixation and semantic opacity) of each of the complex collective NPs. Fernández-Pena zeroes in on a selection of seven collective nouns only, those with high rates of plural agreement and frequency in present day English: *number*, *group*, *majority*, *bunch*, *couple*, *host* and *minority*. It further narrows down the search by focussing on mainly indefinite noun phrases, “the only configuration which has been shown (as confirmed here) to be susceptible to grammaticalisation (Traugott and Trousdale 2013: 116; see also Keizer 2007: 135–137)” (55). For instance, the author traces the behaviour of *number* and manages to confirm that its syntactic fixation (*a number of* taking plural agreement) is perfectly in place by the beginning of the nineteenth century, as the occurrence of singular forms was really negligible by that time. This means that the bleaching of the numerality semantics and the move towards a quantificational meaning is complete. This contrasts with, for example, the case of *bunch*, whose relative fossilisation becomes evident only in the second half of the twentieth century. It also contrasts with the data on *host*, as these reveal that the lexicality of this noun is preserved much more, imposing a considerable number of singular agreement choices even in the twentieth century. The specificity of the lexical head is nicely glimpsed on p. 98:

As regards the predictors of idiomatisation examined, only *a number of* showed positive evidence for all of them and, thus, scored highest in the proposed cline of idiomatisation. *A bunch of* and *a couple of* showed positive results for syntactic fixation but the qualitative analysis was not robust enough to confirm a high degree of idiomatisation. At the end of the scale were *a host of*, *a group of*, *a majority of* and *a minority of*, though for very differing reasons.

And the functional motivation for the historical glide towards quantification on p. 99:

My findings show that, to different extents, the seven constructions analysed have developed quantifying meanings in response to the constant search by speakers for new and expressive means of conveying indefinite and vague quantification. This evolution has been facilitated by the quantificational implications of each of the seven collective nouns, with the added value that they preserve certain nuances of their lexical collective meaning, which increases their functionality over canonical quantifiers and guarantees their productivity in the language.

Chapter IV (“Modelling variation in verb number agreement with complex collective subjects in Present-Day English”) provides an in-depth corpus study of verb agreement variation of complex denominal subject phrases in present-day English. The study uses written sources only for reasons of adequate comparability of the different regional varieties used vis-à-vis the existing corpora. As “core defining variables” (109) the author analyses agreement choice, the collective noun and the oblique noun. As for the “morphosyntactic variables” (109), these include, among others, Det₁, N₁ premodification, Det₂, formal variation of N₂, type of N₂, structure (bare, with premodification, postmodification, etc.), number of premodifiers of N₂, number of words preceding N₂, number of postmodifiers of N₂, type of these modifiers, number of intervening words between N₂ and verb, etc. The “lexico-semantic variables” (115) include the semantic number of N₂, its countability, or its animacy, among others. Finally, as for the extralinguistic variables, the author examined test type

and regional variety. Having mastered such an impressive (indeed dizzying!) number of variables allowed Fernández-Pena to prove that, specifically, “the patterns of agreement of complex collective subjects *are* conditioned by the type of determiner, countability, animacy, semantic plurality and morphological number of the oblique, as well as by the complexity of the *of*-PP” (my emphasis). This specification is precisely what is needed to stave off claims that this kind of corpus analysis merely re-states the facts in a numerical fashion, showing that *everything counts*, and thus becoming somewhat useless *qua* un-illuminating. Not every thing counted in Fernández-Penas’ very careful study. Instead, only a few parameters did, and it is the complex interplay among these and their heterogeneous nature (compare animacy vs. complexity of the *of*-phrase) that does illuminate crucial aspects of the general dynamics of grammar, both synchronically and diachronically.

Chapter V presents “Concluding remarks and prospects for future research”, and it helps to remind the reader that this is a very fine piece of scholarly work, the type that focuses on excruciating detail and allows the reader to generalise freely. A welcome addition...



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ABSTRACT I AEDEAN DOCTORAL SEMINAR (2019)

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The acquisition of postverbal subjects in Spanish and its information structure by English-speaking students

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The main focus of this study is the interaction between word order and information structure. The hypothesis is that the realization of postverbal subjects in Spanish might be sensitive to specific focus types. Our goal is to check whether the association between context(s) and word order variation is part of the competence of an English learner of Spanish L2.

We have conducted some experimental tests taking into consideration the influence of two factors: focus type (informative, corrective and broad focus) and verb type (transitive, unaccusative and unergative). These tests are intended for adults and children:

The Smurfs Test (children)

To check and evaluate the evolution of the responses to the same stimulus in children, we use the control group of adults as a “reference”. Analysis and description of data: Chi-square Test

- A one to one question- (free) answer test with The Smurfs characters intended to examine the syntax-discourse properties of postverbal subject in L1 children.
- Informants: students of a school in Seville, coming from Seville or close-by areas (same variety of Spanish)
- Methodology: children were presented a ppt and they were asked to answer a question concerning either the subject or the action at issue. The test was distributed in two different sessions (2 weeks distance).

The Online Test (adults)

To check whether the association between context(s) and word order variation is part of the competence of an English learner of Spanish and whether the differences found between L1 and L2 adults are statistically significant. Analysis and description of data: ANOVA Test

- The test consists of a series of sentences/dialogues set in different contexts, and a final part (generally a question) with four options proposing different word orders to complete the relevant micro-text.
- Informants: L1: Spanish native adults with similar sociolinguistic features and ages from 18 to 60 years old. L2: university students between 18 and 25 years old with upper-intermediate or advanced level of Spanish (B2-C1).
- Methodology: The test was distributed online. The informants had access to a survey by clicking the link previously received. For each option the student should provide a judgement on its acceptability along a Likert scale running from 0 to 4. All options are grammatical. This test is anonymous and it takes about 20 minutes.

Summary of preliminary results (children)

Evolution of answering strategies by age:

SV strategy is the most frequent for all foci until the age of 6-7 years old.

VS strategy shows a constant increase emerging at 7 years old, which affects especially the Corrective Focus and Informative Focus.

In Broad Focus sentences, SVO is the most frequent option whereas the use of VS is limited to unaccusative (especially motion) verbs.

VS strategy can be considered a late acquisition, becoming a **significant** alternative to SVO in Narrow Focus constructions after 6-7 years old.

