

## The writer, the translator and strategic location: adapting the *adventures*

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## The writer, the translator and strategic location: adapting the *adventures*

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Having submitted a proposal for this conference (and I thank the organisers for having accepted it), it was classified under the heading «Traducción literaria». The classification was not unreasonable: Walter Starkie's *Spanish Raggle-Taggle. Adventures with a Fiddle in North Spain* (originally published by the London-based publisher John Murray in 1934) has been / is classified under the heading of travel writing. The writing up of one's journey/journeys in the form of prose narrative has been considered closely aligned to the literary form of prose fiction<sup>1</sup> though this closeness has not been untroubled, as Hulme and Youngs (2002: 6) have pointed out:

The relationship between the genres remains close and often troubling. Many readers still hope for a literal truthfulness from travel writing that they would not expect to find in the novel, though each form has long drawn on the conventions of the other...

Given the range of groupings adopted by the organisers, I suggested that the paper might be included under the heading «Traducción de la ideología» since, even though Starkie's text is episodic like an eighteenth century novel and, it may be argued, carries much which may be qualified as fantasy rather than fact,<sup>2</sup> *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (like all Starkie's travel and autobiographical writing published by John Murray in the 1930s) is eminently ideological and Antonio Espina's translation, *Aventuras de un irlandés en España* (published by Espasa Calpe in 1937), is ideological all over again.<sup>3</sup> Here I should clarify what I mean by ideological and this relates to my use of «strategic location» in the title of my contribution.

I understand that ideologies are «the beliefs, meanings and practices which shape our thoughts and actions» (Belsey & Moore 1990: 245) and am using ideological in the sense derived from Louis Althusser who sees that ideology «has a material existence in the State apparatuses» (Belsey & Moore 1990: 245) A publishing house may, of course, choose to function as a part of the cultural organisation of the state and, thus, contribute to a strategic formation which will, in turn, contribute to the constitution of the state's subjects in a particular fashion. By strategic location (the concept used in my title), I am referring to «[t]he position that an author adopts within a text *vis-à-vis* the material written upon» (Cairns & Richards 1988: 170). What I wish to focus on here, then, is the ideological thrust of *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*, the author's positioning within the text, and the transformation wrought, on ideological grounds, when a text entitled *Aventuras de un irlandés en España* surfaced in war-besieged Madrid in 1937 in a translation signed by Antonio Espina.

Ian Gibson's claim in last year's resuscitation by Espasa Calpe of *Aventuras* that Starkie (taking him to be one and the same with the narrator of the 'adventures'): «está claramente con el espíritu de progreso que anima a los que han traído la República» (Gibson 2006: 12) strikes me as debatable. Gibson (2006: 12) substantiates his claim by reference to the description of: «el enorme retraso

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs observe that prose fiction in modern forms «[trafficked] in travel and its tales», even going so far as to affirm that prose fiction *copied* the form of travel writing. They illustrate their claim by reference to the first person narrative form and, thus, the focus on the centrality of the self, but also point to «a concern with empirical detail, and a movement through time and place which is simply sequential.» (Hulme & Youngs 2002: 6).

<sup>2</sup> Ian Gibson (2006: 11) remarks on Walter Starkie's tendency to fantasize: «Un poco fantástico resulta, desde luego, el gárrulo dublinés, aunque ello no reduce para nada el atractivo de su narrativa. [...] 'la gracia del cuento está en el aumento.' De ello sabía mucho el autor de *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*.»

<sup>3</sup> The extent to which particular changes (excisions and additions) were produced as a consequence of decisions made by the translator and/or publisher cannot be verified by remaining evidence from the period. Manuel Durán, at Espasa Calpe in Madrid, tells me that the publishing house no longer possess any correspondence or papers which might document decisions taken at the time. The fact was confirmed on the occasion of the publication of *Aventuras* in 2006. (Telephone conversation with Manuel Durán, Director del Departamento de Documentación y del Archivo Gráfico de Espasa Calpe, 10-IV-2007.)

económico y agrícola del país (descubre [Starkie], por ejemplo, que el método de trillar no ha cambiado desde la época del Cid), su aislamiento del resto de Europa, y el acuciante deseo de cambio sentido por las clases menos favorecidas.» Examination of the description of harvesters in Castile will show that the Irish Catholic's<sup>4</sup> lens awards the harvesters majesty and dignity<sup>5</sup> (Starkie 1934: 302), that Spain's isolation (though not —and Gibson appears to have overlooked this— Madrid's<sup>6</sup>), if not splendid, certainly afforded her a substance, solemnity and variety<sup>7</sup> forfeited in industrialised climes and that the desire for change on the part of the less favoured was certainly not pressing or urgