

nexus
2023. 02

ASOCIACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE ESTUDIOS
ANGLO-NORTEAMERICANOS
aedean
edita: Silvia Martínez Falquina

A Hundred Years of Doireann MacDermott

1975
AEDEAN año cero

RESEARCH PAPER
The Challenge of Diversity in CLIL

IN MEMORIAM
Ama Ata Aidoo (1942-2023)

A TRIBUTE
Hilary Mantel (1952-2022)



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Graphic design TONI CAMPS
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ISSN 1697-4646

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THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH STUDIES IN SPAIN

M. SOCORRO SUÁREZ LAFUENTE

UNIVERSIDAD DE OVIEDO

***1975: AEDEAN,
año cero***

Poco tengo que añadir al minucioso estudio del desarrollo de los estudios de Filología Inglesa y Estudios Ingleses que han realizado mis colegas y, como comúnmente se dice, sin embargo muy buenos amigos, Tomás Monterrey y Fernando Galván, y que han sido publicados en nuestro *Nexus* en 2022.2 y 2023.1 respectivamente. A la cuenta detallada de leyes, órdenes ministeriales y boletines, han añadido ambos el toque humano, los nombres de quienes tomaron sobre sus hombros, con entusiasmo y buen hacer, la tarea de pensar, impulsar y transmitir unos estudios en marcha para generaciones futuras. En este sentido, yo me considero muy honrada de haber sido un eslabón en esa cadena, recibiendo, madurando en la medida de mis capacidades y transmitiendo el conocimiento que hoy forma parte de los Estudios Ingleses que se imparten en los diversos Grados. No dudo, además, que, al igual que sucedió en las décadas precedentes (¿setenta años ya?—Can't believe it!!), nuestra especialidad seguirá avanzando y beneficiándose de las posibilidades que ofrezcan las nuevas tecnologías que surgirán en los años venideros. Y yo creo firmemente que AEDEAN es el espacio idóneo para realizar intercambios académicos, para que fructifiquen nuevas ideas y para cimentar la amistad, fundamental para alcanzar y mantener el equilibrio emocional que se necesita en las variadas y cada vez más abundantes “comisiones.”

En nuestra especialidad tenemos la fortuna de entender la Filología como un espacio común en donde caben el pasado y el porvenir, donde los desarrollos lingüísticos e históricos se estudian como parte de los entornos culturales y como pasos hacia lo que el futuro nos depare. Así, abierta como está y siempre estuvo, la Filología Inglesa a otros lenguajes y a otras teorías, nos permite repensar, redefinir y evolucionar personal y académicamente. En 1992, encontré en *English Music*, novela de uno de mis autores favoritos, Peter Ackroyd, la definición que expresa mi concepción de nuestra Filología: “[My father] used to call ‘English music’ not only music itself but also English history, English literature and English painting” (1992, 21). Parafraseo: un tema siempre le llevaba a otro, William Byrd o Henry Purcell a Tennyson y Browning; la obra de Samuel Johnson a las pinturas de Thomas Gainsborough; el Londres de Daniel Defoe al Londres de Charles Dickens. Y concluye el narrador: “in my imagination, as he talked, all these things comprised one world which I believed to be still living—even in this small room where we sat” (1992, 21). Esa versatilidad nos permitió, a lo largo de estas décadas, introducir nuevas genealogías literarias, con sus culturas correspondientes y sus variedades lingüísticas, e implantar perspectivas críticas que modificaron sustancialmente la manera en que percibimos los mundos que configuran la Filología Inglesa.

Igualmente cambió la mirada sobre la historia, ya que a los datos y fechas y a la cuidada concatenación de los acontecimientos, a menudo contenidos en la angostura de las “causas y consecuencias,” pudimos añadir la diversidad de vivencias y perspectivas y hacer calas en los intersticios de la Historia, fisuras que ya es imposible ignorar y que están llenándose de contenido a medida que crecen las investigaciones de nuestra Academia. Yo, jubilada ya, celebro esto como un gran paso sin retroceso posible, el conocimiento que ya se instaló en nuestra especialidad sólo puede ir hacia delante.

Tomás Monterrey dice en la introducción a su estudio que la manera en que se formaron los estudios ingleses en nuestro país será relatada “como un gran mosaico, una obra colectiva, que aglutine diversas maneras de entender y escribir la historia” (2022, 10). Voy a apoyarme en esas palabras para atreverme a contar un par de episodios personales relacionados con AEDEAN.

Quisiera antes añadir otros recuerdos de “condiciones adversas” en los congresos de AEDEAN a lo ya mencionado por Tomás Monterrey: la nevada que cayó durante el congreso en Salamanca en 1980 y que interrumpió las comunicaciones por tren y por carretera durante unas horas, y la nevada que cerró el Puerto de Pajares y pospuso el viaje de vuelta de muchos congresistas en Oviedo en 1981, donde una granizada colosal dificultó la audición de la conferencia del profesor Esteban Pujals Fontrodona. Pedro Guardia recuerda, en su biografía de Patricia Shaw, otra nevada al término del Seminario realizado en Salamanca en diciembre de 1975 que impidió a algunos asistentes llegar a Madrid: “tuvieron que dejar el coche en la cuneta y echar a andar hasta un pequeño poblado sin hotel” (2000, 72). Sin embargo, fragilidades de la memoria, yo estuve en ese seminario, del que recuerdo muchas cosas, pero no tal gran nevada. En aquellos primeros años se bromeaba con el mal tiempo que solía acompañar a nuestros congresos (todavía en Sevilla en 1997 vivimos un diluvio considerable) y se decía que si padecías de sequía, organizases un congreso de AEDEAN. El cambio del congreso al mes de noviembre y el cambio climático convirtieron tales historietas en memoria.

También quiero agradecerle a Fernando Galván que recordara tan detalladamente aquella oposición de 1982 en la que, efectivamente, se forjaron las amistades que aún hoy perduran; será interesante para los Estudios Ingleses tener memoria viva de una época en que ni era tan fácil como ahora desplazarse por el país, ni había muchas posibilidades de asistir a encuentros académicos que eran, apenas, una decena de Semanas Inglesas. Además, aparte del teléfono fijo que era posible obtener en las voluminosas guías telefónicas (en papel, por supuesto) donde figuraban nombre y dos apellidos más dirección postal y número de teléfono (pues tampoco se conocía el término ‘privacidad’ como lo entendemos hoy en día), la única manera de comunicarse era por carta: había que desplazarse hasta el buzón para echarla al correo y esperar unos días a que el destinatario la recibiera, contestase, la enviase y llegara la respuesta a nuestras manos. Es decir, había una concepción totalmente diferente del tiempo y organizar cualquier seminario o congreso era una tarea mucho más larga y prolija de lo que es en la actualidad, con todos los medios electrónicos a nuestro alcance.

En una época en que no había aeropuertos en la mayor parte de las provincias, en la que los vuelos que sí había eran aún un lujo que no estaba a nuestro alcance y en que el sueldo de un profesor no numerario de universidad no permitía mantener un coche, los viajes a los congresos de AEDEAN eran, a veces, una odisea. Recuerdo el periplo largo y complicado para llegar a Salamanca desde Oviedo en 1975 y 1980, cuando aún no existían ni la autopista del Huerna ni la de la Ruta de la Plata. Salíamos de Oviedo sobre las 9:00 de la mañana, en uno de los dos trenes diarios que había a Madrid, y nos bajábamos en Medina del Campo, donde había que tirar de la maleta (aún no se habían inventado las maletas con ruedas) como un kilómetro, si la memoria no me falla, hasta un apeadero por donde pasaba un ferrobús sobre las 5:00 de la tarde que nos dejaba en Salamanca ya de noche cerrada y que daba la sensación de parar en todas las esquinas. Afortunadamente, había una pastelería a medio camino entre la estación de Medina y el apeadero donde podías endulzar la espera, tomar un café y resguardarte del frío hasta que llegara el transbordo.

Voy a aportar ahora lo poco que sé de cómo se forjó nuestra asociación, siempre insistiendo en que es una versión personal; una versión que difiere algo de la propuesta por Pedro Guardia en la biografía mencionada, y que yo relato como lo recuerdo, a sabiendas de que los recuerdos son poco fiables y pueden ser traicioneros, especialmente a casi medio siglo vista. En diciembre de 1975, la directora del entonces Departamento de Filología Anglogermánica de la Universidad de Oviedo, Patricia Shaw, nos ofreció la posibilidad de asistir a un seminario organizado por la Universidad de Salamanca y el British Council y quizás también la embajada de Estados Unidos, en el que participarían como *keynote speakers* Malcolm Bradbury y Christopher Bigsby. Urbano Viñuela Angulo, profesor también del Departamento, y yo cogimos las maletas y el ferrobús y para allá nos fuimos. En el Seminario, que se celebró en el edificio histórico de la Universidad, estábamos unas veinte personas (mi memoria visualiza a Patricia Shaw, Doireann MacDermott, Javier Coy, Juan José Coy, Emilio Lorenzo, Esteban Pujals Fontrodona, Ramón Bela, Antonio Garnica, Francisco Tortosa, Ramón López Ortega, Ángel Luis Conejero, Catalina Montes, Juan Luis Pujante y Bern Dietz), por lo que pasábamos una buena parte del día juntos entre conferencias y cafés. Creo que fue allí donde se materializó la idea de hacer una asociación que favoreciese el intercambio de conocimiento en la Filología Inglesa y sirviera también de plataforma de defensa de nuestros estudios, y creo que éste fue el primer paso para la organización del Congreso Internacional de Estudios Norteamericanos, que tuvo lugar en Sevilla un año después, en diciembre de 1976, como preludeo a la constitución de AEDEAN.

En este punto ya han recogido mis compañeros la historia. Y colegas habrá que puedan ampliar o matizar lo que yo recuerdo.



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A Hundred Years of Doireann MacDermott

SUSAN BALLYN

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Doireann MacDermott: Mentor and Traveller

I never had Prof. MacDermott as a teacher at under or postgraduate level, something I have always regretted. At that time, all staff were known by their academic titles and it was not until after her retirement that we got to call her by her given name; Doireann.

I first met her when she became my PhD Supervisor. I went to see her in an immaculate office where nothing seemed out of place. I am by nature untidy and wondered if this was an omen! Doireann asked me what I wanted to do and the only thing I knew was it had to be poetry. She then suggested that I might like to do something in Commonwealth Studies. I suddenly saw my old school map with pink all over the globe! My heart sank. Doireann immediately detected that I was taken aback, to say the least, and suggested I start with an anthology. That was how I came to love Australia and specialise in Australian Studies.

It was during the writing of my thesis that I came to consider Doireann as one of my mentors. I have not had many, but I

am lucky to count Doireann as one of them. The correcting of my thesis was meticulous as were the number of questions asked almost on every page. Every chapter, once corrected, forced me to rethink my position as a doctoral candidate and teacher. Quite often, she would ask how I would explain a point in the thesis to my classes if I had to. Her position was ethical, and free-thinking in terms of allowing me to use the texts and critical work I wanted to use. It was from her that I learnt that supervising a thesis, or any piece of academic writing, meant not only red ink on a page but a full engagement in conversation, a pointing towards other secondary sources and, in her case, very often playing the devil's advocate!

I still have the card she sent me on my fortieth birthday where she wrote "Life begins at forty as you will see." Her friendship, affection, and academic and personal guidance have continued throughout the years and long may they do so!

Doireann and her husband Ramón Carnicer were intrepid travellers visiting parts of post-WWII areas of Europe immediately after the war but also venturing as far afield as China and Cuba. When she heard that one was about to go to a place for the first time, she would describe it as she had seen it all those many years ago and, if she had returned, talk about how the country or place had changed in her view. She had friends around the world, and so often I would meet people who on learning I was from the University of Barcelona would break into large smiles as they remembered their encounters with Doireann. Travelling with her was always an experience and often full of surprises!

I don't know when my reputation with hotels suffered a severe blow! I do remember a conference in Sitges, near Barcelona, when a colleague had missed the train back to Barcelona. I suggested she stay in my room for the night as I had two beds. And so she did, keeping it all very hush-hush as I had a single room booking. All went according to plan until the next morning when I heard a frantic banging on the bathroom door. My colleague was locked in and neither of us could open the door! I rang reception and a young man appeared and forced the door open. He was surprised!

Doireann and Kathy Firth had a peculiar habit. If we were all going to the same place and there was some mix-up with hotel bookings, I would arrive to find them laughingly ensconced in my room! The most hilarious occasion was in Lecce, Italy. They had booked but something went awry and they had to wait until the next day to get their room. I arrived quite late in the day anxious to get to my room, have a shower and unpack. On opening the door, I jumped out of my skin. There were two double beds and a sort of large cot. Gleeful laughter came from the beds, both of which were taken by Doireann and Kathy. How they persuaded somebody to let them into my room remains a mystery! They had already decided that I would sleep in the cot contraption and contraption it was. In the middle of the night, it suddenly folded up, head to toe. All I could hear from my muffled position as I fought off the enemy, was gurgling laughter from both of them! The rest of the night had to be spent carefully manoeuvring myself lest the cot decapitate me!

I woke early the next morning in time to see Kathy doing her morning gymnastics on the floor! Doireann was reading a book. "Oh good morning," they both chorused. "Did you sleep well?" I wondered what might be attenuating circumstances for murder! It goes without saying that a restorative cup of coffee and I was laughing as much as they were.

The next incident happened in Switzerland. By accident, I had chosen a Temperance hotel. Somehow, several of us decided that we would have a drink together after dinner. The only problem was that we were in Basel and at the time we would be wanting an after-dinner drink and chat everywhere close to us would be closed. Before I could react, it was decided that we would retire to my room! Everybody would bring their own drink, all I could offer was water! Thus, two colleagues from Slovenia, one from Australia and we three met in my room. Rumour has it that our Australian colleague was seen waiting for the lift in my hotel having doubled in size in a couple of hours! He was actually holding several beer packs under his coat! I have to say that a good time was had by all and at around three in the morning we decided that it was time for bed. A few minutes later, when I looked around my room, I could hear the group walking down the street laughing. I, however, suddenly realised that stacked very neatly near the waste paper basket were the empties! I did not know where to look when I went past reception on my way to the conference venue!

Doireann's contribution to English Studies in Spain will have been talked about elsewhere in this homage to her. Her intrepid defence of English, American and Postcolonial Studies in Spain have left a golden wake of achievement across the nation. One can only feel immense gratitude and respect for somebody who broke new ground to make our paths easier as we entered academia.

A Hundred Years of Doireann MacDermott

JACQUELINE HURTLEY

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Doireann MacDermott: One Hundred Years On

“Thursday’s child has far to go ...”

I’ll begin at the beginning, that is, her own: Thursday, 13th December 1923. A southerly wind was blowing on what constituted a mild winter’s day in Dublin, the capital city of the recently founded *Saorstát Éireann* / The Irish Free State, an entity, paradoxically, not yet quite free: one with Dominion status within the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (McDonagh 2019, 1193-1194). Born in the wake of the Easter Rising of 1916, to be followed by the Irish War of Independence and Irish Civil War, Doireann was the third child of Commander Anthony MacDermott, OBE, R.N., the eldest son of “a distinguished Irish family” (Worcester 1966, 2) rooted in the west of the island, and his wife of Devonshire descent, Evelyn Goodridge, a Newfoundlander. No stranger to international conflict, the Commander served in both World Wars and the siblings would follow in their father’s

footsteps, in the context of WWII. Doireann has recalled pondering what she might do following the loss of her beloved brother Diarmuid when HMS Royal Oak went down in October 1939 (MacDermott 2014, 100). Thus, approaching eighteen, she joined the Royal Navy, serving until the end of the war. In ration-run, postwar England, the ex-Wren would be afforded the opportunity to study at the University of London, subsequently graduating from Royal Holloway with a degree in English.

Not unlike Gerald Brenan's desire to escape England in the wake of WWI, Doireann headed abroad. Brenan had chosen southern warmth in *Andalucía* some twenty-five years earlier and as the decade of the 40s drew to a close, the young graduate travelled to Switzerland with a view to perfecting her French at the *Université de Genève* before taking up a teaching post at an international school in the city. It was during this period that she met her future spouse, Spaniard Ramón Carnicer. Hence, a generation on, like Brenan before her, she moved to peninsular Spain, taking up residence in Barcelona where Ramón, an aspiring writer, already lived. Together they would found *La Escuela de Idiomas Modernos de la Universidad de Barcelona* (UB) whilst also dedicating their linguistic talents to translation tasks. Doireann became a secondary school teacher before obtaining her degree within the Spanish system at the *Universidad de Madrid*. She then worked towards a PhD (MacDermott 2014, 102) and went on to do the university-level state examinations in order to obtain a secure post in tertiary teaching. She would obtain a professorship at the *Universidad de Zaragoza* before transferring to Barcelona, where she became Head of what was then *El Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana*, from 1971 to 1989.

**There once was a prof,
not given to scoff,
who noticed a man
far, far from wan.
He drew her to Spain,
which caused her no pain.
Un leonés sin mancha
amigo de Sancho Panza.
They lived happily together,
whatever the weather
sharing friends 'n learning,
yet, not void of yearnin
for a more just regime
in a world, at times, obscene.**

I have been witness to wellnigh fifty-two of Doireann MacDermott's first one hundred years. I thank her for the precious time of her life given over to mine since 1971, when I arrived in the Catalan capital as a graduate. She supervised my dissertation and PhD at the *Universitat de Barcelona*, as she did numerous others over years when full professorships were few and far between. I thank her for wading through reams of my academic efforts and encouraging me to reach for the sky (still straining). Though we might not see eye to eye on the place of theory in literary studies, I have benefited greatly from her wide international reading and interest in world literatures and cultures, from the more canonical Shakespeare to Shaw, passing through Sheridan, Trollope, Dickens and Aldous Huxley but also Patrick White, Kamala Markandaya, George Mikes, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Arthur Koestler, Michael Ondaatje and Lauretta Ngcobo, amongst so many others, and, not least, Cervantes.

In 1984, a number of international writers, scholars and undergraduates attended a conference in Sitges organised by Doireann MacDermott under the auspices of the *Universitat de Barcelona*, a gathering of the European Association

for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. A memorable event, it gave me the opportunity, as was the case with some of the other participants, to begin to know literatures in English, to be re-educated. The occasion, together with a later conference, “A Passage to Somewhere Else,” held on the university campus in 1987, enabled encounters with both authors—the likes of Peter Porter, John Figueroa, A.L. Hendriks, Chris Wallace-Crabbe—and critics, thus, Hazel Rowley, John Thieme, Coral Ann Howells and Frank Birbalsingh, amongst a number of others.

Almost finally, then, allow me to express gratitude to Doireann MacDermott for bringing worlds of difference to our doorstep, to Catalonia, and across Spain, a memorable legacy, which has continued to be developed by colleagues and contemporaries *in situ*, as well as beyond. In her retirement, I personally thank her for kind enquiry, for listening, for being generous with her library, for sharing her global awareness of politics, knowledge of and empathy for diverse peoples, together with her noteworthy affection for the animal domain and commitment to protecting the natural environment. Finally, and not least, I acknowledge her sharing the on-going time of her life as she moves, gently, and simply, as recommended by maese Pedro¹ (Rico 2016, 754), into her second centenar.



Archivo Manuel de Falla

¹ “Llaneza, muchacho; no te encumbres que toda afectación es mala” (Rico 2016, 754). The programme of Manuel de Falla’s “El Retablo de Maese Pedro,” first performed in the year of Doireann MacDermott’s birth, is reproduced courtesy of the Manuel de Falla Archive.



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A Hundred Years of Doireann MacDermott

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A Tribute to Professor Doireann MacDermott

I would like to display Professor Doireann MacDermott's gift for poetry in order to commemorate her birthday with a poem, as she used to, to celebrate events in the English Department—a new chair or the birth of a son, for example—but, even though I share her “passionate love for language,” I do not possess her immense talent and will have to write these lines in prose, “walking” instead of “dancing” as poets do. None the less, I hope to convey my great joy in celebrating one hundred years of an impressively fruitful life. Let me share with you my fond memories and remembrances of our dear Doireann MacDermott.

I met her almost fifty years ago when she was a young professor, recently arrived from the University of Zaragoza, where she had been the first woman full professor in the whole University! She was the Head of the English and German Department at the University of Barcelona, as she would be for many years. Full of new ideas and projects, shortly after her arrival in Barcelona, together with her husband, the writer Ramón Carnicer, she founded la Escuela de Idiomas Modernos de la Universidad de Barcelona, bringing a new methodology in the learning of languages and encouraging multicultural encounters, which created fresh air and brought new customs to Spanish students.

She also reorganized the English Department at the University and brought young lecturers, who would be *las fuerzas vivas* for a long time, though many of them have now retired. Doireann MacDermott was an inspiring professor, who impressed many generations of students, like myself. She was a priceless source of knowledge, “the wing wherewith we fly to heaven,” encouraging us to expand our understanding, broaden our perspectives and develop our critical thinking, by being intellectually curious and willing to question existing assumptions and beliefs. Her classes were very clear, well-organized and always kept our attention. They were also well ahead of her time and the students’ participation was highly encouraged. I still remember her thought-provoking lectures on Koestler, her talks on Huxley or her perpetual interest in language, which she transmitted to us. Always a pioneer, she fought for and succeeded in setting up postcolonial studies in Spain, which are now extremely successful all over the country. Her efforts in this field were recognized with her appointment as President of the European Branch of the International Association for Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies.

As Head of Department she was highly efficient, extremely kind and highly generous with her time, caring for both teachers and students. Moreover, she was a warm Head of Department, inviting all the lecturers to her home to celebrate the end of the academic year, where she and her husband delighted us with inspiring conversation and delicious food.

Doireann MacDermott is also the nature lover, who is well acquainted with the lexicon for plants as well as animals, and cares about them. She has a beautiful balcony full of colourful flowers, where an adopted turtledove calls every evening to greet her. It is a serene place, thus reminding us that in spite of the difficulties that are to be faced, we can always find beauty and tranquillity in nature. She also has a wonderful sense of humour, which never leaves her, even at the worst of times, and a natural elegance, not only in her appearance but also in her attitude. Her wisdom in every facet of life has always been a source of inspiration for all of us.

With deep admiration for all she is and has achieved, my grateful tribute to the professor, the poet, the nature lover, the friend. “I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks.”

A Hundred Years of Doireann MacDermott

A Ditty for D.

To the gracious, multicultural Colleen

Whom I dearly respect and esteem:

For her help and advice

(to the “poco” world did she me entice)

For her friendship of years never failing,

(‘Specially when my scrabble hand was ailing)

For her sense of humour sublime

(She’ll be chuckling at this very clumsy rhyme)

I’m no Wilde, Shaw or Joyce

Just a lass with a daft northern voice

But who really has no other choice

In which her 100 years to rejoice.

K. Anon.

ESTHER PUJOLRÀS-NOGUER

UNIVERSITAT DE LLEIDA

***“I Have
Been Happy
Being Me:
an African, a
Woman and a
Writer”***

**In Memoriam: Ama Ata Aidoo
(1942-2023)**

On an ordinary day, two women, Esi and Opokuya, meet by chance at the Twentieth Century Hotel in Accra, Ghana. They take up the opportunity to chat and renew a friendship that several circumstances brought to a halt. This is the scene from the novel *Changes. A Love Story* that came to my mind when my friend Felicity told me about the unfortunate demise of Ama Ata. It is remarkable the way our neurons weave an electric tapestry in our brains wherein memories are knotted, emotions are revived and past impressions are, unexpectedly, awakened. Why is it that, of all the memorable scenes that Ama Ata Aidoo's writing has granted me, the unpremeditated encounter between these two friends is the one that I most vividly connected with her?

This random meeting between two women friends is the shadow story that nurtures the larger love story that stands at the core of Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes. A Love Story*. To me, *Changes* has always been a story of friendship between two women that must fight their *feminist* ways in a suffocating patriarchal environment that will put to the test the very *female* friendship that sustains their lives and urges them to move on. The romantic love story that the title of the novel promises is, therefore, enmeshed in a more insidious manifestation of love, the sisterly love between friends which, incidentally, is the spirit that envelops Ama Ata's entire oeuvre. My claim that the romantic side of the novel is somehow subservient to a story of friendship is indeed audacious and prone to be highly criticized by Academia. But since I am not writing an academic article, I dare to proclaim unabashedly that the woman I met on an ordinary day at a hotel that resembled the fictitious Twentieth Hotel of the novel agreed with my intuitive interpretation of *Changes* as a story about the ordeals of a friendship that is menaced by the deceitful—and patriarchal—undertones of romance.

Ours was not a fortuitous encounter. I went to Ghana to, first and foremost, meet the writer I turned into the topic of my doctoral dissertation. I needed to be enfolded by the physical and emotional surroundings of the world displayed in her fiction, plays and poetry. I admired her so much that I wanted her to like me and was terrified at the thought that maybe she would not like me. When I saw her small figure appearing through the sliding doors of the hotel entrance, the recognition was immediate and the act of embracing her came as something natural. I can say that we hit it off right away. The dissertation came to an end, as all dissertations do, in one way or another, but my commitment to Ama Ata, the writer and the extremely generous woman I had the pleasure to discover, will forever continue. All deaths are untimely and unwelcome; they are brutal, irreversible interruptions of our lives. Sadness encircled me when I first heard about Ama Ata's death and then, the image of Esi and Opokuya, talking, laughing and sipping their beers, inhabited my mind and I smiled. This imagined picture that exudes womanly camaraderie had the invigorating power of extricating me from incapacitating sorrow. I took the box where I keep my printed pictures of old times and searched for *that* image that captured one of the most fateful moments of my life: my meeting with Ama Ata. I am so sad but so honored to have been offered a time and a space to share the happiness of this African woman writer whose words, infused with wisdom, beauty and irony, have become part of the indelible memory of "woman-ship."



ROSARIO ARIAS

UNIVERSIDAD DE MÁLAGA

***Writing
(in Pain)
and Ghosts:
A Tribute
to Hilary
Mantel
(1952-2022)***

The news of the death of Hilary Mantel on 22 September 2022 reached me during our end-of-project International Conference “Dis/Orientations and Dis/Entanglements in Contemporary Literature and Culture” (21-23 September 2022, [website](#)), and it rapidly circulated among our participants. Although everyone agreed on the great loss to contemporary fiction writing, I was especially moved, and involuntarily my thoughts travelled back to the earlier years of my academic career, when I embarked on studying Mantel’s production for my PhD thesis (2001). Therefore, I am especially grateful to AEDEAN for providing me with the opportunity of devoting a few lines to a writer who has left an indelible imprint in me, and who has left an incredible legacy for many writers and readers alike.

Hilary Mantel was born on July, 6 1952 in Glossop (Derbyshire) and she died on September, 22 2022. She took the name of her stepfather after her parents’ separation and her mother’s remarriage. Mantel studied Law at the London School of Economics, but also worked as a social worker. Then, she lived in Botswana, and in Saudi Arabia with her husband, Gerald McEwan, a geologist, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The experience of living in those countries would provide raw material for her novels *Eight Months on Ghazal Street* (1988), which offers a critique of the condition of women in Saudi Arabia, and *A Change of Climate* (1994), which is about memory and loss. Prior to those novels, Mantel published her first novel, *Every Day is Mother’s Day* (1985), and its sequel, *Vacant Possession* (1986), very darkly comic works about a spiritualist and her daughter, and various other characters which populate the novels. The decade closes with *Fludd* (1989), set in an imaginary village in northern England, where a mysterious visitor appears in a small, religious community and disrupts it. In this novel (and in some other texts) Mantel stages her strained relationship with Catholicism.

Although she wrote her novel about the French Revolution from the perspective of its leading revolutionaries between 1774 and 1799, the final publication took her several years, and only after her first four novels had gained some critical success. Finally, Mantel published her (then) masterpiece, *A Place of Greater Safety* in 1992, winner of the *Sunday Express Book of the Year*. The 1990s also saw *An Experiment in Love* (1995), a partly autobiographical novel, which won the Hawthornden Prize in 1996, and which bears some resemblance to Muriel Spark’s *The Girls of Slender Means* (1963), as some critics have noted. In the late 1990s, Mantel published *The Giant, O’Brien* (1998a), which deserves close attention: the novel is based on the life of the eighteenth-century Irishman, Charles Byrne, who suffered from gigantism, and who earned money in his last years by exhibiting his body, known as “Giant O’Brien,” attracting the interest of surgeon anatomist, John Hunter. Byrne’s body was on display in the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in Leicester Square until reformations were in place some years ago. Quite recently, on January 11 2023, the Board of Trustees of the Hunterian Collection released a statement about the display and retention of Charles Byrne’s skeleton, following today’s sensitivities, as well as current ethics about display of human remains, with the approval of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (Statement 2023). In short, Byrne’s skeleton is kept for research purposes, and it will never be on display again in the museum. Mantel depicts a kind portrayal of Byrne, and a less sympathetic rendition of John Hunter in her historical novel about exhibits and freak shows in the eighteenth century.

Her novel, *Beyond Black* (2005), is a ghost story and a novel about the supernatural, but also about the power of memory. In 2006 Mantel was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE), and three years later she published *Wolf Hall* (2009), another foray into the historical novel, set in Thomas Cromwell’s England, which won the Man Booker prize for fiction and the newly created Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction. Its sequel, *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), also won the 2012 Man Booker prize for fiction, and the 2012 Costa Book of the Year. Her first Tudor novels were dramatized in the BBC in 2015, put on the stage by Mike Poulton, and performed in Stratford, London and Broadway to great success (Pollard and Carpenter 2018, 1). The conclusion to her ground-breaking trilogy, *The Mirror & the Light*, was published in 2020 to huge critical acclaim: it was longlisted for The Booker Prize 2020 and was winner of the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction, which she had first won for *Wolf Hall*.

Although she held a writing career that spanned 35 years, she was largely unknown to the wider public until she won the Booker Prize in 2009, when she suddenly became very popular. In total, she wrote 12 novels, several collections of short stories, memoirs, and acted as a reviewer for the *Spectator* and *The London Review of Books*, thus tackling multiple forms, wide-ranging topics, and various genres. Mantel wrote fiction experimenting with different types such as gothic fiction, ‘condition-of-England’ novel, historical fiction (not only on the Tudor period, but also on the French Revolution, and on the life of the Irish Giant O’Brien), among others. In 2023, *A Memoir of My Former Self: A Life in Writing*, a collection of her writing over four decades, was published, which includes a selection of her film reviews and her Reith Lectures, about the process of raising the dead back to life in fiction. In Spain, Fernando Galván (2001), Pilar Hidalgo (2002), Ángeles de la Concha (2011), Lin Elinor Pettersson (2011), Silvia García Hernández (2012, 2013, 2015, 2017), José Igor Prieto-Arranz and Patricia Bastida-Rodríguez (2021), and José Igor Prieto-Arranz (2022), among others, have addressed Mantel’s production from various perspectives, and they have decisively contributed to shaping the reception of Mantel for both the scholarly community and for general readership.

Although this tribute is one of the many Hilary Mantel has received since her passing, it gives me the opportunity to recollect my relationship with the writer, and the person. Importantly, this short piece allows me to express my gratitude to those who first drew my attention to Mantel's novels: Ángeles de la Concha and Pilar Hidalgo. In the late 1990s I was doing my PhD thesis on mothers and daughters in contemporary fiction, under Pilar Hidalgo's supervision, and I was in the very early stages of the process, namely, the selection of the corpus of novels. Hilary Mantel gave a plenary talk at the XX AEDEAN Conference, held at the University of Barcelona in 1996, that I also attended. She delivered the talk "Is This Story True?," available open access on the AEDEAN [website here](#): this was an eye opener for a doctoral candidate avid of new readings and titles. In her plenary Mantel shared her thoughts on *A Place of Greater Safety*, her best-known novel at that time, about the French Revolution, and she delved into the differences she established between Margaret Atwood's method and her own take on the treatment of history in fiction through an analysis of Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996). Crucially, this also provided room for her own meditation about the nature of fiction writing, and about the novel, in particular, a form, as she argued in the keynote talk, "where all things are possible, and all possibilities may be accommodated" (Mantel 1997, 39).

This tribute to Hilary Mantel is tinted with the sadness for the loss of a relevant writer in Anglophone contemporary fiction, blended with the gratitude I feel for someone who profoundly impacted my academic (and personal) life. I had the opportunity to interview her during a summer course at El Escorial in 1997, thanks to Pilar Hidalgo and Ángeles de la Concha, who organised the course and facilitated the interview. I recall Mantel's vibrancy, her mellow voice when reading out loud, and her spirited way of describing things, as well as her kindness and generosity. I will always remember this summer course, and the interview, not only because I was interviewing one of the writers that I was examining for PhD purposes, but also because of an anecdote very few people know.

This was 1997, a time when mobile phones (at least, my mobile phone) did not provide recording facilities. I then used a small recording machine, with those small tapes that one had to turn sides to continue taping. I distinctly remember that I was engrossed in the interview as Hilary Mantel was extensively addressing many of the issues I raised. Everything seemed to go very well, when, at one point, to my dismay, I realized that I had completely forgotten to turn the side of the tape to continue the recording, and that part of the interview had not been recorded. I was horrified, mortified, and totally embarrassed at the thought of asking again the author to address some of the questions that had been left unrecorded. However, Hilary Mantel proved to be the kindest, and most generous, and thoughtful, person, who took pity of a young, and inexperienced, doctoral candidate and without hesitation she agreed to repeat part of the interview on the following day, making me extremely happy (and relieved!). It goes without saying that I checked twice that I turned the side of the tape in due course that time round. This story has, of course, a happy ending: the interview was published in *Atlantis* (Mantel 1998b), and Mantel and I kept in contact for several years subsequently after, and until quite recently.

In the interview Mantel not only engaged with the aspects of her fiction that most interested me then (the mother-daughter relationship), but also she offered key ideas about her writing process, her artistic alliances, and very interestingly, she openly acknowledged that she "regret[ed] not having been a historian" (Mantel 1998b, 289). Clearly, both *A Place of Greater Safety* and the Thomas Cromwell trilogy develop out of that craving for historical projects. In addition, in the interview Mantel also mentioned a close relationship between her writing and the ghosts, which took further shape in her 2003 memoir *Giving Up the Ghost*.

Writing (in Pain) and Ghosts

In comparison to her fiction, Hilary Mantel's memoirs, *Giving Up the Ghost* (2003) and *Ink in the Blood: A Hospital Diary* (2010), have garnered far less critical notice.¹ And as I have written on Hilary Mantel's fictional production elsewhere (Arias 1999, 2001, 2003, 2014), I would like to mainly turn to her autobiographical writing, which has also been considered "pathography," or "autopathography," understood as "to story one's own life in terms of illness, disorder or disease" (Jutel and Russell 2023, 888). Mantel's memoir, *Giving Up the Ghost*, sheds light on the ways in which her own personal history sensitises her to themes such as the dialogue between past and present, the interest in religious beliefs and the supernatural, and women's experiences, especially, her illness, that incapacitated her to become a mother. Significantly, her life was punctuated with ill health, caused by an undiagnosed case of endometriosis, a womb-related illness which also left her with chronic pain.

1 An early version of the following analysis of *Giving Up the Ghost* and *Ink in the Blood* was delivered at the IABA Conference: "Knowing the Self: Auto/Biographical Narratives and the History of Knowledge," Universidad Complutense de Madrid (19-21 June 2019).

Giving Up the Ghost is populated with ghosts and spectres: the ghost of her stepfather, the malicious spectral presence she felt in the back garden and ultimately, the ghosts of those children she could have had and who remained unborn due to her endometriosis. Mantel suffered from this illness in the 1970s, when it was little understood. She was left in constant chronic pain for decades, thus culminating in a hysterectomy when she was 28. She suffered from washes of nausea, and crippling pain, lacerating her life already at 17, which made her aware of her chronic ill health caused by a pathological process, and not, as professionals strove to prove, “evidence of a neurotic personality, or of [her] ambivalence about [her] gender... not brought on by ‘nerves,’ or by fear of failure in a man’s world” (2003, 220). Endometriosis was labelled “the career woman’s disease,” as it was believed that it affected women who had postponed having babies when they were young for career reasons. In addition, Mantel had to cope with years-long struggle with the side effects of drug treatment and pain control, which changed her life (and body shape) for ever. In a foreword to 2015 book *Coping with Endometriosis*, Mantel argues that cases like hers could not occur nowadays and provides some valuable comments on the disease (2015a). In her fifties, Mantel wrote *Giving Up the Ghost*, her memoir, to set the story straight as regards her illness, and to confront not only the illness that stigmatised her in her youth, but also the ghosts of those (unborn) children, which haunted her life and her fiction. Even though her illness was a thing of the past, it still had bearings upon her later, as seen in a lesser-known memoir, *Ink in the Blood: A Hospital Diary* (2010), in which she narrates how she undergoes surgery again in July 2010, thirty years after she first had endometriosis.

Even though the relationship between Mantel’s autobiography and her fiction does not seem always that clear, there exists a close link between her painful illness and her writing a particular story, which later became her first novel, *Every Day is Mother’s Day* (1985), a gothic novel set in the 1970s in a Midlands town. Mantel’s early fiction is packed with references to pregnancies, (unborn) children and children-related issues in a gothic structure, with a special connection between buildings and their inhabitants, when she was going through a process of recognition of her infirmed body and illness. This could be described as wounded storytelling, following Arthur W. Frank, where the wounded storyteller recovers her voice in bearing witness to her story, and “becoming a witness assumes a responsibility for telling what happened” (1995, 137). Thus, as a wounded storyteller, she finds the need to bear witness by telling her story, creating new meanings, not only her memoir, but also a novel. In addition, Mantel’s first novels can be read as gothic narratives which textualise the writer’s personal experience of her ghost children, and her ambiguous relationship with her own mother. Therefore, there is a link, an invisible cord, that connects novels and *Giving Up the Ghost*, which, covering several of her years abroad, centres on the relevance of ghostly figures, explained as children who were never born due to her endometriosis.

As she states in her memoir, the story is about “a woman who believes her baby had been taken away, and a substitute [a changeling] provided in its place” (2003, 173). Also, in *Every Day is Mother’s Day* Mantel worked out her troubled relationship with her own mother, a spectral presence in a metaphorical sense, as she stated in an interview:

I really think Muriel is me in that relationship, who can only cope by closing her eyes, closing her ears, and I think [...] that if I go back to my childhood, probably the relationship between myself and my mother was negotiated very badly. (Mantel 1998b, 283)

Every Day is Mother’s Day and the follow-up novel, *Vacant Possession* (1986), can be described as gothic in that there is the intermingling of life and death, the existence of a “spare room” inhabited by ghosts and spectres, and ultimately, there is the connection between the family and the house. *Every Day is Mother’s Day* unfolds the troubled relations between Evelyn Axon and her mentally incapacitated daughter, Muriel Alexandra Axon, as well as providing an insight into the way maternity is constructed in a Gothic structure. The Axon house keeps the gothic environment of one-to-one relation with the victim, like the all-powerful mother of infancy. Following Claire Kahane’s analysis of the conventions of Gothic literature (based on object-relations psychology), the house embodies a parent or a body (namely, Evelyn Axon), whose overwhelming presence dissolves the victim’s boundaries of self (1985, 334-51). The troubled identification of Muriel with her mother, whom she ambivalently seeks to kill/merge with, becomes increasingly central in Mantel’s narrative.

The house embodies the strained relationship between mother and daughter and is repository of secrets such as the unnameable activities that Clifford Axon, Evelyn’s deceased husband, carried out in the shed when Muriel was a baby. He told Evelyn to keep “[a] blind eye to whatever he kept in there and whatever comings and goings there were [...] until one day she had seen the child from next door heading down the path, little Florence Sidney [...] ‘Do you take children down there?’ [...] Clifford’s face then: ‘A blind eye, Evelyn, a blind eye’; the threats in his voice, the promise of a week of bruises, and Muriel tossed into her bedroom unfed and screaming” (Mantel 1985, 174). Mantel’s novel tangles the Axon family with the Sidney family (late middle-aged Florence Sidney still living next door) and with Isabel Field, one of many social workers who have proved to be unsuccessful in relation to the Axon household, and who has an affair with Colin Sidney, Florence’s brother. At the end of the novel the boundaries of time and space, as well as those of life/birth and death, are confused and dissolved in the so-called spare room where the secret is finally disclosed: Muriel, pregnant by a man in a park (who turns out to be Isabel’s father), delivers a baby who becomes a spectral presence in the novel. As

Evelyn believes the new-born child is a changeling, she persuades Muriel to drown him to get a real child in return. The novel ends with two deaths, Evelyn's, and that of the baby. Evelyn's uncanny presence will continue to haunt Muriel in Mantel's second novel, *Vacant Possession*.²

Set in 1984, the novel features the same house as having a life of its own, which deeply influences the Sidney family. The deterioration of the house, compared to "the House of Usher" (1986, 203), runs parallel to the break-up of the family. Arguably, as *Vacant Possession* is more specifically focused on the haunted house and the gothic family appears as indicative of the nation, Mantel's second novel could be read as a house-of-England novel, particularly in the correspondence between the family, the house, and the nation at large (Arias 2001). Finally, the past keeps coming back in the novel, "the past seems to be the present," according to Colin Sidney, and it is even described as "circular, [Isabel] can feel it snapping at her ankles" (Mantel 1986, 165). Although the Sidney family move house to escape from that stifling atmosphere to improve the situation and for Colin and Sylvia to make a fresh start, the novel ends on a note of circularity and temporal disjoining.

Undoubtedly, the focus of attention in Mantel's early fiction, and in her later fiction, too, is the return of the past and the sense of temporal dislocation, which is one of the defining features of the spectre, according to Jacques Derrida's definition of hauntology in *Specters of Marx* (1994). The spectre's temporal disarray is underlined by the repetition of the events: "[a] question of repetition: a spectre is always a *revenant*. One cannot control its comings and goings because it *begins by coming back*" (Derrida 1994, 11; italics in the original). Derrida's hauntology and his spectral epistemology suit Mantel's production very well since the ghostly, the recurrence of the past (the dead) which constantly haunts the present, defines her work, her life, and her position in contemporary British fiction until the Thomas Cromwell trilogy. Wolfgang Funk has addressed Mantel's "spectral realism," considering the Derridean spectre as forward-looking, thus pointing us towards the future into the unknown: "Mantel's fiction features a number of spectres which beckon towards the future and transform the worldly beings they come in touch with" (2018, 93). Several critics have further considered the potential of haunting and spectrality in Mantel's *oeuvre* such as Lucy Arnold (2018), or Ryan Trimm (2016), who has explored spectres in Mantel's *Beyond Black* being summoned in meaningful places connected with migration and the past (59-74).

Moving on to Mantel's lesser-known memoir, *Ink in the Blood: A Hospital Diary*, the haunting presence of the past, in this case Mantel's illness, makes Mantel hover between life/survival and death, materiality and immateriality. And this testifies to the recurrence of the past and the tangible experience of an infirmed body rendered in a literary form. If *Giving Up the Ghost* (and Mantel's fiction) can be considered a lamentation for the loss of unborn children, never to materialise and constantly a ghostly presence, as Mantel states: "[w]hat's to be done with the lost, the dead, but write them into being?" (2003, 225), Mantel's second illness memoir, *Ink in the Blood: A Hospital Diary*, is filled with references to bodily pains, and to the sensorial aspects of the infirmed body, which oozes and exudes odours and smells. Following Victoria Bennett, Mantel depicts herself "as a subject whose physical existence cannot be separated from its textual existence" (2018, 76). This "textured recovery" (Bennett 2018, 75) involves an "embodied knowledge." Therefore, Mantel uses the written word to understand, in a phenomenological way, her condition of 'being-a-self' or being-in-the-world, and the relationship with the reader becomes more open and direct, underlining nuanced intersubjective dynamics, which is fluid and multiple. At one point, she uses 'we' to make her experience common to the reader, making the subject-object dichotomy redundant, as illness is a leveller: "We see things that never should be seen; our inside is outside, the body's sewer pipes and vaults exposed to view" (2010, Pos 67-68). There are parallelisms between the written word and Mantel's description of her infirmed body, and, thus, she dissolves differences between the outside and the inside. This view of the body, where inside and outside are conflated, goes along with a phenomenological perspective on illness narratives, one that generates and evokes an emphatic relationship, in the act of reaching out, with the recipient of the illness narrative.

Ultimately, her two illness narratives explore new ways of dealing with chronic illness and pain: through the embodied situatedness of the writing subject, the wounded storyteller engages in a more dynamic, intersubjective relationship with the reader, thus privileging the act of being in contact, of relating to the world through the (ill) body. As mentioned before, this is wounded storytelling, following Frank, where the wounded storyteller recovers her voice in bearing witness to her illness. Thus, when narrating her story in *Giving Up the Ghost*, Hilary Mantel is re-orienting the reader's focus on to the text as body, not to evoke sympathy or pity, but to enact an act of recognition of the ill self in the text:

2 In this novel, the boundaries of life/birth and death are dissolved in a specific room, which can be understood as the secret centre of gothic structure. Ghost children feature prominently in *Vacant Possession*, since Muriel, Evelyn's daughter, becomes obsessed with revenge against Isabel Field and the Sidney family as she blames them for her losses. Ten years have passed, and the Sidney family now live in the Axon house. The spectral presence of Muriel's baby is particularly relevant in *Vacant Possession* since his remains are found by chance and end up in Muriel's possession again at the end.

I am not writing to solicit any special sympathy... I am writing in order to take charge of the story of my childhood and my childlessness; and in order to locate myself, if not within a body, then, in the narrow space between one letter and the next, between the lines where the ghosts of meaning are. (2003, 216)

Therefore, the text engages with bodily encounters in the first-person perspective, thus eliciting various reader's responses. In this sense, Mantel proves Rita Felski's statement right: "[w]e are embodied and embedded beings who use and are used by words" (2008, 31).

Indeed, this is most noticeable in this short narrative where she traces her reaction to her infirmed body, which had undergone surgery thirty years ago, and where the damage and traces left by that illness remain tangible: "[o]rgans were stuck together, pulled out of shape. It took six hours to disentangle the wreckage" (2010, Pos 27). The wound in her abdomen is described as "spiral... like a manuscript" (2010, Pos 46): her wounded body is a manuscript, a type of palimpsest where traces of her chronic illness become visible through spiral time. The spiral form suggests a different way of conceptualising time for Mantel, as regards her illness, not as repetition and circularity, but as a repetition with a change, learning from her former experience, and unfolding each time a different unexpected outcome: her hospital diary, but also her production at large. This image configures ways of conceptualising time in her memoirs, but also it seems to suit the bases of her writing. Therefore, this spiral-bound trajectory in Mantel's production refers to Mantel's understanding of her writing (in pain) that generates an endless spiral of texts, and meanings. In so doing, the spiral form that produces multilayered re-readings, and texts, whose point of departure is Mantel's illness, can be interpreted following philosopher Paul Ricoeur's notion of "endless spiral," which indicates the different levels of a text, that is to say, his idea of "threefold mimesis," developed in *Time and Narrative* (3 volumes). Ricoeur establishes time and narrative as being central elements of our human condition, and the "spiral" frames a repetitive yet progressive process in which the writing subject (and the reader) interprets and acts in response to the past. However, Eileen Pollard suggests that the ellipsis best defines Mantel's writing: "the ellipsis—the dot, dot, dot—is a theoretical tool... it just creates more dialogue for readers, with yourself and with each other, in terms of what's going on in the texts" (Mantel 2015b, 1044). Even though I agree with the elliptical nature of Mantel's style, I consider the spiral as a fitting figure for Mantel's configuration of time and her writing (in pain).

The repetition (with a change) of Mantel's painful illness thirty years after she had her hysterectomy leads her back to the past, "[a]nd so I spin away, back into the 1970s" (2010, Pos 86). However, as she argues, "pain is a present-tense business... Remembering to breathe. Studying how to do it. Plotting to get your feet on the floor, inching a pillow to a bearable position" (2010, Pos 38). Mantel's illness narrative, like the figure of the ghost that collapses temporal boundaries, hovers between past (the recurring presence of the illness) and present (the pain), materiality and immateriality, writing/survival and death. She tries hard to position her life in relation to illness as she understands the need to re-arrange her life: "... illness was only a feature of it, and not the whole" (2010, Pos 216), and she sees survival in the act of writing, the act of reaching out to others: "I am fascinated by the line between writing and physical survival" (2010, Pos 226).

Overall, Mantel's fiction and memoirs revolve around questions of memory, past and survival. In her AEDEAN plenary talk Mantel stated: "[Y]ou do need to hang onto the past, because it is the thing against which you measure the present" (1997, 44). On the back cover of the hardback edition of *Wolf Hall* there is a quote from Diana Athill, who affirms that "[this is] a stunning book. It breaks free of what the novel has become nowadays. I can't think of anything since *Middlemarch* which so convincingly builds a world." This makes one wonder: why is Athill comparing George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871) with Mantel's novel? Is it because of their use of the past? Their sense of history? Dana Shiller has examined the use of the Victorian past in two neo-Victorian novels, A. S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990) and Peter Ackroyd's *Chatterton* (1987), alongside *Middlemarch*, and she finds a similar sense of historicism. For Eliot, according to Shiller, there is "a past that continually changes shape based on individual perspective... [and] Eliot's true focus is on those unhistorical acts that shape the public record in subtle and usually unnoticed ways" (1997, 542). This view of historicism is also at work in Mantel's Thomas Cromwell series, and it may have contributed to its success.

Much has been written on the trilogy, when Mantel shot to fame in 2009, but the wealth of critical sources seems to indicate that one should consider "her nine previous novels as something of a long apprenticeship for *Wolf Hall*, a 650-page work of historical fiction about the court of Henry VIII" (Fletcher 2017, 37). In contrast, my contention is that the trilogy should be examined as part of a larger project about her personal relationship with the past. In this sense, Mark Lawson believes that Mantel's use of the past and memory is "oblique":

The story of the wives of King Henry VIII is a tragedy of fertility in which how a woman bred or bled could prove a death sentence... [his] perception... is that her long suffering with the fertility-threatening gynaecological condition endometriosis [described in Giving Up the Ghost (2003) and in Ink in the Blood (2010)] might give her a particular emotional insight into the psychology of historical characters whose menstruation became a life-and-death cycle. (Foreword 2018, x)

To read Mantel's Cromwell trilogy through Mantel's illness is not to turn her successful fiction into autobiographical writing. Instead, it is paying attention to how her literary career has been shaped by writing (in pain), and by the recurrence of the past, through ghostly forms, that constantly haunts the present. This is salient in her use of various shapes and genres, spiral-like, including her historical fiction. If Mantel needs exorcism to come to terms with the spectral presences of her life, she does so by infusing life into those spectres in her fiction and memoir.

Due to Mantel's recent popularity, her early novels, published in the 1980s, are now back in print, which contributes to her gaining more visibility. Then, her position as an author who was ghostly, understudied by critics and unknown by readers, reveals the tension between visibility and invisibility, past and present, life/survival and death, in her work at large. Finally, Mantel's production, defined by her writing (in pain) and her ghosts, both in her fiction and in her life, deserve more critical attention, and wider readership. I hope this tribute has done her justice, making Mantel's work enticing to those who were not familiar with her.



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The Challenge of Diversity in CLIL: Game- changer or Deal- breaker?

This article focuses on one of the most hotly debated issues affecting Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) at present: diversity, inclusion, and elitism in bilingual programs. The latter have been in place in many parts of Europe for over 20 years and are evolving in exciting new directions. One of the most prominent ones at present involves mainstreaming CLIL and making it accessible to an increasing range of learners. This new challenge has thrown bilingual education a real curveball and is entailing a thorough overhaul of our current CLIL programs. This article will explore the main areas on which the impact of inclusion has been most intensely felt as a more diversity-sensitive model continues to take root in bilingual education. These hinge on ten main fronts: the concept of diversity in itself, the charge of elitism, the importance of the supranational perspective, language and methodology, materials design, the role of the L1, teacher education, multi-tiered systems of support, the focus of research, and success factors. The latest empirical evidence on the topic (stemming from the ADiBE Project: www.adibeproject.com) will be used to address each front and the broader take-aways and chief pedagogical implications will be extracted for the frontline stakeholders. A broad array of materials, methodological tips, and teacher development options will be made available to continue addressing the challenge of diversity in CLIL in the immediate future and to ensure CLIL for all increasingly moves away from being a mere chimera to become a firmly embedded reality in our classrooms.

Keywords:

CLIL, elitism, diversity, inclusion, differentiation

1. Introduction

Bilingual education initiatives have been making a steadfast advance in our continent and beyond for well over two decades. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), considered the European approach to favor plurilingualism, has in particular become a global signature pedagogy (Shulman 2005) and is now largely held to be “an unstoppable train” (Macaro 2015, 7). In its 20+-year life span, CLIL has been subjected to substantial empirical scrutiny which has unequivocally indicated that the metaphorical train is advancing firmly and relatively unencumbered, as robust research has shed largely positive light into its inner workings. Indeed, the latest investigations indicate that CLIL significantly improves foreign language (FL) standards (Rallo Fabra and Jacob 2015; Pérez Cañado 2018a; Martínez Agudo 2020; Gálvez Gómez 2021; Navarro-Pablo, 2021), while not detrimentally impacting L1 competence (Navarro-Pablo and López Gándara 2020; Barrios 2021; Nieto Moreno de Diezmas and Custodio Espinar 2022) or watering down content learning (Dallinger et al. 2016; Surmont et al. 2016; Pérez Cañado 2018b; Graham et al. 2018; Hughes and Madrid 2020; Martínez Agudo 2021). In addition, numerous SWOT analyses (Pavón Vázquez and Rubio 2010; Pérez Cañado 2018c) have evinced high levels of satisfaction among all participating frontline stakeholders in these types of programs and the cognitive advantages inherent in CLIL have equally been signposted in the latest specialized literature (Marsh et al. 2020).

However, as with any successful language teaching method, CLIL has not stayed still, but has been growing and evolving in exciting new directions, posing new challenges along the way. One of the most conspicuous ones is undoubtedly the issue of diversity, inclusion, and egalitarianism in CLIL. Indeed, Content and Language Integrated programs have been wrestling with issues of elitism, segregation, and discrimination for well over a decade. The creaming effect of CLIL (Bruton 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015, 2019), the covert self-selection inherent in CLIL tracks (Lorenzo et al. 2009), and the exclusive gatekeeping criteria for admission into these programs (Dallinger et al. 2018) are criticisms that have frequently been leveled at CLIL. Increased attempts to mainstream CLIL school- and program-wide have been heeded with caution, as “this novel model of mainstreaming is not only a huge challenge which entails an increased difficulty, but it could seriously jeopardize everything achieved so far in bilingual programs” (Pérez Cañado 2023a, 1129-30).

This concern thus raises the question of whether and under what conditions CLIL can truly be for all and of whether reshaping our educational structures to encourage opportunity and access for all types of bilingual students is a total deal-breaker or merely a game-changer in CLIL. This is a topic of great currency in today’s language teaching scenario which has garnered heightened academic interest yet remains to date underexplored. It is still, as Mearns et al. (2023, 13) have put it, “a blind spot” in the specialized research. This is precisely the niche which the present article seeks to fill. It will explore the main areas on which the impact of inclusion has been most intensely felt as a more diversity-sensitive model continues to take root in bilingual education. These hinge on ten main fronts: the concept of diversity in itself, the charge of elitism, the importance of the supranational perspective, language and methodology, materials design, the role of the L1, teacher education, multi-tiered systems of support, the focus of research, and success factors. The latest empirical evidence on the topic will be used to address each front and the broader take-aways and chief pedagogical implications

will be extracted for the frontline stakeholders, showcasing how the potential of bilingual education programs to serve as inclusive settings remains high, provided substantial modifications are introduced in each front in order to attune bilingual education to the changing landscape brought about by the curveball of diversity.

2. The impact of diversity on bilingual education: Ten salient issues on the CLIL agenda

2.1. The concept of diversity

A necessary starting point in examining the impact of diversity in bilingual education is the very concept in and of itself. Prior to implementing an inclusive education reform agenda in bilingual education, diversity was essentially equated with special education needs and students with severe learning disabilities. However, now that CLIL is increasingly being made accessible to all, the concept of diversity needs to be broadened and updated in the new bilingual scenario. In this sense, to capture the manifold dimensions involved in the concept of diversity, different learning styles, achievement levels, learning paces, and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds also need to be encompassed within its definition. In order to attain this goal, a new conceptual framework has been drawn up to approach diverse students in an asset-oriented and inclusive manner and to thereby create more dynamic, efficient, and responsive structures to meet students' differentiated needs.

The DIDI framework has thus been set in place (Pérez Cañado 2023b) to attune the concept of diversity to the new demands posed by bilingual education. It capitalizes on the notions of *diversity*, *inclusion*, *differentiation*, and *integration*, with *diversity* being the overarching umbrella term which entails providing an adequate education to all students. It rests on the pillars of *inclusion* and *differentiation*. The former refers to an educational model which also aims to respond to the learning needs of all students, but from an asset-based perspective. In this sense, it views diversity as a source of enrichment and as an opportunity to help at-risk learners who are on the fringe go from being outsiders to becoming participants. In turn, *differentiation* attempts to tailor teaching to students with diverse abilities and backgrounds, via, for example, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, Gardner's multiple intelligences, or Bloom's taxonomy of higher- and lower-order thinking skills. A conflation of these three aspects then leads to the *integration* of students with diverse ability levels and all four concepts dovetail to favor equitable access to CLIL programs and to offset the disenfranchisement of the most vulnerable and underserved learners.

Moving forward, this theoretical foundation should ideally be applied from a practical stance in order to tackle the multifaceted dimensions of diversity and thereby support bilingual learners from all paces, styles, and backgrounds to unlock their full potential in a multilingual environment.

2.2. The charge of elitism

A second key area where the impact of diversity has been intensely felt and has caused a substantial rethinking of previously harbored ideas is what we term the charge of elitism. Issues of gatekeeping and participation in bilingual programs are complex and multifaceted, as they have long been decried for being elitist, segregative, and cream-skimming (Bruton 2011a, 2011b, 2013, 2015, 2019; Paran 2013; Broca 2016). The silent agenda of selectivity in CLIL programs has forcefully come to the fore in the flurry of vocal criticism which has stemmed from different flanks, particularly in the past decade. This harsh disapproval has had a positive spin-off, namely, that robust research from the past five years has focused in a fine-grained way on this issue (Ainsworth and Shepherd 2017; Madrid and Barrios, 2018; Pavón Vázquez 2018; Rascón Moreno and Bretones Callejas 2018; Lorenzo 2019; Navarro-Pablo and López Gándara 2020; Pérez Cañado 2020; Lorenzo et al. 2021; Bauer-Marschallinger et al. 2023; Casas Pedrosa and Rascón Moreno 2023; Nikula et al. 2023; Siepmann et al. 2023). And the findings have spoken loud and clear, identifying four main iterative patterns offered by the data.

A first of them is that the most intelligent, motivated, and linguistically proficient students are no longer in the CLIL groups. The comparison of CLIL and non-CLIL strands in hundreds of randomly selected schools has detected no statically significant differences between both cohorts, indicating that bilingual and non-bilingual learners are increasingly homogeneous. A second trend which emerges is the leveler effect of CLIL: while in non-bilingual groups there are still marked differences in terms of socioeconomic status, rural-urban context, and type of school (private, public, charter), in bilingual classes, these differences are notably mitigated. CLIL appears to be canceling out these differences, mainly owing to CLIL students' greater sense of responsibility and autonomy and to teachers' provision of more language-sensitive teaching, according to the latest research results (Halbach and Iwaniec 2022). A third theme which has emerged

as salient is that CLIL has the potential to work even in the most disenfranchised settings: in rural, public schools, where parents have a low socioeconomic status, and with minority ethnic groups. The key to success here appears to rely on the teachers' training and commitment and on the adequate implementation of the methodological principles underpinning CLIL. Finally, the most recent investigations (cf. Pérez Cañado in press for 2023) have revealed that CLIL can work with all types of achievers. When over 2,000 CLIL students were trichotomized in terms of their verbal intelligence, motivation, English level, and academic achievement, it was ascertained that all three tiers performed successfully on the L1, the L2, and the content subjects taught through the target language. Socioeconomic factors did not appear to have a bearing in explaining these outcomes and those variables which did impinge on the success of bilingual programs for all were the students' verbal intelligence and their English level and extramural exposure to the language.

Thus, in mapping out future pathways for progression, it seems clear to posit that the issue of elitism / segregation / classism in CLIL is on its way out from being a burning issue on the bilingual agenda to become a non-issue. Instead, we need to redirect our attention to setting in place measures to ensure CLIL will work with over- and under-achievers alike.

2.3. The importance of the supranational perspective

And, in doing so, the latest investigations point unequivocally to the need for “increased research at the supranational level” (Macaro et al. 2018, 64). While the one-size-fits-all model has been disparaged in CLIL given the variegated nature of its application across our continent and a “context-sensitive stance” (Hüttner and Smit 2014, 164) has long been propounded, navel-gazing needs to be overcome in accommodating differentiation in bilingual programs. Indeed, in this sense, learning from what is successfully being implemented in other contexts stands out as a hallmark of good practice to balance out different learning paces and ability levels (Casas Pedrosa and Rascón Moreno 2023). Pan-European studies (Pérez Cañado 2023a) have revealed the highly beneficial nature of learning from the best practices of other countries, as key areas of expertise have been identified which can be usefully adapted to other scenarios. In this respect, Finland stands out for inclusive lesson planning, Austria is conspicuous for student-centered methodological practices, the UK excels at differentiated materials design, Italy is notable for the use of ICT options, and Spain particularly masters diversified assessment procedures.

