BABEL AFIAL

Aspectos de Filoloxía Inglesa e Alemá (2022)

31

Universidade Vigo
Servizo de Publicacións

BABEL AFIAL

BABEL-AFIAL
Nº 31, Ano 2022

EDITA
Servizo de Publicacións da Universidade de Vigo
Campus Universitario - 36310 Vigo, España

MAQUETA: Andavira Editora

ISSN 1132-7332 – eISNN 2660-4906
DEP. LEGAL PO 603-02

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Literature as Travel Guide: Amenity Writing on Mallorca as a Twenty-First-Century Consumer Product

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Abstract

This article discusses a literary tendency which has emerged in connection with new migratory movements, popular literature and consumer culture in the context of Mallorca. This Mediterranean island receives thousands of tourists every year and currently hosts a significant number of what Laurence A. G. Moss (1994) has called "amenity migrants", most of them from Germany and English-speaking countries. By focusing on a number of narratives produced by amenity migrants on Mallorca, this paper addresses some of the main features shared by these texts, such as their birth as consumer products for a very specific audience and their idealised view of Mallorcan culture, and contends that a central characteristic of the new trend is its hybrid nature, as it combines fiction – usually crime fiction or romance – with the kind of information expected in a travel guide for tourists.

Keywords: amenity migration, consumerism, crime fiction, romance, travel writing, Mallorca, tourism.

La literatura como guía de viajes: la narrativa de amenidad sobre Mallorca como producto de consumo del siglo XXI

Resumen

Este artículo analiza una tendencia literaria surgida en relación con los nuevos movimientos migratorios, la literatura popular y la cultura de consumo en el contexto de Mallorca Esta isla mediterránea recibe cada año a miles de turistas y actualmente alberga un número significativo

de lo que Laurence A. G. Moss (1994) ha denominado "migrantes de amenidad", la mayoría de ellos procedentes de Alemania y de países de habla inglesa. Centrándose en una serie de narrativas producidas por migrantes de amenidad en Mallorca, este artículo aborda algunos de los principales rasgos que comparten estos textos, tales como su origen como producto de consumo para un público muy específico y su visión idealizada de la cultura mallorquina, y sostiene que una característica central de esta nueva tendencia es su marcado carácter híbrido, ya que combina la ficción con el tipo de información que se esperaría encontrar en una guía de viajes para turistas.

Palabras clave: migración de amenidad, cultura de consumo, novela policíaca, novela romántica, literatura de viajes, Mallorca, turismo.

1. Introduction

Amenity migration has been a much discussed social phenomenon since the concept was coined by Laurence A. G. Moss in 1994. For him it stands as a "global condition" ("The Rural Change Agent" 13) specially observed since the late twentieth century, although present long before at a smaller scale, and involving the migration of people to certain rural areas that are "perceive[d] as having greater environmental quality and differentiated culture" ("The Amenity Migrants" 3). Unlike economic migrants, amenity migrants are oriented toward leisure, learning and spirituality, though in varying degrees and patterns according to place ("Beyond Tourism" 124) and it is often the case that they were initially tourists there. Research into amenity migration has mainly focused on its pernicious effects on the environment and culture of the place of destination, with special attention to mountain areas as its more significant manifestation. Scholarship has mainly covered specific locations in North America, Western and Northern Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, though there are other emerging destinations which have not been sufficiently analysed within this paradigm and also deserve attention. One of these is the Spanish island of Mallorca, in the Balearic Islands, a major tourist resort in the

Mediterranean since the early twentieth century – and even before, if we consider its inclusion in the so-called "Grand Tour of Europe" made by young European aristocrats in the nineteenth century (see Fiol-Guiscafré).

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the Balearic Islands have received millions of tourists. According to official records, at the beginning of the new millennium citizens of twenty different nationalities visited the islands and nowadays more than thirty countries send tourists to the archipelago (Govern de les Illes Balears), with the most numerous groups since the 1990s coming from Germany – who were 49.9% of tourists in 2017 – and the United Kingdom – 15.5% in 2017 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística). Apart from these, a significant percentage of incomers from Britain and Germany own property in the islands and live as residents all the year round or most of it. At the beginning of 2019, 17,000 British citizens were registered as residents only in Mallorca and 22,000 in the whole archipelago (Moneo), whereas about 70,000 German nationals have been said to come and go regularly every year from Germany to their property in the Balearics (Fueris). Although these figures cannot be exact – there might be residents who are not recorded as such by the Spanish government or change their status over time – this is indication that amenity migration stands as a growing, outstanding phenomenon in the Balearics today and specifically in Mallorca.

The patterns found among these migrants follow those proposed by Moss: they can be permanent, seasonal or intermittent ("Beyond Tourism," "The Rural Change Agent"), though they share the fact that "all typically own a residence in the bioregion and perceive themselves as residents" ("Beyond Tourism" 123). Several factors have contributed to the phenomenon, in line with those suggested by Moss (124-25), one of them being the increase in amenity resources over the last decades, noticeably those related to cultural events in Mallorca. Landscape and nature have always been important sources of attraction as well. However, the involvement of amenity migrants in Mallorca goes beyond the attempt to preserve its local environment and amenity culture: among German and English-speaking migrants an interesting trend has been observed which consists of publishing narratives in their own language whose setting and characters are characteristically those of the island.

In the last two decades a significant body of texts have been produced in German and English that share an important number of features, the most prominent being, apart from their Mallorcan setting and the fact that their authors qualify as amenity migrants, their potential use as travel guides to the island, since their pages include valuable information for tourists and ethnographers in combination with topics and clichés typically found in what is known as "genre fiction" or "popular literature." Indeed, these texts can be interpreted as products for the consumption of tourists and migrants belonging to the authors' culture, readers who are ready to travel to or already living in the island and seek additional information that will make their experience more enjoyable, while also craving the pleasure and entertainment of reading fiction. The role of literary texts as consumer products has been discussed in the last decades in connection with the emergence of mass culture and the commodification of literature (see Long; Zia), a phenomenon that stands as an important component of present-day literary markets, although its link to contemporary tourism and migration trends has not been sufficiently acknowledged.

In 1994 Moss himself made reference to what he called the "content analysis of novels" as a useful tool to find information about amenity migration ("Beyond Tourism" 122). However, the texts themselves have never been explored as a cultural phenomenon. This article intends to shed light on the trend Gloria Bosch-Roig has called "amenity literature" ("Turistas" and "Mallorca") by discussing the characteristics shared by a number of texts produced in German and English in the context of recent amenity migration in Mallorca. In order to do this, the article will initially turn to the first travellers who could be considered "proto-amenity migrants", to use R. S. Glorioso's terminology (275), as they not only lived on the island for many years, but also wrote about it in various types of texts, placing it on the international literary map. Next, a number of recent German narratives about Mallorca shall be discussed, most of them considered detective fiction or romance. The following section will explore writing in English about the island, which has a more varied nature but shares many features and motifs with that produced in German. Finally, some conclusions will be drawn that support a perception of these narratives as disguised travel guides which contribute to the promotion of international tourism in the Balearics.

2. Proto-Amenity Migrants in Mallorca

Amenity writing in Mallorca cannot be discussed without first considering those who can be perceived as the initiators of the trend. Among the earliest foreign visitors in the Balearics it is perhaps not surprising that some could be considered "proto-amenity migrants," as they settled in the islands for periods ranging from several months to several years or even for their whole lifetime. This pattern can be observed in several eminent travellers, inheritors of the spirit of the Grand Tour, who came to Mallorca in search of exoticism and vestiges of a medieval past while escaping from nineteenth-century burgeoning industrialization. Some of them even wrote travel books or travelogues which came close to the first travel guides that emerged in the same period, the late nineteenth century. This was the case of German scientist Alexander Pagenstecher (1825-1889) and German zoologist Otto Bürger (1865-1945), who offered in their texts realistic descriptions of life and landscape in the archipelago. Bürger, who spent two months in Mallorca in 1912, even included in his *Spaniens Riviera und die Balearen* [*The Spanish Riviera and the Balearics*] (1913) his own assessment –and not always positive– of the quality of public transport, travellers' accommodation and food.

But the first proto-amenity migrant in Mallorca can be said to be Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria (1847-1915), second cousin of Emperor Franz Joseph I and fourth son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He visited the Balearics twice in his twenties and during his second visit he decided to buy property in Mallorca and settle there for the rest of his life. He was so fascinated by the Balearic landscape and lifestyle that he wrote a seven-volume book, *Die Balearen in Wort und Bild geschildert [The Balearic Islands, portrayed in words and images]* (1869-1891), which included descriptions of landscape, animals, history, folklore and customs, as well as maps and engravings. In the 1920s a relevant number of German citizens settled in Mallorca and opened their own businesses, parallel to a growing tourism coming from Germany. It is in the last decades of the twentieth century, with the tourist boom in the archipelago and its growing international visibility, that a stable increase can be observed in the number of German tourists and residents in the Balearics, an increase leading to the phenomenon under analysis here.

The first English-speaking travellers in the Balearics arrived during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and wrote mainly travel books based on their experiences, as discussed by Fiol Guiscafré and Moyà. Although most stayed only for a few weeks or months, the most prominent exception was the poet and novelist Robert Graves (1895-1985), who moved to Deià, Mallorca, in 1929 in search of a "paradise" where he could write, following the advice given by American writer Gertrude Stein. He lived there until 1936, when the Spanish Civil War began, though he returned in 1946 and settled again for the rest of his life. As part of his literary production he wrote a significant number of local-colour stories set in Mallorca – published in his *Collected Short Stories* (1964) – which can be read as precursors of the texts under study here, since they offer valuable ethnographic and sometimes geographic information about the island, although they have been barely visible among his large literary output. Due to his lifestyle and mindset, Graves can be considered not only a proto-amenity migrant but also an important agent in the migration of other English and non-English intellectuals into the Balearics. As a consequence, the anglophone community has expanded steadily in the archipelago, the tendency being more visible in the second half of the twentieth century and blooming in the first years of the twenty-first century.

3. Amenity Writing in German

When discussing recent German writing set in Mallorca, two dominant genres can be found: the crime novel and the local-colour romance, the former experiencing a boom from the 2000s onwards (Kreye). These *Mallorca-Romane* are novels to be read easily while sitting on a chaise longue, which recreate holiday landscapes and settings, lived or imagined situations and/or experiences that contribute either to activate readers' memories of a place or to encourage travelling there. If a travel guide can be defined as "a book, website, etc. that provides travellers or tourists with information about places of interest, accommodation, restaurants, etc" (Oxford Lexico), crime fiction written in German on Mallorca can be said to fall very much under this definition, as these narratives include abundant descriptions of places of interest for tourists as well as explanations of traditional customs and local recipes in ways that turn them into "veiled" travel guides.

Crime fiction on Mallorca can also be included within a wider literary trend called regional crime fiction, a phenomenon that has reached great popularity in Germany in recent years as reflected, for example, in the enormous success of crime novelist Rita Falk, whose bestselling novels are always set in Bavaria. In all these texts a strong emotional attachment can be observed between the authors and the settings chosen for the plot; this is also the case in those set in Mallorca, as very often these narratives use recurrently the topos of the island as a symbol of paradise. Thus, Mallorca is usually portrayed as a romantic tourist destination chosen by some tourists as the place to commit a crime but always worth the journey. In addition, these narratives are products for ready consumption whose commercial success is usually taken for granted. Their main objective is not literary but to entertain, to attract the sensuous attention of readers, to evoke sensations and experiences through what Roland Barthes has called "the pleasure of the text". But, as suggested above, they can also be read as travel books, travel guides or even cultural guides, since many of them, besides offering useful information for Mallorca travellers, have a pedagogical dimension when they try to explain Mallorcan culture to the German reader.

One of the most prolific German authors to cultivate the crime novel set in Mallorca is Andreas Schnabel, who has published seven books within a series whose titles begin in their majority with the word *Tod* [death]. Schnabel's link to Mallorca dates back to forty years ago; nowadays he spends long periods in a rented house in the Mallorcan village of Santanyí. Thus, he can be considered a seasonal resident in Mallorca – and therefore, an amenity migrant – a fact somehow reflected in his novels through the protagonist, detective Michael Berger, called "El Residente," who works side by side with a Mallorcan police inspector. This also reveals the deliberate intercultural nature of his narratives: the Mallorcan and German worlds, far from each other before, come in touch producing spaces of interaction and dialogue. These texts portray closely delineated characters who can communicate in both Mallorcan and Spanish, as well as narrators who become somehow educators and mediators of Mallorcan culture, as observed in Schnabel's *Tod oder Finca* [*Death or Finca*]:

> Wenn Sie hier leben wollen, sollten Sie sich aber auch an die Gepflogenheiten dieser Insel halten, und wenn Dinge

> noch nicht reif sind, dann kann man sie nicht erzwingen [...]. Also, meine Dame, wenn Sie eine Mallorquinerin werden wollen, dann benehmen Sie sich nicht wie eine Deutsche. Er grinste Sie an. Du verstehen? (24)
>
> [If you intend to live here, you should stick to the island's customs, and if things are not mature enough yet, you cannot force them […]. Then, my lady, if you want to be a Mallorcan, don't behave like a German. He smiled at her. You understand?]

Brigitte Lamberts's *El Gustario de Mallorca und das tödliche Elixir* [*Mallorca's Gustario and the Deadly Elixir*] (2017) and *El Gustario de Mallorca und der tödliche Schatten* [*Mallorca's Gustario and the Deadly Shadow*] (2019) recount how, while travelling through Mallorca in order to write a gastronomic guide, the German journalist Sven Ruge gets involved in a crime. An art historian, Lamberts lives in Düsseldorf and has visited Mallorca regularly for thirty years. Her narratives portray numerous restaurants and typical Mallorcan dishes in what can be considered a hybrid *noir*: a gastronomic crime novel. She has also coedited a short fiction collection, *Mallorca mörderisch genießen* [*Enjoying Mallorca in a Deadly Way*] (2016), comprising twenty-two crime stories authored by eighteen German writers, herself included. Each of the stories is set in a different part of the island and concludes with a recipe and a description of the place, as reflected in her story "Ein Geständnis auf Mallorca" ["Confession in Mallorca"], set in Can Picafort: "Can Picafort liegt im Nordosten von Mallorca und gehört zur Gemeinde Santa Margalida. An der Strandpromenade befinden sich viele Bars und Restaurants, es gibt eine Einkaufsstraße für den Tag und eine Fußgängerzone für den Abend" [Can Picafort lies to the north-west of Mallorca and belongs to the municipality of Santa Margalida. At the seafront promenade we can find plenty of bars and restaurants; there are also a commercial street for the day and a pedestrian area for the night] (43).

Lamberts's fiction can be described as a combination of travel book, gastronomic guide and crime narrative, though her two novels also offer interesting reflections on the tourist boom on the island and historical information on the Spanish Civil War as lived in the Balearics (e.g., "Ein Geständnis auf Mallorca" 63). This sort of literary experiment

can be linked to what has been discussed as unlimited intertextuality, a literary hybridisation which pursues an intercultural, multidimensional, sensorial and hedonistic reading experience. Though the sensorial pleasure of reading seems to be the main objective of these texts, an informative aim can also be observed on the part of the author, which likens it to a present-day travel guide.

Amenity novels also offer spaces for the recreation of Mallorcan folklore, although often tainted with stereotypes. In Bea Milana's novel *Komplott im Süden* [*Plot in the South*] (2015) the author, a resident in Mallorca for fifteen years who signs her fiction with a pseudonym, recreates a real event which ended in a long and unpleasant trial. The *rondalla* "El corb de Ses Puntes" ["The Raven of Ses Puntes"] – a Mallorcan traditional oral story – works in the text as an explicative analogy:

> Es war einmal ein Rabe, der pickte mal ein paar Trauben bei s'Illeta, mal ein paar Bohnen und Erbsen bei sa Cortera und Tuent und mal ein paar Feigen in der Calobra. Dabei war er so alt geworden, dass er seine Federn verlor und nichts mehr finden konnte, um sich den Magen zu füllen. Weil aber nichts erfinderischer Macht als ein leerer Magen, sagte er eines Tages zu sich selbst, als ihn der Hunger quälte: Mal sehen, was ich anstellen kann. Es hat mir nie gefallen, anderen Schaden zuzufügen, aber jeder ist sich selbst der Nächste. Meine Haut ist mir mehr Wert als alle anderen zusammen. Auf geht's Futter suchen! (*Komplott im Süden* 172)
>
> [Once upon a time a raven was picking some grapes in s'Illeta, some beans and peas in sa Cortera and Tuent and some figs in sa Calobra. In the process, he had aged so much that he had lost his feathers and could not find anything to fill his stomach any longer. But, as there is nothing more inspiring than an empty stomach, he said to himself one day when he was very hungry: Let's see what I can do. I have never enjoyed hurting others, but I come first. My skin is more important to me than anything else. Let's go for food!]

Milana does not reproduce the complete story, but only the beginning. By doing this, the strong moralising message typical of *rondallas* is hidden from the reader while the violent plot, very frequent in them, is visible. Therefore, we can observe how the biased intertextual reference she chooses reinforces a negative stereotype about Mallorcans as selfish hustlers and swindlers.

In the world of crime fiction set in Mallorca we can also mention the newcomer Lisa Herding, who represents the second generation of German amenity migrants, as she grew up in the town of Sóller, in the north of the island. Herding has recently published her first crime novel, *Comisaria Fiol und der Tod im Tramuntana-Gebirge [Inspector Fiol and Death in the Tramuntana Mountains]* (2020), whose main novelty is that it features two female detectives as protagonists, a Mallorcan police inspector working side by side with a German ex inspector, which implies a female-centred crime novel – in fact, the first German "femicrime" with a Mallorcan setting.

An example of local-colour romance is that by Heinrich Breloer and Frank Schauhoff – both rooted seasonal residents in Mallorca – titled *Mallorca, ein Jahr* [*Mallorca, One Year*] (1995), whose enormous success is evidenced by its numerous reprints. The novel attempts to show the authentic Mallorca, the one hidden behind the tourist ghettoes, by portraying a German journalist as an emotional expatriate who discovers the real life of the island through a local friend and a beautiful and inaccessible Mallorcan upper-class girl. The book describes the characteristics, attitudes and feelings of the Mallorcans, their behavior towards foreign residents and the ways in which they can be accepted and integrated, in such a way that it can be read as a cultural guide. Thus, the narrative offers many brushstrokes of Mallorcan culture, depicting rituals, ancient traditions and even specific idiosyncrasies of the locals which are quite complex and difficult to understand by an outsider. In the following quote, the narrator explains to the reader the dynamics of buying and selling property on the island, thus revealing the author's deep, almost local knowledge of Mallorcan traditions as well as the text's indirect goal of fostering communication between the German and Mallorcan cultures by providing an example of a common situation that often leads to misunderstanding:

> *Man wird einen Mallorquiner, mit dem man nicht bekannt oder befreundet ist, nicht dazu bringen, zuzugeben, dass er irgendein Interesse daran hätte, etwas zu verkaufen oder zu vermitteln. Das führt bei Verkaufsgesprächen oft dazu, dass der ausländische Käufer glaubt, der mallorquinische Verkäufer pokere auf mehr Geld. Eigentlich spekuliert er aber nur auf mehr Zeit, um sich – nach außen – lange genug überlegt zu haben, ob er diesen Käufer akzeptiert. Denn unter Mallorquinern spielt das Prestige des Verkäufers eine große Rolle, was auch für die Preisfindung erheblich ist.* (*Mallorca, ein Jahr* 231; original italics)

> [*You won't be able to make any Mallorcan you are not acquainted with or who is not your friend admit he has some intention to sell or mediate in anything. This often leads to misunderstandings in sales negotiations, as foreign buyers think that the Mallorcan seller wants more money. Actually, he just wants to buy time to consider whether to accept the buyer, because among Majorcans the prestige of the seller plays an important role, which is also significant for the price.*]

In addition, *Mallorca, ein Jahr* also makes constant references to places of interest and descriptions, many of them outside the typical tourist circuits. At the beginning of the narration, the authors include a map of the island where the main attractions of Mallorca are indicated, in a travel guide fashion. In the following quote, the authors describe how to get to Valldemossa and what to see there:

> An Santa María vorbei, Bunyola rechts liegen lassend, waren sie vor Esporles, Richtung Valldemossa, ins Gebirge hochgefahren […] Die Kartause von Valldemossa mit ihrem breiten Kirchenschiff und dem kleinen Turm aus sandfarbenem Maresstein überragte die Häuser des Ortes, die sich unten an die mächtigen Mauern anlehnten. (*Mallorca, ein Jahr* 39)

> [Passing Santa María, leaving Bunyola on the right, they climbed up into the mountains leaving Esporles behind and heading towards Valldemossa […] The Charterhouse of Valldemossa, with its wide nave and small tower made

> of mares sandstone, towered over the houses of the town below against the mighty walls.]

Breloer and Schauhoff's novel illustrates very well the hybrid character of the amenity texts on Mallorca, as its romance plot is interrupted very often by the introduction of useful information about the culture and places of interest for the German tourist visiting the island. They even include a short glossary of Spanish and Mallorcan terms, with their translation into German, at the end of the book.

The integration of the Spanish and Mallorcan cultures in German amenity novels is getting more evident in recent years, always conditioned by the amount of knowledge each author has. This allows for spaces of reflection and intercultural dialogue that contribute both to relativise some stereotypes on Mallorca and to reinforce or create others. For instance, an incorrect use of Spanish and the Mallorcan dialect can occasionally be observed, as well as incoherences that reveal the author's lack of linguistic and intellectual accuracy when collecting and organising the information. Notorious examples of this are when Milana portrays controversial Mallorcan banker Juan March as Catalan-born (211) or when Breloer and Schauhoff fuse into one two well-known Spanish songs by Joan Manuel Serrat and Julio Iglesias (296). However, this does not seem to affect the consumption of this kind of literature, which can afford certain liberties that would be unthinkable in other literary genres. And despite the fact that authors often lack a deep knowledge of the local culture and tend to reproduce stereotypes, these narratives offer the possibility to update the public image of the island, working as publicity texts and hidden travel guides often unnoticed by tourist agents. These fictions focus mainly on offering an exciting lifestyle, though set in a relaxed, rural world far away from urban concerns: a kind of *Dolce Vita* or *Deutsche Vita* in Mallorca. This has a parallel in novels produced in the anglophone context, as shall be discussed in the next section.

4. Amenity Writing in English

Anglophone fiction set in Mallorca has been well documented since the 1950s, including mainly murder mystery novels and thrillers by bestselling authors who can be perceived as precursors of the trend, such

as Brian Moore (1921-1999), who wrote *A Bullet for My Lady* (1955) and *Murder in Majorca* (1957) while living on the island, and Roderic Jeffries (b.1926), a Port de Pollença resident since 1972 and author of more than 160 novels, thirty-seven of them with Mallorcan settings. As stated before, the role of the Balearics as a source of inspiration for travellers and writers emerged long before the end of the twentieth century; however, as in the German case, fiction produced for mass consumption by amenity migrants and with the features we are discussing has experienced a boom since 2000. These narratives share a portrayal of Mallorca as paradise through many passages that contain descriptions of place and customs in a travel-guide fashion, while also attempting a dialogue between cultures by making characters from the authors' cultural background interact with locals in the island.

As in fiction in German, English crime fiction or *noir* stands as a highly productive trend in amenity writing on Mallorca. But another bestselling trend nowadays is the travel book, which also deserves attention here, as it is the narrative form that most closely resembles the travel guide. Two authors stand out today as bestselling travel writers on Mallorca: Scottish Peter Kerr and English Anna Nicholas, both residents on the island in the last decades and authors of a number of books on their experiences. Thus, Kerr has authored five narratives between 2000 and 2006 about the three years he spent with his family in a Calvià village, whereas freelance journalist Nicholas has published six books between 2007 and 2016 about her leaving London with her husband and son in search of a less stressful life in rural Sóller. As travel narratives, these texts refer explicitly to Mallorca in their titles, thus contributing to the promotion of tourism in the island, and the topos of Mallorca as paradise is often made explicit from the beginning. In Kerr's first book, for example, titled *Snowball Oranges: One Mallorcan Winter* (2000), a quote from French writer George Sand's *A Winter in Majorca* is used as an epigraph to the whole narrative:

> For Majorca is one of the most
> beautiful places on Earth…
> Like a green Helvetia
> Under a Calabrian sky,
> With the solemnity and silence
> Of the Orient. (7)

In his second book, *One Mallorcan Summer* (2001), a similar epigraph refers to Mallorca as "the island of calm" (7) in a quote from Catalan writer Santiago Rusiñol's *L'illa de la calma* (1913). In a similar vein, Nicholas's narratives also contain a recurrent celebration of Mallorca's beautiful landscapes, which is accompanied, nonetheless, by humorous references to common stereotypes such as those of Mallorcan procrastination and relaxed lifestyle, also present in Kerr's texts and valued positively by both authors: "Foolishly, we had not reckoned on Mallorca *mañana* time which means you arrive within an hour or so of the time you originally agreed" (Nicholas, *A Lizard in my Luggage* 15; original italics), "I too am falling under the spell of *mañana, mañana*" (Nicholas, *A Lizard in my Luggage* 181; original italics); "'You know what I think?' [my wife] murmured, 'I think you've finally learned how to be *tranquilo*. And I like it. It's, well…nice'" (Kerr, *Snowball Oranges* 314; original italics).

Another prominent feature shared by Kerr and Nicholas, and certainly to be expected in travel writing, is that both include in their narratives useful descriptions of Mallorcan geography, traditions, gastronomy and even history, which are explained to an anglophone readership who might like to visit the island. Thus, the texts promote Mallorcan culture by describing local recipes (Kerr, *Snowball Oranges* 97), Christmas traditions (Nicholas, *A Lizard in my Luggage* 234) and local festivities and traditions (Nicholas, *A Cat on a Hot Tiled Roof* 40; Kerr, *One Mallorcan Summer* 306). By inserting these references, the authors act as cultural mediators and even ethnographers, translating a way of life to an international audience, sometimes literally through the fusion of English and Spanish in many sentences – very frequent in Kerr's narratives – or English and the Mallorcan dialect – more noticeable in Nicholas.

Their commercial success is self-evident in the numerous reprints and editions that can be found – Kerr even won the American Book of the Year Award in the category of travel writing – which highlights their role as privileged consumer products today. The search for authenticity and a simpler lifestyle stands as a frequent justification in these books, in consonance with a common motivation among amenity migrants for the defense of the natural environment (Moss, "Beyond Tourism" 124). Thus, allusions to "the real Mallorca, the pre-tourist-boom Mallorca" (*One Mallorcan Summer* 310) are frequent in Kerr's narratives, while

in Nicholas we can observe a strong identification with Mallorcan traditional culture, to such an extent that she claims Mallorca as her home, in contrast to an alienating, stressful London she rejects:

> the trappings of city life […] now seem so alien to me. I'm missing a soft sky pregnant with stars, chanting cicadas and the smell of jasmine floating on the breeze. […] Suddenly I want to be back home, […] in our simple, white walled room with its gnarled beams and shutters, with the balmy, fragrant mountain air seeping through the bedroom shutters and fluttering about the sheets. […] My family now feels like it belongs there, back on Mallorca, and tonight in London I feel like a lone tourist, in search of some guidebook to help me make sense of my life here again. (*A Lizard in my Luggage* 39-40)

Passages like this and an overall reflective tone connect her books with the self-help genre, another prominent consumer product in the contemporary literary market that adds depth to her narratives, producing hybrid texts whose merging of conventions makes classification difficult. Nicholas's frequent references to the "authenticity" of Mallorcan life are accompanied by a criticism of certain attitudes among her own nationals while visiting the island which reinforce the stereotype of the self-centred, unconcerned British resident:

> 'Sometimes I think I'm too old in the tooth for learning a new language.' [said Anna's husband].
>
> 'Not at all,' says Pep kindly. 'You do admirably well. Think of all the lazy English living for years in Mallorca who don't bother to learn a word. You should be proud of yourself, *mi amic*.' (*A Lizard in my Luggage* 112; original italics)

As stated before, the most prominent form of amenity literature on Mallorca is crime fiction. It is perhaps no surprise that both Kerr and Nicholas have also published detective novels set in Mallorca as a new direction in their careers. Like the crime narratives in German, this fiction can be included within the growing trend called regional or provincial *noir*, which emerged in English in the 1970s and 1980s.

Kerr's *The Mallorca Connection* (2006) is the first in a trilogy on a Scottish detective who solves mysteries in different parts of the world. The promotion of the island is clear from the beginning: not only does the title refer explicitly to Mallorca, but also the cover of the most recent edition (2012) shows a photo of a well-known, beautiful fishing village on the east coast of the island, Cala Figuera, usually packed with tourists in summer. Furthermore, the inclusion of numerous passages highlighting the exoticism and beauty of specific Mallorcan places allows us to align this novel with the texts explored so far, as it reinforces an iconic view of the island as paradise:

> Julie's senses were feasting on the heady Mediterranean atmosphere as she gazed from the balcony over the dark expanse of Camp de Mar bay, on which a sprinkling of boat lights twinkled among reflections of the stars. 'Isn't it wonderful?' she sighed. 'Ah-h-h, it's so… romantic!" (*The Mallorca Connection* 161)

In a similar vein, Nicholas's detective novel *The Devil's Horn* (2019) introduces a young local woman, Isabel Flores, working hand in hand with a local inspector to solve a crime, in a new "femicrime" set in Mallorca that fuses the travel guide – through numerous references to gastronomy, geography and traditions – with a suspense plot about drug trafficking.

A relevant crime novelist and amenity migrant is George Scott, a resident in Binissalem since the 1980s and owner of two boutique hotels until his death in 2013. He authored the bestseller *The Bloody Bokhara* (1999) and its sequel *The Chewed Caucasian* (2001), both featuring hotel owner Will Stock as the protagonist. His novels are full of descriptions of Mallorcan culture and geography, as well as reflections on the Mallorcan character and even directions on how to reach certain places in the island, in a travel guide fashion:

> If you are touristing, and decide to go by road, take the old, free, serpentine road up over the 500 metre sidehills to the valley, curving back and forth more than thirty times before reaching Soller itself. Coming back, when you're tired out by walking round, the new toll tunnel

> is probably a better option, as it cuts under the hills and saves time and driving effort. (*The Bloody Bokhara* 71)

Some crime narratives come close to the thriller and are produced by seasonal residents in Mallorca. Such is the case of Geoffrey Iley's *Navegator* (2012), whose plot is focused on an international technological scheme involving a Mallorcan academic who moves often between different locations in the island, thus providing faithful descriptions of its geography and most idiosyncratic places. A more recent text which has been widely publicised in Britain is *Death in Deià* (2019) by Englishman David Coubrough, about a murder to be solved in the middle of the Mallorcan village of Deià. In these novels action occupies center stage; however, it is often accompanied by frequent allusions to local geography and culture which reveal the authors' knowledge of – and fondness for – the island, thus performing the additional function of a travel guide. This can be observed when a character in Coubrough's novel recommends Deià and a well-known restaurant there:

> "You'll enjoy Deià, the final resting place of Robert Graves." […] "I'll take you for lunch at La Residencia tomorrow, they've got a lovely restaurant on the terrace looking down at the valley and out to sea. We could share one of their paellas, full of prawns and mussels, and we'll wash it down with a nice bottle of Rioja. What could be better?" (*Death in Deià* 137-138)

The power of these texts to attract tourists is, therefore, huge, as readers become curious about the setting of the narrative and even get useful information about where and what to eat before travelling to Mallorca.

One relevant genre often cultivated today within anglophone fiction is the romance. Although there is a growing body of romance fiction in English set in Mallorca, and the form can be said to have a lot of vitality, very little of it has been written by amenity migrants, as most authors have been just occasional visitors or tourists for short periods of time. One notable exception is journalist and award-winning blogger Emily Benet, a resident in Mallorca for several years and author of *The Hen Party* (2017) and *Tipping Point* (2020), among a number of other narratives with different settings and topics. In line with the texts seen so

far, her two novels set in Mallorca offer descriptions of local geography and some degree of intercultural interaction. However, the plots do not focus so much on the intercultural experience as on the relationships between the British protagonists, who are depicted in a light-hearted tone especially in *The Hen Party*, in which the filming of a British TV reality show on the island ends up in total disaster.

All in all, it is significant that these narratives do not resort to stereotypes in a sustained way but mainly reflect on them humorously, for example, in the view of Mallorcans as lazy procrastinators or that of the drunk Briton in Magaluf, which often contributes to their questioning or at least to their relativisation. As in the German texts, language mistakes can also be observed in many of them when they attempt to reproduce Spanish and particularly Mallorcan terms and phrases. However, this lack of linguistic accuracy, which may suggest carelessness or lack of knowledge on the part of the author, does not seem to be relevant for their readership, as their target audience is, as happens with travel guides in foreign languages, their own nationals and not Spanish readers.

5. Conclusions

This article contends that a new literary trend that can be called "amenity literature" or "amenity writing" has emerged in the last decades. Although more research would be necessary in order to apply the concept to other locations in the world, it has been analysed here in connection with the important number of amenity migrants living in Mallorca since the late twentieth century. It can even be said that amenity writing set in Mallorca is experiencing a boom in recent years, a fact related to the increasing dominance of genre fiction in the literary markets, which has turned literature, more than ever, into a product for consumption.

In the previous sections we have discussed the main features of the new trend as observed in narratives published in English and German, the German and anglophone communities having been the most numerous amenity migrant groups in the Balearics for decades. We have attempted to identify a number of common characteristics in terms of concerns, genres and audiences, the most significant being the

hybrid nature of the texts, as they fuse different genres and conventions in innovative ways, combining, first and foremost, the contents expected in a travel guide with the conventions of genres such as the cookery book, the autobiographical travel narrative, the regional crime novel – sometimes even the rural *noir* – the thriller, the romance and, in some cases, the self-help book. Thus, as postmodern and polysemic cultural products, these texts are built as hybrid, compositional frameworks where all kinds of topics and discourses are inserted like narrative experiments. The result is a diversity of texts whose point in common is the role of the author as mediator between two cultures, in a similar way to what we would find in a guide book or travel guide. It could even be said there is a strong emotional bond between the authors and the settings chosen, which does not mean the former are perfectly integrated in the host culture. Rather, they attempt integration through writing, by mediating between the two worlds and occasionally reproducing or reinforcing certain stereotypes about the host culture or their own community.

The celebration of local culture and rural Mallorca is another major characteristic connected with a common attitude among amenity migrants: the search for authenticity, which seems to spring from a concern about the preservation of the natural environment. Indeed, it is significant that the city of Palma, with its 400,000 inhabitants and multicultural composition, is barely described and often ignored in these narratives. Furthermore, the audiences these texts appeal to are mainly nationals or speakers of the authors' own language either planning their journey to Mallorca or wanting to revive past experiences on the island – thus combining pleasure and information – or potential tourists who might be encouraged to travel by reading the texts. This explains why these books are often found in transition places such as airport bookshop and even souvenir shops.

Interestingly, in the case of German texts they are seldom translated into other languages, which might be a consequence of their poor literary quality or the limited scope of their plots. However, as has been argued, they have an added value, as they function indirectly as publicity tools that fulfil the main aims of tourism marketing. Hence, they contain not only fiction but also useful information about the tourist destination, revealing places of great beauty and describing local customs, traditions and even cuisine to the reader interested in Mallorca.

In contrast to the German texts, some of the travel narratives in English have had a greater international impact, sometimes with translations into other languages (e.g., some authored by Kerr and Nicholas). This interesting difference can be interpreted as a consequence of the greater internationalisation of the anglophone literary market, whose consumer products have a bigger presence in the global economy. In any case, the language and cultural mistakes that some of the texts contain make them inadequate for a Spanish or Mallorcan readership but do not prevent them from achieving success in their own niche market: that of speakers of the authors' own language. Nevertheless, there is little doubt about the vitality of the trend, as dozens of amenity novels are published every year about Mallorca by amenity migrants, among the most recent ones Roland Winterstein's *Mariposa* [*Butterfly*] (2020), Anna Nicholas's second crime novel *Haunted Magpie* (2020) or Carmen Bellmonte's *Zeiten des Wandels: Die Mallorca-Saga* [*Times of Change: The Mallorca-Saga*] (2022), which reveals the emergence of a new hybrid subgenre within the trend: the family saga.

Notes

[1] The first travel guide to Spain and Portugal was published in German by Karl Baedeker in 1897 and it was the best known internationally at the turn of the century. The English edition was published a year later, in 1898.

[2] One prominent writer among these pioneers, though related to another culture, is French novelist George Sand (1804-1876), who moved to Mallorca in 1838 with her partner, the Polish composer Frédéric Chopin, in search of favourable weather conditions for the artist's delicate health. Sand, a pen name for Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, left an important testimony in French of their stay in the island through her travelogue *Un hiver à Majorque* [*A Winter in Mallorca*] (1841), where she offered a negative account of Mallorcans as too conservative and opposed to her advanced, feminist views and her masculine way of dressing. Chopin's health did not really improve during their stay, which lead to her growing frustration in the island.

[3] He lived in Mallorca from the early 1870s to 1914, when he was forced to return to Austria at the outbreak of World War I. He died in the war one year later.

[4] It is significant that Herding uses a Spanish name as her pseudonym, Lucía de la Vega, because, as she explains, a Spanish name is good for sales (Kreye 4).

[5] The series, featuring local detective Inspector Alvarez as the protagonist, was initiated with *Mistakenly in Mallorca* (1974) and its last title to date was published in 2013.

[6] In 2017 Nicholas was awarded the prestigious Silver Siurell, an award given by the Balearic Association for Rural Tourism (ABATI) for her promotion of the Balearics in the United Kingdom.

[7] In some of the texts we could even talk about rural *noir*, a trend emerging in the new millennium which rejects urban settings and the traditional detective as the protagonist (Eppes).

[8] Kerr has also produced a historical novel set in medieval Mallorca, *Song of the Eight Winds: Reconquista* (2012).

[9] We are referring here to novels such as Emma Straub's *The Vacationers* (2014), Helen Walsh's *The Lemon Grove* (2014) or Elise Darcy's *A Mallorcan Affair* (2019). These narratives usually focus on the troubled relationships of anglophone holidaymakers during their stay on the island.

Acknowledgements

This article has been produced within the interdisciplinary research group "Travel writing and the myth of the island: Travelling to the Balearics" ("Relato de viajes y mito insular. El viaje a las Baleares"), at the University of the Balearic Islands.

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Recibido / Received: 7/3/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted 5/7/2022*

The Blithedale Romance. A Woman's Story

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Abstract

Although it does not seem to be particularly groundbreaking in today's world, I contend in this essay that the story Nathaniel Hawthorne tells in *The Blithedale Romance* was radically forward-thinking for his contemporary society. Analyzing it from a contemporary perspective, some feminist scholars have argued that the depiction of female characters is misogynist. In addition, the narrator is often considered to be unreliable and, as such, a failure. Drawing mainly on the theory of Foucault, this article argues that Hawthorne uses an unreliable narrator to interrogate patriarchal monologic discourses and to create a narrative space for the voice of Zenobia, the book's feminist character, to be heard. Gender and genre considerations are particularly intertwined in the text. Thus, while Coverdale's narrative empowers Zenobia's voice, Hawthorne's use of romance challenges established genre conventions. I claim that *The Blithedale Romance* challenges patriarchal authority by presenting Zenobia as a more reliable and powerful voice than that of the male narrator.

Keywords: Nathaniel Hawthorne, feminism, unreliable narrator, monologic discourses.

The Blithedale Romance. La historia de una mujer

Resumen

Desde una perspectiva contemporánea, la historia de *The Blithedale Romance* no resulta particularmente reformadora. No sólo ha sido tachada de misógina por algunas críticas feministas, sino que la obra también recibió críticas porque su narrador no parece fidedigno.

No obstante, enmarcada en el siglo en el que se escribió, *The Blithedale Romance* sí que resulta innovadora en más de una manera. Manejando principalmente teorías de Michel Foucault, este artículo demostrará que Hawthorne usa a propósito este narrador para desestabilizar los discursos monológicos del sistema patriarcal y para crear un espacio que visibilice la opinión feminista de Zenobia. Mientras la narración de Coverdale logra que la voz de Zenobia resulte la más poderosa de toda la narración, la forma en la que Hawthorne juega con el término romance pone en entredicho las convenciones literarias de su época. *The Blithedale Romance* desmonta, por tanto, discursos monológicos referentes al papel de la mujer y a los géneros literarios, al tiempo que presenta la voz de Zenobia como más autorizada y poderosa que la del narrador.

Palabras clave: Nathaniel Hawthorne, feminismo, narrador no fidedigno, discursos monológicos.

"Art is not a mirror held up to reality,
but a hammer with which to shape it."

Bertolt Brecht

The death of Zenobia in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* has led some scholars, including Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Louise DeSalvo, and Wendy Martin, to censure the portrayal of female characters in the novel as deeply misogynistic. However, in contrast to this viewpoint, I believe that Zenobia plays a key role as she allows the author to critique the patriarchal social structures that discriminate women. As Carolyn Maribor suggests, "her faults or 'frailties' are the result of, not the justification for, society's restrictions" (98). The story is narrated by a man, Miles Coverdale, a character that has been variously described as "unreliable, crazy, self-absorbed to the point of blindness, ineffectual, and/or a deluded but cunning murderer" (Davis 99). In this essay, I contend that the difficulties in interpreting *The Blithedale Romance* stem from Hawthorne's "uncertainties about his own society" (Auerbach 114). Thus, Coverdale's unreliability as a narrator is an effective authorial device that exposes society's oppressive discourses.

As Nina Baym (430) argues, before the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*, the term 'romance' was used as a synonym for 'novel'. With this in mind, it is noteworthy that Hawthorne was keen to differentiate the two genres by insisting that his work exemplified the former rather than the latter. This might seem curious, given that, in Hawthorne's world, romances were often criticized as the product of a "'sickly' imagination" rather than deriving from 'wholesome' reason or judgment" (Bell 39). Furthermore, such fiction was thought of as "dangerous, psychologically threatening, and even socially subversive" (Bell 39). Hawthorne's insistence that he wrote romances can be interpreted, therefore, as a deliberate strategy by which he separated himself from the literary and social conventions of his time. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that, although the author makes several comments about the romance in the prefaces to his four novels –*The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), and *The Marble Faun* (1860)– his statements fail to offer a clear definition of the genre. Instead, Hawthorne provides only an imprecise explanation of what the romance is *not* and, as such, his comments actually mask the author's personal vision of the genre.

By analyzing Hawthorne's use of literary genre and gender to promote proto-feminist ideas, this article explores how *The Blithedale Romance* critiques monologic discourses by presenting Zenobia as a more reliable storyteller than Coverdale, a first-person narrator whose omniscience will be called into question by an 'other', "that which, for a given culture, is at once interior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcise the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness)" (Foucault xxiv).

1. A Narrative Theatre

While "The Custom-House" and the preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* would seem to present Hawthorne's views on the constituents of a romance, I consider these texts to be disingenuous, literary performances of what is expected from a romance but not a true definition of the genre. For Bell, "these prefaces are not essays in critical definition but (…) dramatic, ironic, and often comic social performances, in which the author adopts a series of masks and poses in order to obscure —and yet

also to hint at— the true authority behind his fiction" (45). In a similar vein, Peter Bellis points out that

> when Hawthorne speaks directly of the romance as a genre in "The Custom House," he does not offer a true definition—he describes a scene. He *stages* the romance itself, as a performance, rather than grounding it in abstract or theoretical terms. And the quintessentially "romantic" moments in his texts are almost always visual displays or tableaux, scenes of revelation and spectatorship. (24)

As we read Hawthorne's prefaces, readers are cast in the role of an audience to a theatrical representation, expecting their active involvement. Hawthorne needs his readers to take what aestheticians refer to as a psychic distance, the "necessary separation between beholder and art object (...) which disengages the beholder from the real world and enables him to accept the artistic illusion as real" (Rohrberger 18). Hawthorne uses this idea both in his prefaces and in his sketch "Main Street". In these texts, he emphasizes the difference between reality and imagination in order to distinguish the traditional notion of a novel from his very specific version of romance.

The *Blithedale* preface is addressed to its readers and mentions that some of them may find connections between the contents of the book and Brook Farm. The writer acknowledges that he was indeed inspired by that real life enterprise, in which he himself participated, but his intention as an author is "to establish a theatre, a little removed from the highway of ordinary travel, where the creatures of his brain may play their phantasmagorical antics, without exposing them to too close a comparison with the actual events of real lives" (Hawthorne 3-4). This is the first preface in which Hawthorne uses the word 'theatre' to refer to his literary output. Playing on Shakespeare's and Calderón de la Barca's vision of the whole world as (a) stage, this concept will appear, directly or indirectly, throughout the story when Hawthorne mentions the Blithedale community, a gesture that reminds readers of the representational nature of what they are reading.

Hawthorne's decision to describe the Blithedale story in terms of theatre is not random. One of the main features of a play is the presence of multiple voices that often speak in dialogue. But it is also

worth noting that, in this preface, Hawthorne refers to himself as the author in the third-person singular, a device that produces an aesthetic distance between Hawthorne as individual and Hawthorne as writer. In contrast to this technique, the story itself is a first-person narrative by Miles Coverdale who recounts his memories of his time at Blithedale. Nevertheless, throughout the course of the book, it becomes apparent to readers that Miles's subjective version of events is open to question. Unlike the 'author' of the preface, therefore, Hawthorne uses Miles as a deliberately unreliable narrator.

The questionable story that Miles tells is a mechanism that serves a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, to expose the nature of patriarchal monologic discourses, whilst, on the other, to open a space for Zenobia's feminist opinions to be heard. Hawthorne, thus, "created in Coverdale a type of narrative voice that makes room for and even solicits response and critique" (Davis 102). Hawthorne's particular use of a first-person narrator in *The Blithedale Romance* becomes his way of involving his art with a social cause. After all, "the point of using an unreliable narrator is indeed to reveal in an interesting way the gap between appearance and reality, and to show how human beings distort or conceal the latter" (Lodge 155). I contend, therefore, that the figure of Miles Coverdale calls into question the role of such narrators by showing the unreliability of any male discourse.

It is significant that the character of Miles Coverdale is named after the man who finished William Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English and who, in 1535, became the first person to have a Bible printed in English. The Italian '*traduttore traditore*' summarizes a long-running debate on the role of translators. According to some, translators are 'traitors' because they modify the original text and adapt it to the target language. For others, translators are artists capable of producing new artifacts in different languages. For the purposes of my analysis, Coverdale's character can be analyzed by bearing these two contrasting approaches in mind. On the one hand, it can be said that, after living through the Blithedale experience, Miles's version of past events is colored by his current point of view and, thus, he can be accused of reconstructing the narrative to fit his own interests. On the other, it can be argued that Coverdale is not editing the Blithedale experience for his own benefit but, instead, to help readers understand the experimental

community of which he was a part. Thus, he presents the flaws of the Blithedale community in order to explain, with hindsight, why it did not succeed. In this sense, Miles's narrative distils how "the book's aesthetic incoherence corresponds to the community's social incoherence" (Auerbach 110). Coverdale, as a guise for Hawthorne, is therefore a clever strategy that actually engineers narrative spaces for those members of the project who were not given the chance to speak out.

As Coverdale narrates the story, we could consider him to be in a privileged and powerful position compared to the other characters. According to Foucault (1980), knowledge implies dominance over those who do not possess the same information. Yet, by undermining the reliability of Coverdale's testimony about the series of events in which he was involved, Hawthorne effectively downplays Miles's narrative authority within the book. Consequently, Coverdale's story leads us to recognize the impossibility of an account of events ever being definitive, this being even more so when reported by a single voice. Hawthorne's text, therefore, becomes an open forum where different voices can be heard. He conceived the tale as a democratic scenario, a theatre in which a varied range of characters are allowed to put forward their ideas without being censored by an overruling first-person narrator. *The Blithedale Romance*

> is not a historical representation of Brook Farm, but a scene of the dialogue of multifarious social languages, a struggle essentially of interpretation and dominance (...) The novel, thus, becomes a heteroglossic polylogue of ideological discourses on social structure and community in the Blithedale "theatre."" (Bauer 18)

The other main characters involved in the Blithedale theatre are Zenobia, Hollingsworth, and Priscilla. They are supported by two other characters –old Moodie and Westervelt– who set the 'Veiled Lady' strand of the narrative in motion. But Zenobia is by far the most important of the supporting cast. She is introduced in the first pages of the text in connection with literature and "the advocacy of women's rights" (Hawthorne 9). Discussing Zenobia's literary preferences, Mary S. Schriber notes that

> [her] intellect and sardonic wit repeatedly show themselves in her "literary" mode, which is invariably a negative judgment on the pusillanimous literature of her time. The robust, passionate Zenobia cannot admire literature that feeds on melodrama and insipid ideals of the feminine. (69)

These ideas parallel Hawthorne's own about the literary conventions of his time. By establishing a structural parallel in the story, we can interpret Hollingsworth and Priscilla as characters who are complementary to Coverdale and Zenobia. Using Hawthorne's distinction between novel and romance, it can be argued that the former, more traditional couple, are closer to representing novelistic conventions, while the latter operate within the sphere of romances as they are more imaginative and less bound by social precepts.

Hollingsworth and Priscilla appear in chapter IV of *The Blithedale Romance*. The first time the male character is mentioned, there is a reference to the moving power of his speech and the strength of his voice: Zenobia exclaims, "What a voice he has!" (Hawthorne 22). Whenever Coverdale talks about Hollingsworth, he also notices the tone of his voice. This might lead us to believe that, although not the narrator of the story, Hollingsworth is a dominant vocal presence within the text. From the moment of his arrival, Hollingsworth proclaims himself as the leader of the community, whereas Priscilla lacks a voice to express her own opinions. Hollingsworth represents the conventional patriarch of his time concerning women's socially accepted roles, and thus his voice is that of a dominant, nineteenth-century male. By contrast, Priscilla seems a much weaker presence within the book as she possesses no sociopolitical opinions of her own. She aptly illustrates Coventry Patmore's ideal of the 'Angel in the House', a role that Zenobia struggles to change, just as Hawthorne's text set out to confound genre conventions.

Coverdale's narrative is accompanied by the legend of the Veiled Lady, a subtext that is crucial to the main plot as it hints at the relationship between Zenobia, Priscilla and the two male protagonists. Coverdale opens his chronicle by mentioning that he has just attended the Veiled Lady show, which revolves around the identity of a mysterious woman. He ends his account by stating abruptly that this anecdote has "little to do with the present narrative" (Hawthorne 8). Yet by trying to minimize the importance of the tale in this way, Coverdale stimulates the readers'

curiosity. In fact, we hear about the Veiled Lady story again in chapter XIII, when it is both told and performed by Zenobia to the Blithedalers. Zenobia takes over from Coverdale and presents the tale in her own voice, which evidences her narrative importance within Hawthorne's text.

It is important to consider at this point that this story of the Veiled Lady is a legend, popular folklore orally transmitted by the characters within Coverdale's written narration. It is also full of fantastic elements. Therefore, according to the standards of the day, it would not fit into the parameters of a traditional novel due to its elevated concern with the non-rational. By introducing such a relevant oral discourse within Coverdale's account, Hawthorne's wish to undermine those monological discourses that are imposed upon others' voices is made even more evident. Besides Coverdale, Zenobia is the only character who is given a voice to tell a story. The critic bell hooks explains that "one becomes a believer in feminist politics through choice and action" (7). Thus, if we consider the role that Zenobia plays throughout the text, along with the amount and type of dialogue that she is given, Hawthorne can be regarded not as a misogynist but, instead, as a radical and pioneering proto-feminist.

Readers meet Zenobia in chapter I, when old Moodie asks Coverdale whether he knows her. Apart from mentioning her role in the women's rights movement, Coverdale explains that Zenobia is not her real name but "a sort of mask in which she comes before the world, retaining all the privileges of privacy —a contrivance, in short, like the white drapery of the Veiled Lady" (Hawthorne 9-10). In relation to Zenobia's physical appearance, not only does Coverdale describe her as attractive, but he adds that Zenobia's presence inspired "an influence breathing out of her, such as we might suppose to come from Eve, when she was just made, and her Creator brought her to Adam, saying— 'Behold, here is a woman!'" (Hawthorne 19). The female character who is trying to achieve a better society for her fellow women is also the person who, according to the narrator, still retains the essence of womanhood: she is the new woman from whom womankind will be reborn into a better society. As such, Hawthorne grants Zenobia a prominent position within this new community.

Hollingsworth and Priscilla stand in clear contrast to Zenobia. In Hawthorne's approach to genre, Priscilla displays some characteristics that he seeks to challenge while Zenobia displays traits from both

the novelistic and romance tradition in a balanced way. As Joyce Warren states, "Priscilla or Hilda appears as the embodiment of what Hawthorne believed the conventional heroine should be. But in his "inmost heart" Hawthorne knew that this was not a true picture of womanhood" (204).

2. A Masquerade

The Blithedale Romance follows a circular structure. The mysteries presented during the first chapters find their parallels in the closing ones, where the enigmas of the story are revealed and the circle is closed. Before his sickness, Coverdale wonders about Priscilla's origins and, consequently, she is the first person he meets after his recovery. Coverdale openly compares Priscilla's physical appearance with that of Margaret Fuller and, although unaware of Mrs. Fuller's ideas, Priscilla immediately rejects the comparison and asks Coverdale "How could I possibly make myself resemble this lady, merely by holding her letter in my hand?" (Hawthorne 50). To this Coverdale can offer no answer. In fact, the narrator never responds to any of the questions posed by Zenobia or Priscilla as he seems to be verbally overpowered by them.

Chapter VIII, "A Modern Arcadia", anticipates chapter XXIV, "The Masqueraders". It focuses on Priscilla and Zenobia, who are celebrating May Day. This chapter reintroduces the link between the two women and the story of the Veiled Lady by suggesting the possibility of Priscilla having "the gift of hearing those 'airy tongues that syllable men's names'" (Hawthorne 57), a special quality the Veiled Lady does possess. The chapter also recounts that, on the first day after Coverdale's illness, when he leaves his bedchamber, he finds out that Zenobia has covered Priscilla in spring flowers. The latter's merry disposition leads Zenobia to reflect upon Priscilla's happiness. From her perspective, Priscilla's belief that it is "a Paradise here, and all of us, particularly Mr. Hollingsworth and myself, such angels!" is "quite ridiculous, and provokes one's malice, almost, to see a creature so happy —especially a feminine creature" (Hawthorne 56). Zenobia is concerned about the situation of women in her society, and most of the people for whom she is fighting do not share Priscilla's naive happiness. When Coverdale suggests that women "are always happier creatures than male creatures" (Hawthorne 56), Zenobia replies by pointedly asking him whether he has ever seen "a happy

woman" and by declaring, "how can she be happy, after discovering that fate has assigned her but one single event, which she must contrive to make the substance of her whole life? A man has his choice of innumerable events" (Hawthorne 56-7). Once again, Coverdale's voice is here silenced by that of Zenobia. This incident illustrates Joyce W. Warren's notion that "one of the problems Hawthorne notes is the lack of opportunities for women" which he "regrets" (194). Throughout their conversation, Priscilla remains still. She only moves when she notices Hollingsworth and then she immediately rushes towards him. Upon Hollingsworth's arrival, Priscilla loses all her previous 'enchantment', as if his presence completely overrides the woman's true personality which is displayed only when she is in the presence of Zenobia (and Hollingsworth is absent).

Recovered from his sickness, Coverdale opens chapter IX, "Hollingsworth, Zenobia, Priscilla," by acknowledging that

> if we take the freedom to put a friend under our microscope, we thereby insulate him from many of his true relations, magnify his peculiarities, inevitably tear him into parts, and, of course, patch him very clumsily together again. What wonder, then, should we be frightened by the aspect of a monster, which, after all —though we can point to every feature of his deformity in the real personage— may be said to have been created mainly by ourselves. (Hawthorne 65)

To some extent, Coverdale admits here that the characters he presents have been altered in his imagination. Coverdale's statement can be read as Hawthorne's way of suggesting that every narrative, no matter how truthful it is intended to be, has been filtered through the author's thinking, and it is, therefore, inevitably biased. Perhaps for this reason chapter IX portrays a disagreement between Hollingsworth and Coverdale. The incident takes place after Coverdale has mentioned how close Hollingsworth and Priscilla are becoming and, also, that "the gossip of the Community set them [Hollingsworth and Zenobia] down as a pair of lovers" (Hawthorne 74). Here Coverdale begins to estrange himself from Hollingsworth when he realizes that the latter has a better chance of receiving the two women's affections. His narration is clearly biased by his emotional state and, as readers, we cannot be sure

whether he is telling the story as it happened, or as he would like it to be because this version suits him best. Again, Hawthorne emphasizes that a narrative that silences other viewpoints is not one to be trusted.

As soon as Coverdale makes this observation, the story gathers momentum and two characters appear in succession. The first one, old Moodie, reenters the story, while the second one, Westervelt, is a new addition. Both, however, are closely linked to the Veiled Lady legend and they possess a superior knowledge about Zenobia's and Priscilla's interconnected lives than Coverdale does. When old Moodie appears in Blithedale, Coverdale is working in the fields with Hollingsworth. The narrator unsuccessfully tries to engage Moodie in a conversation because he fails to see beyond his preconceived set of ideas. Hollingsworth, however, does talk with the old man, which reminds us of the strength of this man's voice as opposed to that of Coverdale. Throughout Hollingsworth's conversation with Moodie, Coverdale is a mere spectator and his language is that of somebody who is in the process of interpreting a play that has just been performed. Coverdale has become part of the audience, an observer of the play, a notion that takes us back to the classic conception of the world as a theatre that was mentioned earlier in this article. The fact that the first-person narrator of the story is the one who feels isolated within this new community can also be understood as a subversion of traditional narrative roles. It is Coverdale who lacks the knowledge about this community established by the two women.

Immediately after his attempted conversation with old Moodie, Coverdale meets Westervelt. His description of Westervelt echoes that of the devil in "Young Goodman Brown":

> his hair, as well as his beard and moustache, was coal-black; his eyes, too, were black and sparkling, and his teeth remarkably brilliant. (...) with a gem that glimmered, in the leafy shadow where he stood, like a living rip of fire. He carried a stick with a wooden head, carved in vivid imitation of that of a serpent. (Hawthorne 86)

As will be disclosed later, Westervelt is the man who controls the Veiled Lady and knows about the relationship between old Moodie, Zenobia and Priscilla. Therefore, his association with the devil, by

means of the serpent-shaped head of his stick and his fire-like gemstone, suggests both his illicit knowledge and his alleged psychic powers.

Westervelt asks Coverdale about Zenobia's whereabouts as he wishes to speak with her in private. Although reluctant, Coverdale feels compelled to answer all the stranger's questions, which marks the first time in the book when Coverdale provides all the news that another character needs. However, following Westervelt's departure, Coverdale displays once again his usual lack of awareness. He begins to wonder about

> the fact that, ever since the appearance of Priscilla, it had been the tendency of events to suggest and establish a connection between Zenobia and her. She had come, in the first instance, as if with the sole purpose of claiming Zenobia's protection. Old Moodie's visit, it appeared, was chiefly to ascertain whether this object had been accomplished. And here, to-day, was the questionable Professor, linking one with the other in his inquiries, and seeking communication with both. (Hawthorne 89)

This paragraph functions as a summary of all the instances that connect the two women and, as such, it not only refreshes readers' memories but also foreshadows what is to come. This passage also emphasizes Coverdale's inability to link a sequence of events in a logical way so that they can lead him to a fruitful conclusion. Furthermore, the chapter closes by his acknowledging, again, that his "part, in these transactions, was singularly subordinate. It resembled that of the Chorus in a classic play" (Hawthorne 90). Coverdale has already taken for granted that he is just "one calm observer" of the "drama" (Hawthorne 90), adapting the theatrical subtext to refer to his own role within the story. Significantly, here he specifies "a classic play" (Hawthorne 90), in which actors wore masks to hide their faces and only show the predetermined expressions that the public needed to see. It can be thus inferred that Coverdale is also figuratively wearing a mask throughout the whole story. Alternatively, it could be argued that Coverdale is, in fact, the mask that Hawthorne wears to expose the absurd conventions of his time, such as the excessive rigidity of traditional literary genres and gender inequalities.

Interestingly, as soon as all the characters involved in the story of the Veiled Lady have been introduced, Zenobia tells the Blithedalers her own version of the tale. Chapter XIII is fully devoted to this storytelling. The legend, as noted earlier, has a very rich subtext within Coverdale's narrative because it displays

> many of the ingredients for a feminist critique of patriarchal theater and display. It depicts the Veiled Lady as the object of male observation and discourse, as a group of young men seeks to establish her identity in conventional patriarchal terms — through a father's name or a brother's protection. The Lady calls herself a "prisoner" behind her veil, either a virgin or wife, at the whim of her male pursuer. (Bellis 54)

In fact, *The Blithedale Romance* at large revolves around such mysteries, particularly in relation to both Zenobia and Priscilla. At the end of her narration/performance, for example, Zenobia covers Priscilla with a veil, thus turning her into the Veiled Lady and anticipating the key to understanding the legend that is told about her. A profound critique of the traditional roles assigned to women by the male-dominated establishment is latent within the narration at this point. Hawthorne uses both Zenobia and Coverdale to expose the unfair treatment of women in nineteenth-century society. Coverdale, who is granted authorial power to tell his story, allows Zenobia's voice to be heard by recounting this incident as part of his narrative.

Chapter XIV describes Zenobia's confrontation with Hollingsworth regarding women's role in society. She tells us that she feels the urge to "lift up my own voice, on behalf of woman's wider liberty" (Hawthorne 110). Zenobia continues to express

> [her] belief —yes, and my prophecy, should I die before it happens— that, when my sex shall achieve its rights, there will be ten eloquent women, where there is now one eloquent man (...) It is with the living voice, alone, that she can compel the world to recognize the light of her intellect and the depth of her heart! (Hawthorne 111)

Her statement here encounters Coverdale's agreement, who explains to her that he "would give her all she asks, and add a great deal more,

which she will not be the party to demand, but which men, if they were generous and wise, would grant of their own free motion" (Hawthorne 111). As a sign of his solidarity, Coverdale goes on to mention the social changes he would make. Priscilla, however, cannot believe what she is hearing and tells him so. With these words, Zenobia denounces the girl as "the type of womanhood, such as man has spent centuries in making" (Hawthorne 112), a comment that reminds us of the Pygmalion myth in which a sculptor chiseled a 'perfect' female made of ivory because he was dissatisfied with real-life women. As Foucault notes, in a patriarchal system, "women are figured only as objects or, at most, as partners that one had best train, educate, and watch over when one had them under one's power" (1986 22). Priscilla's skepticism about Coverdale's pronouncements is encouraged by Hollingsworth, who regards woman as

> the most admirable handiwork of God, in her true place and character. Her place is at man's side. Her office, that of the Sympathizer; the unreserved, unquestioning Believer (...) Man is a wretch without woman; but woman is a monster —and, thank Heaven, an almost impossible and hitherto imaginary monster— without man, as her acknowledged principal! (Hawthorne 112-3)

Hollingsworth here voices the stereotypical conception of women's role, popularized in Patmore's poem discussed earlier, and from which Zenobia wants to break free. However, taking into account that she is part of a society, one in which women "were not regarded as persons" (Warren 3), it is not surprising that Zenobia cannot successfully challenge the conservative beliefs that Hollingsworth and Priscilla represent.

It is crucial to state that this does not imply, as some feminist scholars have insisted, that Hawthorne despises Zenobia and the values she embodies. As hooks suggests, we should bear in mind that, in Hawthorne's time, "Patriarchal masculinity [taught] men that their sense of self and identity, their reason for being, reside[d] in their capacity to dominate others" (70). In fact, Coverdale confesses that Hollingsworth's speech was an "outrageous affirmation of what struck me as the intensity of masculine egotism. It centered everything in itself, and deprived woman of her very soul, her inexpressible and unfathomable all, to make it a mere incident in the great sum of man" (Hawthorne 113).

Coverdale's ideas are more liberal and progressive than Priscilla's, which, if we accept his character as a mask for Hawthorne, goes some way to refute the accusations of misogyny made against the writer. However, it is also apparent that society at the time was not ready for the radical changes that Zenobia and Coverdale propose. If we further extrapolate this notion to the issue of genre, it becomes clear that Hawthorne was not attempting to overthrow existing literary conventions in *The Blithedale Romance*. Instead, his conceptualization of romance can be read as challenging the establishment, rather than trying to dismantle it. In this sense, Hawthorne's work illustrates Bakhtin's definition of the novel form as "parod[ying] other genres (precisely in their role as genres); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and reaccentuating them" (45). Hawthorne's hybridized genre, therefore, combines the novel and the romance to create an innovative form of expression that nuances literary genres, while Zenobia's sociopolitical struggle points forward to how the lives of women could be improved.

3. The Curtain Falls

Coverdale leaves Blithedale following his argument with Hollingsworth and he goes to stay at a boarding-house. In one of the windows of the building across the street, he sees Zenobia and deduces that the other person in the room must be Priscilla. Coverdale's perspective of Zenobia is that of an actress in a mime show. She is framed by the window, as on a stage, and he can only see her movements. But Coverdale soon realizes that the two women are not alone and that they are, in fact, accompanied by Westervelt. Coverdale keeps watching them until Zenobia, who is warned of his presence by Westervelt, "[lets] down a white linen curtain between the festoons of the damask ones" (Hawthorne 145). Coverdale describes this action "like the drop-curtain of a theatre, in the interval between the acts" (Hawthorne 145). Ironically, it becomes quite literally an interval because Coverdale decides to visit Zenobia to try to find out what is happening. Coverdale also enquires about Priscilla, who is with Zenobia, and who greets him. When he asks Priscilla whether she came to the city "of your own free-will," she replies that "I am blown about like a leaf. I never have any

free-will" (Hawthorne 157), a response that encapsulates the experience of many women at that time.

A few weeks later, Coverdale once more attends the Veiled Lady show and, at the performance, finally discovers that Priscilla is the eponymous character, as Zenobia's earlier narration anticipated. Hollingsworth breaks Westervelt's enchantment over Priscilla and rescues her thus embodying the stereotypical knight who saves a distressed damsel. This scene conclusively establishes Hollingsworth and Priscilla as characters who are representative of the conservative novelistic tradition.

Upon his return to Blithedale, Coverdale finds his fellow Blithedalers celebrating some sort of carnival. Hawthorne's particular use of this event indicates his will to draw attention to the situation of women at the time since a "carnival challenges God, authority, and social law" (Cohen 28). Zenobia is given the chance, for one night only, to radically alter society and, reading in terms of the Bakhtinean carnivalesque, freeing herself from the social constraints that made women dependent upon men. However, what Coverdale actually discovers is that Zenobia has been put on trial by Hollingsworth. Zenobia reproaches such men who want

> to bring a woman before your secret tribunals, and judge and condemn her, unheard, and then tell her to go free without a sentence. The misfortune is that this same secret tribunal chances to be the only judgment-seat that a true woman stands in awe of, and that any verdict short of acquittal is equivalent to a death-sentence. (Hawthorne 196)

Zenobia has unmasked Hollingsworth's selfish character by demonstrating, with Coverdale and Priscilla as witnesses, that his affections towards her change when he discovers that she had lost her fortune and thus was no longer useful to him. Her words expose the ease with which a man's opinion can ruin a woman's reputation without giving her the chance to defend herself and, perhaps, to prove him wrong. Zenobia is thus trying to undermine the power of patriarchal justice, another of the establishment's monological discourses. Zenobia then asks Coverdale to make a ballad out of her story. But, when we next hear about her, Hollingsworth and Coverdale find Zenobia's drowned body. Her corpse is recovered by Hollingsworth, who strikes his pole into

her breast, an action which reenacts Hollingsworth's earlier behavior towards Zenobia and, symbolically, makes him responsible for her death. A week after Zenobia's burial, Coverdale recalls Hollingsworth's unsteady figure as he is supported by Priscilla. The narrator emphasizes that neither looked happy but, instead, were chastened with remorse. In this respect, Warren notes that "what seems to disturb Hawthorne most of all in his observations on the position of women is the misuse that men have made of their dominance" (193). Hollingsworth's lack of success in his enterprise, therefore, serves as his punishment for his hostile attitude towards Zenobia and her ideas about the role of women.

Although Zenobia is dead, Coverdale does indeed turn her story into a ballad so that her progressively feminist ideas can be disseminated. It is a story in which Hollingsworth is portrayed as the egotistic man who brings about her downfall. Thus, Coverdale, despite his lack of awareness, manages to construct his narrative in a way that supports Zenobia's sociopolitical beliefs. In light of this conclusion, Zenobia's suicide should not be regarded as a rejection of her perspective. On the contrary, her death is an act of subversion because it "is a way to "finaliz[e] oneself rather than being finalized in essentializing, monolithic discourse" (Bauer 27). By choosing to commit suicide, Zenobia exposes the injustices within her society towards women. As Spivak concludes in relation to the Indian rite *Sati*, "By the inexorable ideological production of the sexed subject, such a death can be understood by the female subject as an *exceptional* signifier of her own desire" (96). The resonance of Zenobia's voice, therefore, has a longer lasting impact than that of Coverdale, since his peculiar narration is devised as a strategy to expose the flaws of Hawthorne's society. The subtle social critique inherent to Coverdale's story is a clever maneuver that seeks to challenge patriarchal monological discourses. As readers acknowledge Zenobia's voice to be central to the meaning of *The Blithedale Romance*, this strongly suggests that Hawthorne himself endorsed his female character's progressively feminist ideas.

Notes

[1] Coventry Patmore published a narrative poem entitled "The Angel in the House" between 1854 and 1862. The poem, with his wife as the model, describes the perfect woman/wife, who should be, among other things, devoted, obedient, and passive. The social impact of this vision of

women was such that, in her speech "Professions for Women", Virginia Woolf stated that "Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer" (p. 4).

[2] Sarah Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) was a key member of the American Transcendentalist movement. She met Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1836 and they founded *The Dial* journal in 1840. Fuller has been regarded as the first American feminist, sharing Emerson's ideas in open philosophy discussions with some of her female contemporaries, such as Sophia Peabody Hawthorne. This proved that women were just as capable as men of understanding, and producing, philosophy. Her work *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) is a canonical feminist text in American letters.

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Recibido / Received: 24/1/2021 *Aceptado / Accepted: 24/4/2022*

When Irishness and Jewishness Meet: Maria Edgeworth's 'The Limerick Gloves' (1804) and *Harrington* (1817) as Fictions of Cultural Identity

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Abstract

Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) has recently attracted the interest of postcolonial studies for her portrayal of cultural stereotypes at the turn of the nineteenth century. In this paper I insist on the close connection between Edgeworth's "The Limerick Gloves" (*Popular Tales* 1804) and *Harrington* (1817). By drawing on a close reading of the stories and previous research on Edgeworth's *oeuvre*, I argue that in *Harrington* Jews share with the Irish a common landless condition and both are seen as a cultural menace. Cultural identity is here taken as the set of values that relate the individual to the world and reflects historical experiences and shared codes while Jewishness and Irishness refer to perceiving people as Jew or Irish with all the connotations that go with them. I maintain that the approach to woman in both narratives has to be associated with Irishness since both women and the Irish are discriminated in terms of prejudice and ethnic othering in relation to what was being presented as normative English society. "The Limerick Gloves" is paramount to understand Edgeworth's attack against fanaticism in *Harrington* because the latter involves evolution in technique that makes her narrative so enticing even for readers nowadays.

Keywords: Maria Edgeworth, "The Limerick Gloves," *Harrington*, Irish literature, stereotypes, nineteenth-century literature.

Cuando las identidades irlandesa y judía se encuentran: "The Limerick Gloves" (1804) y Harrington (1817) de Maria Edgeworth como ficciones culturales sobre la identidad

Resumen

Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) ha atraído recientemente el interés de los estudios poscoloniales por su representación de los estereotipos culturales a principios del siglo diecinueve. En este artículo insisto en la estrecha conexión entre "The Limerick Gloves" (*Popular Tales* 1804) y *Harrington* (1817) de Edgeworth. Gracias al *close-reading* de las historias y la investigación previa sobre la obra de Edgeworth, sostengo que en *Harrington* los judíos están al mismo nivel que los irlandeses en el sentido de que son naciones sin tierra y ambos son vistos como una amenaza cultural. La identidad cultural se toma como el conjunto de valores que relacionan al individuo con el mundo y refleja experiencias históricas y códigos compartidos, mientras que ser judío/irlandés se refiere a percibir a las personas como judías o irlandesas con todas las connotaciones que ello conlleva. Sostengo que el acercamiento a la mujer en ambos relatos está asociado al elemento irlandés, ya que ambos son discriminados por los prejuicios y alteridad étnica en relación a lo que se venía presentando como norma en la sociedad inglesa. "The Limerick Gloves" es fundamental para entender el ataque de Edgeworth contra el fanatismo en *Harrington* porque esta última historia implica un paso más allá con un elemento técnico adicional que convierte su narrativa en atractiva incluso para los lectores de hoy.

Palabras clave: Maria Edgeworth, "Los guantes de Limerick", *Harrington*, literatura irlandesa, estereotipos, literatura del siglo diecinueve.

1. Introduction

One of Maria Edgeworth's (1767-1849) earliest stories about prejudice is 'The Limerick Gloves' (*Popular Tales* 1804), where she explores the English attitude to the Irish. Set in Herefordshire (England), the story deals with the relationship between Phoebe Hill, the daughter of Mr. Hill, a tanner and verger from Hereford, and her lover Brian O'Neill, an Irishman who sends her a pair of Limerick gloves as a present. The main obstacle between the lovers is Mr. Hill's prejudice against the Irish, so he opposes any relationship with the Irishman. Though many events conspire against O'Neill — he is sent to jail due to past debts and is even accused of plotting to blow up the cathedral — his good actions prove that he is a good man. Eventually, Mr. Hill overcomes his prejudices and consents to Phoebe and O'Neill's union.

There are some reasons to relate this story to *Harrington*. Both were supported by Richard Lovell Edgeworth, with the only particularity that *Harrington* was composed as an answer to Rachel Mordecai's complaints about the image of the Jews in Edgeworth's *oeuvre* —she had repeatedly stereotyped and demonized Jewish characters— and Richard Lovell Edgeworth totally agreed (MacDonald 33). In *Harrington*, Edgeworth not only offers an insightful analysis of prejudice, but she also introduces some self-criticism when she refers to the portrait of the Jews as "mean, avaricious, unprincipled treacherous character" (*Harrington* 31) in *Moral Tales for Young People* (1801). *Harrington* features a protagonist who is frightened by his nurse's gruesome stories about Jews and his parents' despise for this race, which creates in him a false impression of the Jews until he takes contact with them and realizes that bias has been stronger than truth. Eventually, he falls in love with a Jewess and has to fight to get her father's approval. Though the book fared well and was published in a volume with *Ormond* in 1817, it appeared at a sad time for Maria, just after Richard Lovell's death, as Edgeworth's orphan book.

Critical readings of *Harrington* have systematically focused on the extent of Edgeworth's stance towards the Jewish question, but the long tradition of British imperialist narratives racially othering the Irish dates back at least to Giraldus Cambrensis in the twelfth century, through Edmund Spenser, up to Edgeworth and beyond. For James

Shapiro, the term "Jew" served for political purposes as they were seen as somehow extrinsic to that which was English and a danger to get rid of:

> Even as England could be defined in part by its having purged itself of Jews, English character could be defined by its need to exclude 'Jewishness". In the decades following the Reformation, the English began to think of the Jews not only as people who almost three centuries earlier had been banished from English territory but also as a potential threat to increasingly permeated boundaries of their own social and religious identities (7).

Regarding Edgeworth's *oeuvre*, Edgar Rosenberg's scathing appraisal of the character of Mordicai in *The Absentee* (1812) —in which that Jewish character is viewed as a Shylockian parasite— contrasts with his analysis of the Jew in *Harrington*, which is branded the first Anglo-Jewish novel with the merit of showing diversity in the perception of the Jews and presenting racial prejudice as disruptive:

> [it is] the first novel to attempt anything like a meaningful social stratification of its Jewish personnel: the first to take its benevolent Jews seriously, without assuming them to be, for all their benevolent qualities, a collection of hyperborean oddities; the first to deal with anti-Semitism critically and problematically, as a destructive public force, not a whimsical form of muscular exercise (47).

Scholars have repeatedly insisted on that line, considering Edgeworth's portrait of the Jews as negative. When Judith Page analyzes the impact of Romanticism in the view of the Jews in nineteenth-century British literature, she draws on Sheila A. Spector, who claims that the ending of *Harrington* satisfies nobody and argues that in Edgeworth's earlier works "any perceived English shortcomings had been displaced onto the Jew, the stereotypical other whose mere existence had enabled Edgeworth to ignore the anti-Irish prejudice underlying the Union, not to mention her own fiction" (328). Yet, it must be emphasized that Anglo-Irish literature has stressed that Edgeworth was not always favourable towards the emergent Irish Catholic middle class within the context, for example, of feudal hierarchy that delineates between the Protestant

Ascendancy and Catholic Peasant classes (Dunne 116). Already in the twenty-first century critics like Natasha Tessone have moved on to relate Harrington's anti-Semitism and his enthusiasm towards English symbols with madness and have insisted on Edgeworth's embarrassment and her concern with Irish blunders: Edgeworth tried to accept "the political illegitimacy after class in a country that she sought to claim as her home, but whose political reality served as a constant reminder of the validity of such a claim" (Tessone 463). Quite a different perspective is Lionel Gossman's, who focuses on Edgeworth's limited multiculturalism as typical of her age and elaborates on Rachel Schulkins' thesis that in *Harrington* the Jew is approved of as long as he is portrayed as a good Christian: "Christianization allows the unfamiliar *other* to reside within the already established borders of Englishness, without undermining the threatening of social order" (Schulkins 478), just as Montenero's wealth allows his social acceptance. The only researchers who appreciate Edgeworth as favouring the Jews are Michael Ragussis and Susan Manly. The former maintains that the Anglo-Irish writer recognizes a tradition of discourse that she at once inherits and perpetuates and Edgeworth turns her personal self-examination into a cultural critique: "she diagnosed a distortion in 'the imaginations of the good people of England' and in so doing she issued a challenge and founded a new tradition" (114). More recently, Susan Manly goes deeper into Ragussis's examination and affirms that Edgeworth's *Harrington* "exposes the lie of English 'liberties' and questions some myths about England's exceptional liberalism and democracy" ("Mendelssohn's" 236). It is precisely Manly who highlighs *Harrington*'s insistence on the need for religious tolerance. According to Manly, who argues that Edgeworth's portrayal of Harrington's fears is more decisive than what the people around tell him, *Harrington* reflects the Edgeworths' feelings when they saw themselves attacked in 1798 ("Burke" 153) —which again links *Harrington* and "The Limerick Gloves" —, and she registers a clear influence of John Toland's (1670-1722) republican and enlightened ideas.

My study considers that both 'The Limerick Gloves' and *Harrington* take place in a special historical moment: after the 1798 Rising and the Gordon Riots, which occur at the end of *Harrington,* and "November 1799," just before the publication of *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and a few months after the Rebellion, a bloody episode that the Edgeworths witnessed in County Longford. The historical background of "The

Limerick Gloves" is the confrontation between the Orange Order and the United Irishmen in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. The latter had become a revolutionary group on the rise who formed a coalition with the Defenders (a Roman Catholic agrarian secret society) (Wilson 24; Litton 47). As for the Gordon Riots, they took place in London in June 1780 and were sparked by resistance to the Catholic Relief Act of 1778 which removed the requirement to condemn the Catholic Church when taking an oath of allegiance to the British crown and some restrictions on land ownership, preaching and publishing were also lifted. Novelists like Frances Burney or Charles Dickens chronicled the events (Haywood 2-3) and one of the towns where rioting was feared was precisely Hereford (Haydon 215). The date that appears at the end of the Irish tale is quite significant: Mitzi Myers explains that in September 1798 rebels devastated Ballinamuck, a few miles from Edgeworthstown. The Edgeworths' home was twice spared "in gratitude for the family's lack of sectarianism and their good relations with their tenantry" before Edgeworth's father and brother were brutally attacked by Protestant loyalists (Myers 29; see also Richard L. and Maria Edgeworth 209-38). Violent stereotyping and paranoias about the recent rebellion underlie and inform the unfounded English prejudices against O'Neill and the rebellion is a vital context for understanding the grounds of prejudice in the story: as an Irishman, O'Neill is suspected of plotting to blow up the Cathedral. This supposed plot of which O'Neill is accused is assumed as "evil design", presumably against religion and the community, a terrorist attack.

Edgeworth's fiction does not only contain a powerful criticism against the oppression of the Irish, but against other communities too. In this paper I argue that Edgeworth clearly developed her ideas on the stigmatization of Jewishness and Jewish identity from what she had already achieved in her meditations on anti-Irish prejudice and the effects of stereotype on Ireland and Irish identity. Both the Jews and the Irish occupy a critical position in the English imagination, and in the English national character in general, and both menaced the British stability. If the Jew is an invention of the Anti-Semitists —as Jean-Paul Sartre wrote in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1945)—, the Irish is an invention of the racist English. *Harrington* (1817) indebtedness to "The Limerick Gloves" can be examined mainly in the portrayal of cultural stereotypes and the approach to woman in the stories. I draw on Catherine

Gallagher's analysis (307, 323) and argue that in *Harrington* the Jews are at the same level as the Irish in that they are nations without a land. Both are discriminated in terms of ethnic othering and prejudice in relation to what was being presented as normative English society. Also, in both "The Limerick Gloves" and *Harrington* it is the English who are ultimately ridiculed. Following Manly's argument that in *Harrington* we do find a vision of race and religion that is "more nuanced, much more pluralistic, than it has hitherto been thought" ("Mendelssohn's" 247), I show that this trend can be traced earlier.

2. Stereotypes

When Edgeworth entered the literary realm, there was a long tradition of negative portraits of both the Irishman and the Jew in England. The image of the stage Irishman and Teague had been familiar with English audiences since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in popular culture. Paddy opposed the Englishman as John Bull and suggested that Irish people were lawless, unstable, emotional, childlike, superstitious, lazy, clannish, backward, and hard-fighting Catholic peasants. In the Irish tale these features are reinforced by the belief that the Irish are violent and O'Neill is a destabilizing force who certainly threatens the division of the community and England in many ways. Rather than a scapegoat, O'Neill's is a Scott-like hero whose worth shows all the time, but, paradoxically, he is discredited for being an Irishman. Courageous and full of humanity, O'Neill is committed to improving the lives of those around and he assumes his arrest as another way to combat prejudice. The Irishman also epitomizes the Irish perfect pride and perfect contempt for the English nation, so, for him, an individual is not the representative of a nation and his arrest is unfair: "'No, I am not the king's prisoner! I am the prisoner of that shabby rascally tanner, Jonathan Hill. None but he would arrest a gentleman, in this way, for a trifle not worth mentioning'" (Edgeworth, "Limerick" 270). Also, the linguistic misunderstanding between O'Neill and Phoebe echoes the breach between England and Ireland and the girl considers O'Neill too proud: "when her Irish admirer said *I expect*, he meant only in plain English *I hope*. But thus it is that a poor Irishman, often, for want of understanding the niceties of the English language, says the rudest when he means to say the civilest things imaginable"

(Edgeworth, "Limerick" 255, my italics). Similarly, in *Harrington*, the Jewish dialect and pronunciation are ridiculed to the point of turning them into "objects of perpetual derision and detestation" (Edgeworth, *Harrington* 31) and the portrait "The dentition of the Jew" that Mowbray wishes to purchase testifies the hatred for the Jews which were simultaneously stereotyped between 1290 and 1700 as aliens, anti-Christs, bribers, clippers and forgers, crucifiers, demons, desecrators, hypocrites, outcasts, regicides and usurers (Felsenstein 25) and also seen as intelligent, ambitious and sly. Eighteenth-century secularization and mercantilism brought a better vision of the Jews who were increasingly accepted as a part of the British society and this features in *Harrington*. Interestingly, the painting shows a Jew getting his teeth extracted, a punishment that brings back Harrington's worst memories of the figure of the Jew with the terrible eyes at the synagogue. Montenero's cutting the painting into pieces before a company of people becomes an attempt to eradicate intolerance and exorcize the protagonist's demons.

The main difference between "The Limerick Gloves" and *Harrington* is a technical transformation that makes the latter a highly attractive story for any reader. *Popular Tales* was addressed to a younger audience while *Harrington* is formally closer to the series of *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809-1812). The type of narrative voice used in the earlier story is an ironic pro-Irish third-person narrator who condemns phobia and is able to detach himself from Hereford ignorant inhabitants. The narrator's comments are tinted by didacticism and cover criticism, so the reader notices that O'Neill's involvement in the plot is never properly investigated: "Upon putting all these things together, it was resolved, by these overwise [sic] politicians, that the best thing that could be done for Hereford, and the only possible means of preventing the immediate destruction of its cathedral, would be to take Mr. O'Neill into custody (Edgeworth, "Limerick" 262). Likewise, Mr. Hill's bigotry is repaid with Mrs. Hill's gossip and Mr. Hill's ethics are questioned by the narrator: "How Mr. Hill made the discovery of this debt to the grocer agree with his former notion, that the Irish glover had always money at command, we cannot well conceive; but anger and prejudice will swallow down the grossest contradictions without difficulty" (263).

What we find in *Harrington* is an enticing first person narrator who refers to past events and is very close to the narrative voice in *Castle*

Rackrent. Not coincidentally, Carol Margaret Davidson labels the opening of *Harrington* a "phantasmagoric primal scene [that] is nothing short of a Gothic germ" (10). This narrator serves Edgeworth for a purpose, as Davison states: "[l]ike a transgressive Gothic protagonist, Edgeworth brazenly and shamelessly enters the closet of British middle-class consciousness to expose the dark and dirty secret of anti-Semitism and to speculate upon its psychopathology" (10). Harrington sees things from the distance, but he offers enough temporal tips and references to historical events, like the naturalization of the Jews and the Jew Bill which were being discussed, the London Gordon Riots that took place in June 1780 and the 1753 Naturalization Bill. Also, the slogan "No papists! – no priests! – no Jews, no wooden shoes" specifically points to the correlation between Catholics and Jews. In "The Limerick Gloves" the narrator carefully chooses the vocabulary to refer to the Irish while the intensity of insults to the Jews escalates in *Harrington*, where direct speech is reserved for prejudiced high-class characters, like Mr. Harrington, Mowbray and Lady Brantfield.

Instead of a self-confident hero, the protagonist that Edgeworth introduces in *Harrington* is an easily impressed man who wonders about so many issues and experiences an inner conflict between silence and openness. Harrington's thoughts resemble an interior monologue: "A Jewess — her religion — her principles — my principles. And can a Jewess marry a Christian? And should a Christian marry a Jewess?" (*Harrington* 274). His indignation is similar to O'Neill's when it is questioned whether an Irishman cannot be a good man. Besides, neither Jacob nor Cambridge scholar Israel Lyons look like typical Jews. Harrington meets the former at school while "the Wandering Jew" is bullied. It is Jacob who introduces Harrington to Lyons, the son of Polish Jews, and a man who has written several books. His description is far from what Harrington considers a Jew. Michael Ragussis links *Harrington* to the "novel of Jewish identity" which aims to articulate, investigate and subvert the function of *The Merchant of Venice* as a key text to represent the Jew (116), but I would rather redefine *Harrington* as a novel of racial prejudice. Ragussis maintains that Montenero's postponed discovery of the truth is a typical device to rewrite the texts about the Jews, for instance Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) (143). Nonetheless, stereotypes serve other purposes, too. Thus, non-Jews

pass for Jews to take advantage of Mrs. Harrington's generosity and get money because in *Harrington* prejudice masks economic struggle.

The antihero in *Harrington* is a fallible man who will have to overcome his fears and does not realize that his weakness will become an obstacle to his relationship with Berenice since it discredits him before Montenero —who had already explained to him that excessive sensibility is "a dangerous, though not a common vice of character" (204)— and Berenice. The attitude of the narrator reveals the influence of *Practical Education* and later narrators, like the one in *Ennui*, where the protagonist, Lord Glenthorpe, transitions from an idle countryman to a responsible landlord and also becomes psychologically stronger. Still, in *Harrington*, the hero is also committed to justice. As a matter of fact, one of the strengths of the first person narrator in *Harrington* is his capacity to sympathize with others. The protagonist puts himself in the Jewess's shoes and imagines both how Berenice feels and how Shylock feels too: "I felt the force of some of his appeals to justice" (149), so history acquires a new meaning for him as he becomes more mature. Michael Scrivener accurately states that "Harrington sees Shakespeare's play through 'Jewish' eyes" (120) and adds that "[a]s Shakespeare became the national poet in the eighteenth century, Charles Macklin's version of *The Merchant of Venice* stabilized English identity as not Jewish, not-Shylock; the play in effect supported repeal of the Jew Jewish" (12). Another circumstance facilitating the identification between the protagonist and the Jews is that Jacob had a nervous disease when he was a child. Aware of "the foolish prejudices of [his] childhood" (*Harrington* 71), the protagonist of *Harrington* detaches himself from a past that he rejects. Harrington notices now the inhuman treatment that the English have given to the Jews and experiences an awakening. The private history or his earlier vision of the Jews confronts a new one:

> Shall I be pardoned for having dwelt so long on this history of the mental and corporeal ills of my childhood? Such details will probably appear more trivial to the frivolous and ignorant, than to the philosophic and well informed. Not only because the best informed are usually the most indulgent judges, but because they will perceive some connexion [sic] between these apparently puerile details and subjects of higher importance. (19)

Darkness and suspicion are associated with both the Irish and the Jews and they are difficult to reconcile with generosity. Though very generous and a bit gullible, the Irish in "The Limerick Gloves" are seen as guilty of every evil affecting Hereford, so Mr. Hill automatically relates O'Neill to the hole under the foundation of the Cathedral and he supposes that O'Neill is a wicked Roman Catholic who should be watched since the ball could be the perfect excuse to perpetrate his evil design. Also, the Irish tale registers the prosperity of the linen industry in south Ulster in the 1800s, when so many young men could establish their independence and religious hatred arose (Jackson 75), but in Hereford no Irishman could be allowed to lead a gentleman's life. In fact, 'Essay on Irish Bulls' (1802) was partly motivated by the disadvantage to Irish prosperity and the development of Irish trade and industry since the Act of Union affected the prosperity of those who were not among the Anglo-Irish landed classes. As Gary Kelly writes, the "new economy of money and merit" (in which "the former was supposed to accumulate in proportion to the latter") both legitimized the values of the newly influential middle class while "preserving the hierarchical social order which they could take over from within" (89). Like the Jews in *Harrington*, O'Neill is doubly othered by his religion and his class since he lives like a gentleman, which relates him to the paranoias surrounding the upward mobility of naturalised Jews. Perhaps O'Neill's fault is simply his stubbornness to be treated as gentleman and still be Irish, but his attitude is also as uncomfortable as Harrington's weakness.

Like O'Neil in "The Limerick Gloves," in *Harrington* Montenero is socially accepted and excluded at the same time. Judged for having a pistol at home after the evidence has been manipulated, Montenero shows his generosity when he helps the Coates and he gives his picture collection so Mr. Harrington can pay his creditors, which makes Mr. Harrington see Berenice's father in a new light. Curiously, there is an intertextual reference to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in "The Limerick Gloves" when Widow O'Neil resorts to a pawnbroker to obtain ready money for her son's release. The man pledges "goods to treble the amount of the debt" ("Limerick" 272). O'Neill learns a moral lesson after this episode and tries "to retrench his expenses in time, to live more like a glover, and less like a gentleman [...] He found, from experience, that good friends will not pay bad debts" (273). According to Davidson, through

the contrast between Montenero and Mowbray, Edgeworth destabilizes the established division between an English Christian gentleman and a Jewish criminal (49). In fact, in *Harrington* roles are inversed, so it will be a Jew who pays for the Englishman. Another negative portrait of the Jews is voiced by Harrington's companion, Mowbray, who boldly declares that he would become a Jew for money (*Harrington* 290). Mowbray's duplicity and cynicism lead him to marginalize Jacob in Gibraltar and destroy his master's business to the point of ruining his wife and children at the same time that he praises Montenero when the Jew is reading in English. Poetic justice works at the end of the story: Mowbray receives his punishment and has to leave London due to his debts since, in the Edgeworths' stories, those who cannot respect wealth do not deserve to be in England.

Edgeworth destabilizes her stories by including more examples of what can be called positive Irishness and Jewishness. With this strategy she subverts prejudicial stereotypes rather than her "stories" *per se*. In "The Limerick Gloves" Paddy and the hay-makers are also representative of the Emerald Isle and have the positive connotations of humility and humanity. The Defenders are alluded to in the tale as ignorant and poverty-stricken houghers and rick-burners when Paddy M'Cormack confesses pulling down Mr. Hill's rick of bark for "resentment for the insulting arrest of his countryman in the streets of Hereford, had instigated his fellow haymakers to this mischief: he headed them and thought he was doing a clever spirited action" ("Limerick" 285). Though their actions are not supported by the narrative voice, their motivations are explained in the tale. While in *Harrington* the strength of the community is deeply felt, the rebellious spirit in "The Limerick Gloves" is translated in *Harrington* into the mistreatment of Jacob. The protagonist feels like a toy in other English people's hands and admits that he would not have taken part in it if it had not been for the rest of children, and it is Widow Levy who defends Mr. Montenero against the mob. Her discourse is definitely marked as Irish:

> "*Keep ourselves to ourselves*, for I'll tell you a bit of a sacret — I'm a little bit of a ca'olic myself, all as one as what they call a *papish*; but I keep it to myself, and nobody's the wiser nor the worse they'd tear me to pieces, may be, did

> they suspect *the like*, but I keep never minding, and you, jewel, do the like" (*Harrington* 370-71).

Levy specifically advocates tolerance in the face of religious difference by stating to the Jewish Montenero, "we were all brothers and sisters once — no offence — in the time of Adam sure, and we should help one another in all times" (371). Thanks to her "intrepid ingenuity and indefatigable zeal" (373), the rioters are cheated and she even faces Lady de Brantefield's and Lady Anne's insults. More importantly, Widow Levy is instrumental in *Harrington* since she delivers Mr. Montenero's letter to General B. and keeps the Jews away from the mob.

Levy's generosity contrasts with the English hypocrisy which extends to the domestic realm. If the family stands for the political sphere, Edgeworth presents families where parents have no authority. Both Mr. Hill and Mr. Harrington are treated like puppets because they lack determination and are governed by their prejudices. When Mr. Hill's and Mr. Harrington's speeches are mocked, Edgeworth directs her satire to ineffectual grandiloquence and the manipulation of language. It is left to the reader to consider what discourse is most valuable, either the patriarchs' or the protagonist's. Mr. Hill's enforced conversion hides his attempt to swear examinations against an innocent man. Though he feels ashamed, his deceitful words can hardly be credible at this point:

> "I know we are all born where it pleases God; and an Irishman may be as good as another. I know that much, Mr. Marshal; and I am not one of those illiberal-minded ignorant people that cannot abide a man that was not born in England… an Irishman born may be as good, almost, as an Englishman born." ("Limerick" 301)

Prejudices, such as anti-Semitism and anti-Irish attitudes, are so problematic because they are ingrained through normalization and, of all the fictions about the Jews that we can find in *Harrington*, Mr. Harrington's is the worst and the most inconsistent. For him, the Jews are bastards and devils, so he forbids Harrington to talk to them and organizes dinners to convince country people to vote against the naturalization of the Jews. His bigotry reveals the wider prevalence of anti-Semitism and that is why Edgeworth is self-accusatory about

her own representation of Jews. First, the Anglo-Irish author presents anti-Semitism as endemic with Mr. Harrington and then deconstructs it with the Monteneros. *Harrington* also chronicles more conversions: Mr. Harrington becomes more receptive and supports Harrington's marriage hiding an enforced conversion promoted by economic interest. For Sicher, anti-Semitism is a means of control and authority and Edgeworth opposes the prejudice and violence in English history and xenophobia to the rational notion of a nation that Montenero has inculcated in Berenice (Sicher 172) who has been educated in a different vision of nationhood that has Edgeworth's approval.

In this regard, Edgeworth registers some evolution in terms of gender and intergenerational relationships reflecting new times for women too. Regina Hewitt accurately posits that *Harrington* registers the protagonist's growing wish to free himself, his family, and his society from religious and ethnic biases (Hewitt 293). In *Harrington* the parents' hatred for the Jews parallels classism in "The Limerick Gloves" while the young generation is much more open-minded. Also, in the latter the women around Phoebe are featured as eager to engage in the marriage market, but they are as dim-witted as men, which does not happen in *Harrington*. Mrs. Hill's changeable attitude to O'Neill shows that the Irishman is regarded as an uncomfortable challenge that has to be skipped despite its appeal. Unlike Phoebe, Jenny Brown has been sent a pair of Irish gloves and thus has been invited to the O'Neills' ball. Mrs. Hill's reaction recalls Jane Austen's matrons' as she feels "a good deal piqued and alarmed by the idea that the perfumer's daughter might rival and outshine her own" ("Limerick" 259). Mrs. Harrington aligns with Mrs. Coates to attack the Jews; she cautions Harrington against the Jews, but she avoids arguing because that is unfeminine. Likewise, Mrs. Hill connects the gloves to a plot against the cathedral and her fiction about O'Neill is strong enough to influence her weak-willed husband, who immediately decides that Phoebe has to take off the gloves. It is Phoebe —whose name suitably evokes phobia and remains as dispossessed and surveyed as O'Neill— who cannot accept discrimination. She questions irrational repression and her query "'Cannot an Irishman be a good man?'" (248) is never answered, just as Berenice wonders why she cannot marry Harrington.

3. 'She is worth all the fine ladies in Lon'on': the Gendering of anti-Irish and anti-Semitic prejudices in Edgeworth

Since the twentieth century both women and the Irish have been related to Jews as signifiers of the Other, which applies to Edgeworth's stories. In 1947 Fred Manning Smith compared the Jews and women in *The Merchant of Venice* (1598) and *Othello* (1603) (33) and Catherine Gallagher assimilates the position of the Jews to the Irish in her book about Edgeworth's literary partnership with Richard Lovell Edgeworth (307). *Harrington* includes the portrait of very different female characters, not being Berenice the most important one, but Fowler, whose name can equally refer to "fool" and "fault". The protagonist bases his fiction of the Jews on his nurse's gruesome tales. Fowler is responsible for young Harrington's alacrity for the Jews. Nevertheless, because his nurse becomes his sole affective bond, Harrington prefers not to betray Fowler.

If Harrington's nurse is the victim of prejudice and false visions of the Jews, Phoebe is also conditioned in the same way towards O'Neil. In "The Limerick Gloves" lovers fight the cultural stereotypes of the Irishmen as fortune-hunter and the English as ones "who could change her opinion point blank, like the weathercock" (255). Phoebe states "'Brian O'Neill is no Irish fortune-hunter, and scorns them that are so narrow- minded as to think that no other kind of cattle but them there fortune-hunters can come out of all Ireland" (253). Her love for the Irishman grows when a little girl comes to tell her that O'Neill has been good to a poor Irish haymaker. Who "'goes out a haymaking in the day-time, along with a number of others. He knew Mr. O'Neill in his own country, and he told mammy a great deal about his goodness'" (266). The battle between Phoebe's daughterly duty and love is represented by her spreading some leaves of a rose on the gloves and keeping them until the end of the story when she appears "in the Limerick gloves; and no perfume ever was so delightful to her lover as the smell of the rose-leaves, in which they had been (307-8). Renouncing the gloves —now Phoebe's fetish standing in for and substituting her sexual desire O'Neill— also means renouncing a part of herself. Eventually, Edgeworth shows that the Self cannot be renounced whatever it is.

Just as women are sacrificed for patriarchal interests, so are men subjected to the will of others. Sexual stereotypes are destroyed in *Harrington*, where men are as vulnerable and hesitating as women.

The Monteneros demythologize Jewishness by the way they are presented; they exorcize negative images of the Jews as mean and vindictive early in the story. Berenice's background is the opposite of Harrington's. Her father is a Spanish Jew who fled to America trying to avoid persecution and tyranny and turned into a prosperous man in London. Eager to combat prejudice against the Jews, Montenero cannot tolerate Shakespeare's manipulation of real events in *The Merchant of Venice*: "In the *true* story, from which Shakespeare took the plot of the Merchant of Venice, it was a Christian who acted the part of the Jew, and the Jew that of the Christian; it was a Christian who insisted upon having the pound of flesh from next the Jew's heart" (*Harrington*, 163-4) because originally the ruthless man was the Christian. Therefore, he buys the picture "The dentition of the Jew" to destroy it and end up with "every record of cruelty and intolerance" (263). Nonetheless, Montenero's conservative views of Berenice as the weaker sex are clearly exposed: though he considers woman at the same level as man in terms of rationality, he maintains that a woman is not invulnerable to other people's opinions. The Jewess helps to test Harrington, who does not want to declare his feelings to her to avoid exposing her to ridicule and to follow Montenero's advice to just self-control ("command your own mind"; 356).

While Harrington is focused on such a goal, Berenice proves her singularity. A major point of departure between the two stories is that female psyche is much more developed in *Harrington* than in "The Limerick Gloves". In the former the protagonist sees that Berenice is not frivolous, she has a delicate temper without artifice and she inspires him with new life: "I had now a great object, a strong and lively interest in existence" (*Harrington* 211). A most interesting creature, according to Mr. Harrington, Berenice becomes "A character of genuine simplicity" (316), which coincides with Widow Levy's opinion "[s]he's worth all the fine ladies in Lon'on, feathers and all in a bag" (399). Berenice resembles Harrington in one aspect and yet is othered because she comes from the American paradise and is ignorant of the prejudices towards the Jews as greedy and violent. Here Edgeworth refers to Rachel Mordecai's birthplace suggesting that in America Berenice could do what is simply not possible in Great Britain: to mix with varied people thanks to the country's tolerance and freedom.

However, like in Shakespeare, there is one condition for the story to end well and, in fact, many scholars have skewed *Harrington* due to the last twist of the plot (Yates 360-7). Berenice's mother was an English woman of a good family who had been brought up as a Protestant and Berenice had romantically resolved never to marry a man who had had to sacrifice his religion or principles for love or a man who could not accept her father. For Efraim Sicher, the fact that there is no conversion in *Harrington* showcases Edgeworth's respect for difference:

> as in the case of the Anglo-Irish, the novel does not contemplate the Jewish shedding their separateness or advocate any fusion of the Jews into Protestant Christianity, notwithstanding Montenero's demonstration […] that the widely perceived threat of assimilated Jews was unfounded and that they were actually beneficial to the English economy and culture. (172)

Edgeworth suggests that the Jews and the English can live in mutual respect. What makes Berenice acceptable to the eyes of the English society is her wealth. It facilitates her marriage to Harrington, but Berenice is not the only false Jew in *Harrington*. Categories mix, as "Jew" is broadly applied to anyone who contradicts others: Mowbray considers Harrington as a Jew by heart and Harrington says he is as Jew as Jacob and asks him to be as he would like others to be to himself.

The most striking words about prejudice come from a female voice. Once Fowler she has been expelled from England, Mr. Montenero thinks that Harrington should pardon her and Berenice hints that pardoning is non-exclusive of Christians. Berenice's question anticipates Mr. Montenero's doubt in *Harrington*: "'Do you think we have not an Englishman good enough for her?'" (259). What is significant is that, in "The Limerick Gloves", the question is in the heroine's mouth and that she is as outspoken as O'Neill himself. According to Ragussis, with such questions the novelistic tradition "explores, and ultimately seeks to control, the authority by which 'printed books' construct paradigms that nurture racial hatred and perhaps even racial desire" (117), which is a permanent feature of Edgeworth's *oeuvre*. For instance, when she parodies the traditional representation of Ireland in *Ennui* (*Tales of Fashionable Life*, First Series, 1809) through Lady Geraldine, who lies

to Lord Craiglethorpe, a man intent on becoming an ethnographer of Ireland:

> "...he shall say all that I know he thinks of us poor Irish savages. If he would but speak, one could answer him: if he would find fault, one might defend: if he would laugh, one might perhaps laugh again: but here he comes to hospitable, open-hearted Ireland: eats as well as he can in his own country; drinks better than he can in his own country; sleeps as well as he can in his own country; accepts all our kindness without a word or a look of thanks, and seems the whole time to think, that, 'Born for his use, we live but to oblige him." (Edgeworth, *Ennui* 148)

The Anglo-Irish author is here defending an approach to culture which is not based on false portraits, but on direct contact with people. That is the way to achieve proper cultural understanding and to get to know cultural identity free of prejudice.

4. Conclusion

Both "The Limerick Gloves" and *Harrington* are studies of prejudice: they deal with mysterious Others, the Irish and the Jews, and both depict class struggle since the *parvenue* is represented as a menace to the well-offs. Both works also share many common points. "Irish" and "Jew" acquire multiple connotations in the stories, but the heroes show their inner goodness; they help the English financially and Edgeworth insists on their generosity despite the negative images and criticism of those around.

Nevertheless, "The Limerick Gloves" is a tale for young people with a positive, yet troubling, ending while Edgeworth's orphan book lacks the didacticism and irony of her previous *oeuvre* which sometimes is the origin of her fascinating later works. In her Irish tale the Anglo-Irish author shows the effects of prejudice on a couple, and O'Neill affirms himself as a hero. The main difference is that in *Harrington* there is some individual growth and detachment from past events and this device helps Harrington to become more critical to oneself and more rational. As a consequence, the reader confronts a hero who is more human than O'Neill. If examined

together, the two narratives show the two dimensions of prejudice: as an individual evil created in our mind, as happens in *Harrington*, and as the collective disease presented in "The Limerick Gloves."

Notes

[1] The collection *Popular Tales* includes "Rosanna", "Lame Jervas", "The Will", "Out of Debt, Out of Danger", "The Lottery", "Murad the Unlucky", "The Manufacturers", "The Contrast", "The Grateful Negro" and "Tomorrow."

[2] *Castle Rackrent* (1800), in particular, features Lady Rackrent, the "stiffnecked Israelite" (Edgeworth, *Castle* 19) and wife of Sir Kit, who feels alienated and is even deprived of food and freedom for five years because she keeps on defending her faith. Spector puts forward the argument that Jason Quirk is in fact the "figurative Jew" of the novel, which is very close to Edgeworth's portrayal of Brian O'Neill in "The Limerick Gloves". Other stories depicting Jews are "The Prussian Vase" and "The Good Aunt" (*Moral Tales* [1801]), "The Little Merchants" (*The Parent's Assistant* [1796]) and "Murad the Unlucky". For a detailed analysis of Edgeworth's portraits of the Jews in her earlier fiction, see Manly, "Introduction," 7-9.

[3] Toland's pamphlet *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews* (1714) denies any essential difference between Jews and natives of their adopted countries, so Jews were then already natural citizens (Manly, "Burke," 157).

[4] Yet, the translation of "The Limerick Gloves" into French distorted Edgeworth's original aim and offered a much more refined vision of Ireland (see Fernández).

[5] Sir Walter Scott declared his indebtedness to Edgeworth as a source of inspiration for her heroes (see the introduction to *Waverley*; Scott 523).

[6] In 1753 the Jew Bill offered to foreign Jews who had lived in Great Britain and Ireland for at least three years the possibility to naturalize without abandoning their religion (Felsenstein 188), which stimulated the economy and reduced public debt. However, the Tories and London merchants opposed the idea on the basis that the Jews had supported the Hannovers and the Bill would be a menace to English artisans and landowners (Felsenstein 189, 212, 251).

[7] According to Manly, there is some inaccuracy on Edgeworth's part here since the biggest enemies of the Jews were the merchants from the

City, and not the landowners like Mr. Harrington because the latter had the political power ("Introductory Note" xxxi).

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Recibido / Received: 22/4/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 19/6/2022*

Colorism, Passing for White, and Intertextuality in Brit Bennett's *The Vanishing Half*: Rewriting African American Women's Literary Tradition

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Abstract

This article draws on various theories and studies about the color line, colorism, and racial passing in African American culture, history, and literature to examine the themes of colorism and passing for white in Brit Bennett's 2020 novel *The Vanishing Half*. This article juxtaposes Bennett's novel alongside earlier works written by twentieth-century African American women writers, underscoring Bennett's intertextual influences, which include Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929), Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), and Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), and *God Help the Child* (2015). As Bennett revises and incorporates earlier novels into her own, she redeems tragic female characters such as Pecola Breedlove and Clare Kendry, highlights the persistence and damage of colorism, updates the passing narrative, and defies stereotypes about Black women. It concludes that in *The Vanishing Half,* Bennett proposes a fresh path for twenty-first-century African American fiction through the themes of colorism and passing for white in her rewriting of African American women's literary tradition.

Keywords: *The Vanishing Half*, African American literature, colorism, passing, intertextuality.

Colorismo, *passing* e intertextualidad en *The Vanishing Half* de Brit Bennett: Una reescritura de la tradición literaria afroamericana femenina

Resumen

Este artículo aplica varias teorías y estudios sobre la línea de color, el colorismo y el fenómeno de *passing* en la cultura, la historia y la literatura afroamericana para examinar los temas del colorismo y *passing* en la novela de *The Vanishing Half* (2020) de Brit Bennett. Lleva a cabo un estudio comparativo de *The Vanishing Half*, subrayando la presencia de intertextualidad, con otras novelas escritas por mujeres afroamericanas del siglo XX: *Passing* (1929) de Nella Larsen, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) de Zora Neale Hurston, así como *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973) y *God Help the Child* (2015) de Toni Morrison. Bennett, además de revisar e incorporar estas novelas en la suya, redime a personajes femeninos trágicos como Pecola Breedlove y Clare Kendry, destaca la persistencia y el daño del colorismo, actualiza la narrativa de *passing* y desafía los estereotipos sobre las mujeres negras. Concluye que, en *The Vanishing Half*, Bennett propone un nuevo camino para la ficción afroamericana del siglo XXI a través de los temas del colorismo y el *passing* en su reescritura de la tradición literaria de las mujeres afroamericanas.

Palabras clave: *The Vanishing Half*, literatura afroamericana, colorismo, *passing*, intertextualidad.

1. Introduction

The richness of the variety of skin colors and shades, Fritz Gysin notes, is what causes skin to function as a "boundary" in human relations and interactions (287), which explains why in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) W. E. B. Du Bois affirmed that the color-line would be the problem of the twentieth century (11). Decades later, in the essay "If the Present Looks Like the Past, What Does the Future Look like?" (1982),

Alice Walker extended Du Bois's prophecy and proposed that the color line would also be the problem of the twenty-first century, influencing not only the relation between races, "but [also] the relations between the darker and the lighter people of the same races, and of the women who represent both dark and light within each race" (311). In this context, the color line functions at two distinct levels: at the interracial level, which expresses "institutionalized racism," and at the intraracial level (Peters 163), which, in the case of the Black community, is "the expression of dominant race ideals" (Hall 102). When skin discrimination takes place at the intraracial level, it is best known as colorism. While it benefits light-skinned non-white subjects, colorism oppresses individuals with a darker skin color, who are defined in pejorative terms, such as "non-human" or "uncultured" among others (Canaan 232). In the Black community, intra-ethnic colorism already occurred during slavery times, when light-skinned slaves assumed their superiority over their dark-skinned peers (Russell-Cole et al. 56), a haughty attitude that Ytasha Womack summarizes as "the 'better than' history of colorism, with black elitism equating lighter skin with higher status and beauty" (70). Thus, colorism is the worldwide "legacy of [European] colonialism" (Phoenix 101) that has established white hegemonic beauty standards around the globe.

In the United States, gendered colorism restricts Black women's beauty to a lightness (Russell-Cole et al. 155) rooted in a Black-white binary, Patricia Hill Collins contends, because "blue-eyed, blond, thin White women could not be considered beautiful without the Other—Black women with African features of dark skin, broad noses, full lips, and kinky hair" (89). However, the undermining of Black women's beauty colorism involves not only skin pigmentation. Mikki Kendall uses the term "texturism" to relate to the idea that natural black hair is inferior to other hair textures and, particularly, to white hair (103). Pursuing this line of argument, Russell-Cole et al. posit that, for African American women, hair is political (115) and that straightened hair equals respectability (121). As gendered colorism equals beauty to lightness, it equates dark-skinned Black women with ugliness, often considereding them "the least attractive" (Jerkins 59). Thus, in her essay, Walker also expressed her worries about "the hatred the black woman encounters within black society" (291) as they are likely to suffer both

romantic and non-romantic marginalization in the Black community (292-293).

The colorism-beauty relationship is political, in sociologist Tressie McMillan Cottom's words, "because beauty isn't actually what you look like; beauty is the preferences that reproduce the existing social order" (44). Thus, colorism is both the outcome and the reaffirmation of white privilege because "social stratification follows color" (Russell-Cole et al. 6) and, in its connection to class, "color-class hierarchies" emerge (27). For this reason, McMillan Cottom claims that to be beautiful, Black women must retain a certain degree of whiteness (56). In this sense, gendered colorism is at the intersection of gender, race, skin color, and class, introducing the "privilege of beauty" into the equation. Originally derived from critical race theory, intersectionality theory argues that each individual "has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances" (Delgado and Stefancic 11). Race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in the 1989 article "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex." According to Crenshaw, intersectionality surpasses a "single-issue framework" (152) —i.e., gender or race— in the discussion of Black women's oppression. Instead, intersectionality performs a joint study of race and gender. Yet, the intersection of multiple factors when discussing Black women's subordination had been previously addressed by Black Feminists and activists, such as the Combahee River Collective who, in their 1977 Statement, claimed Black women were subjugated by "interlocking oppressions" (Taylor 15), or Deborah K. King, who proposed a multiplicative study of Black women's "multiple jeopardy" (1988). Later in the article "Mapping the Margins" (1991), Crenshaw added that "class, sexual orientation, age, and color [factors]" should be included in the equation of intersectionality (1244-1245).

Light-skinned and white-looking non-white subjects enjoy the added possibility of passing for white, which Delgado and Stefancic define as "the effort to deracinate oneself and present oneself as white" (69), taking advantage of the racial categorization based on phenotypical appearance in the United States (80). According to Floyd James Davis (1991), passing for white is a social phenomenon rooted in the one-drop rule (5). This critic posits the one-drop rule "[reflects] the nation's unique definition of what makes a person black" in the United States

(14). Allyson Hobbs (2014) defines racial passing as "a flexible strategy that relies heavily on the category of class" (30) and signals that light-skinned slaves passed for white strategically during the Antebellum period to achieve freedom, while in later periods passing was mainly used for upward social mobility (29). In "Lost Boundaries" (1995), Arthé A. Anthony explores the complexity of passing for white in New Orleans during the Jim Crow era and claims it was a "public strategy of resistance against the crises of racial repression" (297). He goes on to argue:

> Although it is impossible to determine either the frequency of passing or the number of its varied manifestations, the two most prevalent forms have been described as part-time, or discontinuous passing –such as passing for white at work— and continuous passing or "crossing-over" the racial divide into a new life with a new racial identity. … But passing was not a frivolous matter because it demanded tolerance for racism … as well as the fear of discovery and betrayal, pressures imposed by maintaining a double life. (307)

Further, this critic emphasizes that the complexity of passing also lies in the multiple instances of real-life passing stories. Pursuing this line of argument, those who passed did so to "escape [their] economic conditions" (303) as Black, segregated, and constrained to a certain type of low-income jobs (302). Thus, passing was an "economic necessity" (307). However, not all who could pass did so, mainly because of their family and personal relations (303). And others, those who could not pass as white, would have "if passing for white had been a viable option for [them]" (304). Mirroring this real-life phenomenon, African American fiction features multiple instances of crossing the color line.

Catherine Rottenberg reports that the passing narrative emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century when African American authors started using racial passing "as a way of investigating the complexities and contradictions of the category of race in the United States" (435). Passing for white became a major theme in African American fiction published before the Second World War (Anthony 291) and reached its peak in the 1920s, mainly used to foster "[the] white audience's awareness of the restrictions imposed upon talented

blacks who then found necessary to become white to fulfill themselves" (Christian 44). Barbara Christian highlights that traditional passing narratives "could have peculiarly feminine overtones" because often the "passer" is a Black woman who raises her civil and economic status by marrying a rich white man (45), as portrayed in Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929). Set in Harlem in the 1920s, this short novel revolves around two Black light-skinned childhood friends who reunite in their adulthood. Despite their shared background, as grown women their lives are disparate. Taking advantage of her fair physique, Clare Kendry passes as white and marries a rich white man, John Bellew. Thanks to her marriage, Clare materializes her new racial identity and prospers socially. Unlike Clare, Irene Redfield does not pass as white. She married a dark-skinned Black man who "couldn't exactly 'pass'" (Larsen 32) and is the mother to two sons who inherited their father's dark complexion. Yet, Clare does pass for white in what Anthony calls "isolated occasions" (307) and when not in the company of her husband and children. Hobbs affirms that Larsen, who was biracial, was aware that "racial and gender identities were mutually constitutive" both in her life and fiction (201), which points to the importance of the intersection of race, gender, and class when discussing Black women's experiences as well as passing for white in literature.

This article proposes a reading of the notions of colorism and passing as white in Brit Bennett's *The Vanishing Half* (2020). The novel is a female-centered and coming-of-age narrative that follows the lives of four Black women belonging to the same family from the 1960s to the 1980s through intertwined storylines. The teenage Vignes twins, Stella and Desiree, live with their widowed mother, Adele, since their father, Leon, was lynched when they were little girls. As a result of its founding father's legacy, their hometown of Mallard, a fair-skinned Black community in the South, is obsessed with light skin. The people of Mallard, however, do not pass for white. Instead, they live apart from both their dark-skinned peers and white people, feeling superior to the former while working as domestic help for the latter. Although the twins enjoy the admiration of the entire town for their light complexion and "beauty," they decide to run away to New Orleans at sixteen in 1954 to escape the town's constraining atmosphere. Their relationship as sisters ends when Stella passes for white. She abandons her sister, marries her rich white boss, and has a daughter, Kennedy. In contrast,

Desiree marries a Black man who later becomes an abusive husband. To escape her marriage, Desiree returns to Mallard, in a reversal of her former flight. There she raises Jude, her dark-skinned daughter, who will be despised for her Blackness and "ugliness." Decades later, the focus shifts to Jude and Kennedy, the twins' daughters, exploring their lives and experiences as Black and "white."

Through its exploration of the color complex in the Black community and passing as white, *The Vanishing Half* revisits two seminal novels from the Harlem Renaissance: Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Bennett's novel also draws connections to Toni Morrison's fiction, mainly *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula* (1973). Yet, Morrison's latest novel, *God Help the Child* (2015), is also significant as it echoes Morrison's debut work (López Ramírez 175). Julia Kristeva argues that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (66) and African American literary scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. asserts that intertextuality is essential to African American literature (1988), which he names "*Signify(ing)*." Gates posits that "[i]f black writers read each other, they also revise each other's texts. Thereby they become fluent in the language of tradition" (124). This paper contends that in *The Vanishing Half*, Bennett proposes a new path for twenty-first-century African American women's fiction through the themes of colorism and racial passing in the author's rewriting of the African American women's literary tradition.

2. Of Black Women and Light Skin: Colorism in the Black Community

Russell-Cole et al. (141) connect colorism to what Joy DeGruy labelled "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" (PTSS), which understands slavery as the point of departure for the African American multigenerational trauma that fosters intraracial denigration as protection. According to DeGruy, this syndrome fosters "*appropriate* adaptation when living in a *hostile* environment" ("Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome," 02:30-02:39, italics mine). Encouraged by appropriate adaptation, some Black families attempt to "lighten the line" (Russell-Cole et al. 145) under the belief that freedom and whiteness are the same (Walker 291). In *The Vanishing Half*, colorism is explored in retrospect, first reviewing the origins of the color complex in the Black community.

The town of Mallard (Louisiana) was founded in 1848 by Alphonse Decuir, the son of a white slave owner and a Black slave. As an enslaved child he experienced skin hatred from his mother who despised his lightness—arguably because it reminded her of her rape as sexual violence was used during slavery as "a weapon of domination, a weapon of repression" to subjugate female slaves (Davis 19-20). Being the offspring of "miscegenation" (Davis 21) and experiencing "double consciousness" (Du Bois 1903), Decuir is an American caught between the worlds of Blacks and whites. As a newly emancipated Black man, Decuir understood his light skin as a sign of superiority to other Black people, which points to an instance of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS). In his understanding of light skin to be the *adaptation* needed to survive in the *hostile environment*—the white-dominated world—Decuir began a generational process of "lightening the line" to achieve a perfected Black progeny:

> Mallard. … A town that, like any other, was more idea than place. … A town for men like him, who would never be accepted as white but refused to be treated like Negroes. A third place. … Lightness, like anything inherited at a great cost, was a lonely gift. He'd married a mulatto even lighter than himself. She was pregnant with their first child, and he imagines his children's children, lighter still, like a cup of coffee steadily diluted with cream. A more perfect Negro. Each generation lighter than the one before. (Bennett 5-6)

Mallard not only allows Bennett to explore colorism and white ideals inside the Black community, but its construction as a Black Southern town with a mythical essence that does not appear on maps and which is haunted by white ideals, yet still segregated from whites, is an homage to the Black neighborhood known as the Bottom in Morrison's *Sula* (1973).

In *Sula*, the Black community lives in the neighborhood of the Bottom, segregated from Medallion, a white neighborhood. The Bottom's complex relationship with whiteness also comes from its origins as a place. Its inhabitants are the descendants of born-slaves, and they set apart pure Blacks as "truebloods" (Morrison 52) from "bad blood mixtures," because "the origins of the mule and a mulatto were one and the same" (52).

Morrison addressed colorism through Helene Wright, the daughter of a Creole woman who passed on lightness and beauty to her children. In the neighborhood of the Bottom, there are color-class hierarchies. While Nel is "the color of wet sandpaper" (52) and enjoys a higher status, her friend Sula Peace, who is "of a heavy brown color" (52), comes from an impoverished dark-skinned single-mother family, whose grandmother lost one of her legs to get economic aid to support her children. However, once Helene is outside her Black community and explores segregated New Orleans in 1920, she is subordinated like any other Black person. In contrast to The Bottom's locals, Mallard's inhabitants despise dark-skinned Black men under the prejudice that they are naturally violent. As for Black women, their lightness is connected to ideals of beauty. Hence, the town of Mallard can be categorized as an assimilationist geographical location because "assimilationists constantly encourage Black adoption of White cultural traits and/or physical ideals" (Kendi 3). Decuir's prejudices are long-lasting in time, reaffirming the perpetuation of PTSS in contemporary America because "colonized adults," Manuela López Ramírez states, "pass feelings of self-hatred and self-disparagement down to future generations setting in motion a vicious cycle of negativity and self-annihilation" (177). Still, by 1968, in Mallard "nobody married black" (Bennett 5), a fact which reiterates both the legacy of Decuir's ideals and how colorism affects partner choices.

Two of the protagonists of *The Vanishing Half* are the Vignes twins, Decuir's great-great-great-granddaughters. In Mallard, Stella and Desiree are admired for their outstanding lightness, which confirms Decuir's effective generational "lightening-the-line" that reaches its peak over one hundred years later. And so, Stella and Desiree represent the epitome of feminine beauty: "Twin girls, creamy skin, hazel eyes, wavy hair. He [Decuir] would have marveled at them. For the child to be a little more perfect than the parents. What could be more wonderful than that?" (Bennett 6). Bennett revisits beauty ideals in the Black community by drawing influences from Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Hurston's novel is a masterpiece that is often highlighted as the turning point for the African American women's canon as it "revised the mulatta images that had preceded her and the way toward the presentation of more varied and complex women characters" (Christian 57). Bennett's treatment of gendered colorism is straightforward, though it becomes more complex as it parallels scenes

from Hurston's novel. For instance, in *Their Eyes*, Joe used to finger Janie's long black hair during their first year of marriage, fascinated by its beauty. But over time, her hair becomes a source of jealousy. Her waterfall-like black hair provokes lust in other men and he finally forces her to pin it up (Hurston 62), demonstrating his power over her. In *The Vanishing Half*, Bennett includes a parallel scene: "Early loved her [Desiree's] hair, so she always paid it special attention. Once, Jude had seen him ease up behind her mother and bury his face in a handful of hair" (Bennett 90). This scene makes Jude realize as a child that "good" hair is a symbol of desirability for Black women, causing a sense of uneasiness in her, doubting if she would rather be "the beautiful or the beholding" (90). Aware of her looks, Jude realizes what she lacks, not having inherited her mother's essence—the "*Thing*" that also made Maureen Peal beautiful in *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison 72). Moreover, Bennett pays homage to *Their Eyes* in her discussion of domestic violence and Black women's skin color. When Desiree remembers the beatings she received from her husband, she realizes her light skin works like a white canvas that exposes the violence exerted on her body: "Nobody has warned her of this as a girl, when they carried on over her beautiful light complexion. How easily her skin would wear the mark of an angry man" (Bennett 50). This scene evokes Sop-de-Bottom's words when he tells Tea Cake that he envies him for Janie's lightness, because "You can't make no mark on 'em [dark-skinned women] at all" (Hurston 168). In this light, Bennett reverses Sop-de-Bottom's romanticization of light skin by placing the perspective not on beauty, but on the pain it represents for Desiree.

Bennett's novel also pays attention to the pain colorism causes to dark-skinned Black girls, as Toni Morrison does in *The Bluest Eye* (1970). Pecola's traumatic experiences inside her Black community end with her obsession with having blue eyes which, according to Marilyn Sander Mobley, "equals a desire for love" (89). I would further contend that Pecola's desire for love is connected to her dark complexion, which qualifies her as ugly and, therefore, unlovable. Indeed, her "ugliness" is stressed in the novel as the main reason for her marginalization (Morrison 43). Just like Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Lula Ann in *God Help the Child* (2015), Jude suffers constant discrimination and marginalization by children and adults alike as the only dark-skinned girl in Mallard. While Pecola is harassed by a group of boys who call

her "Black e mo" (Morrison 1970, 63), and while Lula Ann is ridiculed through racist monkey jokes (Morrison 2015, 56), Jude is nicknamed "Tar Baby" and other names in allusion to her skin color (Bennett 84). Jude's dark skin shade is overtly exposed through an enumeration of elements that reinforces her absolute Blackness and foregrounds her "otherness" in Mallard:

> She was black. Blueblack. No, so black she looked purple. Black as coffee, asphalt, outer space, black as the beginning and the end of the world. … A black dot in the school pictures, a dark speck on the pews at Sunday Mass, a shadow lingering on the riverbank while the other children swam. So black that you could see nothing but her. A fly in milk, contaminating everything. (84)

The last line symbolizes Jude's overall experience: she is the parasite of the perfect whiteness that took generations to achieve, becoming the absolute "Other" and, in contrast to her mother and aunt, epitomizes Mallard's notion of ugliness. Hegemonic westernized beauty standards may cause what Ronald E. Hall coined "the Bleaching Syndrome" in 1990. According to Hall, this syndrome is a response to racial domination that has prompted a part of the African American community to "internalize light skin and other dominant race characteristics as the ideal point of reference for normal assimilation into American society" (100). Therefore, light skin is not only the appropriate adaptation needed to survive but also the appropriate adaptation required to be beautiful. In a quest for white beauty ideals, nineteenth-century Black women started using toxic and homemade ointments to market brands, such as Nadinola, to lighten their skin (Russell-Cole et al. 69-71). Enchanted by a Nadinola advertisement that states "*Life is more fun when your complexion is velar, bright, Nadinola-light*" (Bennett 106), Jude attempts to lighten her skin to get rid of her "endless black" (106). With the help of her grandmother, she uses homemade skin-bleaching ointments, simulating Pecola's desire for blue eyes when she devours Mary Jane's candy (Morrison 48). However, like Pecola, she cannot escape her Blackness.

Nevertheless, in *The Vanishing Half,* the mother-daughter relationship is used to overcome the negative impact of colorism on a little girl's self-esteem. When Desiree returns to Mallard with Jude, she is judged as the real "race traitor" instead of Stella: the rumoring local voices

utter "Playing white to get ahead was just good sense. But marrying a dark man? Carrying his blueback child? Desiree Vignes had courted the type of trouble that would never leave" (Bennett 59). From the town of Mallard's perspective, passing as white and marrying white is not a "shameful act" as in some African American families (Piper 10) or an abomination as in Morrison's *Sula* (1973), whose protagonist is accused of the "unforgivable thing" (Morrison 112)—that is, having sexual intercourse with white men—but corrupting Decuir's "lightening the line" with pure Black blood. Mallard locals and Stella alienate the daughter from her mother, thus echoing Sweetness' fear in Morrison's *God Help the Child* (2015), who asks her dark-skinned daughter, Lula Ann, to call her by her first name instead of "mother" because "[i]t was safer" (Morrison 6). Likewise, in *The Vanishing Half*, Mallard residents doubt Desiree and Jude's blood relation because of their contrasting skin color, a reality which even Stella struggles to accept: "The dark girl couldn't be Desiree's daughter. She looked nothing like her. Pure black, like Desiree had never even touched her. She could be anyone" (Bennett 253). To reverse this external estrangement, Bennett established a bond of love between Desiree and Jude. Unlike Pauline Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye* who neglects her daughter by looking after the Fisher girl instead, and unlike Sweetness in *God Help the Child* who is embarrassed by her daughter's skin pigmentation and avoids physical touch, Desiree's motherly love prevents Jude from falling into madness like Pecola or committing a false child abuse accusation like Lula Ann. In this regard, López Ramírez holds that "in a colonized community, marginal subjects are condemned to despairing ostracism" (178). In this way, Bennett transcends the internalized racism that is transmitted in the Black community from parents to children in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *God Help the Child* and puts Mallard's assimilationist legacy and generational trauma to an end through the mother-daughter relationship, ultimately freeing Jude from Pecola and Lula Ann's chains.

Bennett transcends Pecola's tragic ending and, following her mother and aunt's steps, Jude finally leaves Mallard in 1978 on her way to UCLA. She attends medical school there and begins a romantic relationship with Reese, a transexual Black man who struggles to accept his own skin and scars, but who finds Jude's black skin beautiful. As the narrative develops, there is a notable uplifting of her self-esteem while she explores the white world. Although in Mallard, "she never dared

to swim in the river—imagine showing so much of yourself" (125), in the end, Jude is no longer ashamed of her skin. On the day of her grandmother's funeral, she dares to swim naked for the first time in the river that runs through Mallard, an ultimate act of liberation and a scene that stands for a baptism of self-acceptance, as river water in the African American tradition is "baptismal in nature" (Wardi 64). Thus, Jude's transformation and return to Mallard parallels Sula's, who, Karen F. Stein posits, has grown into an "antithesis of her society's codes" (147). The novel closes with the following lines, which echo Langston Hughes' poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1920) about Black ancestry and memory: "This river, like all rivers, remembered its course. They [Reese and Jude] floated under the leafy canopy trees, begging to forget" (Bennett 343). Ultimately, Bennett's stance against intraracial skin discrimination involves the destruction of Mallard, echoing the collapse of the neighborhood of the Bottom in *Sula*.

3. Passing for White: *The Vanishing Half* as a Rewriting of Nella Larsen's *Passing*

As in Nella Larsen's classic novel with this title (1929), passing as white is at the core of Bennett's *The Vanishing Half*. This article will discuss Bennett's novel as a rewriting of *Passing* by focusing on several parallelisms between them. One notable change in Bennett's novel is the shift in the protagonists' relationships, which develops from Clare and Irene's friendship to Stella and Desiree's relationship as siblings. If, according to Bennett, *Passing* denounces race and racism as social farces and presents race as "slippery, uneasy and unstable" (Bennett, "Performance"), her decision to make her protagonists not only sisters but twins—sharing the same blood and physique— enriches Larsen's commentary. In *The Vanishing Half*, the twins function as contemporary adaptations of Larsen's protagonists. On the one hand, Stella Vignes is modelled on Clare Kendry. Like her literary forerunner, Stella passes for white and marries a wealthy white man, Blake Sanders. No longer a Vignes but a Sanders, Stella benefits from social mobility and white privilege. So, *The Vanishing Half* maintains the feminine accent of female-centered traditional passing narratives. On the other hand, like Irene Redfield, Desiree does not pass. Instead, she marries a dark-skinned Black man and bears "his blueback child" (5), Jude. Hence,

their families ultimately dictate their racial subordination. The social mobility enjoyed only by Clare and Stella emphasizes the intersection of gender, race, sexuality, and class. As Black women, their access to social privilege and wealth is only possible through, first, a shift in their racial identity via passing for white, and secondly, through a heterosexual marriage with a wealthy white man. As Morrison wrote in *Sula*, "[b]ecause [Sula and Nel] had discovered years before that they were neither white nor male and that all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them, they had set about something else to be" (52); in their case, Clare and Stella had set to be "white" women. Like Sula, the aims to create her own self away from the neighborhood of the Bottom and its white-gendered ideals (92), Stella performs her own rebirth as a white woman and imagines herself "new and clean as a baby" (Bennett 187). Ironically, only by leaving Mallard, does Stella fully access the white world Mallard locals desire and simulate.

The intertextual connections between Clare and Stella are more complex than the act of passing. For instance, both characters are regarded as performers in these novels. In *Passing*, when Irene thinks of Clare, she has the feeling that "Clare was acting, not consciously, perhaps –that is, not too consciously– but, none the less, acting" (Larsen 48). Likewise, in *The Vanishing Half*, the omniscient narrator elicits the following about Stella's performance: "All there was to being white was acting like you were" (Bennett 75). In addition, both women share an unstable relationship with other Black women. Clare Kendry plays a dangerous game when she meets Irene and Gertrude—both Black and light-skinned—in the presence of John, who is unaware of their race. Their company satisfies Clare's need to be herself. Similarly, Stella cannot avoid befriending Loretta Walker, the mother of the rich Black family that moves to her white neighborhood. Although at first Stella feels aversion towards the Walker family, afraid that her secret might be discovered, she develops an emotional dependency on Loretta quickly. In this way, Irene, Gertrude, and Loretta's company relieve the passer's pain caused by their rootlessness. Furthermore, their passing is at first encouraged by external agents. In *Passing,* Clare Kendry is the daughter of a white man and a Black woman. She was raised by her white aunts, who forced her to keep her Blackness in secret. In *The Vanishing Half*, a young Stella is first misperceived as white in a shop because of her physical appearance, which underscores the "pervasiveness and

irrationality of racial classification" (Anthony 301) because if race were a biological quality and not a social construction, its performance or confusion would be unimaginable and unattainable. Later, she is once again misperceived as white during her job interview at the Maison Blanche, when she decides to pass for white, as she would never get the job presenting herself as colored, an episode which relates to Anthony's revision of passing in New Orleans. In the end, both Clare and Stella decide to cross the color line voluntarily. However, Stella's passing is further explored. It is not only an economic necessity or the ambition of upward social mobility, but the only escape she found from her trauma and pain, originating in her witnessing their father's lynching when she was just a little girl, and, years later, her being sexually abused by Mr. Dupont, their white boss. Although colorism favors the preferential treatment of light-skinned Black women, because of the fetishization of their bodies, they have historically faced the added jeopardy of sexual harassment since slavery (Hills Collins 91-92; Russell-Cole et al. 157). Reminiscent of sexual coercion as an expression of racial power, Stella's sexual vulnerability as a Black woman follows the cycle that started with her great-great-great-great grandmother—Decuir's enslaved mother. Only through her marriage is Stella respected and protected because she is both white and "Blake's girl" (Bennett 187), no longer objectified through the male gaze, either white or Black, and no longer vulnerable to other men's lust.

Likewise, in *The Vanishing Half* as in *Passing*, motherhood is a significant theme. The birth of a dark-skinned baby would expose the "passer" and her secret, and it would condemn the child to the race the mother once tried to escape. Aware of this predicament, Clare confesses feeling terrified during her pregnancy: "'I nearly died of terror the whole nine months before Margery was born for fear that she might be dark. Thank goodness, she turned out all right. But I'll never risk it again. Never!'" (Larsen 31). Her fear is understandable in the light of texts like Kate Chopin's "Désireé's Baby," which addresses the consequences for a white woman who gives birth to a dark-skinned baby. Clare's concern is shared by Stella, whose fears are exposed by the narrator: "The idea of pregnancy terrified her; she imagines pushing out a baby that grew darker and darker. Blake recoiling in horror. She almost preferred him to think she'd had an affair with a Negro" (151). Through their fears, both women reveal their intraracial racism and sense of superiority.

While Clare correlates her daughter's whiteness to turning "all right" as if Blackness would have been a defect, Stella prefers being considered an unfaithful partner to coming out as Black.

Stella and Kennedy's mother-daughter relationship is of utmost importance as it fills the void of Clare-Marguery's relationship in *Passing* as well as serving to emphasize the conflict of biracial identities. Unlike Clare, who fears John's reaction if he ever discovers her secret, Stella is not afraid of her husband's reaction but of her daughter's. Thus, Kennedy serves to enrich the traditional passing narrative, further exploring the impact of racial passing on future generations. Despite Stella's attempts, Kennedy finally discovers the truth:

> "I am not a Negro," she [Kennedy] said. …
>
> "Well, your mother is," she [Jude] said.
>
> "So?"
>
> "So that makes you one too." (Bennett 296)

In the end, Stella's passing affects Kennedy's sense of identity. When Kennedy finally accepts that her entire life has been a farce, she undergoes an existential crisis because she feels alienated from both races. Ironically, Kennedy inherits her mother's acting abilities and becomes a professional actor who only plays white characters on stage. Like her mother, Kennedy soon starts lying about her life in a quest to understand her racial identity:

> All the stories she knew were fiction, so she began to create new ones. She was the daughter of a doctor, an actor, a baseball player. She was taking a break from medical school. She had a boyfriend back home named Reese. She was white, she was black, she became a new person as soon as she crossed the border. She was always inventing her life. (298-99)

The paradox of this resolution is that if Stella passes as white for social mobility, Kennedy reverses her mother's choice and passes as Black when she impersonates Jude, lying about going to medical school and having a boyfriend named Reese. Kennedy has everything a traditional passing character would desire—whiteness and wealth—and yet that does not relieve her lost sense of identity. Kennedy's "passing as Jude" is

a reversal of the traditional passing narrative and a refusal to idolize one race over others.

Traditional female-centered "passing narratives" also present what is better known as "the tragic mulatta trope." First used in abolitionist writing, the figure of the tragic mulatta allowed writers to introduce a Black character that would be seen as respectable by the white readership for their whiteness (Fox-Genovese 799-800). In most literary and cinematographic representations, as Pilgrim notes, the mulatta character was doomed to a tragic fate:

> If light enough to "pass" as white, she did, but passing led to deeper self-loathing. She pitied or despised blacks and the "blackness" in herself; she hated or feared whites yet desperately sought their approval. In a race-based society, the tragic mulatto found peace only in death. She evoked pity or scorn, not sympathy. ("The Tragic Mulatto Myth")

Whether Clare decides to take her own life or it is Irene who defenestrates her, Clare's death is a punishment connected to her passing and, at the same time, her only liberation after the discovery of her secret. Whereas Clare becomes a "tragic mulatta," Bennett transcends this trope imposed on Black women. Stella's secret is not publicly exposed, and she continues to pass as white, thus avoiding the "tragic mulatta" category. In this regard, Eve A. Raimon alleges that the subversion of the myth of the tragic mulatta from contemporary passing novels is the result of 1980s feminism, as it rejected hegemonic sexist stereotypes from nineteenth-century fiction (25). However, two decades before Bennett's novel, Danzy Senna had already outperformed the tragic mulatta trope in *Caucasia* (1998) because Birdie, the biracial protagonist who was forced to pass by her white mother, "survives unlike the 'tragic mulattoes' of earlier periods" (Schur 240). Nonetheless, by refusing to include this gendered and racist trope, Bennett manages not to, in Anthony's words, "misread the history of American race relations" (310). Even if Stella is to be read as a contemporary version of Clare, Bennett made Stella a multidimensional character. Eventually, Stella adopts the mindset of a white supremacist, forgetting her real roots. Like the racist John Bellew in *Passing* —who openly proclaims his hatred towards the Black community, uses the "n-word" assiduously, and even pet names his wife "Nig"— Stella, after seeing her daughter

playing with the Walker daughter, warns her: "we [whites] don't play with niggers" (Bennett 165). By thinking herself white and using the "n-word," Stella echoes John Bellew's outlook. Stella's attitude is not just racist but an instance of self-hatred (Piper 19-20). Later, she realizes the damaging effect of her words when Kennedy repeats them during a tantrum when playing with the Walker girl: "Stella stared into her daughter's face, seeing everyone that she had ever hated" (Bennett 199). Hence, the only resemblance between Stella and a traditional tragic mulatta is her attitude of superiority and the scorn she shows towards her own race. Exceeding the trope's tragic ending, Stella continues passing, which confirms her rebirth as a white woman.

4. Conclusion

Brit Bennett's *The Vanishing Half* (2020) is a mesmerizing novel that explores the color complex inside the Black community and passing as white from a female perspective. Through its treatment of colorism and "passing," *The Vanishing Half* shows its thematic intertextuality with seminal novels written by Black women writers. As a literary mosaic, *The Vanishing Half* draws multiple influences from several Black women writers. The novel's focus on the preferential treatment of light-skinned Black females inside small and rural Black communities recalls Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), as well as Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula* (1973). Although the Black communities of these novels are fictional, they represent the broader Black community in the United States, which has internalized white ideals and beliefs for centuries. In the same manner, Bennett employs Mallard as her particular fictional Black world to address gendered colorism, pointing directly to what Walker articulated as "the hatred the black black woman encounters within black society" (291). The novel aptly explores the politics of colorism and Bennett's contribution to the canon is its redemption of Pecola Breedlove through the counter-narrative of Jude, in her refusal to support intraracial racism. In the wake of Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1973), in *The Vanishing Half*, Bennett creates multidimensional female characters, portraying a Black community that requires introspection, and continues the traditional sisterhood plot in which Black women can either support or betray each other. In addition, Bennett recasts Nel and Sula's sisterhood into a real sibling relationship,

that of Stella and Desiree, which also emphasizes the color line. *The Vanishing Half* is a retelling of Larsen's *Passing*, in that, Bennett, like Larsen before her, publicly denounces the senseless fallacy of race and racial prejudices in her fiction by exploring racial passing to transverse social structures. In addition, by transcending the trope of the tragic mulatta, Bennett redeems Clare Kendry through Stella's counter-story. Instead of giving importance to the discovery of the act of passing as in traditional passing narratives, Bennett problematizes the question of racial identity for those who are racially ambiguous, like Kennedy. Through its treatment of colorism and passing as white accompanied by the paralleling of scenes and the rewriting of characters, Bennett's text employs revision, assimilation, and pastiche, and her novel ultimately emerges as a unique piece of fiction. Overall, *The Vanishing Half* proposes a fresh path for twenty-first-century African American women's fiction in its continuation, rewriting, and updating of African American women's literary tradition.

Notes

[1] Particularly in the *Harlem Renaissance* context, a landmark period for African American literature, music and culture in the 1920s. In George Hutchinson's words: "What is commonly called the Harlem Renaissance today was known as the Negro Renaissance in its own time. 'Negro': a word of pride, of strong vowels and a capital N. The thick diagonal strode forward and put its foot down. 'Negro' no longer signifies to most people what it did in the early to mid-twentieth century" (1).

[2] The term "biracial" applies to mixed-race individuals whose parents belong to different races. As for Nella Larsen's biological parents, her mother was Danish and her father was a Black West Indian. "Unlike most African Americans," Hobbs notes, "Larsen did not trace her ancestry to the American South or to the long history of Southern slavery, but rather to the Dutch West Indies and to Denmark (198).

[3] Claudia MacTeer, the main narrator in *The Bluest Eye*, explains that the "Black e mo" epithet was a direct reference to Pecola's skin color. As Claudia remarks, "[i]t was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth" (Morrison 63).

[4] As this critic goes on to argue, in Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), river water is "healing, renewing, and, most significantly, transformative" (Wardi 65).

[5] After the collapse, by 1965, the Bottom was no longer inhabited by the Black community: "It was sad, because the Bottom had been a real place. … Maybe it hadn't been a community, but it had been a place" (Morrison 1973, 166). In 1981 Mallard ceases to exist, incorporated into the nearby town of Palmetto after a census. As Decuir once imagined, it had been more an idea than a place and, as such, it "couldn't be redefined by geographical terms" (Bennett 303).

[6] In Kate Chopin's short story "Désireé's Baby" (1892), Désireé is an innocent victim of the one-drop rule punished for another woman's undiscovered passing. Désireé's fate is repeated in *God Help the Child* (2015), when Louis accuses Sweetness of cheating because of Lula Ann's skin color and abandons them.

[7] Kennedy's "passing as Jude" should not be understood as an instance of the so-called "Black fishing," which is assuming to be Black when white.

[8] In *Passing*, John's pet name for Clare is "Nig" because when they married "she was as white as – as – well as white as a lily" (Larsen 35). However, due to the apparent darkening of her skin shade, he advises his wife to "look out, [or] she'll wake up one of these days and find she's turned into a nigger" (35). Reminiscent of John's words, in *The Vanishing Half*, Desiree sarcastically points out that for Stella, it would be the end of the world if Kennedy ever discovered "she ain't so lily white—" (Bennett 322).

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the generous support of the *Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (MICINN)* for the research project "Critical History of Ethnic American Literature" (reference PID2019-108754GB-I00).

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Recibido / Received: 6/4/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 12/6/2022*

The Unlikely Heroine beyond Family Trauma: Four Women's Fictions of the Second World War in Greece

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Abstract

My analysis of Victoria Hislop's *The Island* (2005), Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree* (2013), Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street* (2012), and Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams* (2010) examines their treatment of the exotic setting of Greece in the specific historical context of World War II, while following the conventions of popular romance or popular women's fiction. As a consequence of the conflict, the traditional family structure is compromised. This is particularly evident in the case of the female protagonists, heroines who refuse to fall within the traditional happy-ever-after ending and opt for a fulfilling career, a long-felt vocation, singlehood or simply unusual friendships of their choice. As a result, even in novels categorized as "romances", the presence of a hero or lover is questioned and redefined. My analysis starts with Victoria Hislop's *The Island*, a historical narrative of the leper colony at Spinalonga, around the time of the Second World War. For comparative purposes regarding the treatment of popular fiction elements, Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams* and Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree* are discussed as being more generically romantic. Finally, Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street* offers an example of a cohesive, compact combination of political confrontation and popular romance, while at the same time England appears as the counterpoint to the exoticism of Greece.

Keywords: Women's fiction, World War II, Exoticism, Greece, Popular romance.

La heroína inesperada más allá del trauma familiar: cuatro obras de ficción femenina ambientadas en la Segunda Guerra Mundial en Grecia

Resumen

Mi análisis de *The Island* (2005) de Victoria Hislop, *The Girl under the Olive Tree* (2013) de Leah Fleming, *The House on Paradise Street* (2012) de Sofka Zinovieff, y *The House of Dust and Dreams* (2010) de Brenda Reid se centra en su tratamiento de Grecia como *locus* exótico en el contexto histórico específico de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, mientras siguen las convenciones del romance popular o la ficción popular femenina. Como consecuencia del conflicto armado, la estructura tradicional familiar se ve comprometida. Esto es particularmente evidente en el caso de mujeres protagonistas, heroínas que rehúyen el tradicional final feliz y optan por una carrera profesional plena, una vocación, la soltería, o simplemente amistades inusuales. Como resultado, incluso en novelas categorizadas como "romances" se cuestiona y redefine la presencia de un héroe o amante. Mi análisis comienza con *The Island* de Victoria Hislop, una narrativa histórica de la colonia leprosa de Spinalonga, en tiempos de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Al comparar los elementos propios de la ficción popular, *The House of Dust and Dreams* de Brenda Reid y *The Girl under the Olive Tree* se rebelan como más fieles al género romántico. Finalmente, *The House on Paradise Street* de Sofka Zinovieff constituye un ejemplo de novela que combina de manera sólida y convincente el enfrentamiento político y la novela romántica, a la vez que Inglaterra es mostrada como contrapunto al exotismo de Grecia.

Palabras Clave: Ficción femenina, Segunda Guerra Mundial, Exotismo, Grecia, Romance popular.

1. Introduction

Popular fiction in English set in Greece, dealing with events pertaining to World War II and its aftermath, is enjoying great acclaim at the turn of the twenty-first century. Examples of this are the four works analysed in this article: Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree* (2013), Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams* (2010), Victoria Hislop's *The Island* (2005), and Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street* (2012). Written by and addressed primarily to women, these novels are examined as "women's fiction," an "umbrella term for books that are marketed to female readers, and includes many mainstream novels, romantic fiction, 'chick lit,' and other sub genres" (Goodreads). Particularly apposite to this article's corpus are the following defining features from different websites or sources specialised in this genre. Women's fiction in general and these four novels in particular revolve around "relationship stories, generational sagas, [or] love stories," "touch[ing] on subjects women can relate to in their real lives" (Craig), as is the case of Victoria Hislop's Eleni and Maria Petrakis in *The Island*, or Heavenly and Anthi in *The House of Dust and Dreams*. A prolific related type is "a woman on the brink of life change and personal growth," whose "journey details emotional reflection and action that transforms her and her relationships with others" (Romance Writers of America). Examples of this are Penny George in Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree* and Maud Perifanis in *The House on Paradise Street*. But perhaps the most fitting characteristic of women's fiction for the female protagonists of all four novels is that they "struggle with specifically 'feminine' flaws," or are "subversive" examples of "the damaged woman who never overcomes;" this presents these females as "humans instead of just role models" (Kay). It is this universality and commonality of the heroines portrayed in Fleming's, Reid's, Hislop's and Zinovieff's novels that make them appealing ones for an extensive reading public.

Women's fiction plots employ elements deriving from the "popular romance" genre, and indeed romance features in them, yet their focus is the development of the female protagonists towards an affirmation of their independence, be it emotional, financial or familial. This complies with the Women's Fiction Writers Association (WFWA) of America, which defines that works belonging to this fiction genre "may include romance, or they may not," and they "can be contemporary or historical

and have magical, mystery, thriller, or other elements." Additionally, these novels do not use a love story as their "driving force," but "the protagonist's journey toward a more fulfilled self". The latter point is actually the most salient thread running through the fictions studied here. Like many others by female writers, they reveal their authors' preoccupation with urgent, up-to-date issues such as a woman's definition of her own identity and vocation, played out against the context of World War II.

Author Lisa Craig stresses that "though there's not always the standard 'happy ending,' there's a life-affirming resolution even if the story's somewhat tragic". My focus in this article is, indeed, the female protagonists' search for autonomy and self-fulfillment, and the emphasis placed by the authors on that "life-affirming" process of acquisition of independence and maturity by the heroine, in times of dramatic paradigm shifts affecting the social, ethical, political, etc. spheres of the countries involved in the Second World War. In the case of Reid's, Hislop's, Fleming's and Zinovieff's novels, that process is played out against the conflict in Greece or Crete.

The pre-conflict social and familial structures had safeguarded the unspoken intergenerational pact that placed parents in positions of authority, earned or not, and children—in particular daughters—in positions of conformity, as late as adulthood. The upheaval brought about by the war changed that, and as a result sons and daughters refused to return to the moulds allocated them before 1939. The heroines in these four novels, therefore, metonymically represent within their Second World War context "a powerless undervalued section of the population [who find] empowerment and [cope] with the hegemonic patriarchy to establish a sense of value and worth" (Berberich 66-67). These female protagonists thus embark on remarkable life journeys, triggered by their experiences during the war, as we shall see. Such life journeys range from extramarital motherhood, and social or political ostracism, to revenge murder or foreign acculturation, and often end in independence and renewed identities, whether these females are accompanied by a male figure or not. Rather relevantly, Reid's, Hislop's, Fleming's and Zinovieff's "stories [are] about sisters, and women's friendships" in pairs or trios, which "seem[s] to be a current trend," according to editor Micki Nuding (quoted in Craig).

2. Greece in the (Reading) Eyes of the British: Historical Exoticism

Popular fiction of World War II has a further element of interest for readers: the progressive amendment of the historical record. The participation of the British in the Cretan campaign in particular is often covered, at best, in a couple of paragraphs in history books on the conflict. The reason for this may lie in Britain's shameful withdrawal from Greece and Crete, in first place, and the dubious ethical correctness of Britain's later meddling with the region's politics, examples of which are given below. Such blunders seemed to have been virtually obliterated from Britons' collective memory, but the new millennium sparked the authors' interest in the Second World War in general, and the Greek and Cretan campaigns in particular, even if that interest brings home a number of unpalatable historical facts.

The four novels analysed in this article share their geographical setting: Greece, a country suffused with alluring historical nuances for the English reading public. During the Second World War the two countries' special relationship even affected the decision-making by top British personalities (Clogg 192, Sfikas 24-25). Today, the shared history between both territories heightens the appeal that the Mediterranean islands have exerted on British tourists decade after decade since the late 1950s. Where Britain stands for hominess, civilisation and rigidness, Greece offers cultural, climatic, gastronomic, linguistic, religious and racial exoticism. Indeed Reid's, Hislop's, Fleming's and Zinovieff's explicatory accounts of the events of Greece and Great Britain in World War II constitute testimony of the remoteness already operating between those events and readers, in particular of the younger generations. The term "exotic" can therefore be eloquently applied to this emphasis on the past, for World War II is rapidly becoming a myth in its own right. It is this very exoticism which, three quarters of a century after the Second World War, impels British readers to consume these novels eagerly, irrespective of their familiarity with the events. The same rationale explains the frequent dual timelines in women's novels of the Second World War, the perfect narrative expedient to allow generations to connect and half-a-century-old conflicts to heal.

A parallel phenomenon occurs in the case of the authors. For British writers who are now in their 50s, 60s or 70s, their parents' and grandparents' participation in the conflict is merely a childhood memory,

if at all, but one which shaped all their lives. While many of those of the older generations retain a distinct recollection of the conflict due to their direct involvement, currently authors tend to rework their indirect experience of it into "overly romanticised historical exoticism," as Nick Bentley argues. The appeal of such "site of collective trauma might also explain the continuation of the popularity of the Second World War as a subject and setting for contemporary fiction" (139; 155). Additionally, as Kristin Ramsdell affirms, "as we become more removed from the first half of the twentieth century, particularly after the millennium, it is likely that these years will begin to take on a more charming glow and lend themselves more easily to Romance" (112). With the new millennium came the 9/11 Islamist terrorist attacks on the United States and their social and geopolitical aftermaths, which provoked a drastic paradigm shift in our perception of history: the twentieth century, and with it World War II, became firmly lodged in the past, as 2001 ushered in not only a new century, but a new era.

The occupation, resistance, civil war and dictatorship sequence in Greece during World War II has inspired numerous authors, among them Fleming, Reid, Hislop and Zinovieff. In 1939 Benito Mussolini's troops invaded Albania, but they were defeated by the Greek army. Subsequently Greece was invaded by the Italian army, followed shortly afterwards by the Nazi forces. In the winter of 1940-41 Britain and Greece had famously —if not altogether accurately (Donnelly 91-96)— "stood alone" against Adolf Hitler, so when Greece fell, Winston Churchill felt the moral and historical obligation to come to their help (Clogg 137). This is the temporal starting point of Victoria Hislop's *The Island*, the novel with the longest historical span of the corpus commented on here. In 1941 the British Expeditionary Force was shamefully overrun and forced to withdraw from Greece, in a sad replica of the retreat from Dunkirk: the British troops were evacuated from Greece leaving their equipment behind, and subsequently also from Crete (Marr 397-398; Purdue 71-72). These events constitute the setting of both Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams* and Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree*. The Greek people felt a mixture of secular admiration for Britain, incredulity and resentment, although the British command tried to compensate by helping Greece avoid disintegration in the forthcoming civil war. Britain's policy was also in its own interest, given Greece's strategic geographical position. The fratricide confrontation for

power after the war was inevitable and started raging even before the end of World War II.

Rent by ideological hatred, Greece saw herself swamped once more with bloodshed by the numerous guerrilla factions, the most prominent of which were EDES (non-Communist) and EAM/ELAS (Communist). Britain continued to tend to its own interests, by favouring the return of King George II to the Greek throne, regardless of the anti-monarchic wish of the people. To make matters worse, and unbeknown to the Greek communists, Churchill agreed with Stalin on the "spheres of influence" each of them were to exert over certain nations: in Greece, Churchill was to have ninety percent "influence," for Stalin's ten percent; this would be offset by the opposite balance of ascendancy in other Eastern European countries. For historian Richard Clogg "the communist leadership [in Greece] appears to have been unnerved by the apparent indifference of the Russians to the situation," and by 1947 "Greece had in effect become a key battleground in the Cold War" (151; 162). The situation exploded in the *Dekemvriana* events of 1944, when British military, local police forces, and some guerilla fighters fired on demonstrators in Syntagma Square in the heart of Athens. The monarchy was restored in 1946 until in 1972 a new referendum abolished it, superseded by the so-called Colonels' Junta which took power. These rapid changes of regime were the perfect context in which political retribution and score-settling were constantly applied. These events constitute the core narrative conflict of Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street*. Below follows, then, an analysis of how these four female writers use some of the main events of Greece's involvement in the Second World war and its aftermath to focus on the heroines' harrowing circumstances and tests.

3. Frustrated Romance: Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree* and Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams*

Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree* (2013) makes use of the Cretan campaign as historical background, focusing on Chania, Crete's second largest city, and the resistance fighters hiding in the hills. With this novel Fleming vindicates the strong-willed, independent heroine, who "by making a choice about her life […] is presented as a neo-liberal and self-governing individual" (Arvanitaki 10). Penelope Georgioiu, or Penny George, depending on the applicability of her double British

and Greek identity through ancestry, takes advantage of the turmoil of war to become that type of woman: leaving behind the drabness of the English climate, she travels to Athens to train as a Red Cross nurse, in the process unshackling herself from the expectations of her landed gentry family. Had it not been for the war, Penny's society-obsessed mother would have expected her to be "finished off" (*Tree* 36, 69) —a weird sounding phrase— in preparation for her "coming out" as a prospective prize wife. This caricaturesque mother indoctrinates Penelope that "girls of your class don't do… they just *are*, future partners to the great and good of the country," who must marry young and "never read a book," a "time-wasting" habit (*Tree* 15; emphasis in the original). Penny soon ends up not speaking to her mother; her father dies; and the family nucleus is only reconstituted with the following generation. These features, in particular the last one, recur in similar women's fiction, as we shall see below.

Penny's first platonic attachment is to Bruce Jardine, a dashing New Zealander with "black eyes flashing with enthusiasm" and "whisky fumes on his breath" who "talk[s] to her like an equal" (*Tree* 20) and later becomes an Allies' Secret Serviceman and resistance fighter. He inspires her to visit Athens first, and then Crete. Before that break with her past the novel employs elements reminiscent of the Regency romance, a genre in which often, according to Hsu-Ming Teo, "an encounter between hero and heroine either at the beginning of at the end of the novel takes place in a ballroom in London, while the landed estate in England provides safe haven and financial security" for the female protagonist (Teo 160). At the Georges' Highlands estate Penny complains that "nobody ever listened to her at home," but Bruce transforms her reality: "It felt so safe with him next to her, the fire cracking in the hearth and the lamps flickering, a world away from the noisy ballroom upstairs" (*Tree* 21).

Hence *The Girl under the Olive Tree* is exemplary in its use of exotic locale (Crete) to signal the heroine's departure from monotony and gloom (Britain). The "world away" for her and us readers is of course Greece, where Penny aspires to become an archaeologist. Athens in these novels is unfailingly exotic, multicultural, and alien to the British characters (Vivanco 95): Penelope feels "the first blast of heat as if someone was blowing a hot-air fan into her face" (*Tree* 33), as she arrives in this "small elegant city shimmering white in the sunlight" where "everywhere a

blaze of colour feasted the eye" (*Tree* 34, 35). Clichés abound, as in "the peacock-blue Aegean," the "superstitious" people, and the "metropolitan crowd" (*Tree* 54) which constitutes a "melting pot of different peoples, religions, costumes and languages in the bustling streets and markets" (*Tree* 89). After cosmopolitan, stuffy Athens, Crete is similarly enticing with "those vibrant colours of […] the ripening apricots, the turquoise sea, the sandy ochres of the monastery towers, the cerulean sky" (*Tree* 269). It is the cultural remoteness, in particular their stress on religious liturgy—the "processions, chanting, candle-lighting and icon-kissing" —that suffuses these exotic fictions, "so different from the simpler English way of doing things" (*Tree* 285).

The cultural and historical abyss that separates Britain and Crete is what appeals to the female protagonist as it does the readers, and ultimately what facilitates the heroine's forging of her new independence and identity. Caught up in the devastation of the Battle for Crete (1941), Penny undergoes a complete transformation, to the extent that she refuses to leave during the evacuation of British nationals from the island in 1943: "what hold had this island on her to make her risk her life for it?" (*Tree* 318) She has become "too proud, too angry and shocked to care what happened to her any more," (*Tree* 380) as the "good Nazi" Rainer Brecht (who has hovered above Penny's actions throughout the novel) realises. She would rather "exist without wretched papers and numbers" (*Tree* 383) even as the few survivors from Chania are being identified by the Allies, supporting herself only on her vocation as a Red Cross nurse.

One of the tropes Fleming uses to signal Penelope's evolution throughout her ordeal in Chania, culminating in her professional and vocational liberation (in later life she spends years teaching in Africa; see Vivanco 82), is her Red Cross nurse's cloak. Translatable as a powerful symbol, "it had been, in turn, a screen, a blanket, a makeshift shroud, a uniform and a shield, and she didn't want to be parted from it" (*Tree* 132). Traditionally used in literature to illustrate shifts of identity, clothes in this novel signal Penelope's identitary revolution. Once Crete has surrendered to the Axis, Penelope literally has nothing to call her own but the ragged clothes in which she stands. When Rainer Brecht finally comes to her rescue, Penny "had nothing but the sorry outfit they'd cobbled up for her" (*Tree* 381). The love-hate tension between

Penelope and Rainer culminates in traditional —even clichéd— romance fashion, and yet her position as a doubly defeated British and Greek citizen is subverted to one of emotional domination over the German occupier: "she'd never looked as awesome, in his eyes, as she did now. How he wished he could dress her in silk, with a corsage of orchids on her shoulder, and whisk her off to a fine restaurant to fill out those gaunt cheeks. He flushed at his ridiculous fantasy" (*Tree* 381). The fantasy, all the same, reinforces the clothes trope, equating Penny's strength of character and feminine stature with the luxuriance of silk.

The novel at this point reveals its employment of conventions of romance fiction, since it "portray[s] women as heroes" and "invert[s] the power structure of a patriarchal society because they show women exerting enormous power over men" (Krentz 5). For it is not merely sexual attraction that pulls Rainer to Penny, but a deep feeling of respect and even admiration: He is "curious to know more about her before he let her go," and wonders about her family, "the people who had reared such an iron-willed warrior" (*Tree* 380, 381). For her part, she wonders "how could she look with lust on the enemy?" as she notices "his broad shoulders and slim hips, the solid muscle of his thighs," and what it would be like "to be crushed between them" (*Tree* 431). Yet she also sees herself as "currency" (*Tree* 433), giving herself up to Rainer partly out of gratitude. Such duality in Penny's inner self reflects the tensions inherent to many examples of romance fiction: according to Arvanitaki, their heroines "on the one hand […] wish for individuality, agency and the reconstruction of identity. On the other, they appear to secretly wish for a romantic relationship. They seem aware that by choosing the latter, they accept the ideological consequences (the imprisonment of the self) and permit the imposition of men's dominance over them" (7-8), a conundrum which is painfully intensified in the context of the chaotic battle for Crete. Not wishing to commit her female protagonist to either solution, Leah Fleming leaves the likely reunion of Penny and Reiner sixty years later unconfirmed, lying as it does beyond the narrative frame. Their concurrence on the island happens on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Battle for Crete in 2001. At that point in time in 2001, however, both Penny and Rainer would be octogenarians, and so their autumnal romance would work as a postscript rather than centrally to the narrative. Leah Fleming thus focuses on Penelope's evolution

rather than her romance with Rainer, and the same emphasis may be argued for the following novel.

Family dislocations and female redefinitions triggered by events related to World War II are also among the main thematic concerns in Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams*. Protagonist "Heavenly" in 1936 sets about rebuilding her husband's dilapidated family house in Panagia, a small Cretan village, while he is called away to business in Athens, related with the impending war.

Reid uses the armed conflict as a force of change, both personal, for Heavenly and friend Anthi, and collective, for the islanders. Like Fleming, the author uses the Battle for Crete for its exotic historical allure, while highlighting through Heavenly the island's eternal, humble appeal: "there is careless history in every stone and fractured pillar. Round every corner not only sweet-scented flowers, but the sudden chink of an ancient pavement under one's feet, preserved for who knows how long" (*Dust* 18-19). The war of course ruptures this, and once it is over, "Panagia, like all the villages that survived, would never be the same again" (*Dust* 371), a transformation that extends to the people. It is again the womenfolk that benefit the most from unshackling themselves from pre-war restrictions, as exemplified through Heavenly (Cretan phonic adaptation of "Evadne") and Anthi (short for "Antigone"). Since their actions clash with the ancestral social mores and ideas on femininity in Cretan villages in the conflicted 1940s, *The House of Dust and Dreams* is a good example of how romance and women's fiction often "[reflect] both the patriarchal oppression of women and women's strength in resisting, in forging appropriate forms of heroism" (Strehle and Carden xviii). Reid actually provides readers with an interesting dichotomy in terms of the resistance displayed by her two heroines, and developed through an equal number of chapters for each.

The House of Dust and Dreams starts like many popular novels with an unhappy marriage for Heavenly, whose English husband Hugh is characterized as an unmitigated fool. Romance ensues, also rather conventionally, with the appearance of her soul mate, Christo, described in exaggeratedly glowing terms: "a ray of brilliant sunshine came through the high window at that moment, […] lit up his face" and "followed him as he walked" (*Dust* 79-80). Christo conforms to perfection with the "sentimental hero" of romance-novel theory: "still

strong, virile, manly […], but he is wounded physically, psychically, or emotionally. The heroine must heal him" (G. A. Starr quoted in Regis 113). Christo's involvement with the *andartes* (Greek guerilla fighters) and his traumatic experiences during the German occupation of Crete qualify him under all headings. Heavenly "heals" (to use Starr's term) Christo through fatherhood, although she abandons their baby after they had become estranged. Their parting becomes irreparable when the novel ends, somewhat hurriedly, in their almost simultaneous deaths: Heavenly having "been ill for a year," and Christo of heart failure (*Dust* 372-373). Anthi for her part eventually marries and lives a happy life with her sentimental hero, New Zealander Jack, whom she also "heals" through marriage and fatherhood. This romantic plotline, however, is secondary to the harrowing family trauma that characterises Anthi as a heroine. Until her marriage to Jack, her life had been nothing short of hellish: destroyed by the realisation of her husband Manolis's sexual abuse of their own daughter, Anthi fatally poisons him.

Both women must therefore perform a hideous task averse to traditional womanhood: Heavenly abandons her child by Christo, a crisis that signals the symbolic, ritual death characteristic of romance novels (Regis 54); and Anthi commits spousal homicide. As Janice Radway argues, "rape and physical torture […] are obviously objectionable because the readers are seeking an opportunity to be shown a happier, more trouble-free version of existence" when they pick up women's fiction; however, such occurrences are also eloquent in their "exploration of the meaning of patriarchy for women" (75). Manolis, an utterly disgusting specimen of a man, and the equally revolting parish priest Papa Yannis, are ferocious monarchists and anti-communists. This is in common with other popular fictions on similar Hellenic themes: the communists are presented as honourable, brave, handsome men of their word, who even smell of "the sunshine outside and fresh grass," and Christo more so than any other: "The scent of the mountains, the thyme and wild garlic, the rosemary and cypress trees, all are here in this man, along with the rough sweat of his labours" (*Dust* 80; 359). By contrast, Manolis, Papa Yannis and the Nazis invariably carry rancid smells.

Heavenly and Anthi diverge on their respective processes of acquisition of experience and self-knowledge: whereas by returning to Hugh, after Christos's death, Heavenly betrays her previous female

independence, Anthi by killing her husband and breaking with her geographic and ancestral roots takes a leap forward that culminates her transformation into the "angel" that Jack sees in her. More importantly, Heavenly's blithe forgetfulness of contraception—such as it was in the first half of the twentieth century—and her daydreaming reveal her impractical nature; by contrast, Anthi throughout the novel proves sensible and reliable. And she represents an interesting character feature in women's romantic fiction: unloved by a despotic mother (responsible for her arranged marriage to the despicable Manolis), Anthi is practically orphaned and defiantly free from the day she buries her husband. This storyline provides confirmation of how orphanhood for Pamela Regis increases the protagonist's psychological stature and resourcefulness: "The orphan's lack of human attachment makes virtually every relationship a choice, thus increasing the scope of her freedom" since "there are no parents to object or interfere" (91).

Conversely, Heavenly's return to Hugh, together with her abandonment of her and Christo's baby, is unrealistic. Hugh has been characterized as a stuck-up, class-conscious, unfaithful and hard-drinking bore who derides even Heavenly's humble Cretan cooking and refurbishment of their Cretan house in simple local colours and fittings presented by neighbours: "[Hugh] didn't need to use words; a slight sniff, the way he ran his fingers over tables and chests was enough for me to feel sad and embarrassed" (*Dust* 247). Homes in women's fiction (and other genres) are used extensively as metaphoric of identity. Drawing on both the myth of domesticity but also of potential independence and a search for individuality, the heroines of popular fictions embark on the refurbishment of dilapidated houses, or have to plunge into a massive effort of adjustment when they need to emigrate. Still Heavenly relapses, and after nearly four hundred pages of disparaging the life of window-shopping and hair-spraying of the diplomats' wives in the big European capitals, she returns to Hugh and the same Athens she had loathed before. Heavenly therefore illustrates the "contradictory impulse" inherent to most romantic stories: "on the one hand, the narrative ventriloquizes cultural values, perpetuating and naturalizing patriarchal models of gender that project women's destined and desirable end in the family; on the other hand, the narrative talks back, revealing women's frustration, dissent, and potentially subversive responses to those patriarchal constructions" (Strehle and Carden xii).

Through both heroines, Reid presents the female struggle for autonomy and their harrowing moral choices, in very difficult circumstances of war and occupation. Reid implicitly argues that there was no easy choice that would end happily for them in those days.

4. Family Traumas: Victoria Hislop's *The Island* and Zofka Zinovief's *The House on Paradise Street*

In *The Island* Victoria Hislop lays her focus on the Cretan island of Spinalonga in the period 1939 to 1958, but the narrative time frame reaches to a present-day family conflict whose poignant roots extend back to the war and its aftermath, and a dreadful illness: Spinalonga was historically a leper colony until 1957. Hislop skilfully weaves the theme of leprosy into the Petrakis family saga, starting with exemplary Eleni and her devoted husband Georgiou, parents of Anna and Sofia, two sisters of radically opposed natures. Alexis, the daughter of Sofia, in the present-day narrative must play the role of "a natural historian" (*Island* 37) to uncover her family's secrets, a documentary process which she finds superior to traditional forms of historiography: "why examine the cool relics of past civilisations when she could be breathing life into her own history?" (*Island* 38) Hislop's use of the contrast between Lyotardian master- and micro-narratives gives the novel a harmonious combination of the major events in World War II history and the private crises of Alexis, whose mother Sofia had refused to acknowledge her own relatives, out of shame for the "stigma" associated not only with leprosy but all the other family skeletons: "A disfiguring disease, an immoral mother, a murderer for a father" (*Island* 457).

Alexis functions as the expedient through which decades-old generational crises are resolved in the present time, the twenty-first century, some of which had been conditioned by the Second World War. However, it is only chapters 6 to 9 that chronicle the progress of the German occupation of Crete and Greece. Paradoxically, the self-imposed quarantine of Spinalonga is what makes it a much more peaceful and prosperous home for its inhabitants, by comparison with nearby village Plaka and the mainland: "Throughout the war, the only place that remained immune from the Germans was Spinalonga, where the lepers were protected from the worst disease of all: occupation" (*Island* 161). Essentials like electricity and foodstuffs continue to be

supplied in Spinalonga, making it the envy of Nazi-occupied areas (*Island* 116). Yet that very seclusion transforms "the havoc being wreaked throughout Europe" (*Island* 123) into a distant echo. Even the iconic German flag flying over the Acropolis in Athens is given just a cursory mention; then Crete is overrun by a Nazi occupying force, and their overbearing presence is felt even in Plaka, to the excitement of Anna (*Island* 144-148). From this point onwards, Hislop lets her research into the history of the period seep through, as she highlights how "the Germans have never before encountered the kind of resistance they are meeting in Crete" (*Island* 150). Somewhat superficially, the author packs this complex period of occupation and reprisals into a few pages (*Island* 156-158; 165-166), and includes references to two historical myths of the island: how it "owes [the English] so much" (*Island* 160), and the sensational abduction of the Luftwaffe General Karl Heinrich Kreipe out of Crete into Egypt (*Island* 177-179). Hislop makes the German defeat and the end of occupation coincide with Eleni's death (*Island* 176-182), but other than that, this part of the novel is strangely devoid of sentiment, among an overload of historical data.

With the help of a local woman in Plaka, the family's hometown, Alexis pieces together a distressing family history marked by the contrasting lives of her own grandmother Anna, Sofia's mother, who refused to live by any societal or moral rules; and Anna's virtuous sister Maria. Anna, already married, seduces and becomes pregnant by the man who, having become engaged to Maria, was originally to become her brother-in-law. Anna's husband finds out and reacts by murdering her, while Maria must cancel her wedding when she contracts leprosy, and is exiled to the leper colony at Spinalonga. At first Sofia, the daughter of Anna and (possibly) her lover, "was utterly repulsed" and "her ignorance had been nothing less than bliss" (*Island* 457). Then through Alexis's mediation as family historian, she is made to "look at these ancestors of hers as though they were characters in a drama." And in a somewhat abrupt *volte-face*, "at last she saw not humiliation but heroism, not perfidy but passion, not leprosy but love. […] There was no shame in any of it" (*Island* 472). Thus Hislop's narratives fall clearly within Kristin Ramsdell's category of more up-to-date romances which "are increasingly dealing with serious social issues such as spousal or child abuse, alcoholism, racism, and mental and physical illness" (20). As this critic argues, the inclusion of such themes may set these romances apart

from the feel-good, happy-ever-after-resolution tradition, but they are appreciated by readers who "confront real-life problems through fiction" and "envision healthy, hopeful, and successful solutions to them" (20).

Hislop's family saga in *The Island* shines in the passages dealing with local tradition and those devoted to protagonist Maria (Alexis's great-aunt), despite her overload of virtues, from her virginal name, through how her future husband, the doctor at the leper colony, compares her to Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*: "with the grey-green sea behind her and her long hair caught by the wind, Maria strongly evoked the painting" (*Island* 312). The two sisters, Anna and Maria, can be seen therefore as a classic example of the Madonna/Whore dichotomy (Bareket et al.). Originally constructed around the Christian antithesis "Virgin Mary vs. Eve," in British literature it was adopted to set the docile Angel in the House in opposition to the free-thinking and independent New Woman. Today it is one of the patriarchal stereotypes that dominate the contemporary British romance novel, in which the hero will frequently choose the "virtuous" woman for her associations to domesticity: matrimony, children, parenthood and respectability (Bareket et al.). Despite falling victim to leprosy, Maria remains the keeper of the essence of family life: "One of Maria's most important jobs between late autumn and early spring was to keep the home fire burning. It […] kept the spirit of the house alive" (*Island* 215). In the absence of mother Eleni, also exemplary and also a victim of leprosy, Maria by default takes on "the role of mistress in her own household" (*Island* 212).

By contrast, the wilful and rebellious older sister Anna wishes to use marriage as "her route out of Plaka" (*Island* 196), their home village. Hislop characterises the two sisters as opposite ways of conceiving domesticity. One, even while struggling with her own leprosy (of which she is eventually cured) is portrayed as angelic, virtuous and devoted to her father, surrogate son (a leprous boy), and husband. The other is selfish, irate, unfaithful in marriage and ultimately tragically murdered by her husband. Neither Anna nor Maria is turned into the conduit for any ideological agenda on Hislop's part. However, the author intensifies the traditional, domestic elements around Maria's virtuous character, whose reward is to be cured of her disease and to enjoy a life of marital stability with Kyritsis, her doctor husband. Anna, by contrast, is horrendously murdered by her cuckolded husband, which provides

the whole village with "speculation and gossip" (*Island* 456) material for generations. Throughout the confessional conversation between Sofia and Alexis, her daughter and granddaughter, Anna is censured as "weak but […] rebellious," "flawed," or not having "fought harder against her natural instincts," in order "to do what she was meant to do" (*Island* 464). The Manichean interpretation seems inescapable, although that does not imply that readers will sympathise with saintly Maria more than *femme-fatale* Anna: according to Strehle and Carden "a narrative that strikes one critic as honouring women's empowerment may impress another as endorsing women's complicity with systemic limitations on their freedom" (xviii). Both Anna's free spirit and Maria's virtues endorse such ambivalent readings.

There is no ambivalence in the case of the "Angel in the House" Eleni, the mother of Anna and Maria. She is closely associated with domesticity, a powerful symbol of which is the crockery she passes down to her daughters, although only partially since she had taken some with her to Spinalonga upon her reclusion as—also—a leprous patient. When Maria too must move to the island colony years later, "the familiar set of flower-sprigged china plates […] ranged on the rack" indicates continuity, despite the obvious break-up of the family by leprosy. Maria finds the plates, kept for her by a family friend, awaiting her: "Inside one of her boxes Maria would soon find some matching ones and the parts of the service would be united once again" (*Island* 402). Far from shattering as might be expected, the delicate china signals the eventual reunification of the Petrakis family, despite its traumas.

This is effected in Part 4 of the novel, the last one, devoted to the reconciliation of Sofia with her past and her family secrets. Once her father is sent to prison for the murder of her mother Anne, Sofia is adopted as a little girl by her aunt Maria and Kyritsis, who cannot have children of their own. Effectively an orphan, as she defines herself (*Island* 461) like Anthi in *The House of Dust and Dreams*, Sofia honours her mother's rebellious nature by refusing to stay close to her adoptive parents. As the permissive 1960s flood Crete with Northern European influences and tourists, she decides to go to university in Athens or Thessaloniki, not in Crete, because those big cities "connect with the rest of the world" (*Island* 446). At the same time, however, she refuses to "connect" with her own family and history, whom she reduces to a picture

in whose frame she hides some newspaper clippings: "This record of their happiest day now lived by Sofia's bedside and was all that remained of her past" (*Island* 463). Eventually, these mementos are also destroyed, as Sofia wishes to break entirely with her ancestors. As in many women's novels, it is the younger generations who erase the board; when Sofia inevitably confesses to her daughter Alexis that she was too cruel in her abandonment of her family, Alexis applies a pragmatism that is free from generational conflicts or the need to ask forgiveness. As she summarises with impeccable emotional economy, "It's the past" (*Island* 465). This manner of generational reprieve is equivalent to that experienced by one of the protagonists of Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street*, and equally at the hands of the youngest female family member.

In the fourth novel analysed in this article, Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street* (2012), the general tone and the treatment of family traumas and female redefinition are much more sombre than in the three fictions above, in particular due to the pervasiveness of political conflict. First-person narrator Maud, the recently widowed English wife of Greek husband Nikitas, uncovers his real provenance as the result of rape. The assaulted mother is Antigone and her attacker, her own sister's husband, Spiros. This family trauma takes place during the tragic decades of Greece's occupation by the Nazis (1941-1944), followed by Britain's political double-dealing during the aftermath of the Second World War, and eventually Greece's civil war (1946-1949). Sisters Antigone and Alexandra have taken irreconcilable paths in life, as one becomes a staunch communist and the other a devoted monarchist. An early victim of this family feud is their only brother Markos, killed during the *Dekemvriana* events of 1944: a series of extremely violent clashes that erupted after the evacuation of the Axis powers from Greece, between the Greek government, several communist and non-communist guerilla factions, and the British army. To Churchill's (and Britain's) shame, the British army supported the same monarchists who only months previously had collaborated with the Nazi occupiers.

The political abyss rends generations apart, in a novel where mother-children relationships are tragically altered by war and ideology. After Markos's pointless death, Antigone's mother parts with her on a vengeful note: "You can come home when you bring me my son" (*Paradise* 222). Her indictment returns decades later to chastise Antigone, through the

tragical loss of her own child, Nikitas: first she abandoned him, then he died. In the present narrative time, Maud becomes a family historian, and while investigating Nikitas's last moves before he dies, she wonders "how it was possible that [Alexandra] and Spiros had taken in her hated sister's child as their own, after all that happened." Alexandra explains how she refused to let "a child […] an innocent creature of God" go to an orphanage, but she also admits that "Nikitas was trouble, right from the beginning" because "there are some things that are passed on in the blood" (*Paradise* 256). She is of course ignorant of the irony of her words, since "the blood" in Nikitas is that of her own husband, Spiros.

Zinovieff's handling of the political theme is skilful and poignant, as we perceive the various lifetime's disillusions of Antigone. Her first rupture is with her own biological family, who, she accuses, "*have deceived me and acted as my enemies. I never want to see them again*" (*Paradise* 314; italics in the original). Afterwards, during the brutal reprisals of the monarchists, Alexandra's husband Spiros takes his revenge for his own humiliations by raping Antigone, which results in her pregnancy and the birth of Nikitas. This child, the innocent victim of hatred, is abandoned by Antigone when she exiles herself in Russia on ideological grounds. Finally, Antigone is betrayed by the Communist Party, her metaphorical surrogate family. In that climate, monarchists applied all manner of abusive methods in order to "undermin[e] party morale." They would for example "releas[e] communists from detention provided that they would sign a humiliating declaration, renouncing […] their political past" (Clogg 134-135) exactly like Antigone: "I was misguided into the National Liberation Front by deceptive words without being aware of its anti-national activities and its treasonous and destructive actions against my Fatherland. I renounce the organization as the enemy of my Fatherland, on whose side I stand…" (*Paradise* 312) Antigone knows that this recantation not only signals her ultimate political defeat, but it will also mark her as suspicious for her comrades, although the general feeling was of disillusion, in particular "after 1956 and Khrushchev's revelations" (*Paradise* 188) about Stalin's purges.

The novel's twofold focalization (Antigone through her life-story, and Maud in the narrative present) reminds readers of the complexity and vagaries of historiography. As Antigone admits "the victors writ[e] history, but those who win have the luxury of forgetting. It's the losers

who remember—those who experienced the humiliation of defeat" (*Paradise* 192). Alexandra, one of the "victors," indeed remains ignorant of her husband's crimes and paternity of Nikitas, and comments during her sister's funeral that death is "sweet" only "when we lie in our fatherland" (*Paradise* 367). This final return home at least is granted to Antigone. Apart from death (fittingly, both Spiros and Antigone die at the end), resolution to family trauma is suggested through compromise and a hope that the future generations will attempt a renewal. In Greek tragedy fashion, Antigone had entertained a fatalistic, tautological stance to history and family life, repeating throughout the novel that "It is what it is." Her conversations with her namesake granddaughter Tig, however, convince her that although "the past is done and there's nothing we can do to change it […] now it's different, you can leave all that behind. You own the future" (*Paradise* 370). The same trajectory is evident in Greece's own history: according to Richard Clogg, Greece was "a divided nation" as a consequence of the two World Wars and the Civil War, and it was this latter conflict, as illustrated in the novel by the two sisters, which "was to leave a legacy of bitterness that was to cast a long shadow over Greece's post-war political development" (Clogg 164-165). This "long shadow" is only now beginning to lift, in the first decades of the twenty-first century, the context when Zinovieff is publishing her novels. And it is in Tig's generation "owning" the future that readers may perceive the "life-affirming resolution" alluded to at the opening of this article, characteristic of women's fiction.

But history is stubborn. An expert in the problematic Anglo-Greek relations, Nikitas had resented Britain's mistreatment of Greece, starting with the romanticised myth of Lord Byron's support against the Ottoman Empire: "if it hadn't been in their interests, the English would never have backed us against the Turks in 1821," and in any case Britain "spent the next hundred years trying to foist atrocious foreign kings" on Greece. Maud, an English national with Greek citizenship, laments that "each new scandal he uncovered was like a black mark against me personally" (*Paradise* 277). Nikitas's rant about "the Ionian Isles [which] were little English colonies for quite a time" and where "they still play fucking cricket" (*Paradise* 97) contrasts with official promotions like those by the Greek National Tourism Organisation, addressed in great part to the faithful British market. The 2008 campaign, a hugely successful one, encouraged visitors to "Live Your Myth in Greece," a

slogan Zinovieff uses as a chapter title (*Paradise* 296). Maud's portrayal of "the good life in the Mediterranean" which she had enjoyed as a PhD student in Athens is not at all dissimilar from the familiar clichés, still endorsed by British tourists in Greece, and by extension the readers of this novel and similar fictions: "beaches and buckets of bright pink taramasalata […] mustachioed men dancing, the twang of bouzoukis playing *The Boys from Piraeus*, and a Kodachrome backdrop of the sun-drenched Acropolis" (*Paradise* 34-35; see Vivanco 90-91).

Maud had indeed "lived her myth in Greece," since her PhD research stay and later naturalisation as a Hellene had allowed her a degree of freedom she could not have imagined in England. This idealisation of all things Hellenic contrasts sharply with the suffering undergone by generations of Greek nationals during the Second Word War, the Civil War and their aftermath. Antigone's life is a harrowing example: her personal choices, far from a redefinition, implied a sequence of symbolic deaths, having had to abandon family, motherland and son Nikitas due to political, rather than social, imposition. Her eventful life trajectory, in sharp contrast to her monarchist sister's easy life, only comes full circle when she returns to Greece to bury her son, and eventually to die herself.

5. Conclusion

Brenda Reid's *The House of Dust and Dreams*, Leah Fleming's *The Girl under the Olive Tree*, Victoria Hislop's *The Island*, and Sofka Zinovieff's *The House on Paradise Street* are shown in this article to be eloquent—if metonymic—reflections of how the Greek islands and their history around World War II have become a site for contemporary British women writers to explore issues of female independence and redefinition of their identity. In what has become established as a winning commercial formula, the reader's present combines successfully with the temporal remoteness of the Second World War, a time traditionally—perhaps misleadingly—suggestive of national pride and a kind of "we-never-had-it-so-good" nostalgia. This manner of historical exoticism which the authors enhance in their novels is juxtaposed on the one hand to the geographical exoticism and allure that Greece exerts on the potential fiction buyers, in particular the British market, which has been for over half a century one of the most faithful ones to Crete and other islands. On the other hand, both geographic and historical exoticism are deeply

interrelated by these authors with their discussion, through the heroines, of women's autonomy and how their attempts to live meaningful lives had to be traded off against the demands of family and social mores in the decades around the Second World War. Romantic love, within such a framework, is not the end-goal of female self-development, but often an accessory to a narrative which focuses on fully female concerns such as motherhood, a profession, or autonomy.

All four novels therefore illustrate the currently preferred "critical readings" and "writing against the grain" to which Susan Strehle and Mary P. Carden allude: "Where both romance and history could once be imagined straining to achieve 'happily-ever-after' closure, critical readings are now skeptical of pat endings, open to ironic undercurrents, and attentive to the historicity of narratives" (xxv). Throughout their journeys of self-fulfilment some women like Penny, Anthi or Maud struggle for purpose and achievement, while others like Heavenly or Antigone feel they have little choice—given the societies in which they live—but sacrifice their autonomy and sense of worth for what they believe to be a "greater good" at the time, e.g. the stability of the family or their own social position. Reid, Fleming, Hislop and Zinovieff through their alluring Mediterranean-based novels not only eschew the superficial traditional happy ending, but in so doing contribute to the ongoing transformation of women's fiction.

Notes

[1] A search in the British Library catalogue throws over 420 results for fiction related to World War II in Greece or Crete, published since 1985, while GoodReads lists 173 titles liked by readers on the same topic.

[2] See https://www.theguardian.com/travel/gallery/2014/nov/11/holidays-in-greece-history-in-tourism-posters.

[3] As the critic Randall Stevenson affirmed at the close of the twentieth century, contemporary authors "were inevitably drawn to reflect or explore in other ways [. . .] the war's foundational influences on life in later years," since the conflict remained "for novelists throughout the period, a moral centre of gravity as well as a historical one" (Stevenson 441; 443).

[4] Parenthetic references to the novels throughout this article will use abbreviations of their respective titles, as follows: *Tree, Dust, Island and Paradise*.

[5] The assertion by fashion history expert Shahidha Bari that "our clothes can also provide refuge, acting as a canopy under which we shelter our most secret agonies" reads very appositely for Penelope.

[6] See Vivanco (88) for an analysis of how the luscious Greek setting is conducive to "physical awareness" of the desirable hero.

[7] The notion of the Cretans' debt to the English is, however, debatable (Dear 213-215; Donnelly 95).

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Recibido / Received: 7/2/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 10/5/2022*

The Popularity of Montemayor's *Diana*, from Spain to England: Bartholomew Yong's Literary and Political Leverage

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Abstract

Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (c. 1559) provides an excellent example of the cultural interplay between tradition and originality in the Renaissance. Its immediate widespread popularity and subsequent influence are demonstrated by the vast number of editions and translations of Montemayor's masterpiece, as well as the sequels by Alonso Pérez and Gaspar Gil Polo. By 1600, forty-three reprints had been published, in addition to eight editions in French and the English translation by Bartholomew Yong. Although written in the early 1580s, when Sir Philip Sidney penned the *Arcadia*, Yong's version remained unpublished until 1598. The lavish folio, which also included the two sequels, was dedicated to Lady Penelope Rich, a most influential noblewoman and eminent patroness, also known for being the model of Sidney's "Stella." That very same year a new folio edition of the *Arcadia* was published together with *Astrophil and Stella*. Yong's dedication to Lady Rich aimed at enhancing his translation by capitalising on the popular acclaim of Sidney's works, as well as Lady Rich's connection with the venerated poet. In addition, by choosing this dedicatee, Yong attempted to capture the attention of her brother, Robert Devereux, Queen Elizabeth's favourite.

Keywords: Bartholomew Yong, Jorge de Montemayor, Penelope Rich, Sir Philip Sidney, translation, literary patronage.

La popularidad de la *Diana* de Montemayor, de España a Inglaterra: la influencia literaria y política de Bartholomew Yong

Resumen

La *Diana* (c. 1559) de Jorge de Montemayor constituye un ejemplo excelente de interrelación cultural entre tradición y originalidad en el Renacimiento. Su inmediata e inmensa popularidad y su posterior influencia quedan ampliamente demostradas por el vasto número de ediciones y traducciones de la obra cumbre de Montemayor, así como por las continuaciones a cargo de Alonso Pérez y Gaspar Gil Polo. Antes de 1600, se habían publicado cuarenta y tres re-impresiones, junto con ocho ediciones en francés y la traducción al inglés a cargo de Bartholomew Yong. A pesar de haber sido escrito a comienzos de la década del 1580, cuando Sir Philip Sidney compuso su *Arcadia*, el texto de Yong no fue publicado hasta 1598. El suntuoso folio, que también incluía la traducción de las secuelas, estaba dedicado a Lady Penelope Rich, una influyente mujer de la nobleza y conocida mecenas, quien también era conocida por haber servido de modelo de la "Stella" de Sidney. Ese mismo año una nueva edición en folio de la *Arcadia* se publicó junto con *Astrophil and Stella*. La dedicatoria de Yong a Lady Rich perseguía realzar su traducción capitalizando la popularidad de las obras de Sidney, así como la conexión de Lady Rich con el venerado poeta. Además, al escoger a dicha dedicataria, Yong pretendía captar la atención de su hermano, Robert Devereux, favorito de la reina Isabel I.

Palabras clave: Bartholomew Yong, Jorge de Montemayor, Penelope Rich, Sir Philip Sidney, traducción, mecenazgo literario.

Renaissance culture lies in an interplay of tradition and originality: the veneration of classical antiquity is paired with an eagerness to innovate. The Renaissance or "rebirth" implies, as James Turner has

put it, "a self-conscious movement of cultural renewal." The authors of this period attempted to match the literary exploits of their admired predecessors in the vernacular, as a means to bring glory to the new forming nations in Europe. The historical and political setting of the epoch, marked by military conflicts and marital alliances between the royal houses, favoured a context of cultural connections and interchange between the different states. Writers were decidedly attentive to the accomplishments of their fellows, which they were diligent to reproduce if not to surpass.

Pastoral literature provided a fruitful field for the emulation of both classic and contemporary models. Following Joseph Loewenstein (1984), Michelle O'Callaghan has defined pastoral as "a responsive mode, deliberately imitative and echoic" (231). As she explains, this genre "insistently figured processes of imitation and intertextuality," which can be viewed, for instance, in the disposition of certain poems included in the pastoral anthology *England's Helicon* (1600): Christopher Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my love," a lyric which was widely spread in manuscript in the late 1580s, was followed by Sir Walter Ralegh's response ("The Nymph's reply to the Shepherd") and "Another of the same nature, made since" (cf. Macdonald 192-195).

The pastoral revived when Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio composed Latin and vernacular eclogues after the mode of the Roman poet Virgil (70-19 BC), the acknowledged father of this literary trend. The development from eclogue to pastoral romance, which rapidly became one of the most prolific subgenres all over Europe, was achieved by linking the eclogues with prose and creating a narrative frame. Anticipated by Boccaccio's *Ameto* (1342), Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (1504) inaugurated the Renaissance vogue for pastoral romance and was followed by a swarm of imitators. In the second half of the century, the Portuguese poet and courtier Jorge de Montemayor produced the most representative and influential pastoral work, *Los siete libros de la Diana*, first published in 1559. The popularity of *Diana* spread forthwith all over Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century through a vast number of editions and translations.

Montemayor's paramount work gained a major significance in English literature by inspiring Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, which turned him into a venerated author. Concurrently, Bartholomew Yong, a

gentleman of the Middle Temple, translated Montemayor's *Diana* and its sequels in the early 1580s, encouraged by his close friend Edward Banister. Yong's version did not appear in print until 1598. Yong's *Diana*, published as a lavish folio, was dedicated to Lady Penelope Rich, a puissant noblewoman and celebrated patroness. In the dedicatory epistle, Yong justifies his choice on account of Lady Rich's talents in languages and the fact that she had expressed her satisfaction at his performance in a dramatic entertainment staged in the Inns of Court.

Further reasons, which were manifest to Elizabethan courtly coteries, may be involved in explaining Yong's dedication to Lady Rich. Gifted with an alluring beauty, Penelope had aroused a grand passion in Sidney during 1581, which he related and immortalised in *Astrophil and Stella*. The sonnet sequence circulated in manuscript until its publication in 1591; most significantly, the collection was reprinted in 1598 as an appendix to the *Arcadia*. As T. P. Harrison has suggested (126), Yong's dedication constituted an acknowledgement of Sidney's reverence for the *Diana*, and a tribute to his memory. Furthermore, by dedicating his translation to Rich, Yong attempted to enhance his work by capitalising on the popular acclaim enjoyed by Sidney's works and the dedicatee's connection to the poet. Finally, by trying to establish a connection with Lady Rich, Yong was undoubtedly expecting to propitiate her brother, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, who was at the time Queen Elizabeth's favourite.

In this essay, I will first examine the significance of Montemayor's *Diana* in Spanish and English literature, detailing the reasons for its phenomenal success and expanding on Sidney's literary debt to Montemayor. Secondly, I will consider the connection between Lady Penelope Rich and Sidney's production, particularly *Astrophil and Stella* and the *Arcadia*. Thirdly, I will analyse Lady Rich's prominent role as patroness, Yong's career as literary translator and the circumstances that prompted him to choose her as the dedicatee of his ambitious work.

1. Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* and the reasons for its unprecedented success

Jorge de Montemayor (Montemor-o-Velho c. 1520 – Piamonte c. 1564) was a courtier of modest origins gifted with musical and literary

talents who spent most of his life attached to the Spanish nobility. It is believed that he was a member of the retinue of the Infanta Maria of Portugal when she came to Spain in order to marry the future King Philip II in 1543. His first dated publication (*Exposición moral sobre el Psalmo LXXXVI*, Alcalá de Henares, 1548) is dedicated to the Infanta Maria of Castile and in its preface, the author describes himself as a chorister in the chapel choir of the infanta. Around November 1549 he became as "cantor contrabaxo" in the church choir of the Infanta Joana and retained the position until June 1552. He accompanied the Infanta Joana to Portugal as her usher when she married Prince John that very same year. After Prince John's death in 1554, he probably returned to Castile with the widowed Infanta, who was appointed regent of the kingdom while Prince Philip proceeded to England to marry Queen Mary. Francisco López Estrada suggested that Montemayor was part of the entourage of the Prince, drawing on an identification between the poet and Sireno, one of the protagonists of *Diana*: those "certaine affaires," mentioned in the Argument, "which could by no means be excused, nor left undone" and which forced the shepherd "to be out of the kingdom" would be a veiled reference to the journey to England (7). Two stanzas in the second book (70, ll. 1-12) also allude to the circumstances of Sireno's departure. Montemayor next dwelled in Valencia under the protection of Juan Castelá de Vilanova, lord of Bicorb and Quesa, to whom he dedicated his *Diana*, whose first known edition appeared in this kingdom in 1559. He spent his last years in Italy: *Diana* was printed in Milan in 1560, with a dedication to Lady Barbara Fiesca, and he probably died in Piamonte in 1561 in a duel over a love affair.

Montemayor is best remembered for being the author of one of the first international bestsellers of the modern age. *Diana* narrates the story of the lovelorn shepherd Sireno, who returns after a period of absence to discover that his beloved Diana has married Delio. The main story is interspersed with other cases of unrequited love in related substories, all of them linked by the association of characters. In addition, the stories are thematically unified, due to the recurrence of the themes of love: suffering, inconstancy, loyalty, jealousy, deceit. The whole work explores and illustrates the philosophy of love, its causes and its effects, and it is profoundly influenced by contemporary Neoplatonic theories of love. In fact, one of the most eminent sources, Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'Amore* (1535), is largely paraphrased in book four. In addition,

the novel presents, like Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528), the ideal conduct of love (its manners and language) against which the actual behaviour of the characters (and readers) may be measured.

The different discussions and debates on the nature of love also examine its relation to noble birth, as pointed out by Sukanta Chaudhuri: "In *Diana*, … there is a running debate as to whether shepherds can aspire 'gentle' love. It is generally granted to be possible, but the aristocratic lover provides the yardstick; the shepherd can at most conform" (254-255). The dominant values are courtly: shepherds are constrained to behave according to these values. The aristocratic preeminence embedded in Montemayor's pastoral can be explained in terms of his intended readership: the court and all those who were curious about the lives of aristocrats or were willing to imitate them. Most significantly, in his dedication to Lady Barbara Fiesca, the author states that the pastoral originally came to light to satisfy the request of several ladies and gentlemen. *Diana* was created for "the recreation of a fashionable society amusing themselves with amorous accounts of its contemporaries disguised as shepherds and shepherdesses" (Damiani 1).

Certainly, readers were invited to believe that its fictional characters were identifiable persons in real life. The author himself was responsible for that assumption, for in the Argument he claims that his characters "shall finde divers histories of accidents, that have truly happened, though they goe muffled under pastorall names and style" (10). Diana, who dwells "in the fieldes of the auncient and principall citie of *Leon* in Spaine, lying along the bankes of the river *Ezla*" (10), was believed to stand for a lady named Ana, from a town matching this description: Valencia de Don Juan. Montemayor certainly knew this location since he addressed dedications to the duke and duchess of this town, don Manrique de Lara and doña Luisa de Acuña (Montero 314, n. 7.2). The identification of this lady with Diana aroused such a lively interest that even King Philip III and Queen Margaret visited her in 1602 when traveling from León to Valladolid (n.7.3). This anecdote attests the enduring popularity of Montemayor's paramount work and that at the time it was generally read as a pastoral *roman à clef*.

This interpretation was encouraged by the inclusion of a poetic tribute to Spanish and Portuguese noble ladies in the "Song of Orpheus," a sequence of forty-three octaves which appear at the centre of book four

and thus of the whole romance. The shepherds finally arrive at the palace of Felicia, the white witch capable of curing them of their lovesickness. They visit the temple of Diana, whose walls are decorated with the portraits of the virtuous ladies who have been admitted. Among them are the daughters of the Emperor Charles V, the Infantas Maria and Joanna, and those of the Duke of Segorbe, viceroy of Valencia. Jean Subirats (1968) suggested that Felicia was inspired on Mary of Hungary, the regent in the Netherlands, and that this episode was drawn on the lavish festivities that she held in honour of her nephew Prince Philip at Binche in August 1549.

The references to courtly life and the detailed descriptions of these well-known ladies undoubtedly held a strong appeal for readers belonging to the nobility. For this reason, the edition printed in Milan included four new stanzas honouring ladies from this duchy, most probably written by Montemayor himself. Furthermore, due to the popularity of the "Song of Orpheus," panegyrics became an essential element in pastoral romances. Gil Polo, for instance, introduced in his pastoral verses in praise of the dedicatee of his work, Lady Hieronyma de Castro, and her husband Bernard de Bolea, vice-chancellor of the Estates of the Crown of Aragon.

Nonetheless, as Maxime Chevalier (1974) first pointed out, the main reason for the success of Montemayor's *Diana* resulted chiefly from the variety of narrative and poetic traditions that it combined. Among its sources not only do we find pastoral romances (such as Sannazaro's *Arcadia*), but also Bocaccio's *Decameron*, *Ameto*, and *Fiammetta*, and other *novellieri* (for instance, Bandello, from whom he borrows the story of Felismena); chivalric romances, such as Rodriguez de Montalvo's *Amadis de Gaula* and Francisco Vázquez's *Palmerin de Oliva*; and Garcilaso's poems, both in Montemayor's prose and poetry. In addition, the prose narrative of *Diana* is interspersed with poems, which serve to develop the poetic or emotional component of particular situations within the story. Therefore, Montemayor's *Diana* exemplifies the interrelation of the arts proclaimed within Renaissance aesthetics (insertion of lyrics in the narrative prose, inclusion of ecphrases or verbal descriptions of pictures).

Montemayor's *Diana* immediately became one of the most widely read and printed prose fiction works in Spain. Other than its first known

publication in Valencia around 1559, there were thirty-two editions during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Furthermore, two writers made haste to provide readers with the continuation of the story which Montemayor had announced though left undone due to his sudden death. Alonso Pérez's *Segunda parte de la Diana* was issued in 1563 and Gaspar Gil Polo's *Diana enamorada* in 1564. These sequels were also repeatedly printed until the mid-seventeenth century (nineteen and thirty editions respectively). Montemayor's work also spawned a vast array of imitators, both in Spain and abroad.

2. Montemayor's *Diana* and its continuations in England

Diana also achieved a great success outside Spain in a short period of time. Before 1600, there were eight editions printed outside the Spanish borders, which undeniably contributed to its international fame. The first complete translation was in French by Nicolas Colin. It appeared in 1578 and underwent eight editions during the second half of the sixteenth century. However, Montemayor's *Diana* had a prior influence in England. As early as 1563 Barnabe Googe, a poet who had been at the service of the ambassador Sir Thomas Chaloner in Spain, penned an abbreviated and partial translation of Montemayor's *Diana* in *Eglogs, Epitaphes and Sonnettes* (Egloga septima 'Sirenus, Silvanus, Selvalgia').

Notwithstanding, the influence and reputation of *Diana* in England did not depend exclusively on its English translations. William Drummond of Hawthornden read it in French (Newdigate 1941); Edward Banister owned the French version by Colin and Chapuis by 1582. Sidney, among others, was acquainted with it in the original. It appears that *Diana* was particularly popular among Queen Elizabeth and her ladies during the 1580s (Varlow 139).

The most decisive example of the influence of *Diana* and its sequels in English literature was Sidney's *Arcadia*. The precise dates of composition are uncertain. Sidney probably began the first version, the *Old Arcadia*, when visiting his sister Mary, the Countess of Pembroke, at Wilton in the spring of 1577 and completed it during a long visit in the summer of 1580 (Ringler xxxvi). In 1584 he undertook an extensive revision of the *Old Arcadia* and he redrafted the first two books and a part of the third before his death in 1586 (Ringler l). The *Old Arcadia* circulated in

manuscript among Sidney's entourage and it remained unpublished until Feuillerat edited the text in 1912. The revised portion of the *Arcadia* was printed in 1590 under the supervision of Fulke Greville, Sidney's friend and biographer. This version was superseded in 1593 when the Countess of Pembroke, perhaps to meet a public request for the whole text, brought out a folio consisting of the revised version together with the rest of book three and the last two books as contained in the *Old Arcadia*.

Sidney's debt to Montemayor was widely recognized at the time. In 1599 John Hoskins listed the three main sources of Sidney's pastoral: "Heliodorus in Greek, Sannazarius *Arcadia* in Italian, and *Diana* [by] de Montemayor in Spanish" (41). The details of this well-attested influence have been expounded by Harrison (1926), Genouy (1928), Kennedy (1968), Robertson (1973), and Fosalba (1994) among others. The parallels and borrowings identified by these scholars are numerous, though varying in importance. Principally, Sidney took the Arcadian shepherd setting and the combination of prose narrative, eclogue and song. As Jean Robertson and Judith Kennedy have pointed out, the *Old Arcadia* is also indebted to Gil Polo's *Diana enamorada* (Enamoured Diana) with regards to the structure, the didactic openings of the books, as well as the grouping and function of the poems. In addition, Sidney's debt to the *Dianas* is also attested in his poetry. According to William Ringler, Sidney was "well acquainted with the more than 150 poems in the *Diana* of Montemayor and in the continuations of Alonso Perez and Gil Polo" (xxxv). Furthermore, Sidney translated two poems from Montemayor's *Diana*, "What changes here, ô haire" and "Of this haigh grace with blisse conioyn'd", which were included in the 'Certain sonnets' appended to the *Arcadia* edition of 1598.

In all probability Sidney's *Arcadia* prompted the vogue of pastoral romance in English literature and the interest towards the Spanish *Dianas*. In the words of John Buxton, "for a century and a half, from the time of the Armada to the time of the '45, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* remained the best-loved book in the English language" (246). Robert Greene's *Ciceronis Amor* (1589) bears a certain resemblance to Montemayor, since its plot is based on a succession of unfortunate love stories. Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590), a pastoral romance with inset lyrics, is indebted to Greene's model, ultimately to Sidney's, and it seems to have enjoyed some popularity, for it was reprinted several times. John

Dickenson's *The Shepeardes Complaint* (1596) is a brief story in prose interspersed with verse, very similar to the works of Montemayor and Gil Polo. Robert Parry's chivalric romance *Moderatus, the Blacke Knight* (1595), written in mannered prose interspersed with poems and songs, extols the virtues of courtly behavior and encompasses the philosophic refinements of pastoral. The two parts of Gervase Markham's *The English Arcadia* (1607 and 1613) are intended as a continuation of Sidney's great romance, and the influence of Montemayor's *Diana* is also tangible

The overall interest in the pastoral among English authors and readers accounts for Bartholomew Yong's decision to translate the *Dianas*. It is remarkable that Yong undertook this project at the time Sidney began the *Arcadia* and that it was finally published in 1598, the very same year in which a new edition of Sidney's pastoral masterpiece was issued. Between the early 1580s and the late 1590s, Spanish chivalric romances were also translated into English (mainly Anthony Munday's translations of the Palmerin cycle, the first title being published in 1588), which certainly contributed to the popularity of Spanish literature among English readers and paved the way for a publication of Yong's *Diana*.

3. Bartholomew Yong's translations of the *Dianas*

The first complete English translation of Montemayor's pastoral romance, together with the sequels by Alonso Pérez and Gaspar Gil Polo, was produced by Bartholomew Yong (*bap.* 1560, *d.* 1612). In the preface, Yong mentioned a lost fragmentary translation of Montemayor's *Diana* by a certain Edward Paston, a gentleman of Norfolk and musician amateur, grandson of Sir William Paston, the founder of North Walsham grammar school. In addition, in 1596 Thomas Wilson translated Montemayor's pastoral, of which only the first book survives in a manuscript presented by Wilson to the courtier and author Fulke Greville between 1614 and 1620. These various versions certainly demonstrate the strong interest in providing English readers with a translation of the well-acclaimed Spanish pastoral.

The son of Gregory Yong, a Yorkshire grocer, Bartholomew Yong was the eldest of a large Roman Catholic family. In fact, his uncle, Dr. John Young, was vice-chancellor of Cambridge in 1553–5 and took an active role in restoring the university to the Catholic faith. At

the accession of Queen Elizabeth I he was deprived of his mastership and committed to prison for refusing to take the oath of supremacy (cf. Ford). Yong's knowledge in Spanish dates back to his youth, and it could have been fostered by his uncle. At the age of eighteen, Yong went to Spain and spent two years there. His return to England through France was reported by Sir Henry Cobham to Walsingham (Queen Elizabeth's principal secretary), in a letter dated in June 1580. From this letter, we know that Bartholomew "had conference with the Duchess of Feria, being recommended by a privy token from his uncle" (*Calendar of State Papers*, 308-309). As suggested by Harrison, the fact that he was commissioned by his recusant uncle to go to Spain and that there he encountered Jane Dormer, who struggled for the reversal of the Reformation, could indicate that Yong was also a Catholic (132).

Upon his return to England Yong entered the New Inn and afterwards he was admitted to the Middle Temple in May 1582. During these years he took part in dramatic entertainments for which the Inns of Courts had long been famous and became a close friend of Edward Banister, a literary connoisseur acquainted with Sidney. As Yong explained in the Preface, Banister "perceiving my remissenes in the saide language, perswaded and encouraged me earnestly, by some good translation to recal it to her former place" (5). Banister may have suggested the *Dianas* because he knew about their appeal in literary circles or because he had had access to one of the manuscripts of Sidney's *Arcadia*. Indeed, Banister possessed a copy of 'Ring out your bells' given to him by Sidney in December 1584 at Putney (Ringler 555). Kennedy has suggested that Banister may have introduced Yong to Sidney after the completion of his translation (lix), although there is no evidence of such an encounter.

Although Yong's version was completed in May 1583, it remained unpublished for fifteen years. One can only speculate about Yong's reasons for putting off the publication of his *Diana*. He certainly had the necessary connections and the literary context was undoubtedly favourable, for numerous pastoral works were coming to light in this period: Fleming's translation of Virgil's *Eclogues* (1574); Sidney's *The Lady of the May* (c. 1578); Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579), dedicated to Sidney; John Lyly's *Gallathea* and George Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, both published in 1584. Furthermore, a wide variety of romances were being published in these years: Lyly's *Euphues* (1578); Margaret Tyler's

translation of the Spanish *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* (1578); Anthony Munday's *Zelauto*, (1580); Robert Greene's *Mamillia* (1583); Thomas Lodge's *Forbonius and Prisceria* (1585); and Greene's *Pandosto* and Munday's *Palladine of England* both printed in 1588.

Since the original 1583 manuscript has not survived, we cannot compare it to the printed version of 1598, which allows to suggest that Yong may have revised the translation before submitting it to print. He may as well have preferred his manuscript to circulate among a selected coterie of readers, and then submitted his text to the press, but again there is no definite evidence, even though we do have evidence of English readers accessing Montemayor's *Diana*, but they may have relied on the Spanish original or the French translations.

Yong possibly drew from the pursuit of law to that of literary translation. He next undertook the translations of two Italian works thematically linked to the *Dianas*. The first was Stefano Guazzo's *La Civil conversazione*, of which Yong translated the fourth book. It was an influential manual for educated readers wishing to learn Italian manners and social skills, similar to Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* and Giovanni della Casa's *Il Galateo*. It was published in 1586 and Yong's name was displayed on the title-page, presenting him as a gentleman of the Middle Temple. Guazzo's work was widely read during the Renaissance and had also been translated into French twice at the time. Book four was considered the most important and, as Harrison has pointed out, it is noteworthy that Yong had a hand in introducing this work to England (135). It is said that the conversations in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* are inspired by Yong's translation of Guazzo (Luce 89). The second, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, appeared the following year as *Amorous Fiametta*.

Yong's translation of the *Dianas* were finally printed in 1598, as an expensive publication aimed at affluent readers, for it was a folio volume consisting of almost two hundred and fifty pages with an engraved title-page. The folio format with ornamented title-page had also been used in two related publications issued a few years before: Harington's translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1591), which was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth I, and Sidney's *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593). Remarkably, Montemayor's name was displayed on the title-page, a testimony to the renown of the Spanish author and his pastoral

romance in literary coteries, as well as a printer's strategy to attract buyers. Moreover, the printer, Edmund Bollifant, seems to have borne a particular interest in Spanish books, for the following year he also published *A Spanish grammar* and *A dictionarie in Spanish and English*, both authored by Richard Percival. Bollifant's choices, together with the publication of Spanish romances by Anthony Munday, unquestionably point to the existence of a market for works translated from Spanish.

Overall, Yong's translation is lively and faithful, although, as pointed out by Kennedy and Fosalba, he shows a tendency towards expansion, which takes different forms and produces various effects: duplication ("con gran deseo" / "with great affection and desire"); addition of adjectives ("sus aguas" / "his crystalline streames"); amplification of details ("sino la voz de mis sospiros tristes" / "but the voice of my *piteus outcries, and the violent* breath of my sorrowful sighes"); explication of meaning ("cosa de que no poco sobresalto recibi" / "whose sudden sight engendred a forcible passion of joy and feare in my amazed soule"). Moreover, Yong strives to recreate in English the musicality of Montemayor's prose, usually by repetition of a word or construction, or by alliteration: "los tiempos y el coraçon de Diana se mudaron" / "time, and *Dianas* hart with time were changed." Yong's most outstanding skill as translator is his handling of a wide variety of metres, some of them characterised by considerable complexity: Petrarchian and Shakesperian sonnets, sestinas, *ottava rima*, *terza rima*, *rima sdrucciole*, quatrains, quintains, and several six and eight-line stanzas.

Not surprisingly, Yong chose an eminent patroness to dedicate such a lavish and ambitious publication: Lady Rich, known for her knowledge of continental languages, and sister to the queen's favourite Sir Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex. In the dedication, Yong recalls how Lady Rich had attended the Middle Temple revels when he acted "the part of a French Oratour" (3). He explains that, although he had feared her "mature judgement and censure in that language," she expressed her satisfaction by "favourable applause" (3-4). Her reaction, apparently, encouraged him to offer her his translation, pointing out that she was knowledgeable about both the language of the original and the matter of the book. Indeed, her proficiency in languages, together with her musical taste, had also been praised by the French lutenist Charles Tessier, who dedicated to her *Le premier livre de chansons* in February 1596. By making

this anecdote known to his readers, Yong attempted to capitalise on his personal connection to Lady Rich to make his translation appear more engaging to readers, showing that he was well connected to the elite. Whenever authors were well acquainted to their patrons, that had to be demonstrated so as to increase the renown of their works.

Other than her interest in the arts and mastery of Spanish, the reason Yong dedicated his translation to Lady Rich was that she could be associated with the eponymous heroine of Montemayor's work, for she represented the *malmaridada* or unhappily married woman at the Elizabethan court. In addition, Yong aimed at enhancing his translation by capitalising on the dedicatee's connection with Sidney and on the popular acclaim of the works by the venerated poet.

4. Lady Penelope Rich and Sir Philip Sidney

Penelope Devereux (1563-1607) was the eldest child of Walter Devereux, first earl of Essex and Lettice, daughter of Sir Francis Knollys. She was educated by tutors at home until her father's death in 1576. Then she was confided to the guardianship of Henry Hastings, third earl of Huntingdon, and lived at his house in Leicestershire. Before his death her father had expressed a wish that she marry Philip Sidney, but Sidney did not wish to marry then. In January 1581 Penelope arrived at court to become one of Queen Elizabeth's maids of honour. Huntingdon soon arranged for her marriage to Robert Rich of Leighs, Essex, who had just succeeded to the peerage and had a large income. The wedding took place in November 1581 and, according to a later statement, she even protested her unwillingness at the ceremony (cf. Wall).

About this time, Sidney composed his *Astrophil and Stella*, a collection of 108 sonnets in which he relates the love of a young courtier for a married woman. Sidney identified himself with Astrophil and Lady Rich with Stella, and even wrote three poems alluding to her married name. The first of these is sonnet 37, which first appeared in the folio edition of 1598:

> Towards *Auroras* Court a Nymph doth dwell,
> Rich in all beauties which mans eye can see:
> . . . .

> Rich in the treasure of deserv'd renown,
> Rich in the riches of a royall hart ;
> Rich in those gifts which give th'eternall crowne;
> Who though most rich in these and everie part,
> . . . .
> Hath no misfortune, but that Rich she is. (Ringler 183)

The others are sonnet 24, "Rich fooles there be" (176-177), and sonnet 35, "What may words say, or what may words not say" (182), in which he includes a very explicit reference to his beloved: "… long needy Fame / Doth even grow rich, naming my *Stellas* name." The sonnet sequence circulated in manuscript among Sidney's coterie until its publication in 1591. In this same year, John Harington published his translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, in which he states that "Sir Philip Sidney … often comforteth him selfe in his sonets of *Stella*, though dispairing to attaine his desire, and … yet the nobilitie, the beautie, the worth, the graciousnesse, and those her other perfections, as made him both count her, and call her inestimably rich, makes him in the midst of those his mones, reioyce euen in his owne greatest losses" (126). Another contemporary tribute to Sidney mentions Stella and has recourse to the pun on 'rich': "Stella, a Nymph within this wood, / Most rare and rich of heauenly blis." These lines appear in the first poem of *The Phoenix Nest* (1593), "An Elegie, or friends passion, for his Astrophill," attributed to Mathew Roydon.

A few years afterwards a pastoral poem alluding very explicitly to the liaison between Sidney and Stella was issued, though the tribute was satirical. Richard Barnfield's *The Affectionate Shepheard*, published anonymously in 1594, was dedicated in two stanzas "To the Right Excellent and Most Beautifull Lady, the Ladie Penelope Ritch." The poem expresses the love felt by the shepherd Daphnis (Barnfield's alter ego, as he uses it to sign the dedication) for the shepherd Ganymede, who loves and is loved by Queen Guendolena; she is loved by an unnamed old "doting foole" (l. 55) and she previously loved "a lustie youth / That now was dead" (ll. 29-30). The characters can be identified with Lady Penelope (Queen Guendolena), Lord Rich (the old fool), Sidney (the lusty youth), and Sir Charles Blount (Ganymede). Although it is uncertain how Barnfield intended his poem to be read, there is

unequivocal evidence that the poem caused discussion and scandal. In his next work, *Cynthia* (1595), Barnfield, this time under his own name, claimed that his readers had misinterpreted *The Affectionate Shepheard*, which he had only intended as a story of homosexual love, modelled upon the second eclogue of Virgil.

In the winter of 1589 Lady Rich initiated a liaison with a prominent courtier, Sir Charles Blount, which was common knowledge in aristocratic circles by November 1590 (Ringler 444; Wall). The first of their children, Penelope, was baptized on 30 March 1592, but given the surname Rich and brought up with Penelope's former children. Their next child, baptized in 1597 with the Christian name Mountjoy, was not included in the Rich pedigree. Two more sons and a daughter followed, and they were acknowledged by Blount. Given Lady Penelope's enduring liaison with Lord Montjoy, she could be identified with Diana, who had been also unhappily married.

Penelope Rich wielded some power at court, which derived from her personal qualities, as well as her brother's position as the queen's favourite (cf. Wall). Lady Penelope was acclaimed for her beauty and she possessed courtly graces and accomplishments. The vast array of dedications and poetical tributes she received demonstrate her interest in literature and the arts, and she appreciated being esteemed by artists.

5. Yong's dedication to Lady Rich

In the epistle to Lady Rich, Yong resorts to the traditional *topoi* of dedicatory writing: the praise of the dedicatee, the gratitude for past favours, the request for protection, the insistence on the social distance between the patroness and the author. He begins by justifying his choice of dedicatee: Lady Penelope being knowledgeable in languages and a renowned patroness justified the dedication of a major work of Spanish literature. Yong extols her mastery of foreign languages while belittling his own (a common topos in dedicatory writing):

> Right honorable, such are the apparent defects of arte and judgement in this new pourtraied Diana, that their discoverie must needs makes me blush and abase the worke, unless with undeserved favour erected upon high

> and shining pillar of your Honorable protection, they may seeme to the beholder lesse, or none at all. (3)

Whereas most patronesses were praised for their beauty, Yong celebrates Lady Rich's "magnificent mind" and "all noble vertues" and expands on the acclaim of her skills in languages: "I have no other meanes, then the humble insinuation of it to your most Honorable name and clemencie, most humbly beseeching the same to pardon all those faultes, which to your learned and judicious view shall occurre" (4). By asking Lady Penelope to forget him for any faults in his translation, Yong attempts to show his readers that he has produced a valuable translation, for he would not offer it as a tribute to such a learned lady if that were not the case. In addition, this is the reason why he relates the anecdote about his performance as a French orator in the Inns of Court entertainments which prompted Lady Rich's applause.

As T. P. Harrison has pointed out, the dedication functioned as an acknowledgement of Sidney's reverence for the *Diana*, and a tribute to his memory (126). Montemayor's pastoral was known and admired in English courtly circles, and it would be unmistakably associated with Sidney's *Arcadia*. In fact, Wilson also alluded to the connection with Sidney in his dedication of the first book of Montemayor's *Diana* to Fulke Greville, Sidney's closest friend: "Sir Phillipp Sidney did very much affect and imitate the excellent Author there of, whoe might well tearme his booke Diana … as his Arcadia … might well have had the name of Phoebus for never was our age lightned with two Starres of such high and eminent witt, as are the bookes of these two excelling Authors" (Kennedy xxiv).

The fact that both Sidney's *Arcadia* and Yong's *Diana* were printed in folio format points out that Yong was capitalising on the popularity of Sidney's pastoral work and aimed at the same readership. In addition, Yong's dedication to Lady Rich was based on the dedicatee's connection to Sidney, and ultimately on the popular acclaim of Sidney's works. The association of his translation with Sidney's *Arcadia* could enhance his work and recommended it to his readers. Yong's translation was issued the very same year of the publication of the folio edition of *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* which included the sonnets of *Astrophil and Stella*. Undoubtedly, the *Dianas* were issued in an attempt to take advantage of the success of the *Arcadia* and attract its readers.

At the end of his epistle, Yong introduces his pledge for patronage, by asking Lady Rich to accept his translation as an homage to her ladyship:

> Since then for pledge of the dutifull and zealous desire I have to serue your Ladiship, the great disproportion of your most noble estate to the qualitie of my poore condition, can affoorde nothing else but this small present, my praier shall alwaies importune the heavens for the happie increase of your high and woorthie degree, and for the full accomplishment of your most Honorable and vertuous desire. (4)

He also insists on the social disparity between himself and his patroness, as a means to emphasise her nobility and present himself as a poor poet (a common topos of dedicatory writing, used even by affluent writers) which justifies the request for protection. By characterising the translation as a "small present", Yong resorts to the topos of the trifle, the belittling of his work to avoid being seen as ambitious or arrogant.

The inclusion of the date, 28th November 1598, at the end of the dedicatory epistle suggests that Lady Rich accepted the tribute, which would constitute a strong appeal for readers, since an accomplished and eminent lady had approved of this work. Perhaps, Yong also attempted to be part of the entourage of Lady Rich, which was one of the most dominant coteries of Elizabeth's reign. Indeed, her brother, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, was an eminent courtier who enjoyed a great renown as Queen Elizabeth's favourite. As indicated by Hugh Gazzard, "between 1577 and 1599 eighty-three printed books … and three works in manuscript were dedicated in whole or in part to the Earl; the total is higher than any other Elizabethans save the Queen, Lord Burghley, and the Earl of Leicester" (10). This vast number of dedications demonstrates his influence as a patron of scholars and literary authors. Indeed, Essex had interests in intellectual pursuits, for he had completed MA degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, a rare qualification for a young nobleman.

Essex carved out a political and military career. Under the influence of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, who had married Essex's mother Lettice Knollys in 1578, Robert was appointed colonel-general of the cavalry during a campaign in the Netherlands. This position was socially prestigious and politically significant, for it declared his status

as Leicester's new protégé and a potential future leader for his supporters (Hammer). Furthermore, Essex was knighted for his service at Zutphen and inherited one of the two best swords of Sir Philip Sidney, a token which had a considerable impact on his self-image. This gift symbolically appointed him as Leicester's right-hand man and a champion in the defence of Protestantism (cf. Hammer).

Upon his return to England, Essex's political career took off, and he soon became not only the Queen's favourite, but also the foremost military leader of the age. He was appointed Master of the Horse, an office that brought him into close and frequent contact with Elizabeth (Dickinson 2). Young, handsome, and intellectual, Essex rapidly caught the Queen's eye. By the summer of 1587, Essex had become Elizabeth's new favourite and showered Essex with honours and grants, the most important of which would be Leicester's farm of the customs on sweet wines after his death in 1588.

As one of the men who held the highest offices around the Crown, Essex was a patron to those who sought advancement in the royal service. Due to his most favourable position, Essex promoted intellectual culture, for he strongly believed in the dual function of literature. According to Sidney, the function of the poetry was to "teach and delight"; the literature of the period thus reflected and reaffirmed the values of the chivalric ethos (Dickinson 11). The importance of "aspiring towards an ideal and of shaping one's own actions towards the goal of becoming an ideal courtier, knight and gentleman was highly important at the Elizabethan court." (Dickinson 11) Essex's circle included, for instance, Robert Sidney (younger brother to Philip and Mary), Fulke Greville, Gervase Markham, and Henry Cuffe, among others.

Yong was probably planning on having access to the Earl's coterie, for he was also competent in Spanish. Essex had recently been the dedicatee of two pastoral works: George Peele's (1589) and Thomas Bradshaw's *The Shepherd's Star* (1591). Yong may have thought it more expedient to approach the earl courting the favour of his sister, to whom he was already known.

There is evidence to consider that Yong's *Dianas* were highly valued given that twenty-nine copies of the original edition have been preserved. Furthermore, twenty-five of the lyrics contained in these works were

included in *Englands Helicon* (1600). The *Dianas* were the last instance of Yong's vocation for translation and manifested his ambition. He chose a Spanish editorial success which had already aroused interest among members of the English court for its discussions on love in a courtly background. In addition, the translations appeared at a moment when other pastoral works, as well as works of similar content were being published. Yong dedicated the book to Lady Rich as a manoeuvre to attract readers by capitalising on the association of the dedicatee with Sidney and the great appreciation of his works. His choice of dedicatee may also have been intended as a means of opening a path of access to the lady's brother, the earl of Essex and, through him, to Queen Elizabeth herself.

Notes

[1] A minor genre in the Middle Ages, the eclogue reappeared with Dante (1319), then Petrarch (1357) and Boccaccio (1341-1342; 1341-1345), its full expansion occurring in the hands of the Renaissance humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The appeal of this form of bucolic poetry lies in its true discursive ends: a poet composes an eclogue "not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rusticall manner of loves and communication, but . . . to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters" (Puttenham 128). These "greater matters" range from praise of a person, commentary on the nature of poetry to criticism of political or religious corruption (cf. Congleton and Brogan).

[2] It was Sannazaro who transformed the motif of the Arcadia (the utopian mountainous province in Ancient Greece inhabited by shepherds living in harmony with nature, which is associated with the Golden Age) into a literary genre (Petrina 97). Sannazaro's *Arcadia* and *Eclogae piscatoriae* rapidly spread throughout Europe in the mid-sixteenth century, although *Arcadia* was not translated into English until 1781. Nevertheless, Sannazaro's influence in Renaissance England is well attested before that date: Sidney explicitly referred to the Neapolitan poet in *Defence of Poesie* (1595), praising him for having "mingled prose and verse, as . . . *Boethius*" (22). Moreover, both Sidney's *Arcadia* and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* (1578) include imitations of Sannazaro. For a full discussion of Sannazaro's influence in England, see Petrina.

[3] Montemayor dedicated a sonnet included in *Obras en verso* (1554) to the death of the Infanta Maria (1545).

[4] The preface to an edition of *Diana* (Madrid 1622) dates his death on the 26th of February 1561. The anecdote concerning the mortal duel was given by Fray Bartolomé Ponce in *Clara Diana*: "Nunca más le vi, antes de allí a pocos meses me dixeron cómo un muy amigo suyo le avía muerto por ciertos celos o amores" (265).

[5] "Ella salió luz en España, a ruego de algunas damas y caballeros que yo deseaba complacer" (Montemayor 291). Juan Montero, however, claims that this should be read as a common topic in prologues.

[6] This first known edition is undated, although it was most probable issued in 1559, since according to Fray Bartolomé Ponce in this year Montemayor was at the Court in Valladolid "when everybody was reading the *Diana*" (Rennert 33-34). For a full account of the various editions of *Diana* see López Estrada, Huerta and Infantes 98-101.

[7] Cristina Castillo has argued that the sequels of Montemayor's *Diana* by Alonso Pérez, Gaspar Gil Polo and Jerónimo de Tejeda (the author of the so-called *Tercera Diana* [Paris, 1627]) were not intended as providing an ending to the original story, for the shepherdess Diana had already turned into an archetype and that is why her name is present in the titles of these new versions.

[8] These were the following: Milan 1560 or 1561; Antwerp 1561; Lisbon [Köln] 1565; Venice 1568; Antwerp 1570; Antwerp 1580; Antwerp 1581; and Venice 1585.

[9] Colin's translation was reprinted the very same year in Rheims and in Antwerp; in 1582 it was published in Basel and also in a different edition including Chappuis's translations of Alonso's and Gil Polo's sequels in Paris, Tours and Lyon, and it was reedited in 1587 and 1592.

[10] The first of these was also collected in *Englands Helicon* (cf. Macdonald 131).

[11] It was first translated by Gabriel Chappuys in 1580 and then by François de Belleforest in 1582.

[12] Most interestingly, Percival also authored *Bibliotheca Hispanica* in 1591, which he dedicated to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. I will later argue that Yong's dedication of the *Diana* to the earl's sister was ultimately aimed at accessing Essex's entourage.

[13] Leticia Álvarez Recio has explained that Munday targeted his translations at middle-class readers, by publishing them in different books at a cheaper price. However, Yong's text was aimed at the nobility and the gentry, as based on the publication format.

[14] This collection of French and Italian songs included two specifically written for her: "Ces beaux yeux a trayans" and "Casche toy celeste soleil."

[15] In today's literary market, this could be compared to the addition of a foreword by a well-known author in the publication of a novel writer, for this is meant to signal that they approve of their works.

[16] Barnfield justifies himself on the following terms: ". . . Some there were, that did interpret *The affectionate Shepheard*, otherwise then (in truth) I ment, touching the subiect thereof: to wit, the loue of a Shepheard to a boy; a fault, the which I will not excuse, because I neuer made. Onely this, I will vnshaddow my conceipt: being nothing else, but an imitation of Virgill, in ye second Eglogue of *Alexis*" (46).

[17] For an analysis of the rhetoric of dedicatory writing, see McCabe's *'Ungainefull Arte'* ('The Rhetoric of Paratexts').

[18] According to Hugh Gazzard, by the 1590s the Earl had the rudimentary knowledge to correspond in Spanish (25).

[19] Bradshaw addressed the dedicatory epistle jointly to Lord Burgh and Essex.

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Recibido / Received: 12/3/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 16/6/ 2022*

"I Eat Boys": Monstrous Femininity in *Jennifer's Body*

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Abstract:

The marketing strategy behind *Jennifer's Body* capitalized on Megan Fox's emerging status as a sex symbol. As a result of this, many reviewers criticised it for not fulfilling their male fantasies. Ten years after its release, *Jennifer's Body* is now interpreted as a feminist story. This essay explores the limits and contradictions of these readings through an analysis of the depiction of female monstrosity in the film. It starts with the establishment of a theoretical framework on the representation of female monsters in horror cinema and of the monstrous teenage girl. The analysis will be structured in three parts. The first examines the use of irony and self-consciousness in the satanic ritual scene in relation to the film's portrayal of male violence. The second part reads Jennifer's monstrosity as a result of her neoliberal, over-sexualised femininity. The last section explores the relationship between Jennifer and her friend Needy, which makes both of them monstrous in their own distinctive manners. This essay posits *Jennifer's Body* and its representation of the monstrous feminine as both a feminist denunciation of a patriarchal system and a perpetuation of the same clichés the film wants to subvert.

Keywords: horror cinema, gender roles, teenagers, female monstrosity, *Jennifer's Body*.

"Me como a los chicos": Feminidad monstruosa en *Jennifer's Body*

Resumen:

La estrategia publicitaria detrás de *Jennifer's Body* explotó el estatus emergente de la actriz Megan Fox como sex symbol. En consecuencia, muchos críticos descalificaron la película por no ajustarse a sus fantasías

masculinas. Diez años después de su estreno, *Jennifer's Body* se reinterpreta ahora como un relato feminista. Siguiendo una estructura en tres partes, este ensayo explora los límites y contradicciones de estas lecturas a través de un análisis de la representación de monstruosidad femenina en la película, empezando con un marco teórico sobre la representación de monstruos femeninos en el cine de terror y sobre la adolescente monstruosa. La primera parte analiza el uso de ironía en el ritual satánico en relación a la representación de violencia masculina. La segunda sección interpreta la monstruosidad de Jennifer como resultado de su feminidad neoliberal y sexualizada. La última sección explora la relación entre Jennifer y su amiga Needy, ambas monstruosas de distintas formas. El ensayo concluye que *Jennifer's Body* puede interpretarse simultáneamente como una denuncia feminista del sistema patriarcal y una perpetuación de los clichés del mismo género que intenta subvertir.

Palabras clave: cine de terror, roles de género, adolescentes, monstruosidad femenina, *Jennifer's Body*.

1. Introduction

Jennifer's Body, released in 2009, is a teen horror film directed by Karyn Kusama and written by Diablo Cody. It stars Megan Fox and Amanda Seyfried, playing Jennifer, the archetypal popular girl, and Anita "Needy," her co-dependent best friend, respectively. Jennifer is a manipulative and overly sexual teenager who, as the result of a satanic ritual, is possessed by a demon and starts devouring her male classmates. Aware that her friend is a menace, Needy decides she has to stop her.

The marketing strategy behind *Jennifer's Body* capitalized on Megan Fox's emerging status as a sex symbol after her role in *Transformers* (dir. Michael Bay, 2007), as can be seen in the promotional poster and in the official trailer, in which Jennifer is described as the girl "every guy would die for." The movie, which was a failure at the time of its release (grossing only $31.6 million worldwide for a film made on a $16 million budget) was criticised by some reviewers for not giving its (male)

audience what it promised. For instance, Jeffrey M. Anderson wrote for *Combustible Celluloid*: "*Jennifer's Body* is not funny, nor is it sexy (the girls keep their clothes on), nor is it scary (it's all just special effects)." Along the same lines, Peter Howell from *The Star* claimed: "Megan Fox is the girl, the non-bawdy Jennifer, and if you're one of those bored and horny teens hoping to see her in something less than tight clothing, you'll be swallowing a bitter pill." The director herself has commented on the "failed" marketing campaign behind the film, claiming it was painful to see the film marketed to young male spectators when the audience she and the scriptwriter had actually intended were "young women the same age as the main characters played by Fox and Seyfried" (Sharf).

Ten years after its original release, feminist readings of the film have become more or less the norm. Anne Cohen, writing for *Refinery29*, claims that if the film was released today, "Fox could have been heralded as the feminist revenge hero of our time." Similarly, Frederick Blichert, from *Vice*, argues that the way the film deals with "themes of abuse, empowerment, and accountability would likely be a winning formula with horror movie critics in the #MeToo era." This relatively quick transition from the film's former status as a (failed) product aimed at a male audience to its feminist recuperation deserves, in my opinion, further exploration.

This essay sets out to explore the limits and contradictions of existing readings of *Jennifer's Body* through its representation of female monstrosity. It starts by looking at the representation of female monsters in both horror and rape-revenge films and, in particular, given the age of the main characters in *Jennifer's Body*, the monstrous teenage girl. The analysis of the film itself is then divided in three parts. The first looks at the use of irony and self-consciousness in the satanic ritual scene in relation to the film's portrayal of male violence against women. The second part is informed by postfeminist criticism and reads Jennifer's monstrosity in the light of her neoliberal, individualist and over-sexualised femininity. The last section explores the complex relationship between Jennifer and Needy, which makes both of them monstrous in their own distinct manners. It will be argued that the film's specific use of the conventions of the horror genre regarding gender roles is both a feminist denunciation of a patriarchal system and a perpetuation of the same clichés the film wants to subvert.

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Barry K. Grant, the figure of the "monster" allows horror movies to explore that which is considered the "Other" in society, in opposition to the mainstream (283). Grant asserts that in normative films, dominant values are rationalised while the monstrous is excluded, whereas subversive films portray the horrors of the system and the defencelessness of the one who deviates (284). Yet, as this essay will argue, describing a film like *Jennifer's Body* (and by extension most horror films) as normative or subversive is not as clear-cut as Grant's observations would suggest. Like any monster, female monsters are usually filled with ambivalence, as critics examining the topic often contend.

Julia Kristeva describes the term "abject" as that which threatens the self, as it cannot be included in society or defies comprehension by rational thinking (1). The main feature of the abject for Kristeva is its ambiguity, since it elicits both attraction and repulsion (1). The abject is constantly challenging social norms and the unstable border between good and evil, the acceptable and the unacceptable (4). It is a menace for the status quo because it cannot be classified according to mainstream values. Instead, the abject uses socially approved rules for its own advantage, subverting them and undermining their significance (15).

The corpse, because of its liminal status between life and death, is for Kristeva a representation of the abject (109). Body wastes are considered a source of abjection as well, since they cast doubt on the purity of the human body (108). For Kristeva, femaleness is abject too, since it is frequently associated with the "irrational," emotional and hysterical; that is, with something that must be repressed, in opposition to a male "ordered view of society" (70). In this manner, femaleness can be read as something that defies male norms, a source of desire that can never be assimilated by patriarchy.

Barbara Creed, who adapts Kristeva's theory of the abject to the horror film genre, reads the representation of the "monstrous-feminine" in films as the product of male anxieties and desires towards women (1993: 7). She claims the female abject not only threatens mainstream distinctions between life and death, the natural and the uncanny, but

also between proper and improper femininity or normal vs. excessive sexuality (11).

In fact, gender plays an important role in the transformation of the woman into a monster (3). For Creed, the monstrous-feminine is usually embodied by a public and sexual woman holding an ambiguous position between fear and desire (10). For example, the lesbian vampire threatens society because she represents sexual attraction and pleasure between women (61). Another instance is demonic possession, a motif that allows female characters to adopt a masculine behaviour while at the same time depicting the female body as a vulnerable space for male forces, as happens in *The Exorcist* (dir. William Friedkin, 1973) (31). For Creed, the horror genre classifies femininity outside the norm as a source of abjection, a threat for the self that cannot be assimilated into the mainstream, but the monstrous-feminine also undermines patriarchal conventions by means of gaining power and subjectivity (151).

According to Carol Clover, in the mid-1970s women became more prominent in the horror genre, not only in the role of victims, as was already the case, but also in that of murderers (1992: 16). As a result of the second wave of feminism, Clover argues, women were more likely to be portrayed in angry and violent moods (17). This could be interpreted as a backlash against women's rights, but, for Clover, such attention also implies the achievement of a more prominent place in popular culture (17). The female monsters Clover refers to usually vindicate their own suffering, becoming a complex amalgam of both positions: victim and avenger (17). Even if they defeat horrific forces, as does the protagonist of *Carrie* (dir. Brian de Palma, 1976) when facing her abusive classmates, a female monster cannot completely become a heroine because of her "demonic excesses" (4). She must be punished, although, Clover argues, she does achieve some sympathy and identification due to her new position as subject of the gaze (184).

For Clover, the archetypal female monster is embodied in the figure of the rape-avenger. This character appears as the protagonist of the rape-revenge narrative structure, which usually depicts the transformation of a normal and defenceless woman into a ruthless murderer (95). Such depictions include *Act of Vengeance* (dir. Bob Kelljan, 1974), *I Spit on Your Grave* (dir. Meir Zarchi, 1978) and *Ms. 45* (dir. Abel Ferrara, 1981), but

also more contemporary films like *Bad Reputation* (dir. Jim Hemphill, 2007), *Teeth* (dir. Mitchell Lichtenstein, 2009), *American Mary* (dir. Jen Soska and Sylvia Soska, 2011) and *Promising Young Woman* (dir. Emerald Fennell, 2020).

As Casey Kelly argues, the more contemporary instances of rape revenge subvert patriarchal stereotypes (88). According to Rikke Schubart, in these movies, rape brings about the female protagonist's realisation that sexuality is a battle for power and that she must bewilder the enemy in order to win (96). Femininity is a façade for the rape-avenger, and she uses it in order to attract men towards her ultimate weapon: her body (97). In that manner, men, who were in a powerful position at the beginning, become the victims of a monstrous femininity that inverts gender relations (86).

However, within the ideology of these movies, the victim is transformed into a fierce torturer, as violent and evil as her perpetrators: a monster (123). In relation to the ideological remit of these narratives, Clover notes that most of them are created and watched by men who are likely to attribute male features to female characters (1992: 151). This results in ambiguity: while the rape-avengers' strength and hunger for power is enhanced, this does not diminish their sexualisation as fetishized objects of the gaze.

This ambivalence is also characteristic of another kind of female monster: the monstrous teenage girl. According to Katherine Farrimond, the portrayal of dangerous teenage girls oscillates between attraction and repulsion, since they are depicted as desirable objects and, at the same time, blamed for that very objectification (99-100). These representations became especially popular in the cinematic context of the 1990s and 2000s, as a result of the increasing visibility of female adolescence, as attested in the Riot Grrrl Movement and Girl Power discourse (96). In this milieu, consumerism and sexual desirability were depicted as the keys to female empowerment from a post-feminist stance (Genz 10).

Nonetheless, for Karen Renner, horror films about monstrous teenage girls represented the process of sexual maturation as painful and dangerous (34). Films like *Heathers* (dir. Michael Lehmann, 1988) and *The Craft* (dir. Andrew Fleming, 1996) portray the murderous

nature of high school cliques, while others like *The Crush* (dir. Alan Shapiro, 1993) or *Devil in the Flesh* (dir. Steve Cohen, 1998) portray teenagers as evil seducers. Some films revolve around the changing female body, as is the case of *Ginger Snaps* (dir. John Fawcett, 2000), which connects menstruation and lycanthropy, or *Teeth*, which uses the motif of the *Vagina Dentata* as a main narrative premise. As happens in *Teeth*, sometimes the high school girl is a victim of her circumstances, and in others, she is simply a sadistic murderess, as in *The Loved Ones* (dir. Sean Byrne, 2009).

What all these representations have in common is the depiction of a group of young women painfully growing up in a society extremely concerned with regulating their bodies and their sexual activity (Farrimond 129). According to Timothy Shary, teenage anxieties such as not belonging, bodily changes, sexual maturation and uncertainty about adulthood are usually the central theme in teen horror movies (138). For Mary Celeste Kearney, given that adolescence is the period in which patriarchal pressures start constraining the female body, the figure of the fearful and violent female teenager accordingly becomes prominent in contemporary horror (99).

Additionally, there is a revisionist tendency in 1990s and 2000s teen horror cinema, as evinced in movies like *Scream* (dir. Wes Craven, 1996), *Scary Movie* (dir. Keennen Ivory Wayans, 2000), *Teeth*, and *Cabin in the Woods* (dir. Drew Goddard, 2011). These movies self-consciously play with horror genre conventions, showing them to be artificial constructions and subscribing to them solely in an ironical manner.

Casey Kelly argues that through camp, films are able to expose and subvert traditionally patriarchal cinematic constructions (88). She defines camp as "a playful, hyperbolic, and parodic style that deliberately draws attention to the constructedness of a text" (88). For her, camp horror's artificial aesthetics inherently position a film as a transgressive critique of patriarchal horror conventions (88). However, as this essay will argue, self-aware horror movies are also ideologically ambiguous, since through irony, they repeat and participate in horror conventions while at the same time moving away from them and depicting them as artificial constructions.

3. *Jennifer's Body*

3.1. A Woman's Sacrifice

According to Nicholas Schreck, in the 1980s and 1990s, popular visions of Satan shifted from a creature offering god-like knowledge to the elites to the last recourse for those who had failed to succeed in society, especially "heavy metal musicians" (217). In its general ironic tone, *Jennifer's Body* seems to align with this latter premise and features an all-male indie band, desperate to achieve fame, signing a pact with the devil. However, the ritual backfires (whether because the "virgin" they chose is not a real virgin, or the guidelines they found online turn out to be dubious) and Jennifer does not die, but becomes a monster instead.

Adopting camp aesthetics and an ironic, often humorous, tone, the satanic ritual that transforms Jennifer into a monster self-consciously relies on narrative and stylistic motifs from occultist films and rape-revenge movies. As in the cases of previous films parodying horror genre conventions, such as the *Scream* saga (Rowe Karlyn 104), *Jennifer's Body* uses parody and self-consciousness to lay bare the gender dynamics that horror films have traditionally taken for granted. Accordingly, as will be shown in the analysis of the sacrificial scene, the film uses horror genre conventions but, at the same time, creates an ironic distance that highlights the point of view of the female victim and the lack of importance that female suffering has for the male perpetrators in this tradition.

Within the film's structure, the sacrificial scene is not placed in its chronological order. We see Jennifer murdering her male classmates before an explanation for her behaviour is provided. Moreover, the satanic rite is not shown directly, but through Jennifer's subsequent narration of the episode to her friend Needy. Thus, the events are presented through flashbacks mediated by the demonized Jennifer, who recounts the events in an ironic manner. A close-up of Jennifer telling her story dissolves into a shot of the van in which the indie band abducted her. Jennifer describes the kidnappers as "agents of Satan with really awesome haircuts" (01:01:52), underscoring her (and the film's) ironic tone in the portrayal of her "murderers."

Jennifer's ironic narration matches the band members' indifference towards her suffering in the sacrifice scene, which is filled with references to contemporary music. When band member Dirk (Juan Riedinger) is hesitant about sacrificing Jennifer, the lead singer Nikolai (Adam Brody) asks him, "Do you want to be rich and awesome like that guy in Maroon 5?" (01:03:58), a reference to a popular band from the era which instantly persuades Dirk.

Such a self-conscious reference not only connects the movie with its contemporary teen target audience –in a way that is supposed to elicit spectators' laughter— but, at the same time, it also links in a frivolous way female suffering to male success. Likewise, when Nikolai later shows his friend the knife with which he is going to murder Jennifer, Dirk tells him, "Dude, that's a hot murder weapon" (01:05:40) Nicolai's reply, "It's a bowie knife" (01:05:52), elicits his friend's admiration: "Bowie? Nice" (01:05:53). Even if the term "bowie knife" has nothing to do with the actual singer David Bowie, Dirk's reply is further evidence of the male characters' indifference towards Jennifer's suffering.

This indifference is confirmed by the editing pattern used to convey the conversation. Medium close-ups of Nikolai and Dirk together are interrupted by medium close-ups of Jennifer. The two male characters do not even look at her, confirming that a woman's life is no obstacle for their dream. This humorous and hyperbolic tone, in line with Casey Kelly's definition of camp, interrogates the perpetrator's claim on the female body in horror cinema tradition.

The contrast between the band members' attitude and Jennifer's becomes even more obvious at the end of the sacrifice scene. The band sings Tommy Tutone's "687-5309 Jenny," a song about a man who discovers the telephone number of a woman called Jennifer on a wall and becomes obsessed with her. Nikolai recites the lyrics, "Jenny, you're the girl for me. You don't know me but you make me so happy" (01:06:04), while a close-up of Jennifer shows her bewildered expression. The whole group subsequently starts singing "Jenny, I got your number, I got to make you mine" (01:06:17), while Nikolai uses the bowie knife as a microphone. As before, the cheerful tone of the music and the absurdity of the situation are supposed to serve as comic elements in the scene. And, once again, there is a link between female suffering and male

indifference. For the band, the situation is a game or a joke, and could even be defined as a bonding experience.

Nevertheless, the violence of Nikolai's stabbing and Jennifer's suffering is depicted in slow motion, highlighting the brutality of the moment in spite of the singing, which is overlaid with Jennifer's screams. Moreover, the lyrics about a man who idealises an unknown woman and wants to possess her mirror the attitude of the members of the band who use the body of Jennifer for their own means and, ultimately, a music scene in which women are treated as objects of the male gaze and constantly exploited for the production of male art.

According to Katarzyna Paszkiewicz, *Jennifer's Body* uses camp aesthetics in order to create a carnivalesque mood that exposes the complex relationship between gender and genre (80). That is, it exposes gender roles within the horror genre by drawing attention to the artificiality and constructed nature not only of horror tropes, but of gender itself (81). Thus, by portraying violence against women in an ironic and intertextual way, *Jennifer's Body* is self-aware regarding not only the conventions of the horror genre, but also the conventions associated with gender roles in a patriarchal structure.

The members of the band see Jennifer solely as an object. Nikolai tells her at the beginning of the scene that she does not need to talk if she does not want to and, when he finally asks her what her name is, this is only because the ritual requires it. He does not think of Jennifer as a person, but as a body. This positions *Jennifer's Body* in a long tradition of films in which men use women's bodies for their own ascendancy, such as *Rosemary's Baby* (dir. Roman Polanski, 1968), in which Rosemary's husband sells her body to the devil in exchange for fame, and *Satan's Cheerleaders* (dir. Greydon Clark, 1977), in which a janitor kidnaps a group of cheerleaders to sacrifice them in a satanic ritual. At the same time, *Jennifer's Body* also resonates with rape-revenge narratives. The film shows five men abducting a girl, as happens in rape-revenge films such as *I Spit on Your Grave*, in which murdering/raping a woman also becomes a source of male bonding.

Coincidentally, the name of *I Spit on Your Grave*'s protagonist is also Jennifer. Both films likewise share the use of point of view shots from the victim's perspective. Jennifer is not sexually assaulted in *Jennifer's*

Body, but the use of reaction shots of Nikolai above her as he thrusts his knife inside her body while she suffers below him can be read not only as a murder but a metaphorical rape, after which she transmutes into both a monster and a female avenger, in keeping with rape-revenge narrative conventions. However, as will be argued below, Jennifer's monstrosity is not simply a consequence of a ritual that goes wrong: she is already a monster –of a different kind— even before the band abducts her.

3.2. "She is Actually Evil, Not High School Evil": Neoliberal Monstrous Femininity

According to Stéphanie Genz, from the 1990s onwards, "performative" femininity has been reclaimed as an aspect of women's empowerment (10). Movements such as Girl Power or "Girlie" feminism associate women's liberation with heterosexuality, fashion and freedom as consumers (83). Individualism supplants collective action, and the right to acquire goods related to femininity and sexuality replaces all radical opposition to neoliberalism (85). As an individualistic, consumeristic, sexually interpellated young woman, Jennifer is also a monster. However, as this section will argue, she becomes a monster not simply because of the ritual gone wrong, but also as a result of the pressures of patriarchy on teenage women to be thin, good-looking and sexually desirable. As Paszkiewicz argues, Jennifer's monstrosity is the result of an over-sexualized liberal femininity that can be read as a caricature of postfeminist obsessions with sexuality and consumerism (88).

Jennifer's fixation with sexuality is evident well before her transformation into an actual monster in the development of the story. According to Renner, the "normal" teenage Jennifer treats men as objects of consumption as much as she does when transformed into a demon (44). Before the satanic ritual takes place, Jennifer wonders if Ahmet (Aman Johal), the exchange student, is circumcised: "I always wanted to try a sea cucumber" (00:10:47), she claims. On two occasions, first as a normal girl, and then as a monster, she refers to boys she finds attractive as "salty."

Once she has been turned into a monster, she obtains nourishment from boys, which makes her "really pretty and glowy" (00:01:15) in Needy's words. In one scene, Jennifer declares to Needy that she

has not fed for a long time. "[M]y skin is breaking out, and my hair is dull and lifeless, it's like I'm one of the normal girls" (00:44:16). As Martin Fradley explains, Jennifer murders boys to preserve her attractive appearance rather than for revenge, following individualistic, postfeminist cues (2013: 214). Again, Jennifer is a victim of male violence, but she does not take revenge on those who abused her, choosing to victimise her innocent classmates instead. Jennifer selects male bodies for consumption as if they were beauty products in a neoliberal quest for the perfect appearance. In this way, *Jennifer's Body* revises the trope of the female avenger, maintaining its wiles of seduction and tenacious individualism, but changing its agenda, now reoriented towards a postfeminist consumerist context.

In line with the female avenger tradition, Jennifer's main weapon is her sexuality. As Genz explains, women's sexual freedom in a patriarchal system is always subject to ambiguity. Even when women take up an active role in sexual matters, the possibility of objectification is always at hand (31).

While Jennifer's predatory attitude towards boys can be interpreted as that of an assertive and independent woman, she is nonetheless always the object of the gaze that provides visual pleasure to male spectators, as in the scene in which she is seen walking along the high school corridors in slow motion after having attacked one of her classmates. She is dressed in bright colours in opposition to the dark shadows around her, and she is placed in the centre of the frame, suggesting that she is the centre of attention and the object of the gaze.

We later see Jennifer swimming naked in the lake. She is again portrayed in slow motion, which highlights her position as the object of the gaze. However, Jennifer is both an active agent *and* the object of that gaze, a combination that distinguishes her from the female condition described by Laura Mulvey in her article "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" (1975). According to Paszkiewicz, *Jennifer's Body* is not against offering visual pleasure to spectators, but exaggerates this in order to expose its artifice (82). *Jennifer's Body* accordingly replicates the way the female body has usually been portrayed in cinema in order to lay bare the patriarchal mechanisms that cinema has traditionally relied on. Notwithstanding, at the same time as it exposes, lays bare and even criticizes these mechanisms through parody and exaggeration, the

film becomes yet another instance of the objectification of women in contemporary cinema.

Jennifer's Body not only draws attention to the objectification of female characters in cinema, but also to the construction of the figure of the dangerous woman in both horror and teen movies. Regarding the latter, Christina Lee analyses what she calls the figure of the "bitch," who performs excessive femininity, not by transgressing social rules, but by using the system to her advantage (94). Like Lee's "bitch," Jennifer needs to be the centre of male attention both before and after the ritual, underscoring what Paszkiewicz sees as an intertextual relation between Jennifer and the character of Regina George in *Mean Girls* (dir. Mark Waters, 2003), since both use their femininity for individualistic motives (86).

This image of the 'Mean Girl' is hybridized in *Jennifer's Body* with other types of female monstrosity such as the succubus, the possessed female body of *The Exorcist*, the lesbian vampire, and the *vagina dentata* Paszkiewicz decries in the visuals of Jennifer's mouth (78). Jennifer's monstrosity can also be analysed according to Kristeva's theory of the abject: after the sacrificial scene, she goes to Needy's house and vomits blood, her grotesque portrayal blurring the borders between the human and the non-human. She can additionally be associated with the 'female castratrice' figure that arouses fear and desire in male spectators (Creed 1993: 130). Thus, *Jennifer's Body* combines the neoliberal excessive femininity of high-school 'mean girls' with intertextual horror cinema tropes, suggesting that the former is part of her monstrosity as well.

In another scene, there is a clear reference to the construction of female monstrosity by culture and, specifically, the media, as Paszkiewicz notes (87). Needy says that the cause of Jennifer's not feeling herself might be "PMS," that is, Pre-Menstrual Syndrome. Jennifer responds that PMS "was invented by the boy-run media to make us seem crazy" (00:44:27). According to Paszkiewicz, here *Jennifer's Body* exposes the media's role in spreading ideas about female monstrosity (87). When women behave in a manner that men cannot control, it is attributed to PMS, which can be interpreted as a form of female monstrosity, linked to the body, the irrational and the abject. This feminist criticism of media discourses highlights the self-conscious construction of Jennifer as a contemporary, consumerist female teenager whose monstrosity, like the femininity with which it is "essentially" associated, is also a media construct.

Jennifer's Body thus presents a female monster who is an incarnation of postfeminist concerns with sexuality, consumerism and individualism. The so-called girl power of the 'Mean Girl' is combined with intertextual conventions of female monstrosity, from the *vagina dentata* to the 'female castratrice'. In this manner, Jennifer's monstrosity is closely linked to her performative femininity as well as being a product of neoliberal patriarchy. As Paszkiewicz argues, Jennifer is not a marginal female character who is positioned as abject, but a hegemonic figure who uses other bodies as objects of consumption (89). Jennifer uses her sexuality as a tool for achieving her objectives, which is overstated when she literally feeds on boys in order to preserve her normative appearance. Such a depiction brings Renner to conclude that *Jennifer's Body* is not a subversive movie, since it portrays an over-sexualized girl as a monstrous threat (42).

3.3. Mean Monsters: Female Competition as a Source of Monstrosity

Jennifer's friend Needy is also portrayed as monstrous. The complex and ambiguous relationship between Needy and Jennifer is a crucial component of the film's representation of teenage monstrosity. These two characters share an ambivalent friendship, combining competition, homoeroticism and some elements of sorority. This relationship is not only a repetition and exaggeration of motifs present in previous movies, but also provides a critique of a system that encourages women to compete with each other while capitalising on female sexuality.

The film starts with a shot of a barred window in what looks like a jail or a mental institution. As the camera moves backwards, we see a woman with long blonde hair framed from the back. "Every day I get letters" (00:00:44), intones the voice-over of the character narrator. She describes herself as a violent and monstrous woman, even if the audience does not know her motives yet. After she attacks an orderly, she is put in solitary confinement. "I used to be normal. Well, as normal as any girl under the influence of teenage hormones" (00:03:01), she claims, already marking the direct relationship between female adolescence and monstrosity within the movie. In a close-up, looking directly at the camera, she recounts how she started to "feel loose around the edges" (00:03:12) after the killing started. She curls up on the floor, and then in voice-over, starts introducing the town, Devil's Kettle, and the first of the two flashbacks that take up most of the film.

The first flashback starts with a point of view shot of a character (unseen to the audience) approaching an isolated house at night, a scene that replicates the opening of *Halloween* (dir. John Carpenter, 1978), now a staple of the "slasher" subgenre in horror cinema. The title *Jennifer's Body* appears in "girlie pink" neon letters, radically disrupting the tradition of the slasher genre with which the film has initially associated itself. The camera moves slowly to show Jennifer, lying in bed but not paying attention to the television programme featuring a man doing exercise with the words "Butt Squeeze" on the screen. Such programming exemplifies the regulation of normative bodies by the media that saturates the lives of teenage girls like Jennifer.

The following shot shows Needy wearing a hood, eyes bloodshot, watching Jennifer through the window. Now revealed as the focalizer of the previous shot, Needy is situated in the role of the killer in a slasher film. At the end of the movie, we discover that this scene unfolds moments before Needy kills Jennifer in order to put an end to the murders, yet the spectators' first impression is that Needy is the monster preying on Jennifer.

"Jennifer didn't always look this rough" (00:05:25), says Needy, the character narrator. A change in the soundtrack marks the beginning of the second flashback, whose chronology is made clear by the narrator's words: "Just two months ago, me, Jennifer and my boyfriend Chip were completely normal people" (00:05:36). We see Jennifer cheerleading while Needy looks at her from the bleachers. The physical differences between Jennifer, who is described as a "babe" by her friend, and Needy, who calls herself a "dork," highlight the opposition between the two girls. Jennifer is portrayed moving in slow motion in the centre of the frame, standing while the other cheerleaders are kneeling beside her. While Jennifer is the centre of attention, Needy goes unnoticed as part of the audience. Paszkiewicz sees Needy's glasses as a symbol of her intellect and her position as an observer (87). On the other hand, Jennifer's role as a cheerleader foregrounds her body as an object of the gaze. Both Jennifer's cheerleading uniform and Needy's glasses follow the conventions of the teen film genre, coding the two friends as the popular pretty girl and her intellectual best friend, respectively.

A girl sitting next to Needy says to her: "You're totally lesbi-gay" (00:06:18). Paszkiewicz notes that partly because of Megan Fox's

statements about her bisexuality, the marketing of the movie was centred on expectations regarding her kissing scene with Amanda Seyfried (71), a kiss that is longer and more sensual than any of the kisses between Needy and Chip. A bisexual subtext can also be found near the end of the film when Jennifer says, "I go both ways" (1:30:44), before trying to attack Needy.

According to Farrimond, bisexuality is presented in many movies about dangerous women as symbolic of their ambiguity and disloyalty (136). She posits two possible explanations: such a depiction might be aimed at attracting a male gaze influenced by pornography featuring women who experiment with their sexuality while remaining heterosexual, or it might be a film's way of indicating that these characters are dangerous for everyone, male and female (135-6).

Both notions relate to *Jennifer's Body*. The movie was initially marketed as a sexual fantasy for young men. It was nonetheless a commercial failure at the time of its release, which could be due to the fact that the film revolves around the toxic relationship between two female characters.

Kearney's analysis of films in which teenage girls similarly form intense but toxic bonds highlights the potential of such relationships to resort to murderous extremes when faced with any threat of separation (99). This is the case of both *Heavenly Creatures* (Peter Jackson, 1994) and *Fun* (Rafal Zielinski, 1994) in their portrayals of a homoerotic relationship between two monstrous teenage girls. Although not strictly applicable to *Jennifer's Body*, this film certainly borrows some elements from the toxic, homoerotic and co-dependent female relationship conventions in this tradition.

Immediately after Jennifer's cheerleading scene, the two girls talk in the high school hallways. This is the first conversation between Jennifer and Needy, and it promptly establishes the toxicity of their relationship. Jennifer decides for both of them that they are going out that night. Needy has already made plans with her boyfriend Chip, but she changes them in order not to disappoint her friend.

Whenever Needy does not comply with Jennifer's demands, Jennifer cries, "Boo, cross out Needy" (00:06:56), an intertextual reference to the popular quote "Boo, you whore" (00:53:41), originating with

Regina George in *Mean Girls*, who uses such words, like Jennifer, to manipulate her friends. For Alison Winch, *Mean Girls* is the film that best exemplifies the hostility commonly occurring in groups of women, in which cruelty and social belonging go hand in hand (9). *Jennifer's Body* consequently repeats and amplifies some of the elements of female envy present in *Mean Girls*, this time exposing them not only as socially harmful, but monstrous as well.

Another indicator of the toxicity of Needy and Jennifer's friendship is revealed when Needy, as narrator, explains to spectators what it means to "wear something cute" in Jennifer's language: "It meant I could not look like a total zero, but I couldn't upstage her either" (00:07:20). Jennifer thus establishes control over Needy's body so her friend fits normative parameters while she herself remains the centre of attention.

Winch uses Foucault's idea of the panopticon to explain how girlfriends regulate each other's normative feminine and sexual conduct through what she calls the "gynaeopticon" (10). Albeit to a lesser extent than the characters in *Mean Girls*, Jennifer and Needy also compete for the attention of boys. Jennifer not only manages to seduce Needy's boyfriend, but kills him, her only motive being her jealousy towards Needy. In *Jennifer's Body*, as in *Mean Girls* and other teen films about girls, women sabotage each other because of the insecurity derived from pressures to fit into canonical standards. Jennifer and Needy's relationship is based on this ambivalent mixture of regulation and sabotage, since, as Winch argues, in neoliberalism, femininity is presented as a competition with a winner and losers (157).

Despite its evident toxicity, their relationship also has an element of sorority. At the end of the movie, after Jennifer bites Needy and thereby infects her with demonic powers, the latter escapes from prison with the sole purpose of avenging her friend. Needy can thus be interpreted as Clover's final girl of the "slasher," who is significantly different from the other girls because of her smart vigilantism, masculine appearance and sexual restraint (39). The sexually inexperienced Needy, while lacking in "feminine" wiles, is nonetheless suspicious of Jennifer's crimes before anyone else. However, the fact that both girls are monstrous by the end of the movie is paradoxical. The dichotomy between these two female characters dissolves by the end of the film. As Paszkiewicz argues, Needy embodies a less sexualized and less feminine version of monstrosity than

Jennifer, using her power for revenge on the actual male perpetrators (in opposition to her friend who attacks innocent classmates). Hence, as Paszkiewicz claims, Needy's transcendence of gender barriers is more compelling (93).

The relationship between Jennifer and Needy is so ambiguous and toxic that it highlights the monstrosity of both teenagers. This relationship is another instance of the movie's intertextuality, evoking female rivalry, homoeroticism and co-dependency, all of which are ubiquitous in cinematic portrayals of relationships between teenage girls. *Jennifer's Body* repeats and exaggerates such conventions in its depiction of the highly competitive, individualistic and homoerotic friendship between Jennifer and Needy. It can be read not as mere imitation, but rather a self-conscious discourse on how these conventions transform teenage girls into female monsters. Both of the film's protagonists are monstrous in different ways. Jennifer's neoliberal and hypersexual femininity makes her monstrous, but Needy, who is supposedly more innocent and less sexualised, also becomes demonic. Thus, *Jennifer's Body* ultimately highlights that the two girls are not that different after all, and there is no 'right' way to be a teenage girl in a patriarchal society that inevitably pits women against each other in competition for status.

4. Conclusions

This essay has explored the ways in which *Jennifer's Body* repeats and amplifies the conventions of the horror genre regarding the monstrous feminine. As has been argued, the movie lays bare the gender ideology behind the horror tradition, as well as the workings of a patriarchal and neoliberal society that exploits the female body and puts women into competition with one another. The essay starts with a contextualization of the tradition of female monstrosity in the horror genre and the ambiguity that surrounds these figures as sources of desire and repulsion, defying norms and, at the same time, positioning female sexuality as abject. The rape avenger and the monstrous teenage girl are especially relevant for the purposes of this essay, considering Jennifer's and Needy's respective transformations into predators.

As has been argued, the satanic ritual in *Jennifer's Body* self-consciously draws on the motifs of rape-revenge narratives and previous films about sacrificed women, highlighting the links between the objectification of the female body and male ambition. Jennifer's monstrosity is a result of the harassment of her body by male perpetrators, but also of the pressures that neoliberal society places on young women.

Jennifer's Body re-presents both the figure of the 'Mean Girl' and different forms of female monstrosity, transforming the archetypal popular teenager into a monster driven by her postfeminist sexuality and consumerism. Needy, whose femininity does not fit into the postfeminist canon, is also constructed as a monster. The ambiguous relationship between the two, which is competitive, co-dependant and homoerotic, exposes the monstrosity of conventions present in both the horror genre and teen movies. Although representing different types of femininity, both Needy and Jennifer are monsters, which suggests that the dictates of horror conventions and the pressures of patriarchal society affect them similarly.

As noted early in the article, *Jennifer's Body* was first read as a failed attempt to attract male audiences because of its marketing emphasis on Megan Fox's star persona and the kiss scene between the protagonists. More recently, in a 'Me Too' context, critical opinion has started to see Jennifer as a feminist revenge hero: a survivor of male violence and an active female avenger. In this analysis, the limitations of both interpretations have been discussed. *Jennifer's Body* self-consciously imitates some conventions of the horror genre in order to expose the gender politics that link the horror genre and a patriarchal and neoliberal society. However, in the process, it also partakes of that very tradition, raising questions about, on the one hand, the limitations of parody, and, on the other, the apparently unescapable link between female subject positions and objectification.

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Recibido / Received: 19/4/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 29/9/2022*

La traducción española de las voces rurales y sureñas: *Una infancia*, de Harry Crews

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Resumen

Este artículo aborda la traducción española de *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*. La autobiografía de Harry Crews se publicó en 1978 y se tradujo al castellano en 2014, cuando la editorial Acuarela y A. Machado editó la versión de Javier Lucini. *A Childhood* se inscribe en el subgénero de la Grit Lit, pues narra las vidas de los blancos pobres en la Georgia de finales de los años treinta y la protagonizan los *freaks* que suelen asociarse con el Otro en la literatura estadounidense canónica. El libro da voz a la alteridad y retrata su variedad lingüística no estándar. Este trabajo observa cómo el dialecto literario de *A Childhood* recrea ciertos rasgos del inglés sureño estadounidense, los cuales suponen un reto traductológico. Se describen los contextos fuente y meta y se examinan la recepción de la obra y los paratextos que la acompañan. Se analizan las estrategias de Lucini para verter al castellano el dialecto literario de *A Childhood* y se muestra cómo recrea las voces sureñas al introducir marcas no estándar y una serie de notas, las cuales enfatizan la narrativa de Nosotros contra la Alteridad en el texto meta.

Palabras clave: dialecto literario, inglés sureño estadounidense, Harry Crews, paratextos, traducción literaria inglés-español.

The Spanish Translation of Southern Rural Voices: *A Childhood*, by Harry Crews

Abstract

This paper discusses the Spanish translation of *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*. Published in 1978, Harry

Crews's autobiography was not translated into Spanish until 2014, when Acuarela & A. Machado press published Javier Lucini's rendering. *A Childhood* can be ascribed to the subgenre of Grit Lit, since it chronicles the lives of poor whites in Georgia in the late 1930s, featuring the "freaks" commonly associated with the Other in canonical American literature. Crews's book gives voice to this Otherness and depicts the non-standard linguistic variety they speak. This paper observes the features of Southern American English that are recreated in *A Childhood* as a literary dialect, as a translational challenge. Both the source and target contexts are described, focusing on the book's reception and its paratexts. The strategies used by Lucini to render *A Childhood*'s literary dialect into Spanish are analyzed, showing how he recreates the interplay of Southern voices by introducing certain marked non-standard passages and a series of footnotes, which emphasize the Us vs. Alterity narrative in the target text.

Keywords: Literary Dialect, Southern American English, Harry Crews, Paratexts, English-Spanish Literary Translation.

1. Introducción

Este trabajo se inscribe en los estudios descriptivos de traducción con el objetivo de analizar la traducción española de *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*, la autobiografía de Harry Crews que se publicó en 1978 y no se tradujo al castellano hasta más de treinta y cinco años después, en la versión de Javier Lucini de 2014.

Con el propósito de considerar el contexto de publicación, tanto de la obra original como de la traducción, el segundo apartado de este trabajo indaga en la recepción de *A Childhood,* la cual se inscribe en la tradición de la literatura del Sur de Estados Unidos, y en cómo la crítica ha elogiado el retrato que Crews hace de la comunidad de blancos pobres y los esperpentos del entorno rural de Georgia, dando voz propia a la alteridad desposeída. A continuación, el apartado tres tiene en cuenta el concepto de mecenazgo, tal y como lo enuncia Lefevere (29-30), es decir,

los factores implicados en la reescritura en castellano de *A Childhood*, como la editorial y el traductor, para estudiar la historia de la publicación y recepción de la obra de Harry Crews en el polisistema literario español.

En ambos contextos, fuente y meta, se analizan los paratextos, "those elements in a published work that accompany the text" (Braga Riera 246), puesto que, según Batchletor (142), estos condicionan la recepción del texto por parte de los lectores. Los paratextos combinan elementos lingüísticos y visuales para llamar la atención a los lectores, contextualizar la obra y guiar la lectura. Se dividen en peritextos y epitextos. Los primeros son las dedicatorias, notas, introducciones, cubiertas e ilustraciones, es decir, todo aquello ligado físicamente al texto (Braga Riera 249); mientras que los epitextos son los paratextos "not materially appended to the text" (Genette 344) y comprenden las reseñas en prensa y las entrevistas con los autores, editores y traductores. Batchelor (25-46) defiende que, en los estudios descriptivos de traducción, los paratextos contribuyen a la investigación histórica y contextualizada de las traducciones y ayudan a analizar el papel de los traductores, motivos por los cuales se observan las reseñas de los textos fuente y meta y los peritextos que los acompañan.

Dado que *A Childhood* se basa en los recuerdos de Crews y en la memoria oral y colectiva del condado de Bacon (al sur del estado de Georgia), el apartado cuatro estudia cómo la autobiografía recrea esta interacción de voces por medio del dialecto literario, el cual reproduce en el texto escrito ciertas características del inglés sureño estadounidense. Se examina cómo Lucini ha recreado esta variedad lingüística en castellano. Con este objetivo, se parte de la afirmación, a propósito de los dialectos literarios y la alteridad, de López García, quien explica que "el sabor del habla local se recrea no ya como documentación fidedigna, sino como expresión estética que subraya o debe subrayar una percepción de lo diferente" (167). Se contrastan varios fragmentos de *A Childhood* con los correspondientes de *Una infancia* para comprobar si la voz de la otredad presente en el original se refleja o se elimina en la traducción.

Para catalogar las estrategias de traducción del dialecto literario, se sigue la clasificación de Tello Fons, quien distingue entre traducciones con marcas que se desvían de la norma culta o sin ellas (143-144). Una traducción sin marcas es aquella escrita en castellano estándar, respetando las normas ortotipográficas y gramaticales que respaldan

instituciones como la Real Academia Española. En cambio, en una traducción con marcas se tiene en cuenta el papel mimético o simbólico que juega el dialecto literario en el texto fuente y, mediante la estrategia de traducción dialectal paralela, se intenta recrear por medio de una variedad regional ya existente en la lengua meta (Tello Fons 144). Por ejemplo, esta estrategia se aplicaría si el inglés sureño estadounidense de *A Chilhood* se convirtiera en el español de Cuba en *Una infancia*. Una estrategia alternativa es la traducción pseudodialectal. En lugar de optar el texto meta por una variedad geográfica para reproducir el dialecto literario, los traductores se sirven de un dialecto social, es decir, emplean expresiones coloquiales y orales, frases hechas y juegan con la ortografía para introducir un castellano no estándar y alejado de la norma culta que no se corresponda con una zona concreta. Rica Peromingo y Braga Riera se basan en esta clasificación de Tello Fons y amplían a seis las estrategias traductológicas para trasladar —o no— los dialectos literarios (133-134): la compilación dialectal o uso del argot de la lengua de llegada; la traducción pseudodialectal o uso del registro no estándar y coloquial para crear un habla de menor grado de formalidad; la traducción dialectal paralela, que consiste en traducir por un dialecto existente en la lengua meta que despierte connotaciones similares a la variedad del texto fuente; la localización dialectal, que da un paso más y traslada el dialecto y la ambientación a una región concreta de la cultura meta; la estandarización o eliminación del dialecto literario en aras del español estándar; y la compensación, que "permite que algunas estructuras marcadas se traduzcan a la lengua estándar del texto final, a la vez que otras no dialectales se marcan en la traducción" (141).

Una vez se ha analizado cómo se ha traducido el dialecto literario de *A Chilhood,* se estima si la oposición narrativa entre "nosotros" y *otredad* se ha conservado en *Una Infancia*. La construcción de la otredad es una cuestión social de poder y jerarquía, puesto que, como apunta Landry, "social identity not only consists of the identities that people assert for themselves, but also the identification that is assigned to them by others" (129). Es decir, cuando un colectivo social privilegiado se define como lo normativo —nosotros— también designa qué valores y características quedan fuera de dicha conceptualización y se le aplican, por oposición, al colectivo desposeído e identificado como la otredad, reforzando así "the persistent constitution of the Other as the Self's shadow" (Spivak 75). Por otro lado, Baker (3) explica que las narrativas son las historias

que los humanos nos contamos unos a otros acerca de nuestro lugar en el mundo, y en ellas se relata qué se considera normal y qué es lo opuesto, la alteridad. En *A Childhood,* los aldeanos desposeídos del condado de Bacon ejemplifican la otredad que difiere de la normativa clase media y blanca estadounidense de principios de la década de 1950, cuando transcurren los hechos narrados. Dicho contraste está presente en la interacción de voces en inglés sureño y estándar, respectivamente, por lo que se examina si esto se ha reproducido en *Una infancia*.

2. Contexto y recepción de *A Childhood: The Biography of Place* (1978)

Harry Crews nació en 1935 en el condado de Bacon, en una zona conocida como "Wiregrass Country" y poblada por una mayoría de granjeros blancos, en contraste con las plantaciones de esclavos afroamericanos y aristócratas terratenientes del llamado "Deep South" (McGregory 95). Su padre, Ray Crews, era un aparcero que murió de un ataque al corazón antes de que Harry cumpliera dos años. Su madre, Myrtice, se casó con el hermano de Ray, Pascal, y, tras varios episodios de abusos, se divorció y se mudó con sus hijos a Jacksonville, al norte de Florida (*The Times* 96). Allí vivió Harry Crews hasta que se alistó en los marines a los diecisiete años y combatió en la guerra de Corea. Al volver a Estados Unidos en 1956, Crews asistió a la Universidad de Florida gracias al G. I. Bill, un programa federal que financiaba los estudios de los veteranos.

Crews publicó su primera novela en 1968, *The Gospel Singer,* la cual le valió una plaza de profesor de escritura creativa en esa universidad. A su debut literario le siguieron *Naked in Garden Hills* (1969), acerca de los esperpentos o *freaks* que sobreviven en las ruinas de una mina de fosfatos; *Car* (1972), cuyo protagonista decide comerse un coche pieza a pieza; *The Hawk Is Dying* (1973), *The Gypsy's Curse* (1974) y *A Feast of Snakes* (1976). En 1978, Crews dejó de lado la ficción —por la que empezaba a ser conocido, como muestra el texto promocional de su autobiografía (véase la primera cubierta de la Figura 1)— y publicó *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place,* que narra el regreso del autor a su pueblo natal para reconstruir la biografía de su padre biológico y los primeros años de su propia vida, antes de mudarse a Jacksonville. Salvo este último libro, "ninguna de sus historias es literalmente biográfica, pero todas acarrean innumerables elementos arrancados de su periplo por la Tierra" (Amat 15).

Figura 1. Cubiertas de *A Childhood* (1978, 1995 y 2022)

El ritmo creativo de Crews se redujo en la década de los ochenta y los noventa, si bien novelas como *The Knockout Artist* (1988), *Body* (1990) o *Scar Lover* (1992) retomaron la figura del *freak* sureño y hablaron de "gente haciéndolo lo mejor que pueden con el material que les ha tocado en suerte […], familia, violencia, individuos desafectos, gente no convencional y una posibilidad de redención, que no siempre se alcanza" (Amat 20). Crews publicó su última novela, *An American Family: The Baby with the Curious Markings* en 2006.

A propósito del protagonismo que cobran los *freaks* en las novelas de Crews ambientadas en Georgia, MacKethan (s. p.) argumenta que la obra de este autor puede clasificarse como "Grit Lit", un subgénero que contrasta con la versión pastoral e idealizada del Sur estadounidense que caracteriza a novelas como *Gone with the Wind* (1936), de Margaret Mitchell, y retrata a unos personajes que luchan por sobrevivir en un entorno rural, hostil, pobre y violento. McKethan (s. p.) argumenta que la Grit Lit se basa en el uso que hacía Flannery O'Connor de lo grotesco en sus relatos para criticar la asfixiante sociedad sureña del siglo XX, de modo que las obras de autores como Larry Brown, Chris Offutt y el propio Crews presentan un retrato desalentador de las comunidades rurales. Crews aplica las convenciones del género y habla de las clases trabajadoras más desfavorecidas, como los protagonistas de *A Childhood* (Vernon 194). Al distanciarse del discurso pastoral dominante, Crews logra revelar "the fallacies of Southern cultural mythology and expose its limitations" (Guinn 5), al mismo tiempo que da voz a los habitantes

de una región que no contaba con representación en "the Southern, and perhaps even American, literary canon" (Vernon 195).

A Childhood sobresale por el retrato del condado de Bacon durante los años posteriores a la Gran Depresión, pues refleja las costumbres y el habla de los granjeros y aparceros blancos que lo habitaban. Ingram (31-32) subraya la complejidad del texto, genéricamente definido como un ejercicio de naturalismo y de realismo social que cuenta una historia sobre "violence, poverty, and the ways in which a child grown into a man can never have but one place" (30). Crews escribe desde la perspectiva de los blancos desposeídos (Shelton 47) y desafía la concepción previa del Sur de Estados Unidos como una arcadia ajena a la violencia del pasado esclavista, como en la mencionada *Gone with the Wind*. La autobiografía de Crews recoge las vivencias de quienes Guinn denomina los "grit émigrés" (14), es decir, los blancos desposeídos que abandonaron el sur de Georgia en busca de trabajo en las urbes industriales del norte de Florida. Este tipo de personaje reaparece en las novelas de Crews y encarna las tensiones entre lo urbano y las penurias del mundo rural despoblado, oponiendo así lo contemporáneo y lo tradicional. Al escribir sobre las vivencias de los *grit émigrés*, Harry Crews no solo recrea la pobreza y la violencia que experimentó en su infancia, sino que da voz a la alteridad y construye "a complicated picture of the life of the poor white Southerner" (Ingram 31).

La estructura de *A Childhood* consta de dos partes. La primera comienza cuando Crews vuelve de Corea y visita a sus familiares en el pueblo para reconstruir la vida de su padre. Tras hacerse una idea de quién era Ray Crews gracias a las anécdotas que le cuentan el tío Alton y otros ancianos del condado de Bacon, empieza la segunda parte. Esta es la autobiografía como tal, en la que Crews rememora los años de su infancia, las visitas a la casa de sus vecinos afroamericanos, los Bookatee, el turbulento matrimonio de Myrtice y Pascal y dos episodios que le relacionaron con los *freaks*. El primero se corresponde a la parálisis infantil que le agarrotó las piernas y le dejó postrado en la cama durante seis meses, sin que los médicos ni los sanadores espirituales de la región consiguieran curarle. El segundo incidente sucede en 1941, poco después de que Crews se haya recuperado, cuando describe la matanza de los cerdos que prepara su familia. Por accidente, el niño cae en la caldera que usan para escaldar a los puercos. El protagonista acaba con la piel al

rojo vivo y pierde las uñas y el pelo, volviendo a quedar señalado como uno de los *freaks* del condado de Bacon para el regocijo de la comunidad (Vernon 201).