The latest research stemming from the ADiBE projects¹ has allowed the identification of key areas of good practice for the construction of multicultural and plurilingual spaces which favor inclusion. These involve, to begin with, finding motivating topics and approaches which transcend the textbook, in order to engage learners with additional support needs, particularly in content areas being taught through the vehicular language. Methodologically, the use of visual and multimodal scaffolding, of student-centered options, and the provision of one-on-one personalized attention to determine entry levels and identify difficulties are all resolute pillars for diversity-sensitive CLIL classes. In terms of materials, the use of ICTs via Google Classroom, IWBs, or gamification options come to the fore as beneficial to cater to learner variance. The use of the L1 and coordination through co-teaching and co-tutoring are also successful conditions to encourage equity in bilingual scenarios. And, finally, diversified, transparent, and adapted summative and formative evaluation procedures are equally advocated as examples of good practice, where self-assessment is worked in and the students' entry level is taken into consideration.

Thus, keeping an eye on how other countries are tackling the creation of inclusive learning spaces and accommodating these good practices of others to our own context is major take-away for the future, as we can learn a great deal from what others are doing to encourage opportunity and access in CLIL programs for all bilingual students.

2.4. Language and methodology

Another interesting reconfiguration is being operated in language and methodology thanks to the entrance of diversity on scene. Stepping up to the challenge of creating inclusive learning spaces has made it necessary to raise the bar on both these fronts. Indeed, to begin with, linguistically, the need to communicate content to different levels, types, and paces of achievers has caused teachers' linguistic requirements to be pushed up to either a B2 or a C1 (European Commission 2023) and conspicuous efforts have been made to update and upgrade their language competence to ensure their BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) are more natural and attuned to present-day English (e.g. through publications like Pérez Cañado and Ojeda Pinar 2018). In addition, very recent research (Pérez Cañado in press for 2023) has found that the amount of extramural exposure is a key success factor to guarantee the adequate functioning of CLIL programs with all types of achievers. This exposure is being increased thanks to heightened access to original versions on TV platforms such as Netflix or HBO, or via YouTube clips assigned as homework for language catch-up.

1 Cf. www.adibeproject.com.

In turn, methodologically, enacting differentiation has led to more student-centered, diversified, and communicative methodologies which are increasingly embedded in CLIL classrooms. Indeed, more active and participative student roles have been documented, together with a more variegated amount of groupings and learning modalities. In this sense, clear-cut pedagogical measures have hit the ground running in order to counteract the potentially adverse influence of the teacher-frontedness which previously found traction in many CLIL classrooms (Breidbach and Vriebock 2012). Some of these strategies (McClintic 2022; Bauer-Marschallinger et al. 2023; Casas Pedrosa and Rascón Moreno 2023; Nikula et al. 2023; Pérez Cañado 2023a; Ramón Ramos 2023; Siepmann et al. 2023) include, to begin with, transcending disciplinary fragmentation so as to forge cross-disciplinary collaboration among subjects in order to address students' intersectional needs. Co-tutoring, co-teaching, and collaboratively tracking progress through a joint progress book greatly contribute in this respect. The use of scaffolding techniques (through, e.g. grammar framework sheets; scripts, diagrams, and images; gestures or mime; highlighting key words; matching words with definitions; reformulation; or using the L1 strategically) is another very useful technique which is deployed successfully. Employing diversified student-centered methodologies (with project-based learning, task-based language teaching, cooperative learning, and the flipped classroom as salient examples) is another instance of good practice. Finally, hetero- and homogeneous achievement-based groupings also come to the fore as a productive way to cater to learner variance, together with the use of learning stations to create an inclusive atmosphere in the CLIL classroom.

Thus, in advancing in this terrain, the afore-mentioned linguistic and methodological upgrade which is already becoming part and parcel of bilingual education should be leveraged to turn CLIL classrooms into inclusive environments where all students can be confident and successful learners.

2.5. Materials design

A fifth key area which is being drastically reshaped due to inclusion and differentiation pertains to materials. Indeed, traditional, static printed materials no longer fit the bill in balancing out different learning styles and abilities (Siepmann & Pérez Cañado 2022) and they now need to pivot towards digital, interactive, multimodal, tiered-level, project-based, transdisciplinary, and differentiated options. These are still thin on the ground and constitute one of the major roadblocks to diversity in CLIL scenarios, as the latest research has recently revealed (Casas Pedrosa and Rascón Moreno 2023; Pérez Cañado 2023a; Siepmann et al. 2023). Indeed, very limited access to tiered-level materials is still documented, so that practitioners are forced to resort to either adapting or creating them. The absolute lack of textbook is highlighted for certain subjects such as Music, which leaves teachers at a loss. This is the area on which they claim to need most guidance and feel disenfranchised in finding materials: the process depends on their generosity, time, and financial investment, they claim, and they do not feel supported by administrative authorities in this area (Pérez Cañado in press for 2024).

In order to cover this core gap, the ADIBE project has designed 12 batches of interactive, multimodal, tiered-level, project-based, and transdisciplinary projects in three different languages (English, French, and German—cf. <https://adibeproject.com/output-2/>) and with differentiation triangulation. In the first phase, students are grouped into same-ability clusters, encouraging them to choose the highest possible level at which they feel comfortable, following a growth mindset. They then focus on the same contents, albeit through differentiated activities, in line with Bloom's taxonomy. In this sense, achievers needing help are only asked to understand and are provided with heavy scaffolding. Mid-level achievers are required to evaluate, whereas high-level achievers are requested to produce. The learners are then grouped according to different ability levels, and leveraging their strengths, they work together towards a final outcome via differentiated and varied student-centered methodologies. The third and final phase—the final product presentation—is also differentiated, as students can choose whether to draw up an infographic, a video, or an interactive presentation. These projects are transdisciplinary, as they include the L1, the L2, and a minimum of three content subjects. The ADiBE principles on which they are based are also fleshed out within a specific guidelines manual for materials implementation (cf. https://adibeproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GUIDELINES_22_04_2022.pdf).

Thus, conspicuous headway still needs to be made on the materials front in order to fully step up to the challenge of diversity in bilingual education. However, using examples such as those which have been originally designed via the ADiBE project can be a useful jump-off int for further elaboration of materials which fit the bill in diversity-sensitive learning spaces (cf. Siepmann and Pérez Cañado 2022 for a detailed instance and substantiation of the German materials).

2.6. The role of the L1

Within these materials, the role and status of the L1 have also been problematized in supporting differentiation in CLIL scenarios. Indeed, prior to the challenge of catering to diversity, its use was practically proscribed within the bilingual classroom and a functional compartmentalization was favored, where the L1 and the L2 were kept apart. However,

having to cater to very diverse learner styles, paces, and backgrounds has pulled practitioners out of their narrow siloes and caused them to veer towards a more dynamic and integrative stance, bolstered by the concepts of code-switching and translanguaging (García and Wei 2014).

Indeed, the latest research (Pavón Vázquez and Ramos Ordóñez 2019; Bauer-Marschallinger et al. 2023; Siepmann et al., 2023; Pérez Cañado in press for 2024) has corroborated that perfunctory and principled L1 use can be enriching for low proficiency students, as its use does not negatively affect the learning of content and can be a lifeline if used strategically and purposely as a fall-back option. It can be beneficially employed for didactic purposes (to give instructions or for classroom management), within materials (e.g., in tiered-level activities for achievers needing help), to scaffold (to clarify vocabulary, explore difficult concepts, introduce new content, or revise and add a new perspective), to maintain motivation (by ensuring interest, making CLIL lessons more accessible, and preventing blockages), and even within evaluation (to highlight key words in the exam or adapt its vocabulary).

There is thus a lot to be said for the pedagogical use of translanguaging and for the principled deployment of the L1 as a support strategy, a sit can be conducive to enhanced learning of content, it saves crucial time, and it ensures no learner is left behind. In the future, practitioners would thus do well to leverage its potential in diverse CLIL classrooms.

2.7. Teacher education

And it is precisely to practitioners that we now turn. How has bilingual teacher education evolved with the advent of diversity and inclusion? In general, great headway has been documented on this front since the inception of bilingual programs, particularly hinging on three main fronts. To begin with, a clear-cut CLIL teacher profile has been mapped, thanks to both national and international proposals (Bertaux et al. 2010; Marsh et al. 2010; Lorenzo et al. 2011; Madrid Manrique and Madrid Fernández 2014) which have distilled the seven core competencies which any bilingual teacher should master (linguistic competence, pedagogical competence, scientific knowledge, organizational competence, interpersonal and collaborative competencies, and reflective and developmental competence). Secondly, instruments (in the form of surveys, interviews, and observation protocols) have been carefully developed and validated to tap into the main teacher training needs in bilingual education. These are available for the broader educational community (Pérez Cañado 2016) and disseminable in future investigations for a personalized diagnosis to be carried out by those practitioners who wish to. And, finally, a third area of progress has involved their actual application across variegated contexts, which has allowed the identification of the main teacher development needs which should still be honed. These affect five main fronts: *linguistic competence*, *pedagogical competence*, *scientific knowledge*, *collaborative competence*, and *reflective and developmental competence* (cf. Pérez Cañado in press for 2024 for the concrete outcomes).

However, the new diversity-oriented CLIL scenario has led to increased and more fine-tuned training requirements: teachers now need to be equipped with additional attitudes, knowledge, and skills in order to provide culturally and linguistically informed learning opportunities for all bilingual students. New instruments (surveys, interviews, and observation protocols) have been designed to tap into specific teacher education needs to cater for diversity (cf. Pérez Cañado et al. 2023). And when they have been applied, the latest research (Pérez Cañado in press for 2024) has revealed that teacher development options for differentiation should have a three-pronged structure: a brief theoretical basis, a majority of practical training (on methodology, scaffolding, groupings or evaluation), and guidelines for materials design and adaptation. Ideally, tailor-made courses based on real and relevant needs in concrete contexts should be offered, specific CLIL subjects should be incorporated in undergraduate degrees, and they should also be worked into generic MA degrees. The curveball thrown by attention to diversity also seems to have made increased coordination and collaboration a sine qua non for CLIL programs to stay afloat. The preparation of the language assistant equally comes across as a major niche to be filled, and their coordination with content and language teachers is still regarded as deficient. Maximizing the full potential of the language assistant is thus still an area which has not as yet been sufficiently addressed, according to our very recent data (Pérez Cañado in press for 2024).

Thus, ensuring that these areas figure prominently in initial and continuing professional development courses is key. They should trickle down to on-the-ground practice via specific courses and (under)graduate training proposals, in order to ensure that the new needs are met in an evidence-based manner. Therein lies the way forward in reinforcing CLIL teacher education for diversity.

2.8. Multi-tiered systems of support

In addition to teachers, another frontline stakeholder whose role has also been affected by the pivot towards diversity-sensitiveness is the parental cohort. At the outset CLIL implementation, a lack of multi-tiered systems of support (involving educational authorities, multi-professional teams, colleagues, language assistants, and parents) was

documented, together with very scarce satisfaction with those that were in place. Concurrently, parents (especially those with a low socioeconomic status) felt disenfranchised in helping their offspring with homework, claimed to have insufficient information and involvement, and did not motivate their children to participate in exchange programs, yet voiced the greatest satisfaction with bilingual education initiatives, as they regarded them as an opportunity for upward mobility (Ráez Padilla 2018; Barrios 2019).

Now, the fact that CLIL is being increasingly mainstreamed is turning this situation around (Pérez Cañado 2023a). Although the overall school support system is still not considered to be coming through for diverse students (McClintic 2022), collaboration with colleagues and parents has been stepped up and is now more operative in CLIL programs (perhaps because the greater challenge posed by diversity has made it a *sine qua non*). Multi-professional teams and the guidance counselor are present and important. Student, parent, and teacher views are quite homogeneous and aligned vis-à-vis this aspect, thereby pointing to the fact that they are a realistic snapshot of grassroots practice. Information to parents has been increased, via initiatives such as that spearheaded by the British Council (cf. van Wechem and Halbach 2014). And now, parents with a high SES also have faith in teachers' preparation, methodologies, and support systems to step up to the challenge of diversity. Bilingual education is thus still regarded as prestigious and worthwhile and there is buy-on from frontline stakeholders who have to make the decision of whether to enroll their children in these types of programs.

In the future, we thus need to continue reinforcing these multi-tiered systems of support and enhancing parents' ability to engage in their children's bilingual learning experiences and weigh in on their educational outcomes, as this has been unveiled as a key success factor of CLIL programs (cf. Pérez Cañado in press for 2024 and section 2.10 below).

2.9. The focus of research

An interesting change of pace and focus in research has also been documented ever since inclusion has increasingly made its way into CLIL programs. Indeed, initially, the general trend was to quantitatively measure the impact and functioning of bilingual education initiatives by guaranteeing the homogeneity of CLIL and non-CLIL streams. Experimental and control groups were separated out and differentiated CLIL and non-CLIL groups were matched and compared. In turn, qualitatively, general SWOT analyses were conducted, though which stakeholder perceptions were gauged vis-à-vis the main aspects of program evaluation (linguistic aspects, methodology, materials and resources, assessment, coordination, or teacher education). A host of intervening variables were also factored in to determine the possible modulating effect they exerted on student performance (e.g. age, gender, nationality, rural-urban context, socioeconomic status [SES], or type of school).

Now that CLIL programs are being made extensive to all types of students, new research needs have arisen. At present, only CLIL students are the focus. Trichotomizing (rather than homogenizing) them is also a future avenue for further investigation: they are now grouped into three different ability levels (according to variables such as motivation, verbal intelligence, language level, and academic performance) in order to determine whether CLIL can truly be for all. And narrowing down SWOT analysis from general program evaluation to specific curricular and organizational aspects related to diversity is also a desirable line of action in order to complement the overall perspectives which we currently have from a more updated and concrete point of view.

These new lines of action are already being explored via the ADiBE projects and new instruments have been designed and validated to address them (cf. Pérez Cañado et al. 2023). The preliminary results can be found in McClintic (2022), Casas Pedrosa and Rascón Moreno (2023), Ramón Ramos (2023), and Pérez Cañado (in press for 2024), as well as a special issue which is in press in *Porta Linguarum* for 2024. And the results clearly lean towards the fact CLIL *can* be for all, as it is working equally well with all three tiers of learners (in L1, L2, and content subjects), with verbal intelligence and English level are the only variables which yield statistically significant differences (as opposed to context or SES). Thus, continuing to capitalize of this new approach to CLIL research will allow us to ascertain whether the same patterns emerge as in these initial studies or a completely new picture transpires on the ways in which CLIL is functioning with all types of learners in order to base future pedagogical and political decisions on the data obtained.

2.10. Key success factors to attain inclusion in CLIL

The afore-mentioned research has also allowed key success factors to be distilled in guaranteeing attention to diversity within CLIL programs. A framework with 22 key success indicators has been originally articulated for effective diversity-sensitive CLIL programs (cf. Pérez Cañado in press for 2024). Following Kirss et al.'s (2021) taxonomy, they are grouped into *input* and *process* factors. The former hinge on three main fronts (*policy and ideology, resources, and curriculum decisions*), while the latter affect four main aspects (namely, *school climate, attitudes, and beliefs; school teaching and*

practice, *collaboration*, and *support*). Many of these success factors are reliant on macro-level decisions stemming from the educational authorities (e.g. questions of ratio, language level certification, or the types of subjects taught through CLIL). However, another important batch of indicators depend directly on schools and teachers (including enhanced coordination, the development of student-centered methodologies, or the motivation and attitude necessary for these programs to be successful for all). Some of the most conspicuous ones are now foregrounded.

To begin with, at the *policy* level, an adjustment of regulations should be effected in order to reduce class size (teacher-student ratio). *Resource-wise*, materials need to be tiered-level and adapted to different student levels (especially linguistic). An adequate language level on the part of students and a very high competence on the part of teachers also need to be guaranteed for CLIL to work successfully with all types of achievers. Vis-à-vis the *curriculum*, three main indicators transpire as crucial: reduction of content load, as said contents are recycled in subsequent grades and educational stages; reorientation of the subjects taught in the target language, as some of them are more amenable to being taught through CLIL than others (e.g. Spanish History should be maintained in the L1); and provision of continuity for subjects taught through the target language, so that they are not implemented in different languages across grades. In terms of *school and teaching practice*, a variety of student-centered methodologies and types of groupings (cooperative learning, tasks, projects, gamification, flipped classroom), together with across-the-board access to ICTs, should be favored. *Collaboration* is another major area which accounts for success: here, time for bilingual teachers to coordinate within their in-school schedule, coordination with language assistants, and parental involvement through multi-tiered systems of support should all be promoted. *Support* also has an important weight, especially regarding teacher development options on attention to diversity in bilingual education and adequate training for language assistants. And, finally, two last crucial success factors pertain to *school climate, attitudes, and beliefs*: there needs to be awareness that setting diversity-sensitive measures firmly in place takes time and maintenance of a positive attitude towards the possibility of CLIL being for all, because it has been found to have a major impact on how these programs function.

The validation of such indicators should seriously inform future investigation on bilingual education and an empirically validated and full-fledged quality assessment framework for CLIL should be set up for CLIL.² In this manner, a common standard for multilingual education would be established, involving the design of an evaluation rubric with quality control indicators which would serve as an assessment instrument for internal purposes and for external inspections. Self- and co-evaluation of multilingual and multicultural teaching practices could thus be promoted among those instructors who teach academic content in a different language. Those bilingual subjects, strands, degrees, or schools which satisfy the criteria would receive an official certificate or quality seal, which guarantees the adequate implementation of core CLIL principles for all.

3. Conclusion

The present article has addressed the crux of whether the challenge posed by catering to diversity in increasingly inclusive CLIL programs has jeopardized the latter or has simply changed the rules of the game. In order to address this overarching question, the ten main fronts on which the impact of diversity has been most intensely felt in bilingual education have been canvassed, showcasing what the situation was prior to the entrance of differentiation in the bilingual scene, the changes which have been operated following its accommodation, and where the future lies in order for the inclusive CLIL agenda to continue advancing unfettered. The overarching take-away is that attention to diversity has been a positive game-changer—rather than a deal-breaker—in CLIL, as it has forced stakeholders to forge new ground and go above and beyond in creating inclusive learning spaces within it.

Indeed, in this sense, the concept of diversity has been substantially modified and broadened via a brand-new theoretical framework. A growing body of robust research has shot down claims that CLIL is elitist and segregative, evincing that it is actually leveling the playing field and working successfully across different settings and with very diverse types of students. Key areas of expertise have also been identified which allow us to learn from the best practices of others in providing diversity-sensitive instruction, and language and methodology have undergone considerable upgrading and updating in order to successfully enact differentiation in bilingual classrooms. Original materials with interactive, multimodal, and tiered-level traits have equally been designed to guide future iterations in this terrain and the role of the L1 has been reconfigured from outcast to crucial support strategy. Teacher education has undergone upskilling and fine-tuning to respond to newly diagnosed needs, multi-tiered systems of support have been reinforced to ensure

2 This is in fact already being undertaken through the European project “One Stop CLIL Europe” (KA220-SCH-05539825).

parental engagement and empowerment, and the focus of research has shifted considerably, veering towards trichotomization and specificity in SWOT analyses. Finally, key success factors have been distilled and taxonomized for bilingual education programs to be effective or all.

Thus, this overview clearly champions the need for systemic change in order for bilingual education to become accessible to all. CLIL is very much alive and will continue to throw new curveballs our way, but, as this article has evinced, we have the experience, the resources, the faith, and the evidence to step up to them with confidence. Navigating the both exciting and daunting challenge at hand—and those which still lie ahead—will be essential to ensure that CLIL delivers enhanced learning experiences for all in a constantly changing bilingual scenario. To do so, we will have to vary the mix of resources and initiatives along the way, supported by close stakeholder involvement and driven by stalwart empirical evidence, which is what will, ultimately, continue to keep the metaphorical CLIL train on track.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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El pájaro herido y otros poemas, *de Katherine Mansfield*

Jesús Isaías Gómez López (ed. y trad.)

Madrid: Verbum, 2022, 253 pp.
ISBN: 9788413377612

Some novelists and short-story writers follow an almost secret poetry path parallel to their prose writing. On many occasions their poetry becomes a proper lyrical journal and, posthumously, a source of critical evidence as a portrait of the artist. A case in point could be the Spanish novelist Carmen Martín Gaité, a first selection of whose poems was enthusiastically received while she was still living, newly completed and re-edited in the volume *A rachas: Poesía reunida* (2023). This seemed to be the case of Katherine Mansfield too (1888-1923), forever successfully assigned to the annals of Modernist short fiction. However, the unexpected discovery of a poetry manuscript a few years ago (Robertson 2015) has encouraged an alternative hypothesis. Supported by a close look at Mansfield's journals and at the eventful circumstances of her publishing trajectory, after this new finding it is not unreasonable to think that, under more propitious circumstances, a poetry career could have quite plausibly certified her artistic passport (Kimber 2019). Since recent times, therefore, the path of Mansfield's literary achievement is open to critical revision.¹

Fortunately, the Spanish-speaking publishing world has registered these changes leading to a more accurate acknowledgement of Mansfield's oeuvre. An Argentinian edition titled *Té de manzanilla y otros 29 poemas* appeared in 2021—translated by Mirta Rosenberg and Daniel Samoilovich—, whereas the Spanish house Torremozas recently published *La criatura terrestre y otros poemas* (2023), with the translation of Jimena Jiménez Real.² Between these two editions we find the 2022 anthology *El pájaro herido y otros poemas*, edited and translated by Jesús Isaías Gómez López. The timing of these versions of Mansfield's poetry in Spanish runs parallel to the fresh approach to her lyrical work in the Anglo-American academic environment.

1 In a review to the 2016 volume *The Collected Poems of Katherine Mansfield*, which includes the recently discovered corpus, Harry Rickets remarks that the editors do not consider Mansfield's poetry "a minor adjunct to the fiction," but a contribution of "value and interest in its own right" (2017: 1).

2 *La criatura terrestre—The Earth-Child*—is the title of the manuscript found in 2015.

Gómez López's poetry selection responds to a major criterium that he formulates in his critical introduction to the book: those poems that show the psychological evolution of their author have prevailed over other considerations. Thus, the aesthetic journey—also present in Gómez López's study—from Mansfield's initial Romantic and Symbolist imagery rendered in strophic forms towards a mature variety of verse charged with Modernist irony and dramatic fragmentariness is explained in inextricable relation with the turmoil of her life. To be more precise, Gómez López focuses on Mansfield's early discovery of her bisexuality insofar as this fact influences the decisions taken throughout her life and, more importantly, as it illuminates some of her finest poems from a semi-hidden core of introspection and self-knowledge.

I personally find López Gómez's point most convincing when he refers to Mansfield's use of masks in her poems or, in psychological terms, to her recourse to the lyric split self. This seemed the only way available for Mansfield to explore her social and personal maladjustment in verse: an existential patterned-like failure, as it were, reiterated in successive turbulent relationships. Furthermore, along the lines of bisexuality, this pattern may be read as separate sequences within the story of an entity and an identity striving for wholeness and completion. In this regard, the poem chosen for the book title, "The Wounded Bird," shows a paradigmatic figure that permeates all the different phases of Mansfield's poetry:

The hunter threw his dart

And hit her breast,

Hit her, but did not kill.

O my wings, lift me—lift me

I am not dreadfully hurt! (242)

Written only a few months before her early death, Mansfield depicts herself in "The Wounded Bird" through the shape of a dying though resilient bird, a familiar image in her poetry corpus from the very beginning. Gómez López's enlightening introduction, together with the aforementioned selection criteria, allows the reader to establish parallelisms between this poem and other ones distant in time. In 1908, still unknown as an author, Mansfield wrote "When I was a Bird." The use of the past tense in this creation of youth contrasts with the present tense in "The Wounded Bird." The young Mansfield-bird does not need to face the old one's ordeal, yet she must deal with the lack of credibility with which the others regard her own notion of herself as a poet:

That's what my song said: though it hadn't any words.

Little Brother came up the path, wheeling his barrow

I made my dress into wings and kept very quiet

Then when he was quite near I said: 'sweet, sweet.'

For a moment he looked quite startled

Then he said: 'Pooh, you're not a bird; I can see your legs.'

But the daisies didn't really matter

And Little Brother didn't really matter;

I felt just like a bird. (96)

A few years later, and already experienced in unfortunate relationships, Mansfield retakes her bird-like persona from a different view in the self-addressed poem "To K.M.":

She is a bird.

Green is her body and her wings are tawny.

[...]

Her body cries out in weariness—but her wings never tire.

[...]

‘A moment—a moment... I die.’

Up and up beat her wings. (138)

The poet talks about herself now in full outer self-understanding (“She is a bird”), neither using the past tense, nor any nuance (“*just*”). The verses can also be read in a premonitory way in relation to “The Wounded Bird.” Their echo resonates even more strongly when we turn on the page to find a startling kind of anti-sequel, “Limbo.” This time, the previous self-confidence gives way to the acute consciousness of not-belonging and its association—in the subliminal space evoked in the title—with an inexorable end, all of it enclosed within a noisome, disturbing landscape:

The clock ticks on. The rhythmic hammer noise beats

Beats on. The pipe smoke writhes overhead

Terribly still. The piercing children’s voice

Stabs on relentless. Living, I am dead. (140)

López Gómez does not explicitly guide the readers towards these relationships among poems. Relying on an active reading, he rather propitiates a focus on the psychological subtleties that link poems written during different vital moments, allowing readers to extract their own conclusions. This makes the contribution of the anthology to the unknown poetry realm of Mansfield in Spanish all the more valuable, since we can approach the writer’s poetic oeuvre not only in a chronological sense, but also understood as a projection, a kind of—so far unknown—resonance that permeates both her eventful life and her prose work.

At a certain point in the introduction, López Gómez guides our attention towards a unique poem in the collection, “Picnic.” Mysterious and rarely explicit at the same time, its verses offer a different version of the bird element to the ones already analyzed. A voyeuristic lyrical voice powerfully paints the scene into which the voice itself melts, including the readers in its whirlpool of sensations:

When the two women in white

Came down to the lonely beach

She threw away her paintbox

And she threw away her note book

And down they sat on the sand

The tide was low

Before them the weedy rocks

Were like some herd of shabby beasts

Come down to the pool to drink... (200)

After a cascade of more and more allusive images, the final line of the poem—“They looked like two swans”—brings again the figure of the bird to the forefront, now at the service of female love and friendship. “Pic-nic” appears in the book after “Malade,” a piece in which Mansfield clearly and even humorously acknowledges that her end is near. Thus, the winged self does always and under changing circumstances abide by the author’s own self-determination towards poetry, in a succession of pages in which Eros and Thanatos continually coalesce.

The translated poems run smoothly and naturally along the lines of the originals, faithfully rendering style and tone shifts. The translator adopts the hendecasyllabic Spanish verse for Mansfield’s shorter lines, as in “Lives like logs of driftwood/ Tossed on a watery rain” (“Vidas como leños a la deriva,/ Tiradas a una corriente de agua”) (184-85); he frequently employs the 14-syllable *alejandrino* for longer lines: “Tonight we passed a Milestone on the road” (“Esta noche hemos pasado un Hito en el camino”) (76-77); finally, he fully captures the apparently nonchalant fragments of conversation typical of Modernist poetry, for example in “So—don’t you know!” (“Así que ¿no lo sabes! Así que, esto y aquello./ ¡Ya sabes lo que quiero decir, querida!”) (214-15). In short, the translations show Mansfield’s own oscillations between tradition and avantgarde, strophic poems and *verse libre*, respecting the varied and abundant poetic forms with which the author experimented.

In the note to the edition, we learn about the destiny of Mansfield’s poetry manuscripts after her death. As in the case of many other women artists, the external control upon this corpus accounts for its long invisibility. Thanks to *El pájaro herido y otros poemas* we can at last, and in bilingual format, appreciate Mansfield’s poetic legacy.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Poemas vagabundos, de *William Henry Davies*

Jesús Isaías Gómez López (ed. y trad.)

Vigo: Editorial Academia del Hispanismo,
2021. 197 pp.
ISBN: 9788417696481

Professor and translator Jesús Isaías Gómez López offers in his bilingual edition and translation *Poemas vagabundos* an insightful approach to the Welsh poet William Henry Davies (1871-1940). A favorite of popular culture, mainly thanks to his successful *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1908), Davies mostly owes his presence in the Anglo-American collective worldview to the famous opening couplet from his poem “Leisure”: “What is this life if, full of care,/ We have no time to stand and stare?”

Gómez López’s selection is based, as the title chosen for the volume indicates, on the poems that recall and celebrate the vagrant’s spirit and attitude towards life, even decades after Davies’s nomadic experience had ended. In a whitmanesque way, Davies’s life and work embody the conscious choice of the vagrant who, living on the margins of the capitalistic society between Great Britain and the United States, points at the creatures and elements of nature for us in a simple and unaffected style, remains unsettled and “would rather not to” conform to social demands.¹

The volume includes a thorough introduction into the life and poetic trajectory of the poet. On the fringe of the era of Edwardian poetry, Davies’s books would have probably gone unnoticed, were it not for the enthusiastic critical support bestowed by George Orwell and Bernard Shaw, no less than for the financial and affective care that he received from the poet Edward Thomas and his wife, as Jesús Isaías Gómez López explains in those preliminary pages.

Gómez López goes on to clarify that, although Davies became principally known for his autobiographic writings, he considered himself a poet first, a task he undertook throughout decades after his two-decade homeless experiences of youth (47). The symbiosis between life and work observed in his literary legacy deserves a lexical discussion around a few crucial terms: The differences between the ‘tramp’ or the ‘vagrant’—literally, “a person who wanders around idly and has no permanent home”—and the ‘hobo’—a migratory worker of the lowest scale, mostly used as farmhand in the

1 The British rock group *Supertramp* was explicitly named after Davies at the end of the 1960s, a propitious time for the revival of the poet’s free spirit. More indirectly, the recent film *Nomadland* (Zao 2020), based on 2017 Jessica Bruder’s title *Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century*, recreates the stories of modern ‘hobos’ who have changed walking sticks for caravans, and the occasional farm job for temporary hiring at Amazon and similar companies.

States—constantly merge in Davies’s writings and are duly discussed in Gómez López’s introduction (24-25). To these, other singular concepts are added, such as ‘boodle’—to be fraudulently admitted into a prison for a while to escape the winter rigors. The titles of many of Davies’s poems included in this selection give evidence of such haphazard way of life: “The Sluggard,” “The Jolly Tramp,” “A Beggar’s Life,” “A Vagrant’s Life,” “The Philosophical Beggar,” “No Master,” “The Wanderer” or “The Vagabond,” among others.

The appeal of Davies’s figure has not always run parallel to his appreciation as a poet. On occasion of the publication of a Davies *Reader* in 2025, Nicholas Lezard wrote in *The Guardian*, quoting the famed couplet, that “those latter lines, familiar to the point of invisibility, or at least drained of the mild power they once had, are perhaps one of the reasons no one bothers to read Davies any more—why he is condescendingly filed under ‘Curiosities’” (2015, 1). Still, only in the last decade, two volumes of his work, apart from the one reviewed here, have been published in Spain: *Autobiografía de un súper vagabundo* (2018, translated by Susana Pietro Mori) and *Antología poética* (2021, translated by Gabriel Insausti).² This fresh interest in Davies in the Spanish publishing world reinforces his current validity beyond the anecdote. Moreover, Davies’s literary and vital journey sounds eloquently familiar under the Spanish tradition and among its own illustrious bums, such as the protagonist of Camilo José Cela’s 1952 title *Del Miño al Bidasoa: Notas de un vagabundaje*.

The contribution of *Poemas vagabundos* to this renewed interest in the poetry of W. H. Davies lies in the fact that the strengths and weaknesses of his poems—folk simplicity and a particular mode of confessionalism against lack of innovation—are openly discussed (45). From this perspective, Gómez López avoids indulging in the stereotyped traits of the poet-vagabond. Instead, he enables readers to approach Davies’s poems on a par with the personal and social events of his life, pointing at the relevant features and patterns around which they unfold. In this sense, the first section of poems, “A Poet’s Alphabet,” provides an appropriate introduction to the longer one that follows. In addition, it shows the translator’s skill to find equivalences for the titles of the poems, which in effect reproduce the letters of the alphabet and do not always easily fit in Spanish equivalences. The first poem, “A is for Artist,” may well be read as a lifetime declaration of intent:

See what a light is in those painted clouds!

Surely the man’s immortal, who has wrought

This lovely picture with his hand and brain!

But at this though

The glorious sun in heaven

Bursts through a window-pane, and caught

The fringes of those clouds with such a light

That I felt back amazed –

To see that man

Made so much less immortal in my sight! (57)

Under similar views of the insignificance of man’s achievements before nature, in the poems chosen for the anthology and in coherent progression, Davies the poet commits himself to signal all living beings for us readers. Quite often, he wraps this active contemplation of the world in quatrains and short verse, as in “A Summer’s Noon” (“White Lily clouds/ In violet skies;/ The Sun is at/ His highest rise”) (132); more frequently he resorts to tetrameters, as in “Joy and Pleasure”: “Now, Joy is born of parents poor,/ And pleasure of our richer kind;/ Though pleasure’s free, she cannot sing/ As sweet a song as Joy confined” (130).

² These two translations of Davies were respectively reviewed by Marta Marne in 2016 in *Culturamas* and by Luis Muñiz in 2023 in *Faro de Vigo*. Both contributions reflect the ambivalence towards the critical appreciation of the author.

Often compared to Wordsworth and Blake, Davies shows his preference for the countryside over the city, for animals and children and, of course, for the outcasts of society—wanderer-fellows or prostitutes—, as Gómez López also highlights in his introduction and selection. Although solitude and deprivation are certainly not mystified in poems such as “The Vagabond”—“Tormented day and night by fleas,/ With but your shadow for a friend—/ Have you no wish that such a life/ Were coming to a quiet end?” (196)—, the predominant mood is usually that of festive lack of concern. Most of the times the ending of the poems leaves an uplifting, vivifying trace. Buns become sages, and their festive oracle is delivered in everyday speech.

My fleas but bite, and keep me warm,

And worms would do me little good;

My shadow follows—though I swear

And eat up all the bloody food! (196)

In addition, it must be mentioned that Gómez López’s translations freely reproduce rhyme whenever possible. On other occasions, they focus on finding alternative rhythmic patterns in Spanish, as well as on conveying a casual style and diction that matches the original, as in “The Cheat” (“El tramposo”):

Sí, pues oigamos la verdad,

Baco, tú, sonrosado tramposo,

Que bien que robas al mundo

Los cuadros y las dulces canciones;

Sueños les das a los hombres, es verdad,

Pero les arrebatas la voluntad. (144)

I personally celebrate this carefully thought-out edition that presents Davies’s unique poetic stance before Spanish with the accompaniment of scholarly analysis, all the more when a critical corpus of his oeuvre is almost non-existent. Apart from the enjoyment that the poems bring, pre-War British poetry may not be fully understood without the figure of this poet-tramp, so reminiscent of song, cinema, and popular culture as a whole. Finally, the careful selection of poems must be appreciated in full: Davies wrote and published a huge number of poems, and an extensive compilation would offer many repetitive and superfluous material. The effort of extracting Davies’ most representative creations and conferring them coherent critical support, neither underestimating nor overestimating his singular contribution to British poetry, should not go unnoticed. Above any other considerations, the reading of *Poemas vagabundos* offers plenty of joyful, delightful moments.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Science Fiction Cinema in the Twenty- First Century. Transnational Futures, Cosmopolitan Concerns

Pablo Gómez-Muñoz

Routledge India, 2022. 194 pp.
ISBN: 9780367759063

Pablo Gómez-Muñoz, assistant professor of English and Film at the University of Zaragoza in Spain, offers in this book a thought-provoking analysis on the new transnational shift toward cosmopolitanism in the science fiction genre. In the ever-expanding realm of science fiction, where imaginary universes come to life on the silver screen, this book emerges as a captivating exploration of the genre's evolving role in today's society.

The author examines how contemporary science fiction films leverage metaphors and scenarios from our current social context and emphasizes that the genre has undergone a significant transformation over the last two decades, exploring the infinite possibilities of its generic conventions to scrutinize an increasing array of transnational phenomena and cosmopolitan concerns. This transformation has paved the way for a flourishing of discourses on cosmopolitanism within science fiction cinema, which is why Gómez-Muñoz focuses on films released after the turn of the century.

Science fiction cinema, with its imaginative narratives and appealing visuals, possesses a unique power to serve as an advocacy tool, effectively raising awareness of the pressing challenges we face today. Gómez-Muñoz emphasizes the wide range of discourses on the topic in the twenty-first century by citing relevant studies and authors on the subject of cosmopolitanism, and using a variety of examples, including case studies from films such as “Elysium,” “In Time,” “2012,” “The Host,” and “Cloud Atlas” to prove his points.

Gómez-Muñoz structures his analysis in four detailed and professionally written chapters. In Chapter 1, the author analyses systemic dystopias through a cosmopolitan perspective, adding additional layers to the conventional themes of dystopian fiction. The chapter looks into how dystopian films offer a platform to explore transnational socioeconomic issues and compel audiences to reflect on the consequences of unsupervised neoliberalism and inequalities in society (by depicting societies plagued by the dominance of profit over human well-being, labour precariousness, global epidemics

and health threats, unequal access to resources...). As described in Chapter 2, by presenting catastrophic environmental disasters, geographical alterations, and apocalyptic scenarios, science fiction films can vividly represent the potential impact of climate change on our planet and its inhabitants (migration, harsh living conditions, starvation...). They may prompt viewers to contemplate the urgency of addressing environmental issues and inspire action towards sustainable practices. Science fiction narratives also explore themes of translational love, kinship, and affection, as well as alien-human relations (see Chapter 3) to delve into complex subjects like identity, race, rights, sexual freedom, and gender conventions. By means of these creative tactics, science fiction cinema challenges preconceived notions and fosters empathy and understanding. The portrayal of aliens, monsters, and characters with supernatural abilities allows science fiction cinema to metaphorically represent the "otherness" in our world, fostering empathy and understanding for those who may be perceived as different, and challenging prevailing prejudices and biases. Furthermore, the exploration of time and space travel in these films (Chapter 4) opens avenues for examining connections between individuals across different eras or locations, developing ideas across time and space, contemplating human evolution, and considering the well-being of future generations. Additionally, science fiction films often display innovative technologies that blur the lines between national and cultural identities, mirroring the vital role of technology in globalization. These depictions provide opportunities to reflect on the implications and potential consequences of technological advancements, urging us to consider ethical and responsible approaches to the rapidly changing world we inhabit. Through the use of such multifaceted imaginative devices, science fiction cinema becomes a powerful advocate for social change, championing a more just and inclusive society, encouraging dialogue, promoting a deeper understanding of the challenges that shape our shared future, and compelling audiences to contemplate and take action on the challenges that define our time.

The book stands out as a remarkable and intelligent work, and its interdisciplinary approach sets it apart from other books in the field. By seamlessly integrating insights from diverse academic disciplines, such as science fiction, cinema and media studies, cosmopolitanism, border theory, popular culture, and cultural studies, the author offers a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration of the subject matter. This cohesive integration enables readers to gain a nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between science fiction cinema and cosmopolitan concerns.

One of the book's notable strengths lies in the author's captivating writing style, which effortlessly engages readers throughout the chapters. Gomez-Muñoz's insights are perceptive, and his distinctive viewpoints unveil the ways in which science fiction films effectively tackle cosmopolitan issues and mirror our rapidly evolving world. As readers delve into the pages of the book, they find themselves drawn into a world of cinematic imagination, where speculative fiction intertwines with societal realities, fostering meaningful discussions on the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization and cosmopolitanism.

The author's astute observations and analytical prowess shine brightly in each chapter, as he meticulously examines the various dimensions of science fiction cinema. Whether exploring dystopian landscapes or time travels, Gomez-Muñoz deftly navigates the intricate webs of narratives and themes, revealing how these films serve as powerful tools for social commentary and advocacy. By scrutinizing the portrayals of transnational societies, alien-human relations, and time and space travel, the book illuminates the diverse ways in which science fiction engages with issues of identity, race, or human rights.

Beyond its academic relevance, *Science Fiction Cinema in the Twenty-First Century. Transnational Futures, Cosmopolitan Concerns* offers a delightful read for science fiction enthusiasts and cinephiles alike. The book invites readers to embark on a captivating journey through the worlds of imagination, while also challenging them to contemplate the broader implications of the stories being told. With its comprehensive exploration of science fiction's intersection with cosmopolitanism and globalization, this book is a must-read for anyone seeking to unravel the profound societal reflections that emerge from the captivating universe of science fiction cinema.

In conclusion, Gomez-Muñoz's skilled exploration of science fiction cinema as a lens to understand transnational futures and cosmopolitan concerns is commendable. He convincingly argues for the transformative potential of science fiction in shaping our collective consciousness. As stated, the book not only provides a valuable resource for students and academics across interested in science fiction, cinema studies, media studies, cosmopolitanism, and cultural studies, but also captivates the imagination of science fiction enthusiasts and film aficionados. It is also a remarkable journey that will leave readers inspired to envision a future that embraces diversity, challenges inequalities, and fosters a cosmopolitan ethos in our increasingly interconnected world.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Cosmopolitan Strangers in US Latinx Literature and Culture: Building Bridges, Not Walls

Esther Álvarez-López and Andrea Fernández-García (eds.)

Routledge, 2023. 190 pp.
ISBN: 9781032231600

The edited volume *Cosmopolitan Strangers in US Latinx Literature and Culture: Building Bridges, Not Walls* aims at filling a scholarly gap in border and immigration studies related to the figure of the stranger, using a perspective shaped on a definition of “cosmopolitan stranger” that blends different theoretical approaches. Among the main references for it, we find Georg Simmel’s (1964) sociological study of the stranger encounters, decolonial approaches ranging from Marotta (2010, 2017) to Walter Dignolo (2000), passing through Chicana voices such as Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) and feminist post-colonial studies such as Sara Ahmed’s (2000). The introduction is a solid chapter by the editors of the collection, Esther Álvarez-López and Andrea Fernández-García, who build the theoretical framework in a coherent and all-encompassing way—revisiting in particular the Latinx borderland context and the notion of community as a space of identification in which Otherness is recognized.

Looking at narrative empathy, in the first chapter—“Transforming Empathy into Extratextual Action: The Latina Writer as Stranger and Mediator in García McCall’s *All the Stars Denied*”—Vanessa de Veritch Woodside argues that literary authors such as Guadalupe García McCall provide a peculiar iteration of the cosmopolitan stranger who questions the pervasive policing and dehumanization of the Latinx immigrant. Using apt references, she correctly outlines the intrinsic in-betweenness of Latinx creators as Mexican Americans in particular are constructed as perpetual strangers, regardless of their citizenship status, highlighting the sense of being estranged in one’s own land.

Ana M^a Manzanás Calvo’s “Hospitality and Borders in Oscar Cásares’ *Where We Come From*” (Chapter 2) is a solid examination of Cásares’s novel and its rendition of the complex dynamics of hospitality. The text at hand is particularly fitting the scope of the volume and the migrant temporalities connected to Trump’s administration. The author provides a revisitation of border mechanisms as creators of boundaries that, however, Cásares challenges, making the reader look beyond separations and towards in-between spaces and shared experiences that borders produce.

In Chapter 3, “Beyond the Wall: Luis Alberto Urrea’s *The House of Broken Angels*,” Macarena García-Avello analyzes Urrea’s novel highlighting the tensions existing within multigenerational Mexican American families in the face of border issues, discrimination, and migration. The analysis focuses on the diverse negotiations that emerge in the novel related to such kind of borderland context, tracing the historical evolution of immigration fluxes and enforcement dynamics—highlighting how the militarization of the border influenced the life of borderland families.

In “Inhabiting Nepantla: The Stranger in Contemporary Chicana Fiction” (Chapter 4), Norma E. Cantú provides her usual in-depth insight, squarely rooted in the legacy of Chicana Studies and brilliantly creating a connection between the notions of nepantlism and chthulucene. Approaching novels by Reyna Grande and Felicia Luna Lemus, she draws on Anzaldúa and Simmel to argue that these contemporary Chicana writers build on the past in a recursive fashion to heal the wound intrinsic to such colonial past—finding a peculiar stability as deterritorialized subjects in the borderlands.

Chapter 5, Michael Grafals’s “The Cosmopolitanism of Latinx Natality in Jennine Capó Crucet’s *Make Your Home Among Strangers* (2015) and *My Time Among the Whites: Notes from an Unfinished Education* (2019),” looks at Capó Crucet’s work through the cosmopolitan lens. Effectively connecting Anzaldúa’s notion of nepantla and Hannah Arendt’s work on cosmopolitan critical thinking, it is one of the highlights of the collection, as the analysis showcases the writer’s autohistoria and articulated critical stances, challenging Whiteness and theorizing her existence as Cuban American.

In “Strangers in the City: Cosmopolitan Strangers and Transnational Urbanism in the Literary Imagination of Valeria Luiselli” (Chapter 6), Alejandro Ramírez-Méndez examines Luiselli’s New York works through the lens of cosmopolitanism, highlighting the intrinsically visible place of the stranger in transnational neighborhoods of global megacities. The chapter goes beyond the usual study of Luiselli’s work related to immigration and provides a study of her insight into the city as locus of the stranger.

Chapter 7, “Hostipitality and Solidarity in Ivannia Villalobos Vindas’ *Casa en tierra ajena*,” is one of the most interesting and well-grounded of the volume. Ewa Antoszek analyzes the documentary on Central American immigrants drawing on Derrida’s notion of hostipitality and looking at hospitality and solidarity develop despite the dehumanization of “illegal aliens.” The chapter also showcases how the encounter between migrants and grassroots activists—as well as the collection of testimonios—allows for spaces that counter exclusion and estrangement.

Likewise, María Jesús Castro Dopacio’s Chapter 8, “Humanizing the Wall: Cosmopolitan Artistic Interventions on the US-Mexico Border,” closes the volume with a reflection on hospitable and solidary spaces that exist in-between, analyzing visual art projects that look at the border wall in a transnational way. In particular, the author engages with murals and installations that deconstruct the militarized space of the border and promote solidarity and recognition.

The volume is well-organized and combines a series of well-researched chapters that complement each other, demonstrating the theoretical framework’s validity. It is definitely an interesting addition to the field and a great tool for scholars working on similar topics. It would have been good to have a few more chapters, maybe widening the scope to more varied media (as the two closing chapters leave the reader with the wish to read more). Furthermore, the chapters are focused on diverse Latinx experiences giving an insight into the complexity of Latinx identities in the United States—if anything, a couple of examinations of experiences not directly related to the US-Mexico border more (or something considering Indigenous Latinx migrants as estranged subjects) could have been a welcome addition. All in all, *Cosmopolitan Strangers* provides a good basis for any scholar who might be interested in approaching the field, as it encompasses a variety of perspectives, aspects, and frameworks constituting an adequate overview of US Latinx Literature and Culture. Although mostly focused on the US-Mexico border, Mexican and Central American immigration, the book collects solid, well-researched essays, including a few particularly original approaches that make for enriching reading, even for scholars already specialized in the topics examined.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Us & Them: Women Writers' Discourses on Foreignness

Manuela Palacios

Frank & Time, 2023. 237 pp.
ISBN: 978-3-86596-489-2

Us & Them: *Women Writers' Discourses on Foreignness* is an innovative, well-written, and carefully constructed volume that thoroughly examines issues of foreignness, identity, and otherization as they interact with gender dynamics in contemporary Galician and Irish literature written by women. After having directed five research projects funded by the Spanish Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación and the European Regional Development Fund in relation to said literary fields, Manuela Palacios “yield[s] their juices” together (9) in this volume to provide an in-depth, flavorful comparative analysis of Galician and Irish poetry, fiction, and drama. *Us & Them* belongs to the book series iBroLit–Ibero-Romance Studies in Literature and Translatology founded by the GAELT research group at the University of Vigo, which seeks to encourage research in Ibero-Romance cultures and literatures.

Us & Them, as its own title indicates, deconstructs well-established, clear-cut dichotomies in identity formation by exploring the (foreign) Other as part of, rather than apart from, the Self, as critic Julia Kristeva has pointed out in her 1991 work *Strangers to Ourselves*, which permeates the entirety of Palacios’ analysis (13). The author takes “the conspicuous increase of women writers in Galicia and Ireland since the 1980s” as the point of departure to observe how “migration flows, increasingly multicultural societies, constant renegotiations of national identity, and the growing visibility of women in the public sphere” have affected contemporary women’s writing in both communities, consequently destabilizing “the already problematic notions of Irishness and Galicianness” (15). Galicia and Ireland are presented in this volume as two parts in constant dialogue, thus Palacios carries out a comparative study on the “crossing lines, tensions, and discontinuities between both literary fields” (17). The contemporary representation of the stranger in Galician and Irish literatures, the author argues, challenges conventional understandings of self and other as a result of a series of social, historical, political, and economic events that intertwine both traditions: a common agrarian past, shared Celtic foundational myths and cultural nationalism, the claims for the recognition of their national difference, bilingualism, the powerful influence of Catholicism, the 80s-onwards feminist struggle, the impact of an expanding European Union, and the aftermaths of the 1980s, 2007, and 2022 financial crises.

The book consists of three parts, the first of which is dedicated to “The Genres of Foreignness” and focuses on the analysis of several pieces of poetry, (short) fiction, and drama. In the first section of the fragment dedicated to contemporary Irish and Galician poetry, Palacios explores “the diverse configurations of foreignness” (2023, 27) in a series of poems belonging to Mary O’Donnell’s collection *Massacre of the Birds*, published in Ireland in 2021. Through the meticulous analysis of O’Donnell’s poetry, Palacios touches upon varied key notions relating to *us & them*: glocalization, asylum seeking, sex

trafficking, women's double colonization at the hands of both colonizing and patriarchal powers, religious strangeness, and the otherness of the Irish language. (Eco)feminism and animal studies pervade Palacio's study of O'Donnell's poetry, which, in turn, "confirms that patriarchal and (neo)colonialist oppression aim to animalize the subaltern so as to remove any moral consideration from their exploitation" (42).

Palacios then delves into Alba Cid's geographical journey in *Atlas* (2019), which entails "a voyage through time that encompasses history and legend, reality and fiction" as it is constructed as "an imaginative travel around five continents" (43). Palacios looks at "the encounter of opposites" (48) in Cid's poems by examining the local and the foreign, home and abroad, here and there, past and present, time and space. The migration of human, more-than-human, vegetal, and animal beings serves as a common thread in Palacios' analysis to showcase Cid's "broad range of possibilities for the interrelation between *us* and *them*" (53).

To conclude this first section on poetry, Palacios draws correspondences between the poems of O'Donnell and Cid, reminding the reader that "the findings in one literary field will be relevant to the other, and that concerns raised in one national literature may expose blind spots or tantalising omissions in the other" (61). This idea can be appreciated as a continuum in the volume.

In "Us & Them in Contemporary Irish and Galician Short Fiction," Palacios first looks at Englishness, Irishness, and female subjectivity through the stories "The Wall Reader" (1985) by Fionna Barr, "Five Notes after a Visit" (1985) by Anne Devlin, and "Twenty-nine Palms" (2008) by already-discussed author Mary O'Donnell. Palacios examines these three short stories from the unique perspective offered by the us-and-them implications of the Troubles in Northern Ireland: whereas Barr and Devlin write when the conflict reaches its "peak of cruelty" (77), O'Donnell writes a decade after the Good Friday Agreement. In this vein, the author dedicates the next section to "Nomadic Women" (79) by studying two Galician short story compilations: *Narradoras. 25 autoras galegas* (Abraldes 2000) and *O libro dos trens* (Cabaleiro et al. 2019). She draws on Rosi Braidotti's three possible figurations of women's mobility: the exile, the nomad, and the migrant (1992) to "scrutinize the various ways in which women authors of short stories engage with notions of women's mobility, foreignness, and the general configuration of otherness" (79).

Palacios then deals with us & them in the contemporary Irish and Galician novel. This section looks firstly at Evelyn Conlon's historical novel *Not the Same Sky* (2013) and explores notions of Irish diaspora, colonialism, gender, sameness and difference, identity, language, xenophobia and racism, settler-aboriginal interactions, trauma, and migration and the animal trope. The author looks at Conlon's narrative, which centers around the aftermath of the 1848 famine for four orphan Irish girls who are forcibly taken on a voyage to address the shortage of female labor in Australia. This section studies the transmission of painful memories after the trauma of dispossession and the erasure of identity.

To continue the analysis on "the main intersectional conflicts that arise in migrant groups" (130), the volume delves into Eva Moreda's *A Veiga É Como Un Tempo Distinto* (2011), a novel about two Galician/Asturian emigrants "who go to London in the 1960s and early 1970s to work in low-skilled, low-paying jobs" (115). Palacios looks at the two protagonists of the novel, Gelo and Elisa, as they struggle to feel entirely at home both in Spain and abroad during the times of Francoist oppression, since "foreignness is a condition that will accompany them indefinitely" (117). Edward Said's *Reflections on Exile* (2000) infuses Palacio's analysis, which in turn attends to the contrapuntal process that bolsters "the *us-them, now-then, here-there*" binaries in Moreda's novel (127, italics in the original).

To finalize this first part on literary criticism, the volume aims at exploring the us & them relationship in contemporary Irish and Galician drama spheres, bearing in mind the gender gap concerning the presence and representation of women in theatre that affects both nations. By making Lorna Shaughnessy's *The Sacrificial Wind* (first performed in Galway in 2016) and Luz Pozo Garza's *Medea en Corinto* (2003) the targets of her analysis, Palacios explores the rewriting of Greek myths in the shape of "dramatic poems" (167) to investigate disruptive configurations of foreignness and gender. Shaughnessy adapts Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* to the Irish socio-political context (141), thus presenting a metaphor for, in Shaughnessy's own words, the "deaths of civilians" in the interests of militarism and political expediency (quoted in Palacios 2023, 143). On her part, Pozo Garza rewrites *Medea*, originally by the same Greek tragedian, and challenges patriarchal and xenophobic stereotypes as seen in previous male theatrical representations of the myth (158). Palacios argues that references to Galician landscape and literature are constant, as she explores both playwrights' entwining of contemporary Irish and Galician contexts in their plays based on Greek tradition and delves into the configuration of otherness in the portrayal of their "two almost antithetical heroines," Medea and Iphigenia (168).

The second part of the book is dedicated to glocal identities in translation. Palacios moves away from strict literary criticism to explore the strategies of poetry translation devised by Irish and Galician authors to promote the survival and strengthening of their minoritized languages (171). This chapter inquires into "those translation strategies that maintain the local singularity of literary texts in translational cultural projects," thus observing representations of foreignness through the local as potential site of resistance to the impositions of globalization (183).

Lastly, the third part of *Us & Them* looks at the relationship with the experience of travel, migration, and foreignness in communities that have suffered traumatic experiences of massive emigration through a meticulous questionnaire answered by different Irish and Galician women authors: from Ireland, Celia de Fréine, Lia Mills, Mary O'Donnell, Rita Kelly, Mary Hosty, and Lorna Shaughnessy; from Galicia, María do Carme Kruckenberg, Marilar Aleixandre, Luz Pichel, Chus Pato, Teresa Moure, Lupe Gómez, María do Cebreiro, Yolanda Castaño and Eva Moreda (188).

Manuela Palacios succeeds in creating an accessible yet detailed and wide-ranging critical analysis of contemporary configurations of foreignness by Galician and Irish women authors of all genres. *Us & Them: Women Writers' Discourses on Foreignness* becomes therefore an essential read for students and scholars attentive to the entwining of Galician and Irish cultures as seen on both communities' most recent literary productions. The intermingling of literary analysis with observations on Galician-Irish translations as well as with the sharing of individualized travel and migration experiences of authors contributes to the productive experience that this unique and rigorous volume entails for any reader interested in the matter.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This publication has been carried out thanks to the funding from the Ministry of Universities for University Teaching Staff Training (FPU21/01836).



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BOOK REVIEWS

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La peste escarlata, de Jack London

Jesús Isaías Gómez López (trad. y pról.)

Madrid: Visor, 2021, 132 pp.
ISBN: 978-84-9895-602-3

La ironía del asunto reside en que como especie nos creemos ilustrados, sabios, poderosos y previsores, cuando en realidad somos seres totalmente indefensos y a merced de los elementos.

(Gómez López 2021, 36)

La presente edición crítica de *La peste escarlata*, del escritor estadounidense Jack London (12 de enero de 1876-22 de noviembre de 1916), quien inauguró el siglo XX como uno de los novelistas más célebres de su tiempo gracias a obras representativas como *La llamada de lo salvaje* (*The Call of the Wild*, 1903), *Lobo de mar* (*The Sea-Wolf*, 1904) y *Colmillo blanco* (*White Fang*, 1906), fue impresa por Visor en el año 2021.¹ El prólogo y la traducción corren a cargo del especialista Jesús Isaías Gómez López, quien traduce fielmente y examina la primera edición de la novela, *The Scarlet Plague*, editada en forma de libro por Macmillan en Nueva York en 1915, aunque publicada originalmente en la revista *The London Magazine* en Londres en 1912. *La peste escarlata*, un clásico célebre acerca de la escalofriante vulnerabilidad de la civilización, inició el género de novela de corte catastrofista a los horrores de ese escenario (pos)apocalíptico imaginado por el autor. Se trata de una novela corta de ciencia ficción, que destaca por su carácter (pos)apocalíptico e, increíblemente, por su fuerte vocación realista, que muestra cómo la aparición de un microscópico e imperceptible germen puede poner rápidamente en jaque a la humanidad.

Situada en el año 2073, la obra aborda el resultado nefasto de una peste (la peste escarlata o muerte roja) cuyo brote inicial se produce en Inglaterra en el año 2013. Las víctimas fallecen a la media hora tras la aparición de los primeros síntomas, volviéndose de un rojo intenso, especialmente el rostro, al mismo tiempo que se les entumescen las extremidades inferiores. La insólita celeridad con que se propaga el germen pone de manifiesto la debilidad del ser humano y colma el horizonte de inseguridades, temores y confusiones, produciendo una desalentadora pérdida de confianza en la ciencia y en los avances. El ser humano asiste estupefacto al derrumbe de las instituciones, de la cohabitación, del lenguaje, del conocimiento, de la moralidad, etc.

En este estado de total abandono, Jack London esboza un retrato del regreso del ser humano a un estado primigenio,

¹ Este trabajo forma parte del proyecto realizado por el grupo de investigación Lindisfarne en el marco del CEI Patrimonio, Universidad de Almería.

solitario, caracterizado por la hosquedad y el desvalimiento. De esta manera, en un territorio prácticamente yermo, donde sobrevivirán los más aptos (existe un claro reflejo del darwinismo social en la narración de Jack London), tan solo coexisten un reducido grupo de tribus sin contacto entre ellas. Estos miembros tribales, entre los que hay un pequeño clan de cazadores-recolectores trashumantes encabezado por el abuelo, James Howard Smith, y al que acompañan sus nietos, Edwin, Hu-Hu y Cara de Liebre, son intimidados por otras especies animales que han reconquistado la tierra que antaño fue suya y usurpada por los seres humanos.

Los nietos de James Howard Smith, quienes, como el resto de supervivientes, poseen un nivel intelectual y un lenguaje muy limitado, le piden a su abuelo que les narre los hechos acaecidos durante la pandemia que asoló el mundo. Así como una escena retrospectiva o *flashback*, la historia adquiere una estructura del relato de la vida del abuelo, convertido en narrador, quien cuenta la catástrofe a sus nietos, impregnando la narración con comentarios de dolor lacerante y melancolía lastimosa de tiempos pretéritos: su trabajo como profesor de universidad, la angustia provocada ante el acelerado avance del germen, el rechazo de su familia ante el miedo de que estuviera contagiado, la ausencia de una cura provocada por la muerte de los científicos y médicos que investigaban el germen, el caos y el salvajismo que se desatan en las ciudades (llegando incluso al asesinato en una lucha sin precedentes por la supervivencia), su éxodo junto con otras personas hacia el norte, los tres años de soledad con la única compañía de dos perros y un poni, su terrible descubrimiento al regresar a San Francisco, transformada, tras la peste, en un escenario en ruinas humeantes, restos mortales sin sepultar y una población reducida a la estremecedora cifra de cuarenta habitantes, etc.

A los lectores les resultará de lo más interesante el estudio previo de Jesús Isaías Gómez López, quien analiza los sentidos y significados de *La peste escarlata*, y la vincula con el resto de literatura pandémica de gran parte del siglo XX. Todo ello se une a una admirable labor de traducción por parte del citado versado, la cual es fluida, facilitando el disfrute de esta novela.

En el primer apartado de la introducción, “La peste: la llamada de la naturaleza,” Jesús Isaías Gómez López (7-11) destaca el sometimiento del ser humano, tras la peste, a la llamada de la naturaleza, en tanto que esta se transforma en su salvadora in extremis a la par que lo retorna a un estado de regresión primigenia.

En el segundo apartado, “La peste pandémica: la llegada del apocalipsis,” el citado investigador (12-18) señala el declive de la civilización, reducida, en tan solo setenta años tras la pandemia, a un limitado grupo de tribus nómadas y salvajes, quienes hablan un ininteligible inglés. Desaparecida la civilización, el ser humano queda subordinado a las leyes de la naturaleza, justamente lo contrario a lo que venía sucediendo hasta la llegada de la peste escarlata. “En la novela vemos que la lucha del hombre contra la naturaleza acaba destruyéndolo, salvo cuando este acepta el dominio de la naturaleza,” escribe Gómez López (18).