Aparte de los *freaks* y los *grit émigrés, A Childhood* también representa a los *rednecks* estadounidenses. La obra los humaniza, desmantelando así el estereotipo de persona violenta e ignorante, tradicionalmente asociado con estos blancos de clase baja en novelas y películas previas, como *Defensa* (*Deliverance,* de John Boorman, 1972). Según Watkins, Crews reclama cierta dignidad para los *rednecks* y subvierte "a centuries-old trend in which this class of southerners is maligned and demonized, on the one hand, or treated as comic figures, on the other" (16-17).

Las experiencias que Crews narra son representativas del condado de Bacon, pues, como reza el subtítulo de *A Childhood,* se trata de la biografía de un lugar. La memoria del pueblo no solo se construye con los recuerdos del autor, sino en consonancia con otras dos perspectivas: las leyendas populares que escucha Crews cuando regresa en 1956 y las anécdotas que otros lugareños y viejos conocidos le cuentan acerca de su infancia y la breve vida de Ray Crews (Popovich 28; Watkins 15). Esta mezcla de hechos, leyendas y recuerdos personales demuestra la relevancia que Crews le concede al arte de narrar historias en *A Childhood,* sobre la cual reflexiona cuando le preguntan por el género al que pertenece su obra:

> The tradition I'm part of is that of storytelling. I don't think of myself as a Southern novelist… Obviously, I live in the South, and I am from the South… I work out of the conditions of the South, primarily Georgia and North Florida—those cadences of speech, that weather, that whole thing (Crews; citado en Popovich 26).

A Childhood cosechó excelentes reseñas en 1978, que la ensalzaron como "the quintessential redneck autobiography" (Watkins 28). El libro estuvo más de una década descatalogado, hasta que se incluyó, junto a las novelas *Car* y *The Gypsie's Curse*, en el compendio de 1993 *Classic Crews: A Harry Crews Reader*. Dos años después, la editorial de la Universidad de Georgia publicó una edición ilustrada con las litografías en blanco y negro de Michael McCurdy (véanse la cubierta central de la Figura 1 y la Figura 2). La mencionada recepción positiva de la autobiografía de

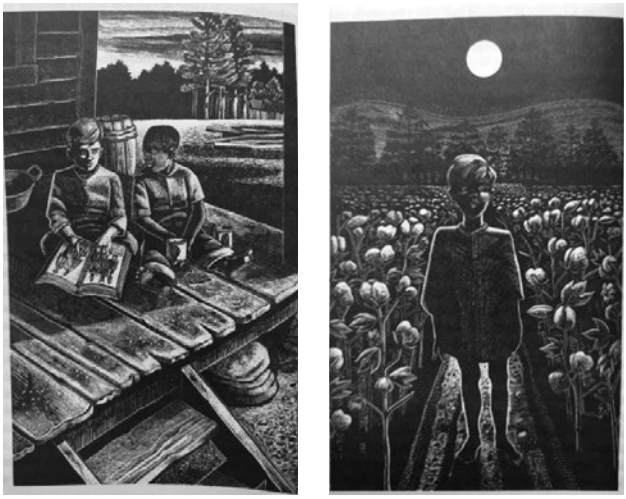

Figura 2. Ilustraciones de Michael McCurdy (Lucini 84 y 102)

Crews en el contexto norteamericano ha contribuido a que *A Childhood* se reeditara en marzo de 2022 en la colección Penguin Classics. La cubierta de esta edición, más figurativa que la anterior, alude a un peritexto interesante (derecha de la Figura 1): incluye un prólogo de Tobias Wolff, donde el escritor habla de cómo Crews le influyó a la hora de trabajar en su propia autobiografía, *This Boy's Life* (1989), acentuando, una vez más, el impacto que *A Childhood* ha tenido en la tradición de memorias sureñas.

3. Harry Crews en España: *Una infancia* (2014)

Los lectores españoles pasaron décadas sin conocer la obra de Harry Crews, pues hasta 1993 no se tradujo ninguna de sus novelas. Curiosamente, fue el euskera y no el castellano la lengua a la que primero se tradujo *Car,* que publicó la editorial Susa con versión de Eduardo Matauko y Kristin Addis. Pasó bastante desapercibida y, casi veinte años después, el proyecto editorial del sello de música Acuarela y la distribuidora de libros Machado, Acuarela y A. Machado, se interesó por traducir al castellano los libros de Harry Crews. El primero en traducirse fue *Cuerpo*, que se publicó en 2011 con traducción de Javier

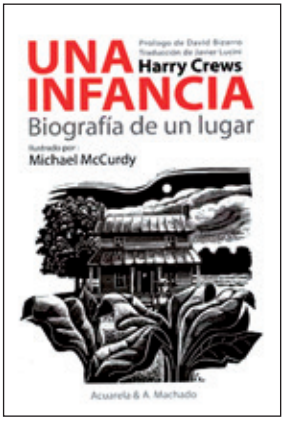

Figura 3. Cubierta de *Una infancia* (2014)

Lucini. El propio Lucini comentó que los motivos que habían llevado a la editorial a publicar las obras de Crews en España eran que al autor "posee una voz propia y un estilo que le aporta homogeneidad, sin importar lo radicalmente diferentes que son un libro de otro. Eso es lo que hace de él un autor verdaderamente especial" (citado en Bizarro s. p.). A finales de 2012, la misma editorial publicó *El cantante de gospel*, esta vez con traducción de José Elías Rodríguez Cañas. El peritexto que abre este volumen es el prólogo de Kiko Amat, donde el escritor catalán reflexiona acerca del trabajo de Crews y cómo le ha influido en sus novelas.

El cantante de gospel tuvo un éxito moderado, que posibilitó una segunda edición en marzo de 2013. Un año después, la editorial Acuarela y A. Machado publicó la versión en castellano de la autobiografía de Crews, titulada *Una infancia: Biografía de un lugar*. Como se aprecia en la Figura 3, la cubierta anuncia dos peritextos: el prólogo del periodista David Bizarro, en el que habla del papel que las experiencias de la infancia desempeñaron en su formación, y las ilustraciones de McCurdy, que se recuperan de la edición estadounidense de 1995. El responsable de verter al castellano el libro volvió a ser Javier Lucini, traductor madrileño que se había especializado en la reescritura de textos estadounidenses para la editorial independiente Mono Azul (Jonás G. y Ayuso s. p.). En la página de créditos, Lucini agradece a al editor Jesús Llorente y a Tomás Cobos (traductor que también colaboraba con Acuarela y A. Machado) su cooperación en la traducción de *Una infancia*. Otro paratexto que

visibiliza al traductor del libro son las cinco notas a pie de página que figuran en *Una infancia,* que se examinan en el apartado cinco.

La acogida de este texto fue positiva en líneas generales, con reseñas en prensa que destacan los ambientes sangrientos y violentos que se describen en *Una infancia,* un texto que resulta, según Arjona, "una biografía peculiar en la que las serpientes hablan y los pájaros roban el alma a los niños, en la que los persistentes ecos del *Huckleberry Finn* de Mark Twain resuenan en la descripción de aquel sitio del que solo puedes escapar sin olvidarlo nunca" (2.p.).

4. La traducción del dialecto literario

La simpatía que muestra la autobiografía de Harry Crews por los varios tipos de alteridad presentes en *A Childhood*, ya sean *freaks, rednecks* o *grit émigrés* (Vernon 208), también se aprecia en cómo retrata sus voces y las peculiaridades del dialecto que hablan, lo cual supone un reto añadido en la traducción al castellano. En cambio, la voz del narrador corresponde a la del propio Crews, quien rememora su visita al condado de Bacon en 1956 y su infancia a finales de los años treinta. Al escribir desde la perspectiva de un escritor consagrado en 1978, el narrador emplea un inglés americano estándar que Lucini vierte al castellano también estándar, sin incluir marca alguna que se desvíe de la norma culta, como ilustran los ejemplos de los primeros recuerdos de Crews en la Tabla 1.

Crews 1978	Lucini 2014
My first memory is of a time ten years before I was born, and the memory takes place where I have never been and involves my daddy whom I never knew. (19)	Mi primer recuerdo se remonta a una época diez años anterior a mi nacimiento, transcurre en un lugar en el que nunca he estado y tiene que ver con mi padre, a quien nunca llegué a conocer. (17)
These were not violent men, but their lives were full of violence. When daddy first went down to the Everglades, he started on a gang that cut the advance right-of-way. (24)	No eran hombres violentos pero sus vidas estaban llenas de violencia. Cuando mi padre llegó a los Everglades empezó a trabajar en la cuadrilla encargada de allanar la ruta. (24)

Tabla 1. La traducción de la voz del narrador

En los diálogos, en cambio, Crews recrea una variedad lingüística específica, el inglés sureño estadounidense o *Southern American English* (SAE). Al usar el dialecto literario en calidad de recurso mimético, el autor se inscribe en la larga tradición de escritores sureños que se han servido de él para imitar el habla de sus personajes: el denominado *vernacular*, que abarca desde Mark Twain, pionero en este recurso, hasta William Faulkner y Eudora Welty en el siglo XX (Cohen Minnick 152). Según Pederson (274), esta habla comienza al sur del río Potomac, se extiende por los dominios de la antigua Confederación —entre ellos Georgia, donde se ambienta *A Childhood*— y se expande por el oeste a los estados de Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas y Oklahoma.

Algunos de los rasgos morfosintácticos que caracterizan al SAE y que se aprecian en el texto de Crews son los siguientes: la omisión de la cópula verbal (Pederson 275, Bernstein 139), por ejemplo en "We all of us made out of dirt" (Crews 75); la supresión de los verbos auxiliares en las formas compuestas (Pederson 275), caso de "You standin in danger of hellfire" (Crews 90); la adición del perfectivo *done* para marcar el pasado al prescindir de los auxiliares *have* y *had* (Pederson 275, Bernstein 140), "His legs ain't done a goddamn thing" (Crews 90); las negaciones dobles con el predominio de la partícula *ain't,* la cual también se observa en otras variedades no estándar (Pederson 275, Bernstein 140), "He ain't comin on the place and causin no trouble." (Crews 39); la combinación de dos o más auxiliares modales para expresar cierto grado de probabilidad (Pederson 275) o amabilidad (Bernstein 138), como en "Been your daddy's mule he mought woulda killed it" (Crews 38); la omisión de la *–s* de la tercera persona del singular en los verbos en presente simple (Bernstein 139), "a splinter don't fly up there and put out that other eye" (Crews 27); el uso generalizado de *was* para las personas del singular y del plural en pasado (Bernstein 139), como en "You was laughing at how many I et. Was you counting, too?" (Crews 45); y la utilización del pronombre *them* en lugar del demostrativo *those* (Bernstein 140), por ejemplo en "And it was because of them biscuits" (Crews 45). Un último rasgo morfosintáctico característico del inglés sureño estadounidense que apuntan Pederson (275) y Bernstein (138) y que, sin embargo, no se observa en *A Childhood* es el uso de las formas *you all* y la contracción *y'all* para la segunda persona del plural. Los fragmentos de la Tabla 2 ejemplifican los rasgos morfosintácticos del SAE presentes en *A Childhood* y la correspondiente versión en castellano

Crews 1978	Lucini 2014
When he'd finished eating, daddy said: "I'm scared, Cecil. That old man and his boy's gone kill me." Cecil was still at his beans. "He **ain't** gone kill you." "I think he means to." Cecil put his plate down and said: "No, he **ain't** cause you and me's gone settle it right now." Cecil was six feet seven inches tall and weighed between 250 and 175 pounds depending upon the season of the year. "Cecil, that old man **don't** know how strong he is his own self." "He's about to find out. You just keep his boy off me. I'll take care of the old man." (25)	Cuando regresó al campamento encontró a Cecil junto al carro de la comida. Al acabar de comer mi padre le dijo: —Estoy **acojonao**, Cecil. Ese viejo y su hijo me van a matar. Cecil siguió enfrascado en sus frijoles. —No va a matarte. —Me temo que es lo que intenta. Cecil bajó el plato y dijo: —No, no va a hacerlo porque tú y yo vamos a arreglarlo ahora mismo. Cecil medía algo más de dos metros y pesaba entre 113 y 125 kilos, dependiendo de la estación del año. —Cecil, ese viejo no sabe la fuerza que tiene. —Pues está a punto de averiguarlo. Tú mantén al hijo **apartao**. Yo me ocupo del viejo. (25)
"**Been** your daddy's mule he **mought woulda** killed it. Horse mule, he was, name of Sheddie". The old man had withered right down to bone, but his mind was as sharp as a boy's. "Workin shares like he was, Sheddie come with the crop. But he was bad to bite chickens like I said. Chicken'd hop up on the feed tough to peck a little corn and Sheddie'd just take him a bite. Sometimes he'd git a wing, sometimes a leg. Sometimes the whole damn chicken." He began to cough and he stopped to spray the porch with black spit. "Ray he got tired of seein all **them** chickens hobblin about the place with a wing or a leg missin. So he cured that Sheddie, he did." (38)	—Siendo suya tu padre debería haberla **matao**. Era un macho. Se llamaba Sheddie. El anciano se había visto reducido hasta quedarse casi en los huesos pero seguía teniendo la agudeza mental de un niño. —Por el contrato de aparcería, Sheddie venía con la cosecha. Pero como os iba diciendo tenía la mala costumbre de morder a los pollos. Se subían al comedero **pa** picotear un poco de maíz y Sheddie les metía un **bocao**. A veces se merendaba un ala, otras una pata. A veces a **to** el puto pollo. Se puso a toser y dejó de rociar el porche con sus escupitajos negros. —Ray se cansó de ver a **tos** esos pollos cojeando por ahí con una sola pata o un ala de menos. Así que le puso remedio a aquel Sheddie **de las narices**, ya lo creo que lo hizo. (44)

(Continúa)

Crews 1978	Lucini 2014
Daddy said: "Something the matter?" Since the old man was bad to bristle and bar himself, he said: "Is it look to be something the matter?" "What you laughing at?" "I **ain't** laughing." "I **seen** it." The old man said: "A man cain't tell me in my own house I was laughing." Daddy said: "You **was**. And it was because of **them** biscuits." "I don't laugh at biscuits, boy. I **ain't** crazy yet, even if it's some that think I am." "You **was** laughing at how many I et. Was you counting, too?" (44-45)	Mi padre inquirió: ——¿Algún problema? Como al anciano no le costaba nada enfurecerse y ponerse a vociferar, respondió: —¿A ti te parece que **haiga** algún problema? —¿De qué se está riendo? —No me estoy riendo. —Le he visto. El anciano dijo: —Ningún hombre **pue** decirme en mi propia casa que **me estao** riendo. Mi padre dijo: —Pues eso es lo que estaba haciendo. Y se reía por estos bollos. —Yo no me río de los bollos, muchacho. Todavía no estoy loco, aunque **haiga** algunos que lo crean. —Se estaba riendo de cuántos bollos me **zampao**. ¿También los ha **estao** contando? (53)
"I **seen** it," mama said. "You **ain't** got but four more days," he said. "Four more days to what?" "Move out." (145)	—Lo vi —dijo mamá. —Solo les quedan cuatro días —dijo él. —¿Cuatro días **pa** qué? —Para irse. (199)

Tabla 2. La traducción del inglés sureño estadounidense: diálogos

de Lucini, cuyas estrategias de traducción se examinan al final de este apartado. Téngase en cuenta que en esta tabla y las siguientes se han resaltado en negrita los rasgos no estándar.

A medio camino entre los rasgos morfosintácticos antes enumerados y los léxicos, Johnstone (194-195) explica que en el SAE y en la obra de Crews es común el uso del verbo *reckon* en lugar de los convencionales *think, guess* o *believe* como marcador de la evidencialidad y modulador de las opiniones. Se aprecia en varios pasajes de *A Childhood,* por ejemplo en "Don't reckon you'd have the stomach for that, would you?" y "I reckon

that about does it" (Crews 27 y 148). En cuanto a las características fonológicas del inglés sureño estadounidense, el autor las recrea mediante la técnica del dialecto visual o *eye-dialect,* que consiste en "unconventional spelling used to reproduce colloquial usage" (Brett 49). Es decir, el dialecto visual recurre a la ortografía no estándar para indicar una pronunciación o acento particular. Varios escritores norteamericanos, entre los que se cuenta Harry Crews, lo han empleado parar dar voz a la alteridad desposeída y marginada y "mark the speaker as 'other', particularly as a less educated or socially or racially inferior person" (Cohen Minnick 152). Este uso concuerda con las reflexiones de Szymańska acerca de la función del dialecto literario, que suele resaltar "differences in social status and education, manifesting ethnic and cultural identity" (62).

La presencia del dialecto visual en un texto literario supone un problema de traducción añadido, según Brett (50), pues es complicado que los dialectos sociales o regionales tengan una equivalencia análoga en la lengua meta. Asimismo, Ramos Pinto advierte de que el empleo de dichos dialectos meta pone en riesgo la aceptabilidad de la traducción, pues "the target system and public do not easily accept the idea of having foreign characters in foreign territory speaking national non-standard varieties" (295). En *A Childhood,* se observa que palabras como *eaten, can't, something, get, working, just* y *Coca-Colas* se transforman, por medio del dialecto visual, en *et, cain't*, *sumpin, git, workin, jus,* y *Co-Colers* respectivamente, reflejando la pronunciación sureña del condado de Bacon.

A propósito de la traducción del SAE en las obras de Harry Crews que publicó la editorial Acuarela y A. Machado, Javier Lucini ha subrayado lo complicado que le resultó traducir el dialecto sureño. En una entrevista detalló cómo era el proceso de traducción, en el que le ayudaron Jesús Llorente y Tomás Cobos:

> En la editorial nos planteamos cómo íbamos a hacerlo. Al final nos inventamos una fórmula que más o menos reflejaba esos detalles, distinguiendo los diferentes acentos. Quedábamos los tres de Acuarela, con una botella de whisky, o con cerveza, y nos poníamos a leerlo en voz alta, y luego jijiji, jajaja, y así fue como se tradujeron esos diálogos. Porque al principio parecían andaluces, luego parecían cubanos… [*risas*] (Lucini; citado en Jonás G. y Ayuso s. p.).

Crews 1978	Lucini 2014
Jay saw Ruby on the back porch and said, loud enough for her to hear: "Why don't you **git** your old woman out here? They tell me she does most of the ax work for you anyhow." That was when Bad Eye looked up, a big vein standing in his forehead. "You stand out there in a public road and talk all you want to. But don't come over the fence onto my land. Don't **reckon** you'd have the stomach for that, would you?" (27)	Jay distinguió a Ruby allí en el porche y elevó el tono de voz para que ella también lo escuchara: —¿Por qué no le dices a tu señora que se venga? Me han **contao** que es ella quien se encarga de hacerte casi **to** el trabajo con el hacha. Fue entonces cuando Ojo Chungo alzó la vista exhibiendo una vena enorme en la frente. —Mientras estés ahí, en **mitá** de la carretera, puedes hablar **to** lo que quieras. Pero ni se te ocurra cruzar la valla y pisar mi tierra… Claro que no creo que tengas huevos, ¿**verdá**? (28)
"What is it you want to know?" he said. "I don't know what I want to know," I said. "Anything. Everything." "**Cain't** know everything," he said. "And anything won't help." (32)	—¿Qué es lo que quieres saber? —me preguntó. —No sé —dije yo—. Cualquier cosa. Todo. —**To** no se **pue** saber —dijo—. Y cualquier cosa no te será de mucha ayuda. (36)
"How you, Alton?" he said. Uncle Alton said: "We all right. Everything all right with you, Joe?" "**Jus** fine, I **reckon**. What can I **git** you?" "I guess you can let us have two of them **Co-Colers**." (33)	—¿Cómo va eso, Alton? —dijo. El tío Alton le respondió: —**To** bien. ¿Tú también **to** bien, Joe? —**Mu** bien, eso creo. ¿Qué se te ofrece? —A ver si puedes darnos dos de esas Coca-Colas fresquitas. (36-37)
He stood up from the table and said to mama: "Myrtice, **git** your things. We **leavin**." Grandpa said: "Where you going to?" Daddy stopped just long enough to say, "I don't know where I'm going. It's lots of places I could go. What you don't understand, old man, is if I didn't have anyplace to go, I'd go anyway. (45-46)	Se levantó de la mesa y le dijo a mi madre: —Myrtice, recoge tus cosas. Nos vamos. El abuelo dijo: —¿**Ande** vais a ir? Mi padre se detuvo solo lo necesario para decir: —No tengo ni idea de a dónde me voy. Hay un montón de sitios a los que podría ir. Lo que **usté** no entiende, viejo, es que aunque no tuviera ningún sitio al que ir, me iría igual. (54)

Tabla 3. La traducción del dialecto visual

Tras este relato informal, Lucini cita como ejemplo de traducción del dialecto literario la edición española de *Breve historia de siete asesinatos,* de Marlon James. En ella, se empleó la estrategia de traducción dialectal paralela para convertir el inglés jamaicano de la novela fuente en el español de Cuba, de modo que "la escritora Wendy Guerra se encargó de cubanizar aquellos pasajes escritos en *patois* [jamaicano] después de que [Javier] Calvo los vertiera al español estándar" (Sanz Jiménez 78). En *Una infancia* no se observa una única estrategia para traducir el dialecto literario, sino varias. Como se percibe en las Tablas 2 y 3, Lucini opta por un texto con marcas que transgreden la norma culta en los niveles ortográfico (*usté, contao*) y gramatical (*haiga*). Dichas marcas figuran en redonda y no en cursiva al no hallarse solo en fragmentos puntuales, sino en toda la obra. Aunque en la entrevista Lucini mencione los dialectos andaluz y cubano como fuente de inspiración, no parece quedar claro que haya traducido el inglés sureño estadounidense a un dialecto regional concreto de la lengua meta. Lucini recrea el dialecto del condado de Bacon por medio de apócopes (*pa, to, mu*), la pérdida de la *d* intervocálica en los participios (*acojonao, apartao, matao*), la eliminación de la *d* final (*mitá, verdá, usté*) y las contracciones cuando coinciden dos vocales al final de una sílaba y al principio de la siguiente (*me estao*). Asimismo, incluye expresiones españolas coloquiales, caso de *zampar* o *de las narices*, y formas verbales no estándar, como *pue* o *haiga*, que, más que señalar a una zona geográfica concreta, indican un menor grado de gramaticalidad, apuntan al español oral y coloquial y mezclan rasgos de varios dialectos sin recordar al andaluz o al cubano, como el traductor mencionaba en la entrevista. Por este motivo, la estrategia de Lucini encajaría en la categoría de traducción pseudodialectal, más que en la dialectal paralela. La traducción pseudodialectal no es incompatible con la compensación de la que también se sirve Lucini, pues la correspondencia entre las estructuras marcadas en los textos fuente y meta no es unívoca, como se puede comprobar en los dos últimos fragmentos de la Tabla 2.

5. Las notas del traductor en *Una infancia*

Como se adelantó en el tercer apartado, Javier Lucini no solo se visibiliza en *Una infancia* por medio la dedicatoria inicial o las estrategias para la traducción del dialecto literario, sino también a través de las notas a pie de página.

Crews 1978	Lucini 2014
He had thought from sunup to dark of the chickee where he had lain under the palm roof being eaten alive by swarming mosquitoes. (19)	Desde que amaneció hasta que oscureció había estado pensando en la **chickee**[1] en la que se había tendido bajo un techo de hojas de palma, con enjambres de mosquitos comiéndole vivo. **N1**. Término en lengua creek o mikasuki, hablada por los indios semínolas y miccosukkes que significa "casa". Son casas de plataforma construidas con palmeras y paja sobre palos (*N. del T.*) (18)
There was a section of Bacon County famous all over Georgia for moonshining and bird dogs and violence of one kind or another. It was called Scuffletown, not because it was a town or even a crossroads with a store in it, but because everybody said: "They always scuffling up there." Sometimes the scuffling was serious; sometimes not. (26)	Había un sector del condado de Bacon famoso en todo Georgia por la destilación ilegal de alcohol, los perros de caza y toda suerte de violencia. Se llamaba **Scuffletown**[2], no porque fuese un pueblo, ni siquiera un cruce de caminos con una tienda, sino porque como decía todo el mundo: «Por allí siempre andan metidos en alguna refriega». A veces las refriegas eran serias; a veces no. **N2** Pueblo de refriegas (*N. del T.*) (27)
The door was taken down, as it usually was in those days, for a cooling board, and the body placed upon it. (55)	La puerta se descolgó como solía hacerse en aquellos tiempos a modo de tabla para el cadáver[3] y colocaron a papá encima. **N3** *Cooling board*: tabla sobre la que solía tenderse el cadáver. En los meses de invierno, al complicarse el entierro por hallarse la tierra helada, se envolvía el cadáver en telas y se apoyaba sobre una tabla en el granero hasta que la tierra se deshelaba. El término aparece en las letras de numerosos blues de la época (*N. del T.*) (70)
I felt how lonely and savage it was to be a freak. (87)	Sentí lo solitario y terrible que era ser un *freak*[4]. **N4.** Sustantivo referido a un espécimen anómalo, a un fenómeno insólito, un bicho raro, un monstruo. El Freak Show o Feria de Rarezas es un tipo de espectáculo de variedades en el que se presentan desviaciones biológicas, malformaciones y mutaciones, seres con capacidades o características físicas inusuales, sorprendentes o grotescas. Véase la película *Freaks* (*La parada de los monstruos*, 1932) de Tod Browning (N. del T.) (116)

(Continúa)

Crews 1978	Lucini 2014
The little shotgun row houses were waiting in the Springfield Section and the factories were waiting and they knew their time was coming. (132)	Las filas de diminutas caitas de habitaciones corridas[5] estaban aguardando en el sector de Springfield, del mismo modo que las fábricas, y sabían que se aproximaba el momento de ponerse en marcha. **N5.** *Shotgun houses*, tipo de casa típica de los estados sureños que conforma el plano de un rectángulo con habitaciones dispuestas una detrás de otra y con entradas tanto en la parte delantera como en la de atrás. El término hace referencia a que si disparas con una escopeta (*shotgun*) desde la puerta principal el tiro saldría sin encontrar obstáculo por la puerta trasera (*N. del T.*) (180)

Tabla 4. *Las notas de* Una infancia

La traducción publicada por Acuarela y A. Machado no es una edición académica profusa en notas y referencias bibliográficas sobre el autor, sino un volumen producido por una editorial pequeña e independiente para dar a conocer la obra de Crews a los lectores españoles. Incluye un total de cinco notas del traductor (véase la Tabla 4), que cumplen dos funciones distintas. Por un lado, Lucini emplea las notas para dilucidar el significado de los términos que figuran en otras lenguas, como la casa *chickee,* el barrio *Scuffletown* y los *freaks* que pueblan los textos de Crews. Por otra parte, el traductor se sirve de las notas para comentar brevemente ciertas tradiciones culturales sureñas que se mencionan en la autobiografía y que pueden no resultar familiares a los lectores, por ejemplo, las *cooling boards* sobre las que se colocaban los difuntos o las *shotgun houses* en las que se aloja el protagonista cuando se muda a Jacksonville.

6. Conclusiones

En *A Childhood*, Harry Crews ofrece a los lectores la oportunidad de profundizar en las vidas de los *freaks* y los trabajadores sureños que se marginaban o ridiculizaban en otras novelas estadounidenses (Vernon 209). La autobiografía de Crews se vale de lo grotesco y de las convenciones de la Grit Lit para empatizar con la Otredad, recopila anécdotas e historias de la memoria propia y la colectiva para entender

el duro mundo rural del condado de Bacon y, así, logra humanizar a "the poor white without mitigating the violence and grotesquery typically associated with the representation of this class of southerners" (Watkins 20).

En su humanización de los blancos pobres que conoció de niño, Crews emplea el dialecto literario para reproducir el habla de una comunidad concreta y ofrecer "meaningful information about Southern life" (Cohen Minnick 153). Dada esta función mimética del dialecto literario, se han contrastado varios fragmentos de *A Childhood* y *Una infancia* en las Tablas 2 y 3, y se ha comprobado cómo Lucini reproduce en castellano el inglés sureño estadounidense por medio de la traducción pseudodialectal y la compensación, dos estrategias que le permiten jugar con la ortografía e introducir una serie de marcas —apócopes, contracciones y un registro coloquial— que se alejan de la lengua estándar. El traductor de *Una infancia* también se visibiliza en varios paratextos, a través de la cubierta, la dedicatoria y, sobre todo, las notas a pie de página que aclaran términos en otras lenguas y alusiones a las tradiciones sureñas. Mediante estas estrategias, Lucini logra reproducir la narrativa de "nosotros" frente a la *otredad* tan presente en *A Childhood,* pues la voz de los habitantes del condado de Bacon diverge de la norma culta y contrasta con el habla estándar del narrador (el Crews adulto que visita su pueblo en 1956).

A modo de extensión de este trabajo, se podría estudiar si José Elías Rodríguez Cañas siguió estrategias similares a las de Lucini en su traducción de *El cantante de gospel* o cómo fue la recepción y traducción de la primera novela de Harry Crews que se tradujo al castellano, *Cuerpo,* también editada por Acuarela y A. Machado. Es más, sería interesante rastrear qué implicaciones tuvo el cambio de editorial para las obras de Crews, publicadas por el sello Dirty Works desde 2015, en relación a la representación de la alteridad. Se sigue contando con las traducciones de Javier Lucini, mas queda por estudiar cómo dichas ediciones han condicionado la recepción de Harry Crews en el contexto literario español.

Notas

[1] Shelton (49) define los *freaks* de Harry Crews como "characters with bodily deformities of various kinds" y Vernon (194) matiza la explicación con "those stigmatized […] because of physical, psychological, or spiritual defects". En *Una infancia,* el autor observa que los habitantes del condado de Bacon suelen presentar deformidades físicas: "a casi todas las personas que yo conocía les faltaba algo" (Lucini 83).

[2] El retrato de lo raro y lo extravagante cuenta con una larga tradición literaria en el Sur de Estados Unidos que comienza con los relatos grotescos de Edgar Allan Poe (Vernon 194) y, según Shleton (49), se afianza en las épocas de dislocación cultural, como los períodos de entreguerras.

[3] Vernon (194) apunta la diversidad de etiquetas que emplea la crítica para catalogar la Grit Lit según su temática, por ejemplo, *Rough South, Cracker Realist, Trailer Park Gothic* o *Hick Chic*. Tal disquisición terminológica queda fuera de los objetivos de este trabajo.

[4] Watkins (212) utiliza el término *redneck* para aludir a los blancos pobres y de clase trabajadora de las zonas rurales de Estados Unidos, si bien reconoce que esta denominación suele asociarse con "virulent racism and a predisposition to violence", en contraste con los calificativos "good old boy" y "hillbilly", que designan, respectivamente, a los trabajadores blancos de los entornos rurales y a los gañanes ignorantes. Para más detalles, véase Reed, John Shelton. *Southern Folk, Plain and Fancy: Native White Social Types.* University of Georgia Press, 1986.

[5] Existe una versión española: Wolff, Tobias. *Vida de este chico.* Translated by Maribel de Juan Guyatt, Alfaguara, 1993.

[6] Crews, Harry. *Autoa.* Translated by Eduardo Matauko and Kristin Addis, Susa, 1993.

[7] En 2014, este traductor fundó, con Nacho Reig, la empresa Dirty Works, que definen como una editorial especializada en "Grit Lit, gótico sureño, realismo sucio". Esta editorial independiente ha publicado otras seis novelas de Crews hasta la fecha: *El amante de las cicatrices* (2015), *La maldición gitana* (2017), *Coche* (2018), *Festín de serpientes* (2019), *Desnudo en Garden Hills* (2020) y *Todo lo que necesitamos del infierno* (2022). Lucini se ha encargado de traducir todas ellas.

[8] Lucini tradujo para Mono Azul textos de Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville y O. Henry, entre otros autores.

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Recibido / Received: 26/4/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 11/7/2022*

Construyendo el País de las Maravillas. El proceso de creación de mundos en la obra de Lewis Carroll

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Resumen

El País de las Maravillas que se presenta por primera vez en *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* de Lewis Carroll (1865) es, a día de hoy, fácilmente reconocible en cualquier adaptación o a través de todo tipo de referencias, desde canciones como *I am the Walrus* (John Lennon para The Beatles, 1967) hasta expresiones como "seguir al Conejo Blanco". Esto sucede porque el escritor logró crear un mundo que se diferencia de cualquier otro universo fantástico, y lo hizo a través del sueño de una niña; Alicia es por tanto la que concibe ese mundo, siendo fruto de su imaginación. Esto implica que el País de las Maravillas es el escenario narrativo que inventaría una niña del Oxford victoriano. La propia realidad de la protagonista es la base para que todo un reino de *nonsense* cobre vida. Este trabajo investiga dichas bases, a fin de comprender cómo Alicia, en la mente de Carroll, concibió el mundo fantástico en el que se adentra en *Alice 's Adventures in Wonderland* y *Through the Looking-Glass*.

Palabras clave: *Alicia en el País de las Maravillas*, Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, *nonsense*, construcción de mundos.

Making Wonderland. Worldbuilding Process in Lewis Carroll's Texts

Abstract

The Wonderland that is presented for the first time in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is, nowadays, easily recognizable in any adaptation or through all kinds of references, from songs such as *I am the Walrus*

(John Lennon for The Beatles, 1967) to expressions such as "follow the White Rabbit". This happens because the writer managed to create a world that differentiates from any other fantastic universe, and he did it through a girl's dream; therefore, Alice is the one who conceives that world, being the result of her imagination. This means that Wonderland is the narrative scenario that a Victorian Oxford girl would come up with. The protagonist's reality is the basis for a whole realm of nonsense coming alive. This work goes through these roots, in order to understand how Alice, in Carroll's mind, created the fantastic world that she goes deep into in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

Keywords: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, Nonsense, worldbuilding.

1. Introducción

Cuando una historia transcurre dentro del sueño de uno de los personajes, este se convierte indirectamente en el creador del mundo en el que se enmarca la aventura; consciente o inconscientemente ha imaginado ese escenario, lo ha construido de la misma manera en la que se forman las secuencias oníricas: en base a sus emociones y experiencias, dotándolas de un hilo conductor o quitándoselo, deformando la realidad o desordenando recuerdos. Esto es lo que ocurre con Alicia en *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. El País de las Maravillas lo ha inventado ella, por tanto, Lewis Carroll debe ponerse en su piel para crear lo que la imaginación de una niña podría construir. Así, mirando la realidad con óptica infantil, puede surgir un lugar como el reino al que viaja la protagonista, en el que todo tiene ciertas semejanzas con el mundo que conocemos, pero muchos conceptos y situaciones se deforman. Por ejemplo, al igual que en la Inglaterra victoriana real, hay un sistema político basado en la monarquía, pero la Reina de Corazones está caricaturizada hasta parecer una villana de los cuentos clásicos. La imaginería de juegos como el croquet, el ajedrez o los naipes se entremezclan con las tramas, las cuales no siguen un orden lógico más allá del del descubrimiento a través de la exploración del territorio, las

canciones y poemas que Alicia conoce aparecen con otras formas y significados, y ni siquiera ella mantiene el mismo aspecto todo el rato, con oscilaciones de tamaño que añaden más confusión a las situaciones a las que se enfrenta. El País de las Maravillas se construye con retazos del mundo real, pero estos se ensamblan con piezas de *nonsense*.

2. Construyendo mundos

El proceso de construcción de mundos narrativos empieza mucho antes de que el creador comience a diseñar el universo en el que se enmarcará su obra: se trata de un ejercicio imaginativo que viene de la infancia. Hay muchos niños y niñas que juegan a dibujar y escribir historias, pero el proceso se hace más literal a través del juego: los pequeños disfrutan construyendo fuertes con cojines y mantas, transformando así los espacios en lugares imaginarios en los que pueden entrar durante sus juegos consistentes en lo que se cataloga como "pretend and make-believe" (Wolf 18). Este hábito no siempre se detiene en la adolescencia o la adultez, y por eso es posible para creadores y artistas enmarcar sus historias en un universo narrativo que se articula sobre bases firmes y consecuentes, las cuales pueden ser incluso mantenidas a lo largo de largas sagas de libros o películas. Con esto nacen universos narrativos que abarcan desde reinos como Narnia, en *The Narnia Chronicles* de C. S. Lewis, hasta mundos que no dejan de expandirse, como el "Wizarding World" de J.K.Rowling, iniciado con la saga de *Harry Potter* y continuado en distintos libros sobre la historia de la magia o las precuelas cinematográficas de la aventura principal que se enmarcan en distintas épocas y lugares. Destaca el ejemplo de J. R. R. Tolkien, quién trabajó en su creación durante toda su vida adulta, añadiendo nuevos detalles tanto a la Tierra Media en particular como a su universo en términos generales, proponiendo incluso su propio mito de la creación. Tras su muerte se publicaron trece volúmenes de la serie *The History of Middle-earth*, el cual documenta cinco décadas de trabajo de construcción de mundos. De su autoría es también el ensayo *On Fairy-stories* (originalmente publicado en 1947, como resultado de una conferencia en los ciclos "Andrew Lang Lecture Series" de la universidad escocesa de St. Andrews) sobre mundos imaginados. Al igual que él, muchos otros autores han llevado sus mundos narrativos de las páginas de ficción a las de teoría literaria, explicando los procesos de creación de sus tiempos y espacios. En consonancia con esto

encontramos libros como *The Folklore of Discworld: Legends, myths and customs from the Discworld with helpful hints from planet Earth* de Terry Pratchett y Jacqueline Simpson (2008), en el cual se explican las bases y el desarrollo del Mundodisco de Pratchett, con sus leyendas, mitología propias, adaptadas del mundo real y tratadas en muchos casos en clave satírica, jugando con la subversión de expectativas en torno a los tópicos sociales y culturales.

El estudio teórico y académico de la construcción de mundos se intensifica y toma un cariz filosófico a partir de 1960, analizando las particularidades de lo que se califica como "mundos posibles" y la interrelación entre sus bases lógicas y morales y las de nuestra realidad (Wolf 22). Los universos narrativos de la literatura, medios audiovisuales e incluso formatos como los juegos se estudian desde distintas perspectivas con el objetivo de alcanzar un entendimiento de dichos mundos desde su nacimiento en la imaginación de sus creadores. Así, pueden encontrarse obras como *Oz and Beyond: The Fantasy World of L. Frank Baum* de Michael O. Riley (1997), que analiza el mundo en el que se enmarca *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), obra muy presente en la cultura popular y que goza de constantes referencias y adaptaciones, como *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

El *lore* de estos mundos narrativos creados puede saltar a la cultura popular y a la cotidianeidad de nuestra realidad para expresar ideas y conceptos. Por ejemplo, en enero de 2022, la hija y heredera de Terry Pratchett, Rhianna Pratchett, autorizó a la activista antipobreza Jack Monroe a utilizar la llamada "Teoría de las Botas de Sam Vimes" para explicar los efectos de la inflación en la economía de los ciudadanos, a la cual había hecho referencia previamente en un artículo de opinión en *The Guardian*. Dicha teoría afirma que la razón por la que los ricos son ricos es que gastan menos dinero, al poder permitirse comprar unas botas de cuero buenas y duraderas, de cincuenta dólares, mientras que los menos acaudalados han de conformarse con botas de diez dólares que deberán sustituir pasados uno o dos años. Así, las botas del rico continuarán manteniéndole los pies secos pasados diez años, mientras que un pobre que solo puede permitirse comprar botas baratas se ha gastado cien dólares en botas durante el mismo tiempo y sigue teniendo los pies mojados (Pratchett, *Hombres de armas*, 40). De la misma manera, expresiones referidas al mundo de *Alice* como "no-cumpleaños" o "seguir

al Conejo Blanco" son conocidas, comprendidas y empleadas por la mayor parte de la sociedad, incluso por aquellos que no han leído la obra ni visto ninguna adaptación.

3. Alicia, arquitecta del País de las Maravillas

Si bien Alicia cae literalmente en el País de las Maravillas, el País de las Maravillas ya estaba en ella (Deleuze 117). El hecho de que todo sea un sueño convierte a la protagonista en la creadora del lugar en el que transcurre la historia; nada puede ser concebido fuera de lo que ella conoce; por eso, ese reino tiene similitudes con el mundo de fuera del sueño, pero se enmarca en un espejo que lo deforma, transformándolo en una sátira absurda: es la realidad vista con la lente del *nonsense*. Este aparente sinsentido de la obra no es solo un elemento narrativo, sino un modelo del cual Lewis Carroll es, junto a Edward Lear, uno de los principales exponentes. El *nonsense* tiene un carácter potencialmente satírico pero no es una mera parodia: "Nonsense texts are not explicitly parodic, they turn parody into a theory of serious literature" (Lecercle 2). Así, a través de Alicia, Carroll utiliza el sinsentido para hacer comentarios metalingüísticos y semióticos, convirtiendo al lenguaje en algo más profundo que el elemento transmisor, haciendo que adquiera un significado que pone de relevancia fondo y forma y, a través de juegos de palabras, poemas, combinaciones imposibles y oxímoron, completa la narrativa de una manera que encaja bien con el carácter fantástico de sus historias (Valeiras-Fernández 18). El hecho de que el *nonsense* surgiese durante la época victoriana está directamente relacionado con la educación académica y las encorsetadas convenciones sociales, ya que se presenta como la alternativa imaginativa que se enfrenta al sistema, subvirtiendo expectativas con sus propios elementos, a los que se da un giro para hacer manifiesto cuán absurdos pueden ser si se los toma de manera estricta:

> Nonsense as a genre is a by-product of the development of the institution of the school, that the texts provide an imaginary solution to the real contradiction between the urge to capture an ever wider proportion of the population for the purpose of elementary schooling, and the resistance, religious, political and psychological, that such a cultural upheaval inevitably arouses (Lecercle 4).

Debe tenerse en consideración que Alicia es una niña, por lo que sus visiones de ciertos asuntos como las convenciones sociales se ven retratados en el País de las Maravillas a través de exageración y la parodia porque resultan ridículos a sus ojos. Por tanto, ha de apreciarse la complejidad del proceso creativo de Lewis Carroll, construyendo su universo narrativo del modo en el que lo haría un subconsciente infantil, con una mezcla de curiosidad, lógica y absurdo. El escritor reconocía la infancia como el breve y efímero período durante el cual las niñas podían seguir a los conejos blancos antes de ser atrapadas por la que se consideraba "dull reality of womanhood" (Ross 56-57). De la misma forma, también reverenciaba la inocencia inconsciente de la infancia, aludiendo a la misma como algo sagrado (Carroll, citado por Morton Cohen 381).

La creación de mundos secundarios (siendo la realidad el mundo primario) o subcreación (Wolf 43-44) implica combinaciones de conceptos ya existentes en el nuestro, como nuevas especies de flora y fauna, nuevos idiomas, lugares y accidentes geográficos. Puede verse un ejemplo muy claro en *Through the Looking-Glass*, cuando Alicia encuentra un "Rocking-horse-fly"(149), un insecto con cuerpo de caballito-balancín y alas de libélula. Se trata de uno de los muchos juegos de palabras presentes en la obra de Carroll y el *nonsense* en general y hace referencia a que el nombre que se da en inglés a los tábanos es "horse-fly". La mente infantil de la protagonista relacionó esa palabra con el juguete y del concepto combinado de caballito-balancín e insecto y de esta manera nació esta criatura.

Esa mirada infantil es la que selecciona a qué elementos de la creación de mundos se presta atención y a cuáles no. Por ejemplo, la organización política es muy básica: la Reina de Corazones (en *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, la primera aventura) tiene todo el poder, a modo de régimen dictatorial, y la figura del Rey es meramente de apoyo, haciendo pequeñas concesiones piadosas de vez en cuando. Alicia en el mundo "real" en el que se enmarca la historia vive en la Inglaterra de la época victoriana, con lo cual conoce el sistema monárquico y la importante figura de la Reina Victoria (el Príncipe Alberto falleció en 1861 y el primer manuscrito de *Alice* se completa al año siguiente, por lo que no está claro si la parte "real" de la historia está ambientada antes o después de este suceso). No obstante, este trabajo ahondará más adelante

en los paralelismos y diferencias de la obra con la sociedad victoriana en la que se enmarca.

Es importante recalcar que el mundo real existe en la historia de Alicia; de hecho, es el punto de partida. En ambos libros se plantea que existen portales a otros mundos, en la madriguera del Conejo Blanco y en un espejo. De hecho, la inexplicada presencia del Conejo en el jardín de la protagonista deja claro que los viajes entre ambos lugares son posibles e incluso frecuentes.

El rol de Alicia como creadora de mundos es más patente en la adaptación animada de Disney, la película *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), en la cual canta una canción llamada "In a world of my own", relatando cómo serían las cosas en un mundo creado por ella. Este tema musical actúa como presagio, ya que muchas de las cosas que veremos en el País de las Maravillas se cumplen: "Cats and rabbits / Would reside in fancy little houses / And be dressed in shoes and hats and trousers / In a world of my own." Esa descripción encaja a la perfección con el Conejo Blanco, el cual aparecerá poco después: a través de la canción Alicia ya está evocándolo.

No obstante, algunos de sus deseos o predicciones no se cumplen en la aventura subsiguiente. Por ejemplo, ella esperaba llevarse bien con las flores: "All the flowers / Would have very extra-special powers / They would sit and talk to me for hours / When I'm lonely in a world of my own." Sin embargo, una vez en el jardín, Alicia es rechazada y ridiculizada en cuestión de minutos. El hecho de que la protagonista no sea bienvenida en el mundo que ella misma ha inventado, cosa que sucede tanto en la obra original como en la mayoría de las adaptaciones, puede ser tanto un reflejo de las contradicciones de la preadolescencia en la que está a punto de entrar como de la propia sociedad a la que se supone que pertenece; se ha dicho que Alicia encarna todas las virtudes de una damita victoriana, intentando actuar como brújula moral en el caos del País de las Maravillas y tratando de enseñarles modales (Ciolkowski s.p.), pero también que su excesiva vitalidad y curiosidad son poco deseables para una niña o mujer de la época, resultando "Un-Victorian" (Lloyd s.p.). Esta contradicción en cómo perciben a la protagonista tanto lectores como académicos puede existir también en la realidad narrativa: el País de las Maravillas es su mundo y, a la vez, no lo es. Lo mismo ocurre con la sociedad victoriana que actúa de telón

de fondo de la historia: Alicia es una niña educada en las costumbres sociales y conocimientos académicos y debería sentirse cómoda en su entorno, pero no lo hace; por eso "viaja" a otro lugar.