En el tercer apartado, “El retorno al estado salvaje: la peste-pandemia como catástrofe,” el editor llama la atención sobre las grandes dosis de darwinismo presentes en la obra de Jack London (19-23). Tras la peste, el estado de naturaleza salvaje ha posibilitado que los más fuertes, los más bárbaros, subsistan y sometan al resto, transformando el mundo en un territorio hostil y cruel donde el conocimiento de la humanidad se ha desvanecido completamente y donde solo resistirá el más bruto.

En el cuarto apartado, “El derrumbe de la civilización: una lectura (pos)apocalíptica,” Gómez López (23-27) afirma que el relato puede leerse como un importante aviso sobre el infierno que puede desatar una pandemia de tales dimensiones en la humanidad en muy poco tiempo, apenas setenta años en la novela, desde un escenario apocalíptico, que se produce con la irrupción de la peste en 2013 y que provoca el desplome de la civilización, a otro posapocalíptico, donde se produce una regresión del ser humano a su estado primitivo.

En el quinto y último apartado, “*La peste escarlata*: un modelo (pos)apocalíptico de literatura pandémica” (28-37), Gómez López realiza un breve recorrido literario-histórico de la literatura pandémica. Entre aquellas obras que influenciaron *La peste escarlata* sobresalen *El último hombre* (*The Last Man*, 1826), de Mary Shelley, y *La máscara de la muerte roja* (*The Masque of the Red Death*, 1842), de Edgar Allan Poe. La novedad de esta obra ingeniosa de Jack London, dentro de la literatura pandémica, reside en su carácter (pos)apocalíptico, poseedora de ambos escenarios: apocalíptico (año 2013) y posapocalíptico (año 2073). *La peste escarlata* es un clásico de la distopía que estrenó el género del relato posapocalíptico y cuya impresión quedó plasmada en infinidad de publicaciones ulteriores entre las que destacan *Mono y esencia* (*Ape and Essence*, 1948), de Aldous Huxley, y *Crónicas marcianas* (*The Martian Chronicles*, 1950), de Ray Bradbury.

A la usual destreza narrativa de Jack London se une, en *La peste escarlata*, un destacado e inusitado talento para prever el futuro de la humanidad de manera asombrosa y terrible. Cada página de la obra está impregnada de puro dramatismo, sobrecogimiento, angustia, terror y (pos)apocalipsis. Con un lenguaje sencillo, sin artificios ni adornos, el autor ofrece una perspectiva desconcertante, melancólica y quizás la más realista hasta la fecha de la civilización. El realismo del estilo de Jack London es su mejor arma para captar la atención de los lectores desde el principio de la narración, por medio de la

combinación, por un lado, del lenguaje cuidado en el discurso ilustrado del profesor de literatura inglesa, James Howard Smith, baluarte de una civilización ya perdida, y, de otro lado, el del argot primitivo, con expresiones onomatopéyicas, de los nietos del profesor, como arquetipos de una nueva humanidad que se ve obligada a renacer en las cavernas (20).

En la novela, la pandemia es dibujada con ese trazo pesimista que Jack London ya exhibió en *Una invasión sin precedentes* (*The Unparalleled Invasion*, 1910), donde anticipó, dentro del campo de la ciencia ficción, la guerra bacteriológica. No obstante, aparte de tal consideración, lo más destacable es el atractivo del relato, una cualidad que el escritor supo mantener a la perfección durante toda su vida creativa. La fragilidad de las bases sobre las que se asienta la existencia humana es preocupante. Tras la desaparición del mundo tal y como lo conocemos, las futuras generaciones, sin posibilidad de acceder a ese conocimiento acumulado durante siglos y siglos de historia de la humanidad, perdido tras la peste, regresan a una condición primigenia de tabula rasa: tosca, lega, crédula, ni siquiera el lenguaje se mantiene intacto, transformándose en un idioma enrevesado, elemental y adulterado.

A través de *La peste escarlata*, descendemos a la parte más profunda y sórdida del alma humana, a los sentimientos más ancestrales del ser humano, al derrumbe en unas pocas décadas de todo el saber de siglos de civilización hasta transformar a los pocos supervivientes en remedos de los cavernícolas. Cada escena del relato fusiona la pasión conglomerada de la literatura, el cine y la pintura, dejando una marca imborrable en las almas de los lectores, quienes suspirarán aliviados ante un desenlace cargado de una hermosa sensibilidad y una remota certidumbre.

En suma, la lectura de *La peste escarlata* resulta especialmente adecuada en la actualidad, debido a que la historia cobra un particular realismo en nuestra época, especialmente a raíz de la pandemia COVID-19 que estalló a finales de 2019 y cuyas catastróficas consecuencias venimos arrastrando desde entonces. Y esta edición en castellano de la editorial Visor, a cargo del versado Jesús Isaías Gómez López, resulta una excelente opción para hacerlo, pues tanto la interesante introducción analítica como la traducción lúcida y certera del citado experto permiten un mejor entendimiento y un mayor disfrute de esta obra particular de Jack London.

A pesar de no ser terminante en presagio, pues solamente el más arriesgado en este campo de la ciencia ficción podría tratar de hacerlo con mayor o menor éxito, es muy notoria en desarrollo lógico y planteamiento posterior de una sociedad abocada al cataclismo y el comienzo nuevamente. Por consiguiente, *La peste escarlata* es una obra recomendable, que invita a la meditación, y con la que el lector habitual disfrutará una vez más del intelecto y saber escrito de este gran novelista. Y el nuevo lector que se adentre por primera vez hallará uno de los mayores valores de la narrativa de comienzos del siglo XX.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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A Collection of Sundrie Approved Receipts: Study and Edition of Glasgow University Library, Ferguson MS 43

Isabel De la Cruz Cabanillas

Ediciones Críticas 09. Madrid: Editorial Universidad de Alcalá, 2023. 140 pp.
ISBN: 978-84-18979-42-2

The realm of scientific and medical manuscripts has remained relatively unexplored in scholarly pursuits. Moreover, the existing link between the study of manuscripts and specialised audiences increases the inaccessibility towards the fields of Historical Sociolinguistics and Manuscript Studies. Medieval and modern medical recipes serve as valuable sources of information for researchers to delve into sociocultural and linguistic aspects of the past. The study of these texts is relevant since they exhibit a long textual tradition. Moreover, recipes have historically been used as accessible sources of instructions and remedies for common ailments (Alonso-Almeida and Carroll 2004). In her 2023 volume *A Collection of Sundrie Approved Receipts: Study and Edition of Glasgow University Library, Ferguson MS 43*, Isabel De la Cruz Cabanillas presents a rigorous analysis of Ferguson MS 43, an eighteenth-century medical recipe manuscript housed at Glasgow University Library.

The book offers a variety of perspectives to approach an unedited medical manuscript. The author includes a semi-diplomatic edition of the text, a glossary of technical terminology and a range of analyses covering palaeographical, linguistic and social aspects to produce “a study of relevant linguistic features in the recipe genre, as well as to present this specific volume in the historical, social and cultural context in which it was written” (14). These analyses evince the author’s close attention to detail and a commitment to making this linguistic field more accessible to a wide readership, embodying her goal to “render the inaccessible accessible and provide readers with an intelligible text” (13).

De la Cruz Cabanillas has focused her research on the study of medical manuscripts and social-related topics. Her publications include analyses of medical manuscripts, such as “Editing the Medical Recipes in the Glasgow University

Library Ferguson Collection” (2017a). The author has also contributed notable research on sociocultural aspects of such texts, evident in works like “Foreign Ingredients in Early and Late Modern English Recipes” (2022), “Verbal Magic and Healing Charms in Glasgow University Library MS Ferguson 147” (2021) or “Early Modern English Recipes as a Mirror of the Time Period” (2020). In these studies, De la Cruz Cabanillas covers a variety of perspectives related to medical recipes, such as novel ingredients, sociolinguistic features of charms and social habits, all of which showcase a cultural overview of the period under scrutiny. In addition, the author demonstrates an interest in studies related to gender differences within the field of Historical Sociolinguistics. Notable works include “Genre and Text-Type Conventions in Early Modern English Women’s Recipe Books” (2017b) and “Mary Harrison’s Recipe Book: Women and Household Medicine in Late 17th Century” (2016). These works focus on women writers of medical recipe books and directly address the role of women in seventeenth-century society.

The present book is structured into four main sections that focus on different analyses of Ferguson MS 43. The introductory section acquaints readers with the text and the provided edition of the text. Likewise, there are aspects related to the role of women within the genre of recipe collection. As Ferguson MS 43 is attributed to Lady Stanhope, De la Cruz Cabanillas focuses on gender-related aspects and asserts that “these texts also played an important role in transmitting and disseminating knowledge within the women’s families and social circles” (14). Thus, this underscores the role women played in the use and distribution of medical recipes, which was essential for household medicine, since “it showcases the capacity of women’s recipe collections to provide valuable information regarding eighteenth century domestic medical practice, especially women’s contributions to this” (14).

The second section delves into the manuscript as a physical object and presents sociolinguistic aspects of the text in order to obtain a complete perspective of Ferguson MS 43. The author contextualises the manuscript and begins with a historical insight into the Ferguson Collection. De la Cruz Cabanillas provides an exhaustive analysis of Ferguson MS 43 with a palaeographical description encompassing physical attributes such as the type of hand, marginalia, abbreviations and punctuation. Authorship receives careful attention with detailed descriptions of the Stanhope family and a nuanced examination of potential candidates for the title of *Lady Stanhope*. The content of the recipe collection is scrutinised, including types of diseases, utensils, ingredients and linguistic features of the eighteenth century. This section features technical terminology used to describe both the manuscript and its content, which is supplemented by definitions, figures, tables, and images from the original text to enhance comprehension.

In turn, the third and fourth sections address the contents of the text. The third section presents a semi-diplomatic edition of Ferguson MS 43, thoughtfully formatting pages to juxtapose the original manuscript image with its transcription. The author, in addition, preserves the visual characteristics of the original *folio* including its specific layout in the transcription. While the semi-diplomatic edition typically maintains the original conventions of the text, which might pose comprehension challenges, the author provides prior explanations of the linguistic and content-related aspects that are found in the transcription. The fourth section encompasses a glossary that draws definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) for frequently occurring terminology that appears in the text, in particular, “ingredients, techniques, weights and measures, implements, remedies and ailments that might not be familiar to a modern reader” (119). The presence of this section reinforces the author’s intention of making the manuscript accessible and understandable.

Other notable works also pay attention to the analysis and edition of specific medical manuscripts. Notably, the “Middle and Early Modern English Texts” series published by Peter Lang, focuses on the publication of unedited scientific manuscripts such as *A Late Middle English Remedy-book (MS Wellcome 542, ff. 1r-20v): A Scholarly Edition* (Calle-Martín and Castaño-Gil 2014) and *Lelamour Herbal (MS Sloane 5, ff. 13r-57r): An Annotated Critical Edition* (Moreno-Olalla 2018). Other relevant books are *A Middle English Medical Remedy Book Edited from Glasgow University Library MS Hunter 185* (Alonso-Almeida 2014) and *Un Recetario Inédito del s. XVI en la Biblioteca Hunteriana de Glasgow: Edición y Estudio* (Ortega-Barrera 2014). These volumes focus on individual manuscripts in order to adopt a thorough analysis of the texts. The detailed study of scientific manuscripts yields insight into language and social developments of the past. Thus, the publication of these books contributes to widening the scope of the field of Historical Sociolinguistics.

In conclusion, *A Collection of Sundrie Approved Receipts: Study and Edition of Glasgow University Library, Ferguson MS 43* stands as an outstanding work that explores the realm of modern English medical manuscripts concerning linguistic, sociocultural and historical aspects of the eighteenth century. These aspects strengthen the study and provide the reader with a type of science that might otherwise go unnoticed. The author successfully accomplishes her goal of making “the inaccessible accessible” (13), a fact which has been thoroughly present in the volume. De la Cruz Cabanillas showcases that Historical Sociolinguistics and Manuscript Studies need not remain confined to specialised audiences; they can be rendered accessible to a wide readership.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Discourse, Dialogue and Characterisation in TV Series

Carmen Gregori-Signes, Miguel Fuster-Márquez and Sergio Maruenda-Bataller (eds.)

Granada: Editorial Comares, 2021. 174 pp.

ISBN: 978-84-1369-294-4

It is commonly believed that movies are under more pressure than TV series in terms of time and plot, since they need to present themes, action and characters in a very short time frame. However, television serial formats face the same challenge: they must sell the story and the protagonists as soon as possible, making the spectators comfortable in the story setting so they do not drop out the product. Whether in half-hour or hour-long episodes, the messages should be concise yet consistent, steering clear of contradictions while enhancing engagement. Aspects such as identity and belonging, interpersonal relationships or subtext, for example, ought to be squared with the series structure to give shape to the general plot.

Discourse, Dialogue and Characterisation in TV Series, edited by Carmen Gregori-Signes, Miguel Fuster-Márquez and Sergio Maruenda-Bataller, and published by Editorial Comares in 2021, explores the challenges of these formats and how new audiences and interests are being addressed. Across nine chapters contributed by various authors, the reader will discover analyses of a range of shows, including *Black Mirror*, *The Big Bang Theory* or *Game of Thrones*, among others. These analyses concentrate on various aspects of the characters, their discourse, and their idiosyncrasies.

In chapter 1, Monika Bednarek examines the incorporation of Aboriginal lexicon in audiovisual media to promote the normalization of indigenous languages and identity. The subject of study is Australian Aboriginal English (AAE) in the series *Redfern Now*. In a medium where minority Englishes have traditionally aroused negative attitudes towards ‘nonstandard’ language varieties, this Australian drama embraces diversity by incorporating familiar AAE lexicon, thereby reinforcing the characters’ speech. Through a combination of corpus linguistic analysis and sociolinguistic theory, Bednarek explores how this type of minority English is introduced in the series, remarking the important role of televisual speech. The lexicon not only presents and normalizes minority languages, but also connects with the aboriginal viewers, giving those communities a wider representation in popular culture.

The second chapter, written by Miriam Fernández-Santiago, explores the integration of disability and precarity in the dystopian story of *Mr. Robot*, set on what is considered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by mobile technologies, artificial intelligence and the “Internet of Things.” Fernández-Santiago analyzes the actions of F-Society, the revolutionary group that fights against the big E-Corp, responsible of the precarious situation of the American Working Class. She also explores how the protagonist, Esmail, represents the vulnerabilities of the human beings behind the work force mass, especially the individuals who are mentally and physically compromised, and how the cyberpunk narratives affect representation.

For Chapter 3, Paul Mitchell presents the Swedish series *Real Humans* and its British/US remake, *Humans*, as examples of the ethical issues aroused by the interactions between humans and robots. This work focuses mainly on the sexuality issues and the implications of “cyborgification.” Mitchell analyzes robosexuality as opposed to fetishism, in terms of dialogue, consent and desire. Through the study of these interactions of hybrid socialization and performance, this chapter explains new forms of connection and self-perception that cross the boundaries between humanity and robotic beings, articulating a kind of “cyborg-philosophy.”

Chapter 4, by Gustavo A. Rodríguez Martín, is a sociolinguistic analysis of the terms of address in *Breaking Bad* and their role in discourse, beyond their mere vocative function. Rodríguez Martín explains how the linguistic behavior of different characters towards the protagonist, Walter White, define in a complex way their relationship with him. For example, the familiar nicknames of his wife show how her attitude towards him changes as the plot gets darker. On the other hand, we have the respectful “Mr White” used by his students, including Jesse Pinkman, who would become White’s fellow in the meth-cooking business. This piece thus offers a deep study of the role of vocatives and their evolution through the series, explaining how discourse markers create or break burdens in different relationships.

In Chapter 5, written by Ana Belén Cabrejas-Peñuelas, we are offered a research work concerning the linguistic choices of Daenerys Targaryen in *Game of Thrones*. From strategic negotiation to troops rousing, Khaleesi’s language and discourse are analyzed to find out how lexicon and tone contribute to character-building. Cabrejas-Peñuelas explores the evolution of this character and the use of different elements (such as positive reassurance and identity labels) in order to distinguish herself from male commanders and political leaders. At the same time, this discourse style is aimed to reassess herself as an emblem of a brighter future, but also as the heir of a lineage that had reigned in Westeros for almost three centuries. Consequently, Daenerys’s speech idiosyncrasy is aimed at motivating her armies, but also at approaching their potential allies and reinforcing her leadership and position from a feminist identity and vindication of legitimacy.

Chapter 6, by Manuel Rodríguez Peñarroja, verses about the use of compliments and laughter in *Black Mirror*’s episode *Nosedive*. Using corpus pragmatic analysis, Rodríguez Peñarroja investigates how these communicational dynamics drive the plot. Social affection through interaction is a complex matter in this episode, since some of these compliment exchanges are face-to-face dialogues, but many others are star-ratings on social media or apps. Moreover, the need for reciprocity to increase social credit transforms compliment-giving and laughter into tools to escalate positions and reinforce self-image. This study considers all of this to explain how positive feedback is used as the main driving force in the society presented in this dystopia.

In Chapter 7, Daniela Landert explores depiction and characterization in eighteen different TV series pilots from a linguistic perspective. Through the analysis of the opening scene from shows like *The Big Bang Theory* or *Gilmore Girls*, Landert studies two different areas: first, the direct characterization issues, for example, naming, profession, or interests. Then, she focuses on the duration of that presentation, and on how long it takes for a character to get established. Through direct introductions, descriptions or interactions between characters, pilots use a few minutes’ interval to set the premise for the spectators, giving them enough information to connect with the protagonists and become engaged enough to keep watching the series.

Chapter 8, written by Laura Álvarez Trigo, is about the TV show *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*, and it focuses on three transversal aspects: intertextuality, affect and fandom. This series is a reboot from the 1980s *She-Ra: Princess of Power*, and this was a chance for retelling the story in a more inclusive way, paying attention to different aspects such as socio-political situations and the media consumption habits of young generations. Álvarez Trigo analyzes how feminist and queer issues are implemented in the plot, and also how this is key for building a relationship with the fandom. Streaming services and social media are determining tools in contemporary television consumption, and this series uses these elements as platforms to spread its powerful messages.

Finally, in Chapter 9, Laura Mercé Moreno Serrano analyzes how domestic violence is developed through discourse, taking *Big Little Lies* as a case of study. The marriage of Celeste and Perry Wright as an archetype of abusive relationship offers a handful of examples of how aggressiveness escalates through verbal interactions. Moreno Serrano explains the role of language in this kind of abuse, analyzing the couple’s relationship using the model of the Cycle of Violence by Lenore E. Walker. Following this pattern with a handful of dialogue examples, we can understand how discourse strategies are the core of coercive control relationships, like the one presented in the series.

With all these different approaches and case studies, *Discourse, Dialogue and Characterisation in TV Series* offers a wide perspective on how new challenges regarding TV consumption, new targets and socio-cultural aspects are addressed in very different narratives. The plot and character analyses are complemented by precise theoretical approaches to the field, equipping readers with the tools to independently analyze various examples from other television series or movies. Furthermore, the language is accessible to non-academics, and the methodologies are clearly elucidated, making it unnecessary to be an expert in the field of Television Studies to appreciate the contents and gain insights into the narrative strategies presented. As a result, *Discourse, Dialogue and Characterisation in TV Series* is unquestionably a recommended read for researchers, scholars, and anyone with an interest in audiovisual storytelling.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Representing 21st-Century Migration in Europe: Performing Borders, Identities and Texts

Nelson González Ortega and Ana Belén Martínez García (eds.)

New York: Berghahn Books, 2022. 239 pp.

ISBN: 9781800733800 (hardback) /

ISBN: 9781800733817 (eBook)

Migration, in all its manifestations, is a topic that has always attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention. Nowadays, human mobility has acquired new dimensions as a result of the multiple armed conflicts occurring in several parts of the world like Ukraine or Syria, the ongoing succession of *coups d'état* that have changed the national scene of many African and Latin American countries, the depletion of natural resources, the undermining of human rights and other freedoms, the absence of *de facto* democratic governments or the effects of the climate emergence. Not only has this new and challenging geo-political scenario propelled the forced displacement of an increasing number of individuals, but it has also encouraged experts to re-assess the phenomenon of migration and the notion of the nomadic subject in the twenty-first century, re-considering practices of hospitality and humanitarianism.

Key to this process of re-assessment of the new dynamics of contemporary migration is the politico-institutional and social response diasporic subjects are receiving upon their arrival to their destination countries. Unfortunately, and despite the massive efforts of NGOs, local organisations, activists and other renowned scholars, migrants—especially those coming from the Global South—are discursively constructed as a threat to (Western) national identity, cohesion and economy. And thus, they are deliberately imagined following ideas of invasion, organised crime, terrorism, religious fundamentalism and even opportunism. In this light, the wave of resurgent nationalisms and far-right political parties and their anti-immigrant rhetoric has contributed to the stigmatisation and criminalisation of undocumented newcomers. Additionally, and as part of the politico-institutional response given to what Achille Mbembe has termed as “the problem of excess of presence” (2019, 43), we are bearing witness to the active containment and/or deportation of the so-called abject Others by numerous Western governments such as, for instance, the recent creation of the infamous “Bibby Stockholm barge” in post-Brexit UK to literally keep certain newcomers at

bay (Pakzad and Farley 2023, n.p.); the hyper-securitisation/militarisation of borders like the progressive fortification of Ceuta' and Melilla's border fences (Castan Pinos 2022, n.p.); and the implementation of strict immigration surveillance like the US surveillance program designed to track undocumented migrants (Bhuiyan 2022, n.p.).

Representing 21st-Century Migration in Europe: Performing Borders, Identities and Texts, edited by Nelson González Ortega and Ana Belén Martínez García and published by Berghahn Books in 2022, originally grapples with the multifaceted representations of contemporary migration (in)to Europe as informed by a very specific theoretical framework: "border studies." As part of this field of study that has recently gained more prominence and theoretical depth (Anzaldúa 1987; Saldívar 1997; Brambilla et al. 2015; Schimanski and Wolfe 2017; Schimanski and Nyman 2021), the articles comprised in this collection are guided by four conceptual tools: the "chronotope/focalization," "metaphor/metonymy," "performative acts" and "border aesthetics" (6). Furthermore, the interdisciplinarity of this volume is worth emphasising, since it allows the contributors to "interrogate current textual, visual and performative modes of (re)presentation of migrants and migration from Asia and Africa to Europe between 2000 and 2020," while discerning the myriad forms of modern mobility that have emerged as a direct consequence of "colonialism, modernity and peripheral globalization worldwide" (3).

The volume is divided into four main parts, further organised into eleven chapters and the final conclusions. Part I—which includes the contributions of Nelson González Ortega, Carles Magrinyà Badiella, Mattias Aronsson, Johan Schimanski and Ana Belén Martínez García—focuses on the literary representations of migrancy into Europe as discussed in a number of narrative texts (mainly novels, memoirs, diaries and autobiographies) that explore the testimonies of mobile subjects coming from Africa and Asia and their border-crossing ventures.

The contributions of this section concern themselves with the narratives by Equatorial Guinean Donato Ndongo, Gambian Kalilu Jammeh or Senegalese Pathé Cissé and Fatou Diome, in an effort to analyse how sub-Saharan African immigration to Spain is represented in the works of writers who have actually migrated themselves. González Ortega and Magrinyà Badiella examine a number of Bakhtinian chronotopes (e.g. dinghy boats, cayucos, taxis, ship containers, airplanes or trucks) to prove that the continent's migration laws are essentially designed to prevent or deter undocumented border-crossers from entering EU countries, while proving that the conception of Europe as "The Promised Land" is simply utopian and unreal. In their articles, the notion of the "borderscape" designated by Johan Schimanski and Stephen F. Wolfe (2017, 155) is extensively explored with regard to religion and the Mediterranean Sea; the latter being held as a porous border zone, that is, a geographical demarcation between continents that is traversed on a daily basis, and a symbolic separation between the familiar and the unknown, past and future or Islam and Christianity.

In his study of the reception of the works by Senegalese author Fatou Diome in Sweden, Aronsson addresses the female dimension of the migrant experience while focusing on the "feelings of inadequacy," alienation, hostility and (un)belonging transnational bodies experience upon their arrival in the destination country (63). The so-called "problematic relationship between centre and periphery" (55) allows this novelist, Fatou Diome, to interrogate Western hegemony in Africa and to discuss the aftermath of colonisation on the continent. While Aronsson focuses on first-generation African migrants, Schimanski delves into the identity conflicts and cultural dilemmas faced by second-generation diasporic subjects in selected texts by Somali-Norwegian writer Roda Ahmed. This contributor examines the paratexts and reviews concerning Ahmed's 2008 bestseller *Forberedelsen* (*The Preparation*) to determine the role these elements play in the critical reception of migrant literature by a Western audience. The article promotes a reading of the border-crossing experience as a practice of resistance and re-negotiation regarding the prejudiced perceptions of outsiders by Western host societies.

For her part, Ana Belén Martínez García analyses a series of written and audio-visual texts by Syrian activist Nujeen Mustafa. Her chapter originally ventures into the idea of the precarious "border-crosser" (90), in an effort to counteract the homogenising perceptions of these individuals and construct alternative narratives of migrancy that actually acknowledge our shared humanity. Martínez García concludes that the ultimate borderscape is not the Mediterranean Sea or the Atlantic Ocean but "the contestation of pre-existing master narratives, and the tension between resistance and acceptance" (92). For this scholar, dismantling these "master narratives" is paramount to grant refugees and asylum seekers the visibility and acceptance they deserve and so much strive for.

Part II—which includes the contributions of Ljiljana Šarić and Elizaveta Khachaturyan—delves into the ways "erratic" individuals are portrayed in mass media while discussing how photographs mediate in the representations of refugees and asylum seekers coming from Africa and Asia, generally depicting them in polar terms. In chapter 6, Šarić centres on the refugee crisis of 2015-16 as explored in the Croatian press with a special interest in the power of iconic images to generate an ethical response of empathy and solidarity. While in chapter 7 Khachaturyan devotes herself to the same task but this time as explored in the Italian mass media. Both researchers pay special attention to the different ways migrants are medially depicted (e.g. refugee as threat to the host community vs. refugee as suffering subject lacking in voice and agency) and the very specific use of language employed to discuss this historical situation: "tsunami," "exodus," "wave of migrants," etc. They conclude that these representations have a direct impact on how this community is characterised and on their prospective (non-)acceptance by the receiving society.

Part III—which includes the contributions of Carolina León Vegas and Laura Camacho Salgado—theorises about the depictions of clandestine travellers in contemporary European cinema and how these figures destabilise the very integrity of European nations. León Vegas investigates the notions of “border,” “space”—more specifically what this contributor names as the “subterranean and limbic spaces” (160)—and the metaphorical role of the body (i.e. corporealities) in several Spanish films from the 2010s dealing with the European and non-European migrant experience. In these movies, transnational subjects are figured as inhabiting underground spaces, conceiving them in the realm of the in-/subhuman as meaningless presences that are overtly denied a dignified existence. Whereas León Vegas’ analysis centres on the subterranean spaces non-native individuals are forced to inhabit, Camacho Salgado introduces what she terms as the “metaphor of illness,” in which migration is symbolically conceived as a disease and irregular aliens as threatening entities (i.e. pathogens) that are to be immediately expelled due to the risk they pose for “the body of the [European] nation” (167). This original metaphor thus lays bare Europe’s national insecurities, the fragility of its identities and borders, and its inability to come to terms with its (unresolved) colonial past.

Part IV—which includes the contributions of Olga Michael, Jovana Mastilovic, Elizabeth Challinor and the conclusions by Ana Belén Martínez García—study in detail a number of artistic works while probing its *artist* potential to counteract right-wing, xenophobic messages that, on the one hand, promote the “us VS. them” rhetoric and, on the other, flagrantly demonise subaltern Others. Michael’ and Mastilovic’s joint chapter explores diverse pictorial representations by inter-/non-governmental organisations that perpetuate dehumanising framings of undocumented migrants vis-à-vis other artistic manifestations by amateur artists standing up for a real politics of hospitality and integration. For her part, Challinor investigates a collaborative play that gathers several instances of border crossing and forced mobility in Northern Portugal based on the real experiences of migrants coming from different cultural backgrounds. This author warns readers against “a non-reflective, emotional humanitarian position” (220) that keeps on perpetuating reductive and stereotyping views regarding certain bodies *in transit*, and invites us to critically engage with the circumstances that force them to relocate every time.

This edited volume constitutes an extremely valuable exercise of multiple border crossing acts that essentially attempt to debunk deeply rooted misrepresentations of African and Asian migrants travelling (in)to Europe while contesting specific “bordering processes,” as Ana Belén Martínez García claims in the conclusions section (227). By implementing a number of cross-generic and multi-media perspectives, the articles comprised in this collection attest to the fact that mobility is an intrinsic part of human existence, though strongly conditioned by a matrix of oppressions and privileges, and that contemporary societies cannot be understood without empathetically acknowledging this phenomenon. In their contributions, the authors gathered in this volume centrally foster a critical humanitarian response towards those underprivileged and precarious visitors who are still subject to b/ordering, othering and neocolonial practices, and who have no choice but to be *on the move*.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Atlantic Communities: Translation, Mobility, Hospitality

María Teresa Caneda-Cabrera, Rui Carvalho Homem & David Johnston (eds.)

New York: Routledge, 2023. 132 pp.

ISBN 9781032407913

In the interdisciplinary Atlantic scholarly context, the volume *Atlantic Communities: Translation, Mobility, Hospitality* (2023) must be welcome as a timely and relevant publication which appropriately engages with contemporary issues pertaining to cultural diversity and identity within the Atlantic regions. As explained in their introduction, editors María Teresa Caneda-Cabrera, Rui Carvalho Homem, and David Johnston propose a discussion which transcends the conventional perception of the Atlantic as a mere geographical and cultural barrier and focuses instead on its functioning as a “space of transit, mobility, and, occasionally, hospitality among nations and peoples” (1). Drawing inspiration from Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), which first challenged nationalist and ethnocentric cultural criticism and emphasized the need for alternative perspectives, the editors advocate for an understanding of the Atlantic as a region shaped by multiplicity, coexistence, and diversity. Through this lens, the chapters in the volume examine the intricate interplay of physical and conceptual crossings, as well as the reciprocal influences among the varied Atlantic communities, portraying the Atlantic space as a multi-centered site of confluence and intersection.

In their fitting introduction, the editors insistingly embrace a relational conception of the Atlantic which challenges “abstract notions of identity and sameness” (Benjamin 1994, 214), and instead focuses on the “contingencies of encounter” and “the inbuilt inequities of geopolitical influence and power” (1). Referencing the interdisciplinary field of the humanities and social sciences in Soja’s *Postmodern Geographies* (1989), which recognizes the interpretive significance of space in contemporary critical thought, they argue for a renewed interplay between history and geography, emphasizing the need to balance the identity-affirming power of emplacement with the experience of displacement. To underscore the importance of interrogating processes of representation and examining the challenges posed by mobility and aspirations toward hospitality, the editors suggest that in a time “when our mental maps are being redrawn and frontiers of difference reinforced” (2-3), it is crucial to continue questioning representations and foster intercultural contact zones, such as the Atlantic, as spaces for shared understanding.

Within this framework of interconnectedness, it becomes imperative to examine the dominance of the English language in shaping the historical narrative of the Atlantic, particularly in the realms of trade and power dynamics. Such dominance raises legitimate concerns regarding the absence of a multilingual framework and the consequent dearth of translation in transatlantic research. Drawing upon the scholarly insights of Édouard Glissant’s notion of *a poetics of relation* and Julio

Ortega's concept of *transatlantic translation*, the editors compellingly argue for a broader perspective that acknowledges the transformative role of translation and the diverse perspectives it unveils. Consequently, they advocate for scholars to transcend the constraints of a monolingual understanding of the Atlantic and instead embrace the fluid and dynamic nature of relationality that is inherently intertwined with the act of translation. This call-to-action urges researchers to embrace a more inclusive and nuanced approach that encompasses the manifold possibilities and complexities arising from the multilingual fabric of the Atlantic region. Therefore, the present volume underscores the need to reconsider shared spaces, notably the Atlantic, reconceptualizing them as "spaces of fluctuation" or "multidirectional spaces" that challenge binary frameworks and foreground the pervasive presence of "dialogism, mediation, borrowings, and métissage" (2) with translation as a crucial mediator facilitating cross-cultural communication, fostering mutual understanding, and promoting intercultural dialogue within the Atlantic World.

The volume opens with Stephen Kelly's chapter on "The Atlantic Crossing and the 'New World': The Odd Political Theology of Modernity," a deep exploration of the Atlantic crossing's impact on Western interpretations of contemporary globalization. Kelly challenges prevalent assumptions linking translation, hospitality, and mobility to the neoliberal agenda. These terms, he contends, have become dominant discourses, displacing linguistic traditions in pursuit of a globally desirable cultural ethic. The Atlantic crossing contributed to dislocate European cultural traditions, ultimately engaging in epistemicide by discarding their own intellectual heritage in favor of a perceived superior worldview. In this context, Kelly engages in theoretical speculation regarding the potential for a politics of translation to challenge the entrenched neoliberal globalization paradigm. Such approach would emphasize the locality of knowledge-making practices and reintroduce epistemological humility from pre-modern cultures. Drawing from the work of anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's "Amerindian perspectivism," Kelly proposes alternative models of Atlantic mobility that diverge from the Western notion of translation as a transparent representation of a specific worldview. Likewise, the author advocates for a practice that redefines the conditions for translation as a mode of cross-cultural communication. Ultimately, the chapter puts forward a (re)conceptualization of translation as a means of fostering dialogue across cultures, and, thus, underscores the diverse ways of knowing and communicating.

In "Translating China to the Atlantic West: Self, Other, and Lin Yutang's Resistance," Yangyang Long undertakes an extensive examination of the translation techniques employed by Lin Yutang, an esteemed Chinese author and translator. The objective of Lin's translation practice is to challenge and rectify cultural misunderstandings between China and the Atlantic West. Yangyang Long's original analysis centers on Lin's departure from conventional Chinese translation methods and his integration of two fundamental principles of translation, namely *tongshun* (同顺, fluency) and *zhongshi* (中式 fidelity, faithfulness). Through the application of these principles, Lin endeavors to establish a harmonious space, known as *zhongyong* (中庸 central harmony), encapsulating the dynamic relationship between the Chinese Self and the Atlantic-Western Other. According to Yangyang Long, Lin's elucidation of *zhongyong* underscores the coexistence of subjugation and resistance, ultimately giving rise to an "imagined central territory" of relatedness (41). The author remarks that Lin's translational approach, undermines the essentialized and hegemonic Western paradigms historically imposed upon Chinese culture. Free from oversimplified representations, translation emerges as a means to invigorate a reciprocal and egalitarian modus operandi for cultural exchange between China and the Atlantic West.

In her "The Cross-Atlantic Knowledge Divide, or PISA for Development: Should One Size Ever Fit All?," Kathleen Kaess provides a sharp and pertinent analysis of PISA-D, the educational assessment system implemented by the OECD in developing and emerging nations. Kaess examines the potential ramifications of PISA-D in perpetuating global disparities in knowledge production and distribution. By conceptualizing the Atlantic Ocean not only as a physical barrier between continents but also as a symbolic space of division, Kaess illuminates the intricate global inequities between the Global North and the Global South. According to Kaess, the implementation of PISA-D raises concerns regarding the marginalization of local and indigenous knowledge systems, which may face the threat of epistemicide, leading to the erasure and devaluation of these alternative knowledge systems in favor of the dominant paradigm. Thus, Kaess stresses the need for an ethics of translation that encourages the adoption of diversity and equity strategies in education.

Michèle Milan's "Mary Anne Sadlier's Trans-Atlantic Links: Migration, Religion, and Translation" provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between religion, migration, and translation within the context of the 19th-century Atlantic world. Milan's analysis specifically focuses on the life and literary contributions of the Irish writer Mary Anne Sadlier, highlighting the significance of recognizing women's capacity to exert influence on the transatlantic literary landscape of her time. Within the discourse of transatlantic academia, Milan argues that Sadlier's trajectory as a "transatlantic translator" reveals a complex web of textual exchanges, where a diverse array of translation agents contributed to the transcultural dissemination of religious, literary, and cultural ideas among communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Milan's analysis underscores the transformative power of Sadlier's translation work, challenging fixed notions of identity and paving new avenues for transatlantic connections.

In the chapter "Nothing Important in Common," José Liste Noya conducts a comprehensive analysis of Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* (2008) as an expatriate work which employs cricket and migrant identity as vehicles to explore the

paradoxical terrain of an increasingly interconnected yet “unevenly transnational world” (85). As Liste Noya discusses, despite numerous paradoxes and disparities, *Netherland* provides glimpses of a cohesive, expansive world that embraces individual perspectives without succumbing to a predetermined totality. The author explains that by concentrating on the act of perceiving and relying on unique viewpoints, the novel offers insight into the complexities of transnational identity formation potentially transcending the limitations imposed by a globalized world. Liste Noya posits that O’Neill’s work sheds light on the multifaceted nature of transnational identity, ultimately embracing the diversity and multiplicity of singular perspectives as a means to overcome the constraints of a globalized landscape.

Antonio Jiménez-Muñoz’s chapter, “Unworked and Unavowable: Communities of Practice in Twenty-first Century Transatlantic Poetry,” presents a compelling analysis of the landscape of contemporary English poetry that transcends the traditional confines of geography and temporality. Departing from conventional methodologies, Jiménez-Muñoz advocates for a paradigmatic shift in literary theory, one that acknowledges transatlantic intersections within contemporary English poetry, irrespective of temporal or geographical distinctions. By emancipating cultural analysis from the constraints of national boundaries, the author posits that a broader spectrum of aesthetic affinities and influences can be explored, thereby engendering a more globally pertinent manifestation of poetry that effectively rebuts assertions of cultural stagnation and irrelevance. Through cogent argumentation, the article not only unveils the potential of poetry as a rich field of scholarly inquiry but also convincingly asserts the indispensability of transatlantic connections in the realm of contemporary literature.

The volume closes with the chapter “Transatlantic Re-soundings: Fats Waller’s London Suite and the Jazz Atlantic,” authored by George Burrows, who presents a meticulously crafted critique of the transatlantic milieu surrounding Thomas ‘Fats’ Waller’s *London Suite*. Burrows’ central thesis posits Waller’s *Suite* as a fusion of European and African-American musical styles, constituting a truly transatlantic synthesis. Through this amalgamation of disparate musical elements, Waller’s composition challenges the racially charged perceptions that have long overshadowed Waller and his distinctive hot jazz style. In stark contrast, the wistful piano recordings, reminiscent of the artificially produced sweet jazz associated with the white music industry, offer a multifaceted and nuanced perspective. Drawing on Paul Gilroy’s conceptualization of “The Black Atlantic,” Burrows develops a theoretical framework that comprehends Atlantic Jazz—a critical theory that transcends national boundaries and embraces the entirety of hybrid musical compositions and the encompassing critical discourse. This theoretical paradigm provides a dynamic space wherein luminaries such as Waller can navigate, interact, and reenvision their musical contributions. In this vein, Burrows argues that Waller’s *London Suite*, with its inherent hybridity and pluralism, stands as a prime exemplar of Atlantic Jazz musical productions, bestowing upon us a bountiful repository of music often unjustly neglected.

In conclusion, *Atlantic Communities: Translation, Mobility, Hospitality* presents an invaluable contribution to the field of Atlantic World studies. This suggestive volume delves into the Atlantic Ocean as a space for cultural exchange and interaction and demonstrates the pivotal roles of translation, mobility, and hospitality in shaping the multifaceted communities that inhabit this region. Through an impressive array of theoretical discourses and critical methodologies, the different chapters challenge conventional and Eurocentric interpretations of the Atlantic as a realm defined by conflict and dominance. They shed light on its vast capacity for collaborative endeavors and mutual enhancement, particularly through the transformative power of translation, which stands as an indispensable tool for establishing bridges across linguistic and cultural boundaries. By delving into the intricate cultural dynamics at play within the Atlantic World, this book provides unprecedented original research, fostering a renewed perspective on the impact of language and communication on historical and contemporary communities. Its significance transcends disciplinary boundaries, rendering it a fundamental resource for scholars and students with a vested interest in investigating the interdisciplinary nature of the Atlantic World. Moreover, it holds immense value for those engaged in the study of translation and cross-cultural communication, offering substantial insights into the mechanisms that underpin these processes on a broader scale.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Telling Truths: Evelyn Conlon and the Task of Writing

María Teresa Caneda-Cabrera (ed.)

Oxford, New York: Peter Lang. 214 pp.

ISBN: 9781800794818

Telling Truths: Evelyn Conlon and the Task of Writing, Volume 117 of the series Reimagining Ireland, is a necessary tribute to the life and literary career of one of Ireland's most powerful and restless voices. Conlon's career is prolific and varied: she has authored four collections of short stories, four novels and various works of non-fiction, examples of which include her essay on her life and literary career in the ground-breaking *Look! It's a Woman Writer* (Ní Dhuibhne 2021), the Foreword penned for *Trauma, Memory and Silence of the Irish Woman in Contemporary Literature: Wounds of the Body and the Soul* (Armie and Membrive 2023) and her *Reading Rites: Books, Writing and Other Things that Matter* (Conlon 2023).

As editor M. Teresa Caneda-Cabrera points out in her introduction to *Telling Truths*, "Conlon has been widely anthologized and translated and her writing has received a great deal of critical attention among Irish Studies scholars nationally and internationally" (11). Although she is part of that generation of writers born in the second half of the twentieth century whose works appeared in the economically stagnant Ireland of the late 1980s, for Rebecca Pelan "Conlon's early writing emerged from within a publishing culture that was directly connected to the second wave of feminism, and at a time of significant change within Ireland, both in terms of publishing and politics" (12). The connection between this early writing born out of "a natural conjunction of poetics and politics" (11) and Conlon's most recent works still exists and is observable in both her style and the topics she explores. In the words of Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, "[Conlon] is passionately angry about inequality, and her [work ...] includes protests against apartheid, the death penalty, misunderstanding related to the Irish/Northern Irish border, the excessive impact of the Catholic Church on Irish legislation, forced emigration and deportation, fascism, forced incarceration of socially inconvenient people in psychiatric institutions, and so on" (31).

All these aspects of Conlon's work are subject to scholarly discussion throughout the book, which features a foreword by Michael Cronin, an introduction by Caneda-Cabrera, ten chapters in four sections, an interview, and a chapter on the "Selected Works of Evelyn Conlon," which offers a comprehensive list of Conlon's oeuvre, interviews and other collaborations.

Part one, "Writing against the Norm: Representations of Women's Lives," contains essays by Rebecca Pelan, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne and M. Teresa Caneda-Cabrera. In the first of these, "'Women Behaving Badly' in Evelyn Conlon's Short Fiction," Pelan explores "a tapestry of women who break the rules, who are non-compliant and feisty in their efforts to challenge and change the world they live it" (13) in Conlon's four collections of short stories, all of which she considers

good “example[s] of the link between the theories and practices of feminism” (13). Pelan, therefore, pays attention to both “the interior (psychological/inner workings) of a female protagonist’s mind” (13) and to Conlon’s “political activism [as being ...] as valid a means as any other of responding to situations that women need to change in order to make their lives better” (13). The result is a comprehensive study of a body of short fiction filled with “less constricted women” who “push the boundaries of what it means to live in a world that isn’t of their own making, and they do so within a body of writing that equally challenges the boundaries of a genre that has not represented them well, historically” (28). These peculiarities of her works are what “[make] Conlon very much part of a collective of [Irish] women/writers [... but] Conlon is neither confined nor defined by those origins” (29), as the author of this chapter remarks.

Chapter Two, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne’s “Moving about the Irish Short Story: An Exploration of Evolving Style and Themes in Evelyn Conlon’s Fiction,” also deals with short fiction by examining in detail two short stories: “The Park,” from Conlon’s second collection, and “How Things Are with Hannah These Days,” from her fourth. Although “[it is rare] for an Irish short story writer to be partisan on any political or even sociological issue” (33), Conlon’s early writing, and by extension “The Park,” is, according to Ní Dhuibhne, politically and socially engaged (33) and departs stylistically “from ‘the national grid’ as far as form and theme [are] concerned” (34). Meanwhile, “How Things Are with Hannah These Days,” despite its form-challenging length, “fits the literary ‘national grid’ which Evelyn Conlon has protested against in the past” (40). Witty thematic and technical comparisons help Ní Dhuibhne conclude that Conlon is a writer whose style and trajectory demonstrate significant evolution, assuring her a special position in the pantheon of Irish short story writers.

In “Women’s Mobility in Evelyn Conlon’s Fiction,” M. Teresa Caneda-Cabrera reads Conlon’s fiction against Stephen Greenblatt’s concept of “at-homeness,” steeped in a patriarchal Irish context, and uses the idea of “the commodification of rootedness” to open new avenues for understanding belonging and identity in relation to the experiences of Conlon’s immigrant women protagonists. Caneda-Cabrera successfully demonstrates how, in her novels and short stories, Conlon, “has consistently responded to the essentialist rigidity of the categories of ‘Irish’ and ‘woman’ by registering stories in which the female protagonists are depicted as individuals with multiple affiliations and multi-located identifications who constantly travel across different kinds of borders and struggle forcefully to direct the movements of their own lives” (44). Their mobility, observes Caneda-Cabrera, is definitely “an experience which may be both distressing and liberating” (52), sometimes an ordeal and sometimes a blessing.

Part Two, “Writing and Power Relations: The Politics of Language,” begins with the essay “Hurtful Intimacy: Kinds of Knowing in a Pair of Evelyn Conlon’s Short Stories,” by the Northern Irish writer Seán O’Reilly. O’Reilly centres his attention on the stories “Telling” (2000) and “The Reading of it” (2021) to dissect “the invented tellability of things” (67), and explore the metafictional devices employed by Conlon to “question not only the authority of the narrator but the social value of the reader’s emotional response” (67). Both stories are constructed around public writing workshops, places where the magic of the literary craft of *telling* takes place, although this art of telling and writing stories is here presented as being occasionally questionable, as it “brings with it with [sic] a range of personal and political problems” (74). Conlon’s fiction, determines O’Reilly, leaves open for debate “whether [...] this intrusion into the lives of others [through telling], can be hurtful if not dangerous when it has lost its moral responsibility” (74). O’Reilly concludes by making explicit the implications of his assessment: “[these stories] structured as stories within stories reveal a tension in Evelyn Conlon’s fiction between the storyteller’s art and the real world, a tension which is a result of a measured scepticism about the possibility of knowledge promoted by the form of the story itself” (75).

In Chapter Five, “Riffraff: Evelyn Conlon’s ‘Two Gallants Getting Caught,’” Marilyn Reizbaum offers an interpretation of the short story “Two Gallants Getting Caught,” which was inspired by James Joyce’s “Two Gallants.” Reizbaum studies how Conlon focuses on remodelling the ideas of “stealing” and “getting caught” by exploring “literary theft” (80), and, by extension, on concepts such as academic plagiarism, authorship and originality by using her own italicised interpolations to highlight the similarities between the stories and thus paradoxically clarify the differences between the two texts. She considers Conlon’s work “a [clever and valuable] riff” (79) that is “a variation [offering] ‘another look at Joyce’” (79).

Chapter Six, Ira Torresi’s “Translating Evelyn Conlon,” exposes the most common challenges faced by the translator of the Italian versions of “Dear You” and “Two Gallants” when faced with the necessity of both preserving the powerful and gendered overtones of Conlon’s work while offering a faithful translation of it. Torresi describes the problems of “creating a slanted perspective using apparently neutral language” (94), the use and non-use of capitalisation to express formality and informality (95), the use of “rapid shift from long, articulate sentences (typical of written prose) to shorter sentences” (97), deviations from grammatical norms (97), the juxtaposition of neutral and positively connoted terms with negative ones to refer to the same person (98), the exposition of the mixture of internal and external perspectives (102), as well as other difficulties. The decisions made to address these challenges make Torresi an “‘intruder’ or mediator between Conlon and her Italian readers” (91), while her analysis sheds light on some of the difficulties of the art of translation.

Part Three, “Writing the Past: History, Memory and Trauma,” begins with Margaret Kelleher’s informative “Rites of Return: Evelyn Conlon’s *Not the Same Sky*.” Kelleher successfully interprets the strategies employed by Conlon to create an affective and effective literary representation of history (111). *Not the Same Sky* is here considered a particularly good example of “factual fiction” (116) or “historiographic metafiction” (120). Its performance of “a rite of return” (111) means that it attempts to illustrate “firstly, how the fictional imagination can reclaim [...] the events of history; and secondly, the significance of this reclamation for the existing national narratives of famine and emigration” (111).

In Chapter Eight, “*Later On*, Later on, and in Another Country,” Patrick Leech focuses on *Later On*, Conlon’s edited collection of non-fiction, published in 2004. The collection and a sculpture by Ciarán Ó Cearnaigh together “[form] the dual artistic commemoration of [the] tragedy” (130) that occurred with the detonation of a car bomb in the centre of Monaghan in 1974, killing seven people. Collected as “a homage to the area of Ireland in which she [Conlon] was brought up” (136) and based on the “belief that art can heal wounds” (135), the anthology gathers fiction and poetry from writers either born or closely connected to County Monaghan, contributions from the families of the victims, and memories from local citizens. The collection creates an opportunity to tackle trauma at both collective and individual levels, deal with grief and pain, and show how telling and writing are mechanisms that keep “Europe’s dark past alive, not through any morbid impulses but because of the need to look into these dark places and resist the temptations to erase those aspects of the past which are traumatic” (136).

Part Four, “Writing and Ethics: Explorations of In/Justice,” begins with Joseph Bathanti’s essay “Prisons, Prisoners, the Death Penalty and Resurrection in *Skin of Dreams* and *A Glassful of Letters*, by Evelyn Conlon.” As its title indicates, Bathanti’s research focuses on “the ghastly underworld of prisoners and the death penalty” (141) and aims to explore how “ordinary people typically shielded from the searing reality of prisons and their mysterious machinations [...] find their lives irrevocably changed” (141). These two ordinary people are Maud and Connie, two women “forced to examine their consciences, to open their eyes” (144) by the secret and unjust histories of Harry Tavey and Senan. Maud and Connie learn these men’s stories, giving them purpose and causing them to emerge from the experience “resurrected, redeemed, by their unwitting, wholly necessary and valiant excavations into taboo pasts” (153).

In Chapter Ten, “Ethical Encounters with the Spectral in Evelyn Conlon’s Fictions,” by Izabela Curyłło-Klag, ghosts are presented in a very positive light as “[e]ven though disruptive, [they] are figures of possibility: they possess knowledge which they may impart to the subject affected by their visitation. By illuminating pervasive silences, they draw attention to what is hidden, repressed or rejected” (155). Through her analysis of “The Undeathing of Gertrude,” “Two Gallants” and *Skin of Dreams*, all of them “spectre-infested fictions” (166), Curyłło-Klag shows how these protective entities have a mission to accompany and help the haunted in situations of injustice. Moreover, for Curyłło-Klag, the use of these ghosts by Conlon has a second dimension: she “demonstrates her belief in the potential of literature to transform parameters of cognition. She is conscious of its influence as a ghost in that it endorses openness to alterity and seeks to expose invisible systems of oppression” (166).

“The Lookout: A Conversation with Evelyn Conlon” is the interview conducted by Paige Reynolds that concludes the collection. They discuss the local and the global dimensions of Conlon’s work, how emigration has shaped her literary career and life experiences, the sense of community in an increasingly globalised and individualistic world, the reparative power of art, the intersection of fiction and non-fiction and the meticulous research process that stands behind the creation of her writings. In addition, Conlon speaks about the changes taking place in Ireland she had witnessed and reproduced in her oeuvre, and the tradition of women writers that paved the way for the current and future generations of creative female Irish voices.

Telling Truths is an outstanding celebratory academic endeavour of vital timeliness. The contributors of this collection are to be applauded for presenting and engaging with the kaleidoscopic facets of Conlon’s literary and non-literary production, encouraging those already acquainted with the author’s works to broaden the horizons of their readings and interpretation, while inviting those who do not yet know her to immerse themselves in the fascinating world of her writing.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author gratefully acknowledges the support provided by CEI Patrimonio, University of Almeria, for the writing of this review.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Retrospective Poe: The Master, His Readership, His Legacy

José R. Ibáñez and Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan (eds.)Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. 323 pp.
ISBN: 9783031099854

There are many publications about Edgar Allan Poe, as he continues to be an author who fascinates scholars and readers alike. Consequently, it might seem difficult to find new aspects of his work to examine without drifting into redundancy. Yet, *Retrospective Poe* offers readers an engaging area of exploration in Poe studies. This recent publication aims to examine Poe's readership in all its heterogeneity, as numerous writers have been influenced by the American author, and Poe's works have been edited multiple times for different audiences. Divided into four parts, the volume engages with both Poe's global influence on others but also on the influences which can be traced in Poe's own works.

The book opens exploring Poe's response to the classical world. Harry Lee Poe contributes the first chapter on the matter, which analyses how Poe's works are in continuity with classical culture and to what extent his poems and tales are indebted to classical literature. The author focuses his attention first on poetry and later on prose, giving readers small but pertinent snippets of how Poe engaged with the classical world in his works. This chapter, in fact, paves the way for further examination of the classical strand in Poe's works. The next chapter, by Dimitrios Tsokanos, focuses on Poe's reception in Europe, paying special attention to Greece. Tsokanos compares Baudelaire's renderings of Poe's works to Poe's Hellenic introduction, for Baudelaire "embellished" his translations at points (26), which contrasts with the late reception of Poe's works in Greece. Tsokanos, then, analyses the figure of Emmanuel Rhoides and his contribution to Poe's reception in the Hellenic country, comparing his way of translating Poe's works to Baudelaire's methods, and concluding that Rhoides aimed to "reconstruct a different identity for Poe" (31), one more founded on science and the rational.

Eulalia Piñero Gil explores the popular culture of necrolatry and thanatography during the nineteenth century in the next chapter. Piñero Gil coins the term "the fetishistic synecdoche" to refer to Poe's attraction to resurrecting the dead through the physical, becoming, thus, a precursor "of the techniques of postmortem photography" (43). In that way, Poe's Gothic tales feature male narrators who, under the psychological instability produced by the death of their loved ones, end up committing transgressive acts while looking for consolation. For this purpose, Piñero Gil engages with the analysis of the fetishistic synecdoche in "Berenice" and "Ligeia," for instance, exploring the liminal states between life and death, and the way in which Poe morbidly employs the teeth in Berenice's case and the black eyes and black hair

in Ligeia's case as symbols of aestheticism and beauty of the dying woman. The author concludes by underscoring Poe's contribution to American necrolatry through his reflection on premature death, liminal states, and the non-existence of an afterlife.

The next section of this edited volume offers a highly innovative and welcome contribution, as it turns to Modernism, an aspect which remained mainly overlooked thus far. Viorica Patea opens the section with a chapter examining Poe's long disregarded influence on Modernist art. First, Patea succinctly highlights the impact and relevant contribution of Poe's works to later movements, and then, expands on Eliot's and Pound's assessments of Poe. Despite their opposition towards Poe's works and Romantic ideas, the Modernists were still influenced by them in their search for the principle of unity. In this way, Poe becomes a predecessor for the Modernists, albeit a neglected one, especially for Eliot. The latter's celebrated poem *The Waste Land* bears witness to this influence, as motifs of the bizarre and ghosts as well as Poesque landscapes plague the work. Patea explores these motifs and draws connections to Poe's imagery, and she later analyses the influence of Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846) on Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), exploring how both poets held similar views on poetic practice and creation. Patea's chapter makes for the revaluation of Poe's poetic practice, especially as regards poetic unity, which aligns with Eliot's perspective on the function of poetry.

In chapter five, Stephanie Sommerfeld again contrasts Poe's poetics with Eliot's concerning the use of notions such as maturity, intertextuality, craftsmanship or bathos. In brief, she distinguishes between Poe as a *poeta ludens* and Eliot as a *poeta doctus*. And yet, for all their differences, Sommerfeld traces Poe's greatest influence on Eliot through the former's cosmology and media theory.

In the next chapter, Slawomir Studniarz examines Poe's complicated legacy in the US, particularly as regards Eliot's supposed indifference in contrast to how other poets, such as William Carlos Williams, praised Poe's writings. As the authors before him, Studniarz also engages with Eliot's rebukes against Poe in his essay "From Poe to Valéry," but he further explores new concepts in Poe's writings, such as the importance of sonority and sound, and the close relationship between poetry and music. There is a divergence between Eliot's poetic practice and his critical viewpoints, Studniarz concludes, for Eliot carefully devised his linguistic material and sound, owing "much more to Poe's legacy than he was willing to admit" (113).

Bonnie Shannon McMullen chooses to explore a different connection. Leaving Modernism and Eliot aside, in this chapter McMullen concentrates on the Jazz Age and Francis Scott Fitzgerald by analysing the story "A Short Trip Home" (1927) in parallel with Poe's "William Wilson" (1839). The most significant points of similarity are found in the labyrinthine descriptions of places and binary divides. Some characters even share mannerisms and ghostlike qualities, according to McMullen, and there is a strong emphasis in these stories of virtue as "a bodily covering, a fashion, rather than an innate quality of personhood" (129). Her examination of the similitudes between both stories and common points such as costume, thresholds, and doubleness results in the conclusion that Poe presides over Fitzgerald's "A Short Trip Home" as a ghostlike figure himself, essential to truly appreciate the narrative.

The third section of the volume centres on Poe's presence in Spain. Alejandro Jaquero-Esparcia and José Manuel Correoso-Rodenas open this third part with their insightful chapter analysing the lesser-known figures of Carlos Fernández Cuenca (1904-1977) and Josep Farrán i Mayoral (1883-1955), and Poe's fruitful reception in 1930s-1940s Spain. Fernández Cuenca edited a selection of Poe's tales, most of them satirical or comical, in 1930, entitled *La caja oblonga*. In this edition, Fernández Cuenca also includes a critical essay which offers significant clues regarding the bibliographical materials at his disposal. For his part, Farrán i Mayoral translated Poe's tales in his 1942 volume *Narraciones extraordinarias*, for which he wrote a preface as well. It is this preface that the authors of this chapter carefully examine so as to provide readers with a full understanding of Farrán i Mayoral's focus on the aesthetic qualities of Poe's works and his innovative analysis of Poe's classical roots as related to his adherence to Romanticism.

The next chapter, by Fernando González-Moreno and Margarita Rigal-Aragón, is an interesting contribution which deals with Poe's reception in Spain concerning the different types of editions of his works, targeted at a variety of audiences. The authors focus on the book as a material artefact and its role, according to the quality of the edition and illustrations, in popularising Poe for the Spanish audience. González-Moreno and Rigal-Aragón provide readers with a valuable analysis of Spanish editions, which culminate in a great proliferation of volumes dedicated to Poe in the twenty-first century.

For their part, Ana González-Rivas Fernández and María Isabel Jiménez González explore the impact of Poe's "Berenice" (1835) in the Spanish visual and audiovisual popular culture. When looking at illustrations, the authors give attention to the female perspective by deciding on the work of two female illustrators and how they shift the observer's point of view in their illustrations. Especially interesting is the analysis offered of Chicho Ibáñez Serrador's "El Trapero." This chapter shows the variety of visual interpretations of Poe's tale and proves its enduring impact on the popular imagination.

The book closes with a final section dedicated to Poe's legacy in a broader and more contemporary sense. First, J. Gerald Kennedy delves into Poe's insights into the "culture of fear" so predominant in our globalised world. The author explores three of Poe's texts which deal with the relationship depicted between spiritual quest and death, and then engages with Poe's visionary appreciation of human anxiety and fear regarding death, annihilation, and disease. Poe might have become the most influential American author, as his continuous presence in popular culture and this volume demonstrates, and this is due, to a great extent, to his perceptiveness of the anxieties of the Western culture. The concept of nostalgia for Poe's American readership is what concerns Jeffrey A. Savoye in the next chapter. Savoye argues that Poe has always had a great appeal, above all concerning melancholy, death, or fear, and his name and words are invoked in moments of crisis, with the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 as a clear example. This sense of nostalgia, nonetheless, has also resulted in the commercialisation of Poe and his works.

For his part, John Gruesser engages with the notion of race in Poe's tale "The Gold-Bug," particularly focusing on its widespread reception among young readers. Notwithstanding the racism in this tale, as Gruesser explains, editors of books for schoolchildren did not find any fault with these characterisations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, contributing, thus, to the spreading of this "average racism." By analysing these editions and their illustrations, Gruesser traces the perpetuation of such racist stereotypes, where no attempt to deal with this issue is shown. The next chapter explores a different aspect within Poe's reception in American literature. Here Marta Miquel-Baldellou centres on the influence and intertextuality between Poe and Stephen King. Drawing on psychoanalysis and Bloom's notion of the anxiety of influence as theoretical framework, Miquel-Baldellou insightfully compares Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) and King's "The Monkey" (1980) in order to find the intertextual links between these short stories and the biographical parallelisms. The author finally stresses how King emulates but also deviates from Poe, searching for "a symbolic literary father figure in Poe" (267) and struggling with it.