4. La sociedad victoriana a través del espejo

Durante la época en la que Carroll desarrolló su obra hubo un crecimiento de la oferta de productos de entretenimiento dirigidos a la infancia: juguetes, revistas, libros… Esto dio lugar a una época dorada de la literatura infantil. Un período en el cual las representaciones de la niñez llegaron a una posición privilegiada, presentando esta etapa vital como un espacio protegido y protector, nostálgico y cerrado a los deseos y experiencias adultos (Roth 23). Uno de los libros de ficción que mejor refleja la infancia y su tratamiento en la época es *Holiday House* de Catherine Sinclair (1839), el cual narra las travesuras de dos hermanos, Harry y Laura, cuidados por un ama de llaves muy estricta y su benevolente tío. Humphrey Carpenter explica que el texto resultó demasiado revolucionario como para inspirar imitaciones (9). Su propia autora tenía dudas acerca de algunos capítulos finales demasiado lúgubres, ya que un hermano moribundo exhortaba a Harry y Laura a reformarse. Sin embargo, fue un libro muy popular, con varias ediciones y cabe destacar que Carroll (por aquel entonces todavía conocido como C. L. Dodgson, ya que aún no había adquirido su *nom de plume*) regaló una copia a Alice Liddell y sus hermanas en las navidades de 1861, unos meses antes de contarles la historia de "su" *Alice*. De hecho, la biblioteca personal del escritor era muy completa en cuanto a literatura infantil y juvenil y, además de *Holiday House*, contaba con obras como *The King of the Golden River* de John Ruskin (1841), *The Rose and the Ring* de William Thackeray (1855), *The Water Babies* de Charles Kingsley (1863), *Dealings with the Fairies* George MacDonald (1867), *The Brownies, and Other Tales* de Juliana Horatia Ewing (1870), *On a Pincushion and Other Fairy Tales* de Mary De Morgan (1877), *Christmas-Tree Land* de Mary Louisa Molesworth (1884), además de *German Popular Stories* de Jacob y Wilhelm Grimm (1823-1826) y varias obras de Hans Christian Andersen, Esopo y distintos cuentos de hadas rusos y japoneses (Susina 28).

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland y *Through the Looking-Glass* muestran el mundo victoriano desde el punto de vista de una de las niñas destinatarias de aquellos relatos. Para algunos lectores no contemporáneos de Carroll,

estos libros constituyeron su primer encuentro con la sociedad y vida de la época victoriana (Auerbach 31). Las aventuras de Alicia y el universo narrativo en el que transcurren aportan por tanto una información muy interesante acerca de la época y la sociedad en la que se enmarcan, que sería también el primer público objetivo de la obra de Carroll. Se considera a la protagonista como un tributo a la infancia victoriana, definiéndola como capaz, modesta, recatada y sosegada, palabras que se quedan un poco anticuadas a día de hoy, pero que ella es capaz de redimir (de la Mare 59). Así, Alicia oscila entre los roles de damisela en apuros, cuando se siente perdida, y heroína, al enfrentarse a las cuestiones del País de las Maravillas que para ella no tienen sentido, incluido el régimen dictatorial de la Reina de Corazones. Subyace en la historia un rechazo a la autoridad, presentándose a los personajes adultos como presencias exageradas y caricaturizadas. No obstante, existe una distinción entre figuras autoritarias femeninas y masculinas: las primeras, encarnadas por la mencionada Reina de Corazones y la Duquesa, son más crueles y despiadadas, mientras que personajes masculinos como el Rey de Corazones o el Caballero Blanco (en *Through the Looking-Glass*) son más benevolentes y afables. Es posible que esto responda al hecho de que Carroll expresó en una carta que la muerte de su padre fue el golpe más terrible que sufrió en su vida, con lo cual podría haber vertido esos sentimientos en sus personajes, presentándolos como figuras paternales amables y cercanas (Gardner xv).

Las convenciones sociales son ridiculizadas en escenas como la de la Fiesta del Té. Las conversaciones aparentemente no tienen sentido, los presentes hablan y nadie escucha y, de existir algún tipo de norma de etiqueta y protocolo en ese reino de fantasía, esta es del todo desconocida para Alicia. Es posible que en su vida fuera del País de las Maravillas haya acudido a fiestas del té o recibido a invitados en su propia casa, ya que se acerca a la preadolescencia y eso la sitúa en una franja de edad conveniente para empezar a ser considerada una "señorita". No obstante, a través de sus ojos de niña, toda la ceremonia de ese tipo de recepciones le resulta absurda y no conecta con los asistentes. Cabe destacar que no se describe la vida de la protagonista más allá de su educación en casa a cargo de su hermana, pero se podría inferir que no tiene parientes o vecinas de su edad con las que pase el tiempo habitualmente, viviendo rodeada de adultos. De la misma manera, no hay niños o niñas en el País de las Maravillas; incluso en el mundo imaginado de la protagonista,

las personas que la rodean no forman parte de su grupo de edad ni comparten sus intereses.

En *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* encontramos también una crítica a la excesiva importancia concedida a la educación social y académica. Para esto, Carroll presenta un mundo en el que todo lo que se presupone intrínseco (tanto innato como aprehendido) a una niña como Alicia es inútil en la práctica: la urbanidad en la mesa o las reglas del croquet son tomadas arbitrariamente, al gusto del personaje que más poder ostente en cada situación. De la misma manera, un proceso de *reductio ad absurdum* es aplicado a las lecciones escolares, tanto cuando a la protagonista no le sirven de nada sus conocimientos de geografía y poesía como en las referencias a la figurada escuela a la que asiste la Falsa Tortuga: allí se estudian las ramas de la Aritmética: "Ambition, Distraction, Uglyfication, and Derison" (Carroll 85), parodiando a las cuatro ramas de dicha disciplina en nuestro mundo: Adición, Sustracción, Multiplicación, y División.

Durante la época victoriana, incluso las actividades no académicas, destinadas al tiempo libre de los niños y niñas, eran, en muchos casos, herencia, adaptación o inclusión en las de los adultos. Así, los períodos ociosos de la infancia no siempre se correspondían con sus gustos, sino que los infantes participaban de las actividades lúdicas de sus padres o tutores, como el croquet. El propio Lewis Carroll inventó nuevos enfoques para juegos clásicos y familiares, imprimiendo folletos acerca de los mismos, dándoles cualidades que fomentaban la diversión de los más pequeños. Por ejemplo, el escritor entretenía a las hermanas Liddell con el juego del "Croquet del Castillo", cuyas complicadas reglas había inventado él mismo (Gardner 102). También se entendía la danza como una actividad social, practicada por niños y adultos, aun cuando algunas modalidades eran especialmente difíciles. La contradanza era una de las más complicadas, y las niñas Liddell la habían aprendido con un profesor particular. En el libro encontramos la Contradanza de los Bogavantes (Carroll 89), que podría ser una burla de la "Cuadrilla de los Lanceros", un baile andante en el cual participaban desde ocho hasta dieciséis parejas, muy popular en los salones de baile ingleses de la época (Gardner 116-117).

Aun cuando Alicia intenta razonar para entender el mundo en el que se ha metido persiguiendo al Conejo Blanco se encuentra con otro problema: el País de las Maravillas es fluido, todo es susceptible

de cambiar en cualquier momento. Por ejemplo, una baraja de cartas puede convertirse en la esclavizada guardia de una reina tiránica; es posible que un bebé se transforme en cerdo y la luna podría resultar ser la sonrisa de un gato (Rackin 397). Las normas de la realidad que la protagonista conoce siguen sin servir. No obstante, ella intenta aferrarse a ese conjunto de saberes adquiridos en el mundo que ha dejado atrás en su sueño para intentar mantenerse en contacto con aquello que le resulta familiar y, sobre todo, lógico. Por ejemplo, intenta recitar un poema, "Against Idleness and Mischief" del libro *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children* de Isaac Watts (1715), el cual comienza con el verso "How doth the little busy Bee". Sin embargo, las palabras de la protagonista toman otra dirección y acaba surgiendo "How Doth the Little Crocodile" (Carroll 19), una de las composiciones del escritor que parodian los poemas y canciones que los niños se veían obligados a aprenderse de memoria. Con esto, el autor critica otro aspecto de la educación victoriana, ya que estas obras no se disfrutaban ni se estudiaban de una manera analítica, sino que se recitaban y repetían mecánicamente, sin ninguna aproximación literaria agradable para los estudiantes.

Se ha hablado de cómo se consideraba y trataba a la infancia en la era victoriana y de qué manera eso influyó en la visión del mundo desde la mirada infantil que se transmite en la obra, pero hay algo más que pudo servir de inspiración a Carroll en lo tocante a la "locura" reinante en el País de las Maravillas: en su época, una persona adulta que fuera percibida como loca o trastornada podía ser reducida al estatus de niño. Esta degradación, no obstante, representaba una mejora respecto al siglo XVIII, cuando los mentalmente inestables eran considerados como animales (Foucault 164). Existía, además, una distinción entre "lunatics" y "pauper lunatics", la cual se basaba en las posibilidades económicas de cada persona; el ingreso de un paciente en una institución y su tratamiento eran una cuestión de clase, dependiendo del estatus social y económico del enfermo (Kohlt 154). Por ejemplo, los *county asylums* tenían un mayor tamaño y estaban destinados a albergar "insane poor requiring some form of institutional care" (Parry-Jones 1). Los ingresos no dejaban de aumentar, como consecuencia de los cambios sociales y económicos de la primera mitad del siglo XIX, por lo que estos centros solían estar desbordados y ofrecer, por tanto, unos cuidados deplorables. Había tres tipos de pacientes categorizados según la *Lunacy Act* de 1945: "Lunatics, idiots, and persons of unsound mind" (Wright 16): "idiots"

serían quienes desde el nacimiento carecían de la capacidad de raciocinio; "lunatics", las personas que a veces podían razonar, pero en otras ocasiones no; y "persons of unsound mind" serían lo que, simplemente, eran incapaces de manejar sus asuntos o a sí mismos, pero no entraban en ninguna de las anteriores categorías. Los métodos de tratamiento consistían mayoritariamente en cadenas, ataduras, chaquetas de fuerza o celdas de aislamiento. Esto comenzó a cambiar a partir de 1858, según se publicó en la revista *Medical Times and Gazette*, empezando a aplicarse sistemas no restrictivos y de carácter terapéutico, como bailes, conciertos, conversaciones y talleres públicos entre los internos. No obstante, es probable que los anteriores tratamientos fuesen todavía aplicados a ciertos pacientes de carácter más peligroso (Kohlt 154-155). También se cree que algunos métodos de recompensa como acceso a tabaco, alcohol, té, café o algún otro premio fueran utilizados como refuerzo positivo (Ellis 308). En el País de las Maravillas encontramos el consumo de té por parte del Sombrerero y la Liebre de Marzo, personajes catalogados como desequilibrados o lunáticos. De hecho, el nombre del capítulo en el que se presenta la fiesta del té es "A mad-tea party" (Carroll 60), por lo cual esta escena y la locura están directamente relacionadas. No hay confirmación explícita del consumo de otras substancias, pero la historia de Alicia ha sido relacionada con las drogas en numerosas ocasiones. El hecho de que la Oruga Azul apareciera fumando en su hookah, sobre una seta y en un jardín plagado de hongos que provocaban efectos extraños era el punto de partida ideal para aquellos que interpretaron la historia entera como una alegoría de las drogas, un viaje en el sentido más psicotrópico de la palabra (Anderson s.p.). Incluso la descripción del sabor de las cosas en la obra de Carroll resultaba sospechosa: "When you take something that tastes like cherry tarts, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee, and toast at the same time and makes you grow and shrink—baby, that's tripping out" (Fensch 422). Con una atmósfera tan alejada de la realidad como era el País de las Maravillas, y en una época en la que el consumo de opio era legal, resultaba común preguntarse si las drogas tenían algo que ver. De hecho, si bien se insinuó que el escritor era consumidor de dicha substancia, nunca se demostró, y es más lógico asociar esa identificación de un lugar surrealista con la experiencia de las drogas a una cierta cultura de los años 60, 70 y 80, época en la que la adaptación animada de Disney se tomaba como referencia de psicodelia, cuando el uso recreacional de las mismas es algo común (Dr. Heather Worthington, profesora de Children's Literature en Cardiff University,

citado por Robehmed, s.p.). Además, no hay en los diarios de Carroll evidencia alguna al opio u otras drogas, mientras que sí que menciona que acostumbraba a comer ligero y disfrutar del jerez, el cual procuraba tener siempre en sus aposentos de Christ Church Commons Room. No obstante, el escritor sí conocía a gente que usaba opio o láudano con fines medicinales, incluidos Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddal, Henry Kingsley, y O.G. Rejlander (Susina 8).

Regresando al tema de la locura y la posible representación parcial de un centro psiquiátrico y sus habitantes en el ambiente del País de las Maravillas, debe tenerse en cuenta que Robert Wilfred Skeffington Lutwidge, tío de Carroll, fue comisario de "*Lunacy*", el departamento para el control de los hospitales para trastornos mentales (Asylums), creado en 1945. Ocupó este puesto entre los años 1855 y 1873, habiendo sido secretario del mismo organismo durante la década anterior. Se considera que tuvo gran influencia en los intereses culturales y académicos de su sobrino (Kohlt 147-148). Su muerte a manos de un interno de uno de los hospitales que visitaba (noticia publicada en *The Times* el 30 de mayo de 1973, citada por Torrey y Miller 33) pudo causar un gran impacto en el escritor, y se considera que su poema "The Hunting of the Snark", escrito un año después, podría haber sido una reacción a este hecho; no obstante, ya que Carroll nunca lo confirmó, surgieron otras teorías, como la de que es una alegoría de una expedición al Ártico, inspirada en la búsqueda de la Ballena Blanca de Herman Melville (Torrey y Miller 34).

Cabe recordar una vez que el modo de Alicia de "viajar" al País de las Maravillas es soñar, inicialmente despierta, pero cayendo en un estado de somnolencia profunda. Esta manera de acceder a lugares de fantasía es muy común en la creación de mundos: "Since the advent of daydreaming, imaginary worlds have drawn us away vicariously to fantastic realms culled from endless possibilities" (Wolf 17). Sin embargo, al hilo de esto, el propio Carroll relacionaba los sueños con la locura, puesto que consideraba que al soñar tenemos una vaga conciencia de la realidad y hacemos cosas insensatas, y que la demencia podría definirse como la incapacidad de distinguir el sueño de la vigilia, añadiendo que el primero tiene su propio mundo y que a menudo es tan natural como el otro (Gardner 81). La línea entre la locura de los habitantes del País de las Maravillas y la propia Alice, que está soñando, se difumina con estos conceptos.

5. Conclusión

La creación de mundos narrativos es un proceso que va más allá de la simple construcción del escenario en el cual se desarrollará la historia: se trata de proyectar un universo cuyos límites van más allá de lo que el texto contiene explícitamente. Gracias a esto, dichos mundos pueden dar cabida a nuevas historias (en forma de precuelas, secuelas o narraciones independientes al texto principal), pero también saltar al mundo real y la cultura popular al volverse culturalmente referenciables por su complejidad.

No solamente vemos el País de las Maravillas a través de los ojos de Alicia: ella nos lleva a él y, además, es su creadora dentro de la historia. Todo es un sueño, por tanto, el subconsciente de la protagonista es la que ha dado vida al lugar y a sus habitantes. Lewis Carroll obra a través de ella no solo para conducirnos a través de ese escenario, sino para mostrarnos el mundo imaginado que podría invocar una niña de su época. Por esto, el lugar al que llega Alicia es una sátira del mundo que conoce, entendiéndose. Así, el filtro de *nonsense* que se aplica a la realidad de la historia sirve también para parodiar, con tintes satíricos, los verdaderos escenarios que hicieron nacer la obra: el Oxford y la Inglaterra decimonónicos.

La sociedad victoriana no fue solamente la que recibió las obras sobre las aventuras de Alicia, sino que es un elemento activo más en las historias narradas por Carroll, ya que se dejan numerosas referencias a través de hechos y personajes, siendo la narración entendida como una crítica a dicha sociedad. Desde esta perspectiva, el libro es una reacción contra los modelos de educación y protocolo victorianos, aludiendo a que todos los adultos, especialmente los que ostentan una posición de poder, por ejemplo, gobernantes o docentes, están locos o son despiadados y mezquinos. Las figuras de autoridad del País de las Maravillas son retratadas como personas malvadas, ridículas o ambas cosas.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, por tanto, refleja las luces y sombras de la época victoriana y del trato a la infancia, cuestiones que se muestran a través de los ojos de una niña, ofreciendo al lector la versión de su realidad deformada por el *nonsense* y llevando al extremo lo que a ella ya le parecía absurdo en el mundo real. La prueba de la importancia de esto es que la mayor parte de las adaptaciones se enmarcan en la misma época, aunque algunas, como la versión de Tim Burton de 2010, cambian la

edad de la protagonista para reflejar otros aspectos de la sociedad de la época con respecto a las niñas que dejan de serlo, planteando así cómo hubiese sido un posible futuro de Alicia dentro del contexto victoriano.

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Recibido / Received: 14/4/2022 *Aceptado / Accepted: 31/8/2022*

Recensións / Reseñas
Reviews / Rezensionen

Carregal, José. *Queer Whispers: Gay and Lesbian Voices of Irish Fiction*. University College Dublin Press, 2021. 218 pages.

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Ambitious in its scope, José Carregal's *Queer Whispers: Gay and Lesbian Voices of Irish Fiction* is the first comprehensive study devoted to gay and lesbian-themed fiction published in Ireland since the 1970s. While there have been publications in the growing field of Irish Queer Studies, such as the contributions of prominent scholars like Anne Mulhall, Michael G. Cronin, Eibhear Walshe or Fintan Walsh, *Queer Whispers* is the first book-length study that covers the wide range of topics explored in the last four decades.

The volume makes a magnificent effort of unearthing an extensive selection of literary texts—specifically, twenty-four novels and eleven short stories—whose authors "challenged the public language of homophobia and heterosexism" (1), thus giving voice to the experiences of gays and lesbians "against a background of non-recognition and silence" (2).

Silence is indeed one of the overriding themes in the book, which shows a deep interest in the mechanisms that have shaped the public perception and recognition of homosexuals in Ireland. Invoking the thinkers Michel Foucault and Robin Patric Clair, the author conceptualises silence as parallel to language in the task of "creat[ing] and recreat[ing] our social realities" (Clair, in Carregal 2), manifesting itself in "the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name" (Foucault, in Carregal 2). Thus, while the dominant public discourse in Ireland would traditionally be conflated with Catholic values of "prudery and chastity" as well as with an "idealisation of the nuclear family, [and] enforced Victorian values on domesticity, social respectability, the body, and sexuality" (3), silence was imposed on individuals whose sole existence challenged these principles, delegitimising their experiences and "relegat[ing them] to secrecy" (3). Carregal argues that this long-lasting silencing process resulted in a lack of a proper language to be found in public discourse to articulate the experiences, identities and desires of queer people. In spite of that, the works and authors covered

in *Queer Whispers* subverted this imposition and produce an invaluable account of the struggles of gay and lesbian people that "articulate[s] a new language of resilience and recognition" (2).

To understand how subversive and valuable those works are, Carregal pays special attention to the social contexts in which they were produced, dedicating part of the introduction to the history of gay and lesbian life in Ireland from the 1970s to the 2010s. The author explores the social attitudes towards homosexuality, starting from the "silence and stigma" (4) that preceded the creation of the Irish State and prevailed up until the 1970s, when the staunch Catholicism that predominated in the public discourse began to be slowly challenged by the "advancement of a language of feminism and sexual rights" (4). Strongly inspired by Judith Butler's ideas on vulnerability and resistance, Carregal goes on to address the combative history of LGBTI+ activism in Ireland, as well as the contradictions and prevalent silences within a general shift towards acceptance and recognition in the 1990s. Given that *Queer Whispers* spans four decades of published novels and short stories, Carregal's volume manages to trace the evolution of the social attitudes and public discourse around homosexuals since the times in which a "conservative, censorious Catholic ideology" (161) reigned to the liberalisation of Irish society since gay decriminalisation in 1993, after which gay and lesbian voices began to be finally recognised. The author acknowledges the importance of reconstructing the history of the cultural contributions of authors that "articulat[ed] a new language to understand gay and lesbian experiences" (161), thus challenging and resisting "cultural invisibility and heteronormativity" (162) in a time when the words to name homosexual desire did not even exist.

One could argue that the ambition to reconstruct gay and lesbian history as well as the overarching focus on silence and language are the common threads that unite the otherwise very diverse novels and short stories that Carregal's volume analyses. The book comprises eight chapters that deal with very varied topics, in an attempt to "valorise the richness and diversity of the writings of gay and lesbian lives in Ireland" (13). Chapter 1 explores four novels that depict the isolation and vulnerability of lesbians in the 1980s and 1990s, namely Maura Richards's *Interlude* (1982), Linda Cullen's *The Kiss* (1990), Edna O'Brien's *The High Road* (1988), and Pádraig Standún's *A Woman's Love*

(1994). The author examines how these novels "promote a language of lesbian love" (33) in a time "when lesbianism remained largely invisible in Irish society" (33), and when the social constraints prevent the characters from living their lesbianism freely.

In contrast to such a depiction of lesbianism, which did not provide models of resistance, Chapter 2 addresses Mary Dorcey's lesbian-themed narrative from the perspective of its feminist politics, arguing that characters undergo a "personal transformation" once they "unlearn the patriarchal stereotypes about women" (35) and engage in "the joys and rebelliousness of lesbianism" (36). Thus, in an Ireland where "there was no public language from which to reclaim the equality of same-sex love" (34), these characters, Carregal posits, provide a very necessary positive representation of lesbianism that "politically empower[s]" (36) and "reverse[s] damaging stereotypes of lesbians" (36).

Chapter 3 engages with a completely different topic, namely the subculture of 'cruising', and presents four short stories—Keith Ridgway's "Graffiti" (1994), Eamon Sommer's "Natái Bocht" (1994), Michéal O'Conghaile's "At the Station" (2012), and Joseph O'Connor's "The Hills are Alive" (1992)—that "defy the public language of cruising as morally degrading" (60), exposing the complexities of this "subterranean sexual world" (51).

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the Irish gay coming-out novel, examining the ways in which the five novels analysed—Desmond Hogan's *The Ikon Maker* (1976), Damien McNicholl's *A Son Called Gabriel* (2004), Tom Lennon's *When Love Comes to Town* (1993), and Jarlath Gregory's *Snapshots* (2001) *G.A.A.Y.: One Hundred Ways to Love a Beautiful Loser* (2005)—explore "how the dominant language of masculinity increases the vulnerability and damages the emotional development of the young gay protagonists" (80), and attest to the "changing sexual morality in Ireland and Northern Ireland, from the 1970s to the early 2000s" and the "evolving story of LGBTI+ social liberation" (81).

Chapter 5 addresses the cultural narratives of AIDS in Irish fiction, including the persistent demonisation of HIV-positive people in two short stories and three novels, namely Michéal O'Conghaile"s "Lost in Connemara" (2012), Keith Ridgways's "Andy Warhol" (2018), Anne

Enright's *The Green Road* (2015), Desmond Hogan's *A Farewell to Prague* (1995), and Colm Tóibín's *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999).

Chapter 6 is devoted to Emma Donoghue's contemporary-set lesbian novels—*Stir-fry* (1995), *Hood* (1995), and *Landing* (2007)—, focusing on "the notions of silence and (in)visibility surrounding lesbian life" (102) as well as "the tensions between the feminist and liberal ideologies within a lesbian subculture" (117) that they dramatise.

Chapter 7 also concentrates on more contemporary times, specifically Celtic Tiger Ireland (1990s-2008) and its representation of gay men, which, as Carregal explains, "promoted notions of personal fulfilment and social progress that were clearly connected with the lifestyle principles of liberal capitalism" (15). To do so, the author selects a number of works—Tom Lennon's *Crazy Love* (1999), Belinda McKeon's *Tender* (2015), Colm Tóibín's "The Pearl Fishers" (2010), Ridgway's *The Long Falling* (1998), "Angelo" (2001) and "The Parts" (2003), and Frank McGuinness's "Chocolate and Oranges" (2018)—that challenge the Celtic Tiger's "celebratory, modern icon of gay life" (118), which equated gay men with a new, prosperous and modern Ireland while obscuring widening class differences and silencing the ongoing marginalisation and stigmatisation of LGBTI+ people in the post-Catholic era.

Finally, Chapter 8 is devoted to four historical novels that, unlike the previous gay and lesbian-themed works, which focused on present-day experiences, choose to "offer a revision of the past that epitomises the growing recognition and valorisation of gay and lesbian experiences in contemporary Ireland" (160). Those novels are Jamie O'Neill's *At Swim, Two Boys* (2001), Emma Donoghue's *Life Mask* (2004), Sebastian Barry's *Days Without End* (2016), and John Boyne's *The Heart's Invisible Furies* (2017). The author explains how these narratives, set in the past, serve to "provide meaningful commentaries on the contemporary moment" (142). In addition, invoking Colm Tóibín's words, the author argues that these novels allow for a cultural revision that "constructs a sense of history" which uncovers the "thin faint line that connects [homosexuals] with those of earlier generations" (Tóibín, in Carregal, 160).

All in all, Carregal's analysis manages to produce a "sense of history" in an indispensable volume which traces the diverse works of gay and lesbian fiction authors that bravely challenged the censorious sexual

norms of Catholic culture and later navigated the contradictions of a more liberal Ireland. Despite dealing with extremely diverse accounts of the same social phenomenon, Carregal manages to deliver an innovative, cohesive and comprehensive study of the articulation of gay and lesbian experiences in Irish fiction in the last four decades thanks to the author's in-depth exploration of silence and the language of resistance in the stories and novels analysed. Moreover, the author's well-informed critical endeavour not only helps in piecing together various fragmented and subversive accounts of gay and lesbian experience in Ireland, but also pushes a door open for further discussion and work on the construction of a queer story of Ireland that is long overdue.

Acknowledgements

This publication is part of the research funded by the Project INTRUTHS 2: Articulations of Individual and Communal Vulnerabilities in Contemporary Irish Writing PID2020-114776GB-I00 MCIN/AEI.

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Gender stereotypes are socially assigned to people from a very early age. They place psychological effects on the individual ranging from self-esteem issues to ambition and expectations, and may effectively shape the way in which society acts and reacts in any given discursive situation. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) describes a gender stereotype as "a generalised view or preconception about attributes, or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by women and men or the roles that are or should be performed by men and women" (*Gender Stereotypes* 1). More often than not, gender stereotypes have been studied for their negative effect on girls and women, as their detrimental consequences have been reported to reduce aspirations and limit career options (Mmari et al.). However, gender identity, i.e. a person identifying as male, female, or other, in contrast to that person's biological sexual traits, is understood as a kind of social identity crucially related to cultural roles typically associated with men and women. Consequently, with reference to some expected social behavior, the volume seeks to encompass a variety of aspects of gender and non-binary consequences, as well as to the means by which those stereotypes are manifested and culturally transmitted. Furthermore, as mental models and social schemata are formed at a very early age, it is important to understand the myriad of aspects that go into meaning-making, identity building, and the discourse modes that small children typically consume.

A Multimodal Approach to Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Children's Picture Books (2022), edited by A. Jesús Moya-Guijarro and Eija Ventola is a groundbreaking volume in the field of multimodal studies and includes contributions and valuable insights from seminal authors and theorists in linguistics and children's literature, including co-editor Eija Ventola, and contributors Charles Forceville, Perry Nodelman, Christian Matthiessen, and Kay O'Halloran, as well as other influential scholars in various fields of study. The volume embarks on a discussion

of Children's Literature through a unique lens that views the function of images as going beyond the purpose of merely creating a more appealing aesthetics. Instead, it contends that the images have distinct narratives in picture books, a genre in which the combination of words and images play an important role in the meaning-making process. Images create and raise ideas and ideologies that go beyond the meanings that the verbal or visual modes transfer on their own, and, viewed together, are complex communicative devices. Taking this premise as a starting point, the volume presents picture books as complex multimodal products of complementary images and words which create an aggregate meaning intended for a young readership.

The editors and authors approach the concept of genre in picture books with twenty-first century realities and our ever-developing societal changes in mind. They recognise the important changes that have taken place in the family unit and which structure today's families, particularly in the case of same-sex families and how they have direct and significant repercussions in social, political and literary areas. Although previous research work on same-sex families in children's literature has been carried out, this volume is unique in its multimodal approach; claiming that meaning cannot be fully understood merely through linguistic content as there is deeper meaning to be found in the *interaction* of images and text in the literary works. The volume tackles word-image interaction from a large sample of stories that feature children who either live in same-sex families, or stories in which male and female characters reject the usual socially typical stereotypes to which they are assigned in traditional narratives.

The theoretical frameworks employed in *A Multimodal Approach to Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Children's Picture Books* include a vast range of the most relevant literary theories, multimodal frameworks and approaches in discourse studies. They also push the boundaries of previous studies as the theoretical concepts and frameworks are applied to previously unaddressed areas of stereotypes in Children's Literature. The volume comprises chapters based on theoretical frameworks ranging from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, Appraisal theory, Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodal Social Semiotics, O'Halloran's Systemic-Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis, as well as cultural and feminist theories, cultural cognitive and social-semiotic approaches.

The scholars and theorists featured in the volume also reveal the quality of analysis, as many of the chapters are written by authorities in the above-mentioned frameworks, making the book as a whole not only a collection of innovative approaches, but also a handbook of seminal insights.

The book comprises thirteen chapters and is divided into three main parts. The first two parts deal with male and female characters and archetypes that challenge their respective traditional gender stereotypes, while the third focuses on the family unit with the aim of challenging traditional views on family form and structure. Part I ranges from Chapter 2 to Chapter 5 and focuses on stories which portray boys who defy gender identities, and the chapters in this section analyse characters whose behaviour reveals a desire to promote social acceptance.

Chapter 2, "Julián is a Mermaid. Challenging Gender Stereotypes: A Qualitative Multimodal Content Analysis", by Danielle Kachorsky and Alexandria Perez, explores how Love, the writer and illustrator of *Julián is a Mermaid* uses both individual modes and modes in combination to "normalise" Julián's love of mermaids, his desire to be one, and his grandmother's acceptance of his transformation into a mermaid. This chapter demonstrates how in this story the combination of verbal and visual elements promotes a message of acceptance, despite inconsistent representations of gender identity and expression across the modes.

Chapter 3, "Ideational Construal of Male Challenging Gender Identities in Children's Picture Books", by Izaskun Elorza, continues along this line, but with a unique perspective of the ways in which the traditional acceptability of binary social gender roles is challenged, particularly through agency, desire and behaviour. Through a framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Visual Social Semiotics, Elorza examines the lexico-grammatical and semiotic visual resources that are deployed to construe gender identities as ideational meaning. It then argues that the construal of stereotypes in the picture books analysed is often based on the narrative relationship between the protagonist and the group representing a given gender stereotype, and that the logical causal chains underlying this construal is what leads to, but also deconstructs the existing dichotomy.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 also deal with binaries and male gender stereotypes, exploring the ways in which meaning potentials are created

in the visual narrative, how those meaning potentials are influenced by social factors, and how the verbal and visual elements promote gender acceptance. In Chapter 4, "At the Heart of It: *Once There Was a Boy*", Brooke Collins-Gearing draws on theories of intersubjectivity, and feelings and emotion to discuss the ways in which *Once There Was a Boy* challenges the dominant ideas of culture and stereotyped gender binaries through the metaphor of a beating heart. The chapter pinpoints, through an exploration of both the written and visual elements of Leffler's picture book, how dominant ideas of gender binaries are disrupted, and Western ideas of the construction of "boyness" are shifted.

In "Gender Assumptions in Picture Books about Boys in Dresses", Perry Nodelman closes Part I by exploring picture books about boys who like to wear dresses and other female-identified clothing. Drawing on semiotic and cognitive approaches, Nodelman's study demonstrates that although the intended purpose of these books is to promote acceptance and tolerance, specifically transgender tolerance, a closer examination reveals the ways in which the books unconsciously undermine that intention. His study shows that, although reviewers and advertisers tend to relate the books to sex and gender issues, the stories, in fact, do not connect dress-wearing with possibilities of being gay or transgender. Instead, they function as a sign of individuality and evoke clichés that perpetuate gender stereotypes about men and women alike.

Overall, Part One is an excellent assortment of analyses that not only serve as analytical foundations in multimodal analysis and social semiotics, it also provides tools for social change and resilience.

Part II shifts the focus of gender stereotypes over to female protagonists and their non-conformity, and involves non-traditional princesses and girls whose behaviour deconstructs patriarchal views of gender, showcasing the semiotic visual resources that are deployed to do so.

Chapters 6 and 7 address the figure of the non-traditional princess with the aim of highlighting the relationship created between text and image that communicate subtle and complex meanings, not always compulsorily akin to the expected claim of challenging gender stereotypes. Chapter 6, "Queering the Princess: On Feminine Subjectivities and Becoming Girl in Contemporary Picture Books", by Angela Thomas and A. Jesús Moya-Guijarro, draws on feminist post-

structural theories, Visual Social Semiotics and Appraisal Theory to analyse *Pirate Princess* by Bardhan-Quallan and McElmurry (2012) and *The Princess Knight* by Funke and Meyer (2004) and identify the ways in which diverse feminine subjectivities are constructed in each visual narrative and question how it effectively represents the complexities of girlhood in relationship with the ways in which one can 'become' a girl. The authors claim that, in these two texts, there are somewhat mixed and problematic messages. In both picture books, the texts construct a difficult path for choices, as for each protagonist, the role of knight or pirate are simply presented as natural for a male, yet for these girls, the choices go against their gender's natural order.

In Chapter 7, "A Clever Paper Bag Princess, A Fearless Worst Princess and an Empowered Little Red: A Critical Multimodal Analysis", Verónica Constanty and Viviane M. Heberle aim at substantiating how lexico-grammatical and visual resources are used in children's books to (de)construct the representation of girls as delicate and defenceless. Their results show how lexico-grammatical choices equip some of the characteristics of the main characters in the stories, and reveals the features used to deconstruct the patriarchal and binary views of gender shown in traditional fairy tales. As the stories examined in these two chapters seem to be written as a move to empower, the unintended meaning found within the text-image is one which inverts empowerment and begs the question about the effectiveness of these stories in contesting traditional ideas of the feminine.

Chapter 8 shifts back to the motif of characters who do not conform to their gender stereotypes, yet through female protagonists, and via a theoretical framework that is not often seen in this genre. Santamaría-García in "A Semiotic and Multimodal Analysis of Interactive Relations in Picture Books that Challenge Female Gender Stereotypes" is refreshing and unique in that she draws on social-semiotic approaches in combination with the Systemic-Functional model, but also analyses the text-image synergy from the perspectives of commitment and coupling. The analysis of affiliation draws on focalisation resources for eye contact and type of gaze, pathos, social distance and attitude, all of which produce different relationships of power and involvement. In *Princess Smartypants* by Cole (1996), *Arthur and Clementine* by Turin and Bosnia (1976) and *Tutus Are Not My Style* by Keers and Wilsdorf (2010),

the female characters find agency and "a voice of their own" through systems of affiliation and attitude.

Chapter 9, "Communicative Functions of Part-Whole Representations of Characters in Picture Books that Challenge Gender Stereotypes", by A. Jesús Moya-Guijarro, also takes on an interesting framework building on Social Semiotics and Cognitive Approaches. The integration of both cognitive and social-semiotics in the study of multimodal artefacts established previously (see Feng and O'Halloran, 2013, previously developed by Moya-Guijarro, 2011; 2013) sets up and expands upon an exploration of metaphor and metonymy. This chapter demonstrates, through an extensive analysis of twenty picture books, that metonymic representations in the picture books featuring girls are used to ascribe negative qualities; part-whole depictions are used in the stories portraying boys to highlight the idea that children should always be proud of who they are, independently of their vital preferences and orientations.

Part III turns the readers' attention to the family unit and focuses specifically on challenging traditional views on the family form and structure. Through an impressive range of textual analyses, this section breaks down the concept of the conventional family and highlights picture books that may be resources for transcending limiting views of the family structure in today's society, inviting reflection on existing role distinctions in the real world. Chapter 10, "Gender Stereotypes in Children's Picture Books: A Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis", by Xinchao Zhai, Kay L. O'Halloran, Lyndon Way and Sabine Tan, pinpoints through analysis of the interplay of text and image, the distinct sets of semantic features in multimodal constructions of husbands and wives, demonstrating that gender-biased semantic choices make uneven distribution of experiences in family life. This study concludes that the husband/wife roles are limited to controlled settings and social activities, thus resulting in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes that tend to be fossilised into gender-specific roles.

Chapter 11, "Linguistic and Visual Trends in the Representation of Two-Mum and Two-Dad Couples in Children's Picture Books", by Mark McGlashan, examines a corpus of more than fifty-two picture books and provides a comprehensive account of trends in the naming and visual representations of parents and focuses on how representational strategies have changed over time. As this study is based on an extensive

corpus, Corpus-assisted Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis is the main theoretical framework employed, and details the changing representations of same-sex parents. The patterns in this study show that there seems to be a trend in representing LGBTQ+ parents in family roles from which they have traditionally been excluded.

Also a corpus-driven study, Chapter 12, "The Depiction of Family and Self in Children's Picture Books: A Corpus-Driven Exploration", by Coral Calvo-Maturana and Charles Forceville, investigates how families are represented in picture books in terms of gender and other aspects of diversity that partake in portraying the self. This chapter examines the roles and activities of (grand)parents, children, (pet) animals, and non-family members along with events and occurrences in public spaces. Furthermore, the chapter points to future research on relevant areas to explore in multimodal studies, and suggests visual density as a powerful cognitive to re-evaluate issues pertaining to representing the family and self.

The last chapter, "The Moomin Family: An Elastic Permeable Multi-Dimensional Construct in Semiotic and Social Space", by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen, takes on foundational insights on anthropology and a Systemic-Functional approach in an analysis of the *Moomin family* in Tove Jansson's books. The analytical choice rests on the metafunctionality of folk tales that simultaneously construe a world view and enact protocols for interactive behaviour. The family members in these stories are caring and inclusive, and challenge traditional stereotypical constructions of family.

Overall, Part III serves not only to demonstrate the ways in which family structures have been and are traditionally represented through gender stereotyping, but it also provides examples in which these stereotypes are being challenged in literature.

Through its analysis of an expansive corpus of children's literature, *A Multimodal Approach to Challenging Gender Stereotypes in Children's Picture Books* not only proves to be a ground-breaking volume that contributes to the necessary and pertinent understanding of the message that picture books transmit to young children (and their parents) through the interaction of text and visual, but also serves as a progressive model in terms of its theoretical framework and analytical approaches. As well as serving as a handbook of multimodal approaches to analysing

discourse and contributing to advancing related research, this volume, maybe more importantly, is a valuable social tool as it addresses social problems and contributes to social change. The volume will thus benefit scholars in multimodal and cognitive studies, researchers involved in picture book analysis, teachers of primary education, pre-service teachers, and parents. Moreover, in today's media-oriented society, the development of young readers' visual literacy has become more prevalent than ever before, and this volume contributes to the understanding of the multimodal manifestations of the world in which we live, and contributes to the promotion of social inclusion and equality. The reader will particularly appreciate the fact that it not only adopts an analytical model that connects literary characterisation with relevant social issues, but it also showcases the benefits of gender-inclusive and non-traditional families that contribute towards educating more critically aware children.

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Gladkova, Anna and Jesús Romero-Trillo, editors. *The Conceptualization of 'Beautiful' and 'Ugly' across Languages and Cultures*, *International Journal of Language and Culture*, vol. 81, no. 1, 2021. 168 pages.

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This issue of the *International Journal of Language and Culture* is devoted to how the aesthetic ideas of 'beautiful' and 'ugly' are conceptualised in different languages and, hence, cultures. Within the framework of Folk Aesthetics--that is, the analysis of the meanings that are coded in the linguistic expression of aesthetic concepts--, the authors in this volume tackle the concepts of 'beautiful' and 'ugly' in different European, Slavic, Iranian, Asian and Sinitic languages like English, Spanish, Danish, Russian, Japanese, Persian or Mandarin Chinese. The analyses offered are eminently corpus-based and, therefore, data-driven. They depart from the assumption that the terms employed in the above-mentioned languages to refer to what is beautiful and what is ugly encode different culture-specific assumptions and ways of looking at the world that may be deconstructed and scrutinised using cognitive and corpus linguistics methods. In this sense, the theoretical ideas explored are not only relevant in the area of Cultural Linguistics but also in the disciplines of Corpus and Cognitive Linguistics.

The research reported is of considerable relevance in the field of Cognitive Linguistics for two main reasons. Firstly, as the editors mention in the Introduction, very little attention has been devoted to how humans conceptualise these aesthetic ideas and what their conceptualisation can reveal about the underlying assumptions in specific cultures. Secondly, and perhaps less explicitly stated, the development of the discipline of Folk Aesthetics goes hand in hand with the study of aesthetic concepts on the part of emotion researchers, who consider beauty and ugliness not exclusively as aesthetic ideas but as embodied phenomena (see Menninghaus et al., and Fingerhut and Prinz). In this sense, the studies offered in this volume are individually aimed at determining the meanings that are prototypically associated with 'beautiful' and 'ugly' in the languages analysed with a view to giving rise to a theoretical background that, down the line, will be solid enough

to assess the extent to which these ideas are consistently experienced universally across languages and cultures.

The issue comprises seven papers preceded by an introduction by Gladkova and Romero-Trillo in which they present the reader with an overview of the research that has been carried out regarding the linguistic conceptualisation of aesthetic ideas as well as some suggestions for future research in the study of folk aesthetics. They place special emphasis not only on their own research on the linguistic expression of aesthetic ideas in Present-Day English, Spanish and Russian, but also on different languages and cultures in which beauty is associated with morality. They justify the linguistic approach to the study of aesthetics by pointing out how very frequently the ideas of 'beauty' and 'ugliness' are associated with other phenomena, like space, colour or light. Similarly, they argue for a broader perspective on the study of aesthetic phenomena that allows for a consideration of these ideas in the framework of art but also in everyday situations. In short, they lay down the foundations of the theoretical ideas on which the volume will be based.

The first paper is authored by Carsten Levisten. In it, the author looks into some Danish aesthetic terminology, particularly the adjectives *pæn, flot, dejlig* and *lækker*, which are relatively frequent in everyday contexts and which refer to the experience of positive aesthetic emotions. He analyses these four terms from the perspective of Lexical Anthropology and the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (henceforth, NSM) using the Danish corpus *DaTenTen17*, consisting of internet texts. His analysis emphasises that there are certain implicit associations in these terms: for example, *pæn* frequently refers to home design, *flot* is associated with colour and salience, *dejlig* with delight, while *lækker* is often applied to gustatory pleasure. This fact proves how certain terms are more suitable or frequently employed than others in describing particular aesthetic experiences, and shows some of the possibilities for what Levisten denominates "aesthetic talk" through different bodily domains that range from the visual to the bodily-oriented.

The conceptualisation of 'beauty' in Mandarin Chinese is the focus of the second paper, authored by Jock Wong and Marshall Or. They discuss the relevance of 'beauty' in contemporary culture and society before moving on to their analysis of the Mandarin Chinese terms *měi* and *piàoliàng*. Using the same methodology as above (NSM), they

demonstrate that, despite the polysemy of the two terms analysed, when applied to women, the first one refers to an aesthetic response akin to that indexed in Present-Day English *beautiful*, while the second one is more similar to *pretty*. Their analysis of *piàoliàng* proves that this term is commonly used to refer to someone who is good-looking because of specific facial features or skin colour, while the findings of their study of *měi* point to a different sort of perceived beauty based on morality. Finally, they conclude that the notion of 'beautiful' in the English-speaking world is far from being universal.

The third paper, written by Laura Miller and Carolyn Stevens, presents an analysis that echoes the discussion in the second one, namely the semantic change in meaning from 'beautiful' to 'cute' in Japanese language and culture. The authors analyse two terms, *utsukushii* and *kawaii*, which are found in different contexts and referring to two different aesthetic ideas. While the first one is more oriented towards a rather traditional, minimalist and elegant appreciation of beauty, the second one refers to an aesthetics that is both local and international and that is more akin to popular culture and consumerist art forms. Their analysis of *kawaii* suggests a multiplicity of contexts and usages that are relevant in discussions of age, gender, class, while its comparison with *utsukushii* evinces a tension between the aesthetics that these two terms represent at cultural and artistic levels.

In paper number four, the research carried out by one of the editors of this issue, Anna Gladkova, is presented. Acknowledging the variety of Russian terms for aesthetic experiences, Gladkova's research looks into four terms that she distributes alongside a continuum from the positive to the negative where the terms are ordered in increasing intensity: *krasivyj* 'beautiful' and *prekrasnyj* 'beautiful/fine', which refers to a more intense aesthetic response; and *nekrasivyj* 'ugly/plain' and *bezobraznyj* 'ugly/frightful', which exemplify how additional senses of a word can inform about the particular aesthetic traits that are appraised as negative. Employing the methodology designed in previous research (Gladkova and Romero-Trillo) and the NSM, the author demonstrates that aesthetic notions embed cultural meanings related to morality, and that the usage of these terms may be censured by politeness.

Gladkova and Romero-Trillo collaborate in the fifth paper in this volume, which focuses on how ugliness is conceptualised in English.

Following their research on the adjective *beautiful* in English, they employ the same methodology to analyse *ugly* in the Cobuild Wordbanks Online corpus in order to determine the most frequent collocations of this adjective and to offer a semantic explanation within the framework of the NSM. Their analysis shows that *ugly* is indeed a polysemic word that is applied to stimulus of different natures, from the visual to the auditory and the behavioural. Furthermore, it evinces the core differences in the conceptualisations of *beautiful* and *ugly*, putting forward different cultural approaches to these aesthetic experiences.

Moving on to the sixth contribution, Tahmineh Tayebi looks into the conceptualisation of two Persian aesthetic terms, *zesht* 'ugly' and *zibâ* 'beautiful', more specifically on how they are used in the evaluation of acts that are deemed polite or impolite. Using a corpus of 80.000 words retrieved from Internet forums and blogs, Tayebi reveals the ways in which aesthetic markers are frequently used in evaluations of politeness or lack thereof, thus emphasising the behavioural dimension of terms for beauty and ugliness. This research work exposes a culture-specific aspect of aesthetic terminology in Persian that encompasses social and cultural norms.

The last paper in this issue is authored by Romero-Trillo and it concerns the conceptualisation of beauty and ugliness in Spanish through the analysis of the terms *bonito* 'beautiful' and *feo* 'ugly'. Using the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*, Romero-Trillo goes over the differences in the contexts and applications of these adjectives, highlighting the prevalence of attestations for *bonito* over those for *feo*. Moreover, he explains that these adjectives are polysemous in the same respects, as they are both used to prototypically refer to visual appreciation, but also to auditory phenomena, behavioural judgments and resultative effects. As in most of the preceding papers, Romero-Trillo highlights the polyvalence of aesthetic terminology to index moral and behavioural judgments.

All things considered, all of the papers in this volume offer different perspectives on the ways in which aesthetic experience is conceptualised, expressed and understood in different cultures through the analyses of different languages. The analyses proposed as to the associations and usages of the terms under scrutiny evince some degree of universality with regards to how different languages employ aesthetic terminology;

in a great percentage of the cases, terms for beauty and ugliness go beyond the exclusively visual and they are employed to refer to sound, smell, taste, value judgments, morality and behaviour, while at the same time allowing for particular culture-specific meanings that are not consistently identified across cultures. This volume does not only offer great insight as to the issue under analysis, but it also opens the door for further research into different aspects of aesthetic experience. Through the different examples on how corpus and cognitive linguistics and the NSM methodology can shed light on cultural conceptualisations of aesthetic notions, this issue stresses how the possibilities in the application of these methods to other contemporary and ancient languages and cultures are manifold.

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