Eusebio V. Llàcer-Llorca, for his part, turns his attention to another of Poe's tale, "The Masque of the Red Death," and its cinematographic adaptation by Roger Corman. By analysing different aspects such as construction of space, time, and actors, Llàcer-Llorca identifies similarities and divergences, and how Corman's adaptation builds on Poe's tale through different strategies so as to fully involve the audience in the film and define more clearly what in Poe's original story only stood in the background. The interaction of both objects examined, according to the author, creates an "inter-semiotic translation" (290), which attest to the richness of the adaptation process.

Takayuki Tatsumi closes the volume writing about Poe's tale "The Man of the Crowd" (1840) and its impact on Japanese author Edogawa Rampo and playwright Sakate Yoji. The centre of attention is Sakate's play *The Attic*, influenced by Rampo's "The Stalker in the Attic," the latter already inspired by Poe's "The Man of the Crowd," and its focus on the *hikikomori*, or social withdrawal, issue in Japanese society. Yet this subject matter serves as a springboard for examining the act and history of voyeurism and flânerie, and Tatsumi later connects it to postmodern globalisation and its use of technology. Gradually, Tatsumi provides readers with parallels between the play, which ends up becoming a sort of detective fiction, and Poe's writings, as a way of modernising his narratives and themes.

The present volume ends, thus, in a thought-provoking manner, creating a thread from Poe and his times to his reception and influence on other writers and to how we can still reread and reinterpret Poe's writings in our current society. With the contribution of each author, *Retrospective Poe* is successful in showing a plurality of ways of engaging with Poe's works and paves the way for future explorations in the field, for it stresses the relevance of Poe's works in our present day. In all, this publication is a welcome addition to Poe scholarship for its engaging and rich content, which takes into account a diversity of aspects of Poe studies and reception, from his influence on later literary movements to intertextuality with other writers. The book will prove to be stimulating and useful both to experts and members of the general public fascinated by the American author.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Shakespeare and the European Heritage: The Legacy of Angel-Luis Pujante

Keith Gregor, Juan F. Cerdá, Laura Campillo and Clara Calvo (eds.)

Murcia: Ediciones de la Universidad de Murcia,
2022. 420 pp.
ISBN: 9788418936548

In a world where Shakespeare Studies continue evolving, we welcome an illuminating and absorbing tribute to the remarkable contributions of Angel Luis Pujante in the volume entitled *Shakespeare and the European Heritage: The Legacy of Angel-Luis Pujante*. This Spanish author's dedication and passion for the English playwright have not only transformed English Literature Studies in Spain, but have also left an unforgettable mark on the wider European literary landscape. Shakespeare's plays are now both understandable and vibrant for Spanish readers thanks to Pujante's unique translation style, which combines accuracy and fluency.

Edited by the University of Murcia's team (Spain), *Shakespeare and the European Heritage* gathers together a wide range of essays reflecting Shakespearean scholarship across Europe. It reminds us of the Bard's plays' perdurable relevance, together with the enduring impact of such passionate scholars as Pujante. This volume provides a worthy celebration of a true "Shakespearean" reading and a testament to the enduring power of Shakespeare's work to shape the literary world.

Shakespeare is revealed as a transcendental character in Ton Hoenselaars' introductory chapter, "Shakespeare in Europe," where his plays serve as a bridge to connect a diverse continent and act as a cultural link. Adaptations and performances of his plays in many European countries attest to his worldwide relevance. These adaptations, while bearing unique cultural traces, keep Shakespeare's creations in essence. Hoenselaars and Delabastita (2015) already proved that Shakespeare's achievements and those who followed him can only be properly understood in an international and multilingual context. Furthermore, he highlights the essential role played by Pujante promoting Shakespeare's study in Spanish-speaking countries.

The second part of the book, entitled "Criticism and Commemoration," embarks on a captivating journey that explores Shakespeare's enduring influence on literature and culture. It is introduced by Alexander Shurbanov, who illuminates Shakespeare's narrative prowess with a brilliance that leaves an indelible mark. His analysis of the narrative within Shakespeare's plays is profoundly insightful, dissecting how Shakespeare uses it as a tool to convey essential information and evoke deep emotions. The evolution of Shakespeare's narrative style, from the extended storytelling of the early

plays to the concise exposition of the later plays, highlights the Bard's versatility. Particularly, Shurbanov's research on the emotional depth that narration adds to scenes is revealing, especially in *Macbeth*. The chapter continues with Rui Carvalho Homem's contribution, which highlights the interconnection between visibility and representation in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Homem's exploration of Cleopatra's charm in the historical context of artistic representations is captivating. He invites us to consider Cleopatra's confluence of visual art and the sensuality that defines her character, adding a layer of depth to our understanding. His contribution recalls Hamilton's work (1973), which discusses the influence of the lovers' tradition, particularly that of Cleopatra and Antony, helping readers to further understand their portrayal.

The three following papers study different devices in Shakespearean plays that we find engaging. Firstly, Andres Höfele examines the complex relationship between law and nature in Shakespeare's comedies. He offers a groundbreaking perspective in his convincing argument for the consistent culmination of these comedies in joyful marriages as the basic law of the genre. Secondly, Keith Gregor undertakes a suggestive analysis of racial identity and belonging in *Othello* and *El valiente negro en Flandes* (1638). Gregor's reflections on Othello's transformation and John's rise offer powerful insights into the malleability of racial identity. His discussion of how different settings shape racial dynamics effectively increases the complexity of our understanding, emphasizing particularly important aspects of belonging in different environments. Thirdly, Robert Lee engages us in Shakespeare's famous soliloquy in Hamlet. Lee's perceptive analysis of its relationship to modernist and contemporary themes enters the realm of self-awareness and existential reflection. His research into the historical context and links to other literary works provides an important appreciation, underlining the lasting relevance of Hamlet's introspection in the context of modern thought.

The second part of the book concludes with the contribution of Laura Campillo, who studies the complexities and interpretations associated with a Shakespeare monument in Jerez, Andalusia (Spain). In Pujante's work *Shakespeare llega a España: ilustración y romanticismo* (2020), we already appreciated the historical reception of the English playwright in Spain. Campillo gives a more locally specific description of how Shakespeare's legacy survives and is interpreted in our country. Her discerning discourse on the monument's architectural design and its influence on today's visitors is thought-provoking as she meticulously describes the monument's historical and cultural background.

As its name suggests, the third section of the book, entitled "Translation," explores the remarkable difficulties and changes that arise when Shakespeare's plays are translated across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This section comprises four distinct chapters. The first is by Salvador Oliva, who strives to take us to the heart of darkness in the unforgettable *Macbeth*. Here, he masterfully dissects three key issues that have intrigued scholars and readers for centuries. Degünther (2014) has addressed similar notions of evil in the play from the medieval and Renaissance eras. However, we note that Oliva places more emphasis on the "Weird Sisters" and the role of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in the tragic descent due to their ambition and influence. He convincingly argues that the enigmatic "Weird Sisters" represent incarnations of evil, embodying the essence of malevolence. Oliva's in-depth review goes deeper into the character of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's role in the play. The second chapter is written by Marta Gibinska, who introduces us to the world of female translation in Poland. She focuses on two remarkable translators, Wiktoria Rosicka and Maria Sulkowska, who bravely translated Shakespeare's plays in a predominantly male-dominated 19th and early 20th centuries. Gibinska's work reminds us of the more recent Krajník and Drozd's study (2023), which also contributes to Shakespeare's theatrical legacy in another culture, but focused on the Czech Republic and based on the *Sonnets*. Gibinska emphasises their pioneering efforts, stressing their contribution to Polish literature. Her contribution truly illuminates the complex relationship between early female translators and the literary landscape of their time. Balz Engler makes the third article with his fascinating account of the crisis in German Shakespearean translation in the 1960s and the solutions that followed. Engler focuses on the "Englisch-Deutsche Studienausgabe der Dramen Shakespeares" and provides valuable data on the development of this unique German translation. It is remarkable how he stresses the need for an edition based on international scholarship to provide the German-speaking community with accurate and up-to-date information. Surprisingly, the third section ends with a selection of Sonnets in the Rioplatense Translation offered by Miguel Angel Montezanti. He delights readers and transports us to Río de la Plata (Argentina) with a collection of sonnets translated from *Solo vos sos vos. Los sonetos de Shakespeare en traducción rioplatense. Segunda edición*. Montezanti's deliberate choices of punctuation reflect Shakespeare's era and invite diverse readings. This translator's ability to preserve the essence of the original text while adding a regional touch is laudable.

Further analysis of affairs surrounding the Shakespearean universe includes adaptation and fictionalisation, thus giving title to the fourth section of the book. Manfred Pfister, the first author, takes us on an intriguing tour through Bandello's works, from the bright fields of Italy to the Baltic lands. His painstaking research illustrates the cultural and literary connections that allowed Bandello's stories to cross borders and time periods. Moreover, Pfister gives us a reference to a 1591 play based on one of Bandello's novels in Gdansk, which underscores the timeless appeal of these stories. The second contribution, by Manfred Draudt, returns to the work based on the *Italian novellieri*, *Othello*, this time from the point of view of an adaptation. Draudt goes deep into the history of the burlesque adaptations of the play in Austria, revealing the enormous popularity they achieved during the 19th century in the country and how it was adapted to its

public. His research tinges the entire narrative with humour, clearly engaging the reader. Reviewing the third chapter in this section, Carla Dente more than succeeds in acquainting readers with David Creig's innovative theatrical approach, in which narration blends with live performance, as Pinchbech (2020) does through his project *The Shakespeare Trilogy*. Her analysis goes deep in the contradiction between narrator and characters in Greig's plays and in the political implications of language and identity. Dirk Delabastita dazzlingly continues this section with his analysis of Ian McEwan's "Nutshell" as part of a complex intertextual exercise. The author deftly navigates the complexities of interpretation, illustrating how authors and readers are deeply connected. The section "Adaptation and Fictionalisation" ends with Franssen's explanation on why the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare has been highlighted, and he discusses the contemporary novels that deal with Shakespeare's life in the Jacobean era. This intriguing and provocative study expands our understanding of an unknown part of Shakespeare's life.

Finally, the last part of the book is "Stage and Performance." This section provides an enthralling study on Shakespearean theater by learning about stagecraft, performance, and adaptation, illuminating the timeless allure and versatility of Shakespearean drama. Firstly, Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine masterfully shows a relatively unknown chapter of English theatrical history, in which English actors were venturing beyond their homeland to perform in France at the end of the 6th century. Her lively view of the political and religious turmoil of the time and her emphasis on the challenges and rewards of historical research compel readers to learn more about those performances. Secondly, Juan F. Cerdá goes further by exploring how changing social conditions and the suffragette movement influenced interpretations of *The Taming of the Shrew* in the 20th Century. Cerdá skillfully situates the play within the sociopolitical context, offering a comprehensive historical overview of the evolution of gender dynamics and social attitudes toward gender roles. Cerdá is followed by Clara Calvo, who once again focuses on *The Taming of the Shrew*, but this time making connections to the suffragist movement and war context. Her witty comparison with *Mary Poppins* adds a close touch to her analysis, making a complicated subject accessible. The following article by Madalina Nicolaescu considers recent Romanian productions of Shakespeare's plays, illuminating the powerful intersection of Shakespeare's timeless plays with contemporary political and social issues. The fifth chapter embraces a bewitching investigation of both the temporal and spatial aspects of Shakespeare's comedies by Michael Dobson. His thought-provoking analysis looks in depth at how directors wrest the balance between realism and theatricality, offering a comprehensive view of the evolving nature of Shakespearean theater. The next-to-last paper is authored by Michael Hattaway, who leads us through unconventional interpretations of Shakespeare's plays into Brexit Britain. Hattaway's writing is engaging and insightful, as is his perspective on the interplay between Shakespearean drama and contemporary politics. The final contribution of the section is the insight that brings us to practically our days thanks to Boika Sokolova, who encourages us to think about how Shakespearean theater interfaces with the political turmoil of Britain's Brexit. Her examination of *King Lear* and *Richard II* performances from 2016 to 2018 reveals connections between the political issues of these plays and the impact of Brexit on our present day.

In conclusion, *Shakespeare and the European Heritage: The Legacy of Ángel-Luis Pujante* is a meaningful scholarly tribute to Shakespeare's long-lasting influence on literature. Ángel Luis Pujante's tireless dedication, together with the collective efforts of the University of Murcia's team and other expert scholars, has not only made Shakespeare accessible to Spanish readers but it has also left an indelible mark on the broad European literary world. Beyond scholarship, this book is an emotional gift, reminding us of the powerful impact that Shakespeare's words have on the human soul.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Las muchas caras de la literatura: Conexiones entre la literatura y otras artes y ciencias

Javier Martín Párraga (ed.)

Valencia: Tirant Humanidades, 2022. 474 pp.

ISBN: 978-84-19376-50-3

Ordinary people waited till life disclosed to them its secrets, but to the few, to the elect, the mysteries of life were revealed before the veil was drawn away. Sometimes this was the effect of art, and chiefly of the art of literature, which dealt immediately with the passions and the intellect.

(Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

Defiende sin titubeos y muy acertadamente Javier Martín Párraga en la introducción “Los Senderos Divergentes y Escherianos de la Literatura” que “[l]a literatura, o literaturas, han servido para educar, transmitir valores, construir (y deconstruir) identidades de todo tipo (nacionales, sociales, sexuales, etc.) y han reflejado permanentemente y fieles a su cita con la historia el *Zeitegeist*, el *esprit du temps*” (21). Con esta premisa como pilar fundamental del volumen *Las muchas caras de la literatura: Conexiones entre la literatura y otras artes y ciencias*, publicado en 2022 a través de la editorial Tirant Humanidades, nos presenta Martín Párraga su carta de amor a la literatura. Literatura como universo y lenguaje único, como principio y fin, hilo rojo que nos ata a verdades más grandes que nosotros, como forma de conectar ficción y realidad, historia, contemporaneidad y futuro, individuo y colectivo... definitivamente, literatura como algo que, haciendo referencia a su intrínseca naturaleza escheriana, resulta paradójico, multidimensional e imposible de definir o de acotar sin riesgo a eliminar parte de su esencia y complejidad. De este modo, Martín Párraga continúa la estela de escritos y filosofías que divagan sobre la epistemología de la literatura, como son *El Placer del Texto*, de Barthes (1973), *El Orden del Discurso*, de Foucault (1973), o *Consecuencias del Pragmatismo*, de Rorty (1982), y encapsula la idea que nos presenta Robert Eaglestone en su manual sobre estudios filológicos: cuando intentamos definirla, la literatura se nos escurre entre los dedos de las manos como el agua (2017, 58, traducción propia). De esta manera, siendo consciente de las limitaciones que resultan del intento de definición, el autor, abandonando la “visión reduccionista de la literatura, que se circunscribe a las categorías aristotélicas con la única adición de la prosa [...] que deja fuera del espectro literario un amplísimo abanico de artefactos literarios que no son producto de otra cosa que ese ‘arte de la expresión verbal’” (23), invita al lector a acompañarle en su revisión metaliteraria que nos mece entre renglones al son de ideas y gnoseologías de pensadores como Derek Attridge y su *The Singularity of Literature* (2004), Terry Eagleton con *The Event of Literature* (2012), Jonathan Culler y *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (2011),

así como Derrida, Dubreuil, o Baudrillard y sus tesis, que resultaron tanto extensas como esenciales en igual medida. Concluye así Marín Párraga esta ilustrativa introducción coincidiendo con las ideas revisadas: el término literatura, como ya expuso Eagleton, se ha servido a la arbitrariedad y las cambiantes necesidades de una también cambiante sociedad. El escenario cultural actual, sumergido en un entendimiento fruto de la post-postmodernidad y el transhumanismo, permite a los autores que conforman este volumen explorar las multifacéticas e interdisciplinarias “cabezas de la hidra literaria entendida de una manera derridiana que no solo evita escapar de las aporías sino que repudia a las exégesis finales y acepta como elemento fundamental al oxímoron en la más pura tradición de Heráclito” (27). Así, este volumen acepta el doble desafío de analizar artefactos culturales presentes en elementos escritos y, del mismo modo, la manera en la que establecen con otros escritos de diferente índole diálogos y relaciones que trascienden los confines de la textualidad y se extienden hacia dimensiones que superan el ámbito escrito, llegando incluso a entrelazarse, fusionarse, e integrarse entre sí dando vida y cabida a nuevos caminos e infinitud de posibilidades en y sobre la literatura y su epistemología. Como resultado, nos hallamos ante un volumen que alberga un corpus substancial y ambicioso, el cual presenta una multiplicidad de contribuciones que quedan categorizadas y distribuidas en cuatro segmentos temáticos, siendo estos: 1. Literatura e Historia; 2. Literatura y otras artes y ciencias; 3. Literatura y Trasvases Culturales; 4. Literatura y Educación. Aunque, como ya indica Martín Párraga, adelantándose a la posible problemática de la clasificación, la naturaleza interdisciplinar de los textos presentados permite situar algunos de los capítulos dentro de un contexto más amplio que podría articularse en otro de los segmentos temáticos, permitiendo así un diferente enfoque. A pesar de esto, es digno apuntar que los capítulos han sido cuidadosamente estructurados, de tal manera que, en términos generales, convergen hacia una temática central que subyace como un hilo conductor, permitiendo así la construcción de un discurso cohesionado y la apertura de un diálogo fructífero en el que distintos capítulos se entrelazan, compartiendo nociones y juicios con un propósito unificador común.

La *Parte I* pondrá en valor la interrelación entre la literatura e historia: el conocimiento del pasado como medio para entender y comprender nuestro presente y crear y proyectar el futuro, destacando, una vez más, la inviabilidad de desvincular la literatura de la historia. Esta parte la conforman capítulos ordenados de tal manera que acompañan al lector a través de un recorrido de momentos e hitos históricos que no pueden entenderse sin el fruto tan indispensable que cultiva y alimenta la literatura. Nos moveremos, pues, en un abanico de temas que van desde lo religioso, lo político y lo feminista hasta la identidad ciudadana, la justicia histórica y democrática o el desafío al tabú de lo macabro que envuelve a las autopsias y embalsamamientos. Para esto, nos desplazaremos con sutileza y delicadeza entre Europa y América para concluir, sin olvidar el último capítulo que trata sobre el papel que jugaron el gobierno norteamericano y la propaganda en relación a la guerra de Vietnam en la perpetuidad de este conflicto dentro del “ADN sociocultural [estadounidense]” (139), en España y el panorama político-civil de los últimos siglos. Así, nos adentraremos en los orígenes de las Islas Británicas (con Juan Manuel Garrido Anguita), la sociedad romana y la figura del scribe (junto a María Teresa de Luque Morales), la Edad Moderna y las conexiones entre medicina, la estética y la literatura, especialmente en la importancia de los *recetarios* para el imaginario y el folklore cultural (Javier López Rider). Analizaremos bajo el paraguas de teorías postcoloniales y feministas la novella *Mal presagio casar lejos* (con Arabella Adams), divagaremos entre autopsias y debates científico-literarios (gracias a Massimiliano Murtas) y exploraremos, junto a Roberto Olavarría, la evolución de la representación de personajes protestantes, comúnmente percibidos como perversos o malvados en las obras de Lovecraft y Hawthorne (95). A continuación examinaremos la relación de la ciudadanía española con el papel legislativo previo a la Segunda República y exploraremos la intrincada personalidad política y literaria de Azorín (de la mano de María José Ramos Rovi y Raúl Ramírez Ruiz), nos adentraremos en la dictadura de Primo de Rivera, las relaciones iberoamericanas y el papel de Emilio Rodríguez Mendoza (con Juan Luis Carrellán Ruiz) y revisaremos el papel de las mujeres en las Cortes de la Segunda República, que, aunque no agrupadas bajo un movimiento sufragista como en otros países, se conformaron en grupos que contribuyeron a la concienciación acerca de las desigualdades de género y promovieron lo que conocemos como feminismo español (en el capítulo de Manuel Bermúdez Vázquez y María José Ramos Rovi). Por último, antes de cerrar Martín Párraga esta primera parte del volumen con un análisis de las estrategias retóricas norteamericanas, muy vinculadas a la cultura popular, empleadas a lo largo del conflicto de Vietnam, veremos en el capítulo de Noelia Ojeda Muñoz el papel que tuvo dentro del anarquismo español la revista *Mujeres Libres* (1936-38) en busca de la liberación femenina y la eliminación de los roles del momento vinculados a la maternidad y la feminidad.

La segunda sección del volumen, la *Parte II*, titulada “Literatura y otras artes y ciencias,” se enfoca en dos aspectos fundamentales. En primer lugar, esta parte examinará las relaciones entre literatura y otras (múltiples y diversas) formas de expresión artística como son el teatro, el cine, la lírica o la pintura. En segundo lugar, estudiará las conexiones entre literatura y diferentes disciplinas científicas, destacando así la “naturaleza ecléctica y multidisciplinar no solo de este volumen sino de los artefactos culturales de manera general y textos literarios de manera más particular” (32). En esta parte observaremos una disertación sobre la poesía como género y como entidad en sí misma: su evolución, su disfrute y su forma de relacionarse con el lector (en el primer capítulo presentado por Leticia del Toro García), hablaremos de expresionismo dentro y más allá de la pintura (con Cristina Jiménez Gómez), nos deleitaremos con el análisis de la producción teatral de Marcos Fernández Alonso (de la mano de Juan José Ortega Román) y conversaremos sobre cine, en primer lugar en el capítulo de Marina Eva Cabezas Morales y María Dolores García Ramos, que, centrándose en la animación japonesa, examinan minuciosamente las interacciones entre literatura y cine, su proceso de hibridación y el

constante diálogo existente entre ambas, en segundo lugar en el capítulo de Álvaro Martínez Sánchez sobre *Blancanieves* (2012) y la transducción como transformación del texto original, y en tercer lugar, con Pilar Moreno Picazo, que analizará la intertextualidad entre *The Princess and the Goblin* de 1872 y la versión animada de 1991. Ester Díaz Morillo dará paso al estudio de productos musicales como reinterpretaciones socio-culturales, centrándose en este caso en el poema de Christina Rossetti “Goblin Market and its Sensuousness on Stage.” Leonor María Martínez Serrano, también prestándose al género lírico, brindará una lectura con perspectiva ecocrítica y feminista a la poesía de Virginia Konchan. Los tres últimos capítulos de esta *Parte II* se centrarán respectivamente en la obra de David Foster Wallace y los desórdenes mentales, particularmente la esquizofrenia (a manos de Ana Chapman), la trilogía *Maddaddam* de la autora canadiense Margaret Atwood y su conexión con el concepto de “monstruosidad” y la pandemia recientemente vivida (con Pilar Somacarrera Iñigo), y, por último, la conceptualización del espacio y la “imaginación cartográfica” en el memoir *Body Geographic* de Barrie Jean Borichs (con el capítulo final de Esther Sánchez-Pardo).

La *Parte III*, bajo el título “Literatura y trasvases culturales” centrará sus páginas en las conexiones no tan evidentes como las ya analizadas entre literatura y traducción, sino también en las que “la literatura actúa como texto (o artefacto cultural) fuente que se trasvasa a un nuevo destino cultural fuente” (35). Pone el punto partida a esta sección Gisella Policastro Ponce, que reflexionará sobre la idea de artefacto cultural desde el punto de vista de la semiótica jurídica. Manuela Álvarez Jurado, por su parte, integra el estudio de la traducción literaria, así como de la retraducción y la utilización del cuento como herramienta didáctica en la enseñanza del francés como lengua extranjera. Manuel Gómez Campos ofrece a continuación su estudio sobre literatura oral senegalesa, estableciendo conexiones desde un punto postcolonial entre la literatura y la traducción. Siguiendo la estela también de la traducción, y más concretamente de la presencia de traductores, Carmen Fuensanta Trinado Jiménez pondrá en tela de juicio el énfasis tradicional que se tiene sobre cultura canadiense únicamente en inglés para centrarse en la francófona, y lo hará con la obra de Angéline de Montbrun. Anna Motisi se embarcará en la difícil tarea de analizar las traducciones (con perspectiva de género) al inglés de la famosa obra del escritor Italiano Italo Calvino *If on a Winters Night a Traveler*. Continuará David Amezcua Gómez con un fascinante análisis sobre la literatura ectópica de Gloria Anzaldúa, Jhumpa Lahiri y Eva Hoffman, centrándose en la idea de literatura como espacio “en el que negociar una identidad híbrida” debido a la voluntaria o involuntaria re-territorialización geográfica (324). Milica Nalić, centrándose también en la idea postcolonial de (no) pertenencia, analizará el paisaje fluvial de escritores emigrantes de la antigua Yugoslavia, mientras que Filomena Fernandes Gonçalves y Francisco Javier Sánchez-Verdejo Pérez cambiarán el tono para centrarse en la obra de Gastão Cruls y como esta, directamente influenciada por *Frankenstein* de Mary Shelley, presenta una visión del mundo real “como máscara de otro mundo que le subyace y que tratamos de ocultar a los demás y [...] a nosotros mismos” (37). Marta Miquel-Baldellou reflexionará sobre la relación entre la alta cultura y la cultura popular mientras centra su estudio en la metaficción presente en la novela *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*, de Agatha Christie. Cristina M. Gámez Fernández pone el punto de mira en la acuciante necesidad de actuar ante la inminente amenaza de destrucción de vida (humana y no humana) debido a los efectos causados por el calentamiento global, a su vez provocado por prácticas antropocéntricas, y lo hace examinando la adaptación al cine de la novela gráfica *Le Transperceneige*. María del Carmen Balbuena Torezano cierra esta parte del volumen con un capítulo muy visual e ilustrativo, a la par que brillante, donde defiende que la literatura, mucho más que texto, es un producto que deja de ser (aun sin perder su esencia), para a la par convertirse en todas las posibilidades que el receptor le brinda, abogando por la existencia de una sinergia entre literatura y otras artes.

Por último, la *Parte IV* se centrará en las relaciones entre literatura y educación, entendiendo educación “en su sentido más amplio y valioso para la sociedad, [es decir, educación como medio para] ayudar a las personas más jóvenes a crecer intelectual y humanamente, a aprender pero también a formarse en valores para que el mundo de mañana sea más libre, democrático, inclusivo y plural” (38). Abre esta parte Marta Rojano Simón, centrándose en la enseñanza en valores, concretamente en los procesos de enseñanza de la Prehistoria, donde, indica, “las desigualdades sociales y sexuales parecían no ser tan extremas y donde cohabitábamos de manera mucho más respetuosa con el medio natural” (396). Gloria Priego de Montiano continua la estela en la educación medioambiental, haciendo un repaso de la difusión, el desarrollo y la implementación de la educación medioambiental, de la mano de las ciencias experimentales, en las aulas. A continuación, María Elena Gómez Parra explorará la educación bilingüe a través del translingüismo y la interculturalidad en las primeras etapas educativas bajo el marco del Máster conjunto Erasmus Mundos “Play, Education, Toys and Languages.” Ángela Larrea Espinar continuará con su capítulo sobre el potencial que albergan las series de televisión (y más concretamente las *sitcoms*), al tratarse de productos de cultura popular, para la enseñanza, no solo de idiomas, sino también de cultura. En la misma línea, Juan Manuel Garrido Anguita y Marta Rojano Simón pondrán en valor el uso de videojuegos como mecanismo para formarse en valores históricos y “concienciar al alumnado sobre la necesidad de conocer, valorar y preservar el patrimonio histórico y cultural” (40). Miguel López Serrano continuará el camino trazado en el capítulo anterior y arrojará también luz a la relevancia de la educación histórica desde las primeras etapas de la vida, centrándose en el esencial papel que cumplen los profesores en formación. Por último, Silvia Medina Quintana es la encargada de cerrar este fascinante, interdisciplinar y transversal volumen, poniendo el broche de oro a esta sección con su capítulo acerca de la educación en artes visuales, en el que estimula al alumnado a sobrepasar la banalidad visual a veces encontrada en medios y redes sociales. Así, este volumen, como bien hemos podido observar, resulta de un bien cultural y científico excelente, abordando temas e inquietudes que son de extrema relevancia y necesidad, no solamente

en los estudios centrados en la literatura, sino en aquellos que consideran y reflexionan sobre el humanismo, la cultura y el entendimiento histórico y humano. Sin duda, este ejemplar servirá como un magnífico aliado para investigadores, estudiantes y lectores inquietados por el mundo de la literatura y de las artes que buscan competencias transversales, multidisciplinares e intertextuales.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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Red Comet: The Short Life and Blazing Art of Sylvia Plath

Heather Clark

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020, 1152 pp.
ISBN: 9780307961174

Heather Clark earned her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Harvard University and her PhD in English from Oxford University. *Red Comet* is her third book and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize; the publication won the National Book Critics Circle Award, the LA Times Book Prize in Biography, and became the New York Times Top Ten Book of 2021. Other books written by Clark are *The Grief of Influence: Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes* (2011) and *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast 1962-1972* (2006). A professor of contemporary poetry at the University of Huddersfield, she divides her time between Yorkshire, England, and New York.

Clark's *Red Comet* is the most detailed biography of Sylvia Plath written so far, a monumental work that required eight years of this critic's life. This latest biography on Plath draws on recently released material from and about the poet. As Clark states in the prologue of the book, her main goal was "to recover Sylvia Plath from cliché—to offer an alternative narrative to the Plath myth, to debunk the sensational and melodramatic rhetoric that surrounds her, and, finally, to examine her life through her commitment not to death, but to art" (Prologue).¹ Clark seems to be conscious of writing a biography of one of the greatest American poets in the 20th century and not only the story of the cursed poet, like previous writers before her. The author's account of Plath's life and writings is simply outstanding for the amount of data that she offers.

Clark also explains, in the meticulous style that characterizes her entire book, that her biography incorporates for the first time all surviving letters, making use also of "unpublished diaries, calendars and creative work in addition to her published writings" (Prologue). Moreover, Clark also researches Plath's family history, including her father's FBI interrogations and her grandmother's institutionalization; she makes reference to what has remained of *Falcon Yard*, Plath's lost novel, and offers the testimony and archival information of more than fifty contemporaries. Furthermore, Clark describes in detail Plath's last week alive to offer a new reading of the events, draws on all the Hughes archives at Emory University and the British Library that contain many unpublished poems and references about Plath, and incorporates material from the Harriet Rosenstein archive at Emory University, which opened in 2020 (Prologue).

1 The references used for Heather Clark's *Red Comet* correspond to the Kindle edition.

Nevertheless, even if Clark's attempt to collect as much information as possible on the writer is worth praising, as there has never been a biography as complete as hers before, there have been previous attempts to portray Plath's life. Some of her best biographies include Linda W. Wagner-Martin's *Sylvia Plath, a Biography* (1987), the first book about Plath to quote unpublished journals and letters available at that time. Like many other books on the poet, it had to face the censorship of the Plath estate, which was not a problem for Clark. Ann Stevenson's *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath* (1989) offers an account of the life of the writer, which was approved by Ted Hughes and passed also through Olwyn Hughes' censorship. This biography recognizes Plath as a literary genius but there is a clear emphasis on Plath's personality disorder and deep psychological difficulties, while Hughes comes out blameless. In this respect, we can affirm that Clark's biography is more balanced. Steven Gould Axelrod's *Sylvia Plath: The Wound and the Cure of Words* (1990) combines the rhetoric of psychoanalysis and the rhetoric of literary criticism to show that there is a narrative of the double in many of Plath's writings. Plath's tendency to see through polarities (202) would end up with her poem "Edge," where Plath's double finally dies (202). Even if *Red Comet*'s final purpose is a different one, there are often mentions in the book to Plath's psychological troubles. Jacqueline Rose's *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath* (1991) mainly focuses on how Plath writes of psychic processes, and the way she generously lets us into her mind (x). At the time Rose was writing her book she also had numerous problems with the Plath estate that she explains in depth (xi). Paul Alexander's *Rough Magic* (1991), the most complete biography of Sylvia Plath up to that year, focuses on facts, archival research and interviews: "I conducted some three hundred individual interviews," says Alexander (1991, 1). Nevertheless, many of the manuscripts were still controlled by the Plath estate, a situation that only relaxed once Ted Hughes passed away in 1998. Finally, Janet Malcolm's *The Silent Woman* (1994) is not so much a book about Sylvia Plath's life but about what happened after her suicide: how Ted Hughes became executor of her estate and Olwyn Hughes, his sister, became Hughes' literary agent to protect the writer. In her book, Malcolm portrays Plath as the "divided self par excellence" (89).

With respect to *Red Comet*, the book is divided into three parts and also contains two epilogues. The first part starts in 1850, in Poznan, at that time a small city belonging to Prussia, from where the family of Otto Plath, Sylvia's father, born in 1885, emigrated; and it finishes in August 1955, once Plath completed her studies at Smith College. The second section of the book begins in September 1955, when the poet travels to Cambridge to study there with a Fulbright grant, and it finishes in December 1959, when Plath and her husband, Ted Hughes, leave Yaddo, a retreat for artists in Saratoga Springs, New York. The third and last part of the biography starts in 1960, when the young couple move to London, and it lasts until February 1963, when Plath commits suicide. The first epilogue describes events immediately after Plath's death, and what happened with Hughes' and Plath's families, their children, their friends and also Assia Wevill, who was one of the women Hughes was dating at the time of Plath's death and who would kill herself and her daughter in 1969. Finally, the second epilogue deals with the publication of Plath's literary work and the impact this had soon after her death.

Regarding what is new in Clark's biography, it is clear that beside focusing on Plath she also writes extensively about Ted Hughes and his work. In her own words, "This is the first biography of Sylvia Plath to examine those 'intolerable similarities' in depth, and to take Plath and Hughes's literary dialogue—and rivalry—seriously" (Prologue). Furthermore, Hughes is not presented as an enemy but as the writer's companion and twin soul until their relationship turns sour and Plath's husband becomes her literary rival: "Horizons were no longer boundless. They had imagined a utopian marriage [...] but their positions were becoming stratified along traditional lines. [...] Sylvia's domestic workload was much heavier now, and her letters make clear that Ted's career took precedence at this time" (Part III). Furthermore, Clark's work also weaves the lives of Hughes and Plath with their historical context, so that we gain a greater understanding of their work. In this sense, the book begins by referring to the origin of the Plaths, Poznan, a city located in the Polish corridor after the Treaty of Versailles (1919), where tensions between Poles and Germans were evident. It offers infinite details of the literary and artistic environment in England and the USA in the 1950s and 1960s, explains the psychiatric care that existed at the time, and portrays the political scene in the USA under the mandate of President Roosevelt. With all this, *Red Comet* is also a good example of literary history, in addition to a biography.

Red Comet portrays Plath as an ambitious and extremely disciplined person who was always afraid of failure: "the horror, to be jamesian [sic], is to find there are plenty of beasts in the jungle but somehow to have missed all the potshots at them. I am always afraid of letting 'life' slip by unobtrusively and waking up some 'fine morning' to wail windgrieved around my tombstone" (Prologue), she would write to Gordon Lameyer, her boyfriend at that moment. Apart from her own personal ambitions, this could also be connected to Otto Plath's death, after which the family suffered hardships and had to be extremely careful with money. In fact, Plath's professional aspirations made her wish to become a great poet and surpass other writers of the time, such as Adrienne Rich, who was also struggling with motherhood and domestic issues: "Plath once asked Rich, who had two small children, whether it was possible to combine writing and motherhood. Rich told her, 'Yes, but it's hellishly difficult'" (Part II), to admit immediately afterwards: "What I wanted to tell her was 'Don't try,' because I was in such despondency... I couldn't foresee a future different from the past two years of raising children and being almost continuously angry" (Part II). In this respect, living in the US in the 1950s, a period of time when women were supposed to be the angels of the house, implied that women could be beaten if they got "hysterical" after remaining at home the whole day working non-stop in domestic issues. They could also be taken to an asylum for

a short time or even receive electroshock sessions for the same reason until they calmed down and could take care of all the domestic chores again. In Clark's words, "In the 1950s, women's discharge from mental hospitals often hinged on their desire to resume their feminine duties as wives and mothers. Those 'who refused to function domestically, in terms of cleaning, cooking, childcare and shopping' when they returned home, as one 1961 study showed, were often recommitted" (Part I).

Plath herself went through electroshock therapy after her first suicide attempt and from then on she was always extremely concerned about the possibility of having to undertake the same treatment once again. Elinor Friedman Klein, who met Plath, explained to Clark in an interview why Plath was so scared: "She told me that it was like being murdered, it was the most horrific thing in the world for her. She said, 'If this should ever happen to me again, I will kill myself'" (Prologue). Regarding Plath's mental disorders, she had always been described as someone suffering from mental problems due to her own personal circumstances but in the first part of Clark's book, we also get to learn about Ernestine, Otto Plath's mother, who died in an asylum for the mentally ill, and other relatives of Sylvia's father who also suffered from depression (Part I). This is again a novelty regarding previous biographies. Now we know that the writer possibly inherited that genetic tendency to depression from her ancestors.

We can conclude by stating that Clark's main goal in Plath's biography, basically "to examine her life through her commitment not to death, but to art" (Prologue), is only partially achieved if we consider that nearly one third of the book (From "Error: Devon, May-June 1962" to the end) deals with the estrangement of the couple, the first infidelities, the hatred, pain, depression caused, and Sylvia Plath's and Assia Wevill's suicides. It is, in fact, very difficult to talk about Plath and her work without ignoring her sad end. There is a moment in her life when everything seemed to collapse and the writer did not have the necessary strength to overcome her situation. The end of her final struggle is very well described in "Edge": "The woman is perfected. Her dead/ Body wears the smile of accomplishment, the illusion of a Greek necessity" (Plath 1965, 84). The poems reflect the attainment of a final inner peace that she could not achieve in real life. Distraught after Hughes' abandonment and the final violence that surrounded the breakup of the couple, Plath only found the perfection that she always sought in life in the fabulous last poems that would be collected in *Ariel*.

Regarding the possibility of another biography with new released material from Plath's journals that would complete Clark's book, we can refer to Karen Kukil's own words in 2021, at the time when she had just stopped being the curator of Plath's papers at Smith College after 30 years:

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. (Martín Castillejos 2021, 24)

And, concerning further publications about Plath, Kukil also added: "Plath may have written as many as 700 additional letters that Peter Steinberg and I were not able to locate. [...] 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" (Martín Castillejos 2021, 25). Yet, when reflecting on the same issue Clark seems to have a different point of view:

[Hughes] hinted that "so-called friends" had stolen many of Plath's manuscripts in the weeks following her suicide. He may have destroyed her last novel, as Assia had wished, as well as her journals from 1960 to 62, though in 1981 Hughes told Alvarez that the journals had "walked, not too long ago." [...] he said publicly that he had destroyed Plath's final 1963 journal to protect her children, though he later hinted to the critic Jacqueline Rose that it might still exist. (Epilogue)

Hence, even if these two versions are somehow contradictory, it seems clear that there is still room for more publications with new released material about Plath. That said, it is fair to add that *Red Comet* must be recognized as the most complete and accurate book written to date on Sylvia Plath.



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BOOK REVIEWS

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American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire

Rodrigo Andrés and Cristina Alsina Rísquez (eds.)

Leiden: Brill, 2022. 292 pp.

ISBN: 978-90-04-52031-8

The result of the collaboration of an international team of scholars, *American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire* (2022) aims to explore a “number of relevant representations of domesticity in American literature over the past two centuries” (2). The volume’s self-proclaimed objective is to consider “the literary representation of the relationship between the spaces where humans live and the lives they live in them” (1).

The authors do so from multiple innovative perspectives, ranging from African-American literary depictions of the dwelling to the reconsideration of the gendered and racialised structures of American prisons, or a re-examination of Thoreau’s conceptualisation of the home. It is precisely this aspect which makes *American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire* (2022) a unique volume. There are other works which focus on the literary connections between the house and different aspects of American society, such as Robert F. Reid-Pharr’s *Conjugal Union: The Body, the House, and the Black American* (1999), Robert J. Norrel’s *The House I Live In: Race in the American Century* (2006), or Timothy Sweet’s *American Land, American Landscape, American Novels* (2011). However, the strength of *American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire* lies in its diversity of approaches to the concept of the house and its implications for individual and collective American identities. The contributors’ explorations of these topics certainly realise their purported intention to investigate “the centrality of the house in the American literary imagination” (2). All these reasons render *American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire* a highly recommendable read for scholars interested in new approximations to the concept of the house in American literature.

The volume is divided into three parts: Part 1 “Houses: Queer Affiliations and Temporalities,” Part 2 “The Legacy of the House Divided,” and Part 3 “Troubled Boundaries of the Domestic Space.” The first section explores the connection between sexually non-normative subjectivities, domestic spatiality, and the feeling of (un)belongingness. The second section explores the interconnectedness between the African-American community and domestic spaces from eighteenth-century Western Africa up to the present day. Lastly, the third section analyses works by some of the most famous American writers who present the home both as a private space and as a place where social relations form a kind of collectivism within the community. The result is a compilation of ground-breaking, multi-layered analyses, with a firm grasp of theoretical approaches and innovative considerations of the American house as a collective and individual dwelling space.

Commencing the first part, Rodrigo Andrés’ “The House as Alternative to Familial Space and Time in Herman Melville’s ‘I and My Chimney’” argues that Melville’s short story displays the domestic space as a site of resistance to the notions of familial space and familial time. In the story, the chimney becomes the centrepiece around which familial relationships

unfold. For Andrés, the male protagonist perceives the centrality of the chimney in the middle of the house as an anti-bourgeois social room, which facilitates the “co-existence of a heterogeneity of lifestyles and social classes within the domestic space” (26). In Andrés’ view, the house in the story embodies Melville’s attempt at preserving “those alternative spaces and moments that can generate communitarian configurations and values that resist the familial and the bourgeois” (36).

Basing her analysis of *The Professor’s House* on Material Studies and Thing Theory, Cristina Alsina Rísquez’ “Paths Well-Trodden and ‘Desire Lines’ in Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House*” considers the deeper implications of material objects in Cather’s novel, which show the dichotomy between “the new, materialistic, consumer-oriented [world] and the old, spiritually sounder, more austere one” (41). According to Alsina Rísquez, those material objects which can be associated with the character of Tom Outland unveil the effects of desire, blurring the limits of domestic space. These everyday artefacts—Alsina Rísquez argues—cater for change in the Professor’s perception of the familial so that by the end of the novel, “the normative, restrictive definitions of what a family is supposed to be and the kind of dwellings it should live in no longer abide” (54). This reconsideration of the traditional heterosexual concept of family and lineage allows the Professor in the novel to perceive the future as “not a threat but a challenge that brings about necessary—though not always painless—change” (55).

Alison Bechdel’s graphic autobiography, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, allows Elena Ortells to reconsider the aesthetics of place and the ethos of domesticity. By relying on human geography and materialist ontology, Ortells’ “Queering the American Family Home: The Aesthetics of Place and the Ethos of Domesticity in Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*” manages to dwell into the significance of the Victorian Gothic Revival family home in the story, asserting that it becomes the “complex, carefully constructed projection of the father’s inner self” (62). Through her exploration of the dialectics of domestic space and sexuality, Ortells examines the importance of the home in the lesbian and gay identities of Alison and Bruce (Alison’s father), who attempts to transform his home into a place of resistance against heteronormativity. However, Bruce and Alison’s house is far from a home, for—as Ortells demonstrates—it fails to offer “the supportive atmosphere concomitant to the family home, the house itself becom[ing] a place of anguish and emotional unrest” (71). Ortells’ insightful consideration of sexuality in Bechdel’s Gothic home is definitely an innovative approach to the genre.

Shifting the focus to the African-American community and its relationships with domestic places, Part 2, “The Legacy of the House Divided,” is commenced by Cynthia Lytle’s analysis of Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing*, a novel which explores seven generations of an African-American family and their relationship with the fortress of Cape Coast Castle (Ghana), “the main structure of power as the British headquarters of the transatlantic slave trade until 1807” (78). Michel Foucault’s notion of biopower and Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropower allow Lytle’s “Cape Coast Castle in the Sky: Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* and the Im/possibility of the American Dream” to question the perennial influence of the castle and its implication in “the continual forms of dispossession that constructed the im/possibility of the American Dream” (95) for the African-American community. As Lytle deftly argues, however, Gyasi’s *Homegoing* demonstrates that slavery “can dispossess but it cannot disempower” (95) as proven by the community’s resilience in the passing down of stories from one generation to the next.

Ian Green’s “The Haunted Plantation: Ghosts, Graves, and Transformation as Resistance in Charles W. Chesnutt’s *The Conjure Woman*” considers Chesnutt’s conjure woman story cycle (1887-1898) from the starting premise that “no space so fully evokes America’s troubled past and troubling future as the plantation” (97). Set in Mars Malaboo’s plantation (North Carolina), Chesnutt’s stories dramatize—Green argues—America’s violent landscape as “a form of haunting, a form of present absence, such that the American landscape is defined by what it dares not make visible but cannot ever fully occlude” (97). Central to this is Chesnutt’s representation of the plantation, which—in Green’s view—epitomises the still unhealed wounds of an America “made both tragic and possible through bodily and spiritual trauma” (112).

“A House is a House is a House: Toni Morrison’s Politics of Domesticity, Redemption and Healing in *Beloved* and *Home*,” Mar Gallego’s analysis of the ways in which Toni Morrison “problematizes the meanings of home and domesticity” (115), offers insightful perspectives on the complex relationships between African-Americans, their dwellings and the politics of domesticity. For Gallego, Morrison’s fiction houses are battlefields, “where both family and community attempt to enact a politics of domesticity, which is sadly compromised from the start” (115). Gallego’s analysis of both works in relation to the politics of domesticity and the interconnectedness between the individual and the community lead her to assert the centrality of the community during two landmark periods for the African-Americans: slavery and the fifties. This centrality—she upholds—“is sustained by an ethics of mutual care that propitiates the characters’ eventual holistic healing” (131).

Basing her study on Winthrop’s foundational sermon “A Model for Christianity” (1630), Vicent Cucarella-Ramon’s “The Politics of Affect with/in the African American Mansion in Stephanie Powell Watts’s *No One Is Coming to Save Us*” conducts a reconsideration of Watts’s 2017 novel. Cucarella-Ramon is especially interested in “the catalyzing potential

of the protagonist's mansion, which embodies the idea of (national) home" (135), and how an analysis of these narrative representations can reveal the characters' sense of place and being. Often considered an African-American revision of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, for Cucarella-Ramon, *No One is Coming to Save Us* problematises the intersecting constructs of affect and self-representation in the urban mansion as a synecdoche for urban ethnoscape, thus allowing an appraisal of "the communal ruptures deriving from the legacy of slavery and racism in contemporary African American culture" (149). Conclusively, Cucarella-Ramon asserts that, understood as the national home, the mansion in *No One Is Coming to Save Us* exemplifies how the forging of love can be "an empowering affective affiliation [which] helps sustain the individual and provides a feasible path to survival" (150) against the burden of social class, racism, and segregation still present in American society.

Closing Part 2, Eva Puyuelo Ureña's "A Lot More Deadly': Gender and the Black Spatial Imaginary in U.S. Prison Writings" considers *Assata: An Autobiography* (1988), the memoir written by Assata Shakur during her seven-year imprisonment. In Puyuelo Ureña's view, Shakur's writings exemplify the reciprocal ways "in which incarceration is informed by gender and sexuality" (153). Puyuelo Ureña's reading of Shakur's memoir illustrates the extent to which prison gendered and racialised structures can be interpreted as an extension of domestic spaces in which "social relations of domination are legitimized and endorsed" (168). Puyuelo Ureña demonstrates how literature prisons can be understood as paradigmatic models of uncanny spaces, dystopian heterotopias which both mimic and contest the dynamics of the home.

The concluding section of the book, "Troubled Boundaries of the Domestic Space," considers an array of texts from the wider perspective of the dwelling not only as a private but also as a communal and contextualised space. The opening chapter, Michael Jonik's "Thoreau's Unhoused," constitutes a philosophical, social, political, anthropological, and ecological exploration of the imprint of the house on Henry David Thoreau's writings. Exploring Thoreau's depictions of the house in both *Walden* and *The Maine Woods*, Jonik asserts that, for the American writer, the house was an *oikos*, or dwelling-with, inscribed "in multiple ecologies and economies of relation" (173). For Jonik, Thoreau's philosophical concept of the dwelling allows a retrospection of those who are "unhoused," namely, African-American slaves and Irish immigrants, thus revealing that the "systemic violence of capitalism is [...] written onto or into the bodies of the poor, as well as into their houses" (177). Similarly, Thoreau's portrayal of the Penobscot and their houses reveals—Jonik argues—a vision of "Native Americans as living if invisible presences who belong to yet another archive of the unhoused" (188).

Arturo Corujo's "Too Tight for Comfort: Shipboard Distance as the Prerequisite for Personal Intimacy in Herman Melville's *White-Jacket*" peruses Melville's portrayal of the personal relationship between sailors, between individual sailors and their personal belongings through the reconsideration of the domestic inventory on board the *Neversink*. For Corujo, Melville's text can be read from a political and ethical perspective as a "category of distance that resists the elimination of individual boundaries" (191). Thus, Corujo analyses the frigate as a domestic space which questions unambiguous gender perspectives, contests imperial narratives and interrogates individuality, finally overcoming "the immaterial and narcissistic understanding of the domestic as solipsistic" (205). Most interestingly, Corujo concludes by asserting the connection between *White-Jacket* and *Moby-Dick*, asserting that the intimacy in the former preludes the "warm atmosphere of respectful cohabitation" (206) Ishmael attaches to whalers.

Cynthia Stretch's "'Maybe There's Nobody to Shoot': The Disappearing Landlord in 20th-Century U.S. Fiction" focuses on the narrative representations of housing precarity from the mid-twentieth century, arguing that the hyper-commodification of housing "had not yet gained traction, but the likelihood of achieving the American Dream of property ownership was receding into the distance" (210). To conduct her analysis, Stretch considers three narratives, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*, all of which portray the evictor as an antagonist protected by the logics of capital accumulation and whose evictions "foreground anxieties about identity and agency" (210) existing at the time. Stretch's consideration of (the lack of) domestic space drives her conclusion that literary representations of the act of eviction acquire cultural and ethical significance insofar as they allow characters to redefine their individual significance in communal terms resting on "some form of mutualism, and suggest that, in the mid-twentieth century America, going it alone is a dead end" (223).

Carme Manuel's "Woody Guthrie's *House of Earth*: A Manifesto in Adobe as a Response to Houselessness and Domicide in Post-Depression Years" unveils Guthrie's fictional response to the economic and humanitarian crisis of the home loss stemming from "the cataclysmic events suffered by rural Americans during the 1930s" (226). For Manuel, Guthrie's utilisation of the New Mexican adobe house can be interpreted as a redemptive element, endowing the unhoused with the potential to recreate "new type of Christian community, relocated in biblical and transcendental terms" (240). In Manuel's view, *House of Earth* portrays the house as a regenerative element, granting the dispossessed the "power to transform the land and redress social injustice" (240).

Basing her analysis on the Derridean concept of the *arrivant*, Paula Martín-Salván's "The *Arrivant* in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*: Deviation, Iteration, Intersection" considers the concepts of domesticity and transience in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*. In Martín-Salván's view, Morrison's depiction of the moment of arrival "structurally interrogates the notion

of home as a stable immunitary articulation, through the prominence of the motif of the *arrivant*" (246). To do so, Martín-Salván probes not only the structural motif of arrival, but also the idea of beginnings, the ethics of hospitality, the construction of home as immunised space, or the logics of iteration and repetition. Such perusals of the Convent—the house which focalises the action in Morrison's work—drives Martín-Salván to assert that *Paradise* dramatizes "the logic of Derridean unconditional hospitality" (263) by affirming the impossibility of absolute arrival. It is this impossibility which—in Martín-Salván's view—cross-examines the notion of home as a stable immunitary space.

Dolores Resano's analysis of Barbara Kingsolver's *Unsheltered* in "A House at Odds with Itself": Barbara Kingsolver's *Unsheltered*" brings the book to a close. For Resano, *Unsheltered*'s shifting timeframe (a narrative alternating between 1871 and 2016) can be interpreted as cyclical narrative, where the present is only a part of a wider reading which considers "the present as part of a natural process of conflict, adaptation, and survival" (268). Interestingly, the connecting motif in these shifting narratives is the image of the unstable house. Read figuratively in terms of the nation, this frailty of the house portrays not only "moments of transition and uncertainty, but also of opportunity" (268). Understood in the context of "Trump Fiction" and based on Paula Geyh's notion of "unhousing" and Christine Wilson's concept of "habitability," the frailty and final collapse of the house creates—in Resano's view—an opportunity for national reconciliation and rebuilding, allowing Americans to be "free and open to consider and to build new houses, new communities, new social arrangements" (281).

Reading *American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire* constitutes a thorough academic experience. Rodrigo Andrés and Cristina Alsina Rísquez have managed to compile a wide array of perspectives on the influence, significance and application of the American house as a literary trope. The editors' efforts have resulted in a well-wrought, innovative scholarly narrative, which caters for new considerations of the concepts of home, house, or dwelling, and their implications for both collective and individual identities. This volume will be of interest for researchers interested in literary representation of the relationship between spaces and their inhabitants. However, the book might also attract scholars keen on discovering novel approaches to urban dwellings in America and their racialised and gendered depictions. In short, *American Houses: Literary Spaces of Resistance and Desire* is highly recommendable for its intellectual rigour, its insightful contributions and its innovative approach to the analysis of the American house.



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BOOK REVIEWS

LETICIA DEL TORO GARCÍA

UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS PALMAS DE GRAN CANARIA

Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction 1665-2000

David Clark

Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, New York, Wien: Peter Lang. 426 pp.

ISBN: 978-1-80079-826-7

Irish crime fiction is a long-lived phenomenon that has always attracted the interest of readers. However, scholars' interest seems to have revived in the last two decades of this century, as numerous critical works have been published. To name but a few examples, we can mention Elizabeth Mannion's *The Contemporary Irish Detective Novel* (2016), Brian Cliff's *Irish Crime Fiction* (2018), or Elizabeth Mannion and Brian Cliff's *Guilt Rules All: Irish Mystery, Detective, and Crime Fiction* (2020). These volumes present analyses of Irish crime fiction from a great variety of angles, including aspects related to the origin of the genre, the works of well-known authors, the setting of the stories contained in these narratives, or the styles used.

Dark Green: Irish Crime Fiction 1665-2000 represents a continuation of this critical line. Its author, David Clark, who has an extensive career in Irish studies, introduces an innovation compared to previous works. He adopts a chronological approach that allows the reader to follow the evolution of Irish crime fiction from its origins almost to the present day (from 1665, where the author locates the first representations of the genre, to the year 2000, the beginning of the new millennium). This book is also volume number 114 in a series called "Reimagining Ireland," in which a variety of academics write about different aspects of Ireland such as culture, politics, history, or literature. This work has been carefully prepared and is the result of intensive research, which is why it is recommended both for those who are just interested in crime fiction but have no knowledge of it, and for those who want to study the subject from an academic perspective and learn more about the historical development of the genre and relevant authors of each period. Another important aspect is the fact that most of the works mentioned in this book are accompanied by a synopsis, so that the reader gets additional information to know what these works are about and to decide whether they could be of interest to them.

Structurally, this book consists of an introduction, twenty chapters, a bibliography, and an index. In his introduction, Clark explains to the reader some not so well-known curiosities, such as the fact that Irish crime fiction is not only written by Irish-born authors but that it also includes writers who have some connection to the country because they have worked there or lived in its territories for some time. He also discusses the fact that, contrary to what one might expect, most Irish crime fiction is written in English rather than Irish. As Clark explains, this is probably a matter of commercial success or even notoriety. When an author decides to use the Irish language, it is obvious that his/her audience is quite limited. It is also noticeable that the content and settings of the titles Clark discusses in this book are not exclusively set in Ireland, but cover a wide variety of places and historical periods, which may surprise the reader unfamiliar with the genre.

Clark begins his exposition by tracing the origin of Irish crime fiction in the seventeenth century, particularly in the picaresque novel, of Spanish influence. He mentions *The English Rogue* (1661) by Richard Head as a relevant influence in the birth of this genre (20-30). He also values the role of the so-called “broadside ballads” and the Newgate Calendars (33-36). Both of them used to include biographies of criminals as well as their trials, confessions, and even executions. The majority of them were located in England and featured the criminal as the protagonist, such as “A Sorrowful Lamentation on the Hollywood Tragedy where Two Sisters Have Been Brutally Murdered (1667)” (34). This type of writing became highly popular among people who were interested in such events. However, Ireland would not be included in the thematic line of these literary works until the nineteenth century. It is the moment where the so-called “silver fork novels” become popular, with a thematic line that includes social class differences, economic problems, rapes, and male violence. But the key topic that becomes a constant in most crime fiction is the controversy between Catholics and Protestants. Thus, although the figure of the detective or even of the police as a force of order do not appear clearly defined in the first states of the genre, we will frequently discover the emergence of religious figures, both nuns and priests, that would take the role of detective in many of these novels. Depending on the religious ideology represented, the novel will propagate one religious sector or another.

The nineteenth century would bring certain novelties in the evolution of crime fiction. In the first place, Clark considers the presence of gothic fiction as an element to be taken into consideration, for as the gothic novel is a perfect manifestation of crime fiction with the particularity that it contains supernatural elements (54-60). This is evidenced by very popular writers of the time such as Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, L.T. Meade, Bram Stoker, or Charles Robert Maturin. However, with the passing of time, readers would get tired of those elements and claim for more realistic novels, and this is when the “sensation novel” appears (61-65). It is located in contemporary settings and portrays the reality of the middle-class. Its thematic line goes around inheritance or domestic crime, murder, bigamy, adultery, usurpation of identity, suspense, and the presence of the figure of the detective is a constant in the story.

Another important feature of crime fiction that became popular at that time is the short story. Many authors start writing short narrations to be published in newspapers and magazines instead of writing novels. In some occasions, the stories are different but there are some writers that create a character that appears in all of them, creating serial stories, shorter in extension to that of a novel, but with all its main characteristics. It is the case, for example, of M. McDonnell Bodkin's short story collections *Dora Myrl*, *The Lady Detective* (1900), or *The Quest of Paul Beck* (1908). Curiously, this manifestation of the genre is still popular nowadays.

Crime fiction would also have its Golden Age, which scholars place between 1918 and 1939 and that possesses popular writers such as Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ronald Knox, G.D.H. Cole, E. C. Bentley, Freeman Wills Croft, Nicholas Blake, or Jessie Louise Moore. Most of these works follow the style of Conan Doyle's Holmes (155-59). It implies a detective who works with an assistant, a crime occurring at the beginning of the story so that the narration goes around its reconstruction and the detection of the murderer, and the setting in an isolated country house (though there are cases in which we also find a school, a hospital, a prison or a cruise ship) with people who are usually upper-middle or upper class. It is noticeable that, while Europe confronted World War I, Ireland was also involved in its internal conflicts. That would give origin to the separation of the territory into the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the creation of the Garda Síochána or Guardians of the Peace, the first Irish Police Force, which would be part of many crime fiction novels set in Irish lands. Clark affirms that Irish people initially did not trust this police, so in many novels they were depicted quite negatively, in a very humoristic or satiric way. But with time, the perception would change and the detective figures belonging to the Garda present themselves as very effective, confident individuals able to solve the most intricate mysteries, as it happens in Sheila Pinn or Eilis Dillon's novels who would use Irish settings for their stories (210-17). In a similar line, the figure of the detective in crime fiction would experience its evolution as the genre evolved. From being a figure poorly defined, characters became much more complex, capable, and prepared to confront the different situations and mysteries they encounter, so from almost anonymous or unknown figures we encounter the figure of the professional detective. This is the case with characters such as Peter McGarr, who belongs to Dublin police and works in the company of his wife, Noreen (262-64), created by Bartholomew Gill; Nick Carroll, an ex-police officer with his detective agency, created by James Brendan O'Sullivan (194-97); or Inspector McCarthy (260), the protagonist of a whole series of novels created by John J. Dunne.

The years of World War II brought great instability to Ireland, as to the rest of the world. However, this was an important moment for crime fiction because many writers centred their attention on Ireland and made its people and its countryside part of their stories. This is the case of authors like Sheila Pim, Eilis Dillon, L. A. G. Strong, or John Needham Huggard Brennan, who present us with the first portraits of Irish police methods of investigation, together with different portraits of political and religious conflicts created among the Irish population. These are more realistic approaches to Ireland than those found in previous authors. However, there was a necessity to move away from reality and turn into fiction from the '60s to the '80s, deriving in a proliferation of spy fiction. This was inspired by the days of World War II though many authors who made use of the Northern Ireland conflict to create their stories as who find inspiration in the intrigues happening in a country with a population divided into two sides in which no one trusts anyone.

Clark also speaks about a much more contemporary development in the genre of crime fiction, the so-called “police procedural novel” (140-46). This keeps many elements in common with previous crime fiction. However, the emphasis is put on the investigation of the crime and the way it is carried out, usually by a detective, a lonely figure who works in collaboration with a group. Clark concludes his presentation introducing some of the most interesting authors today and leaving the door open for a new book where he promises he will exclusively speak about present-day authors and styles.

Summarizing, this work most innovative aspect is its chronological development. Here, in contrast to what happened in previous works, the reader is provided with the possibility of following the evolution of the genre from its origin to present day. Furthermore, its multiple references to authors and titles, along with its bibliography, make it an ideal resource for anyone interested in starting a serious researching on Irish crime fiction.



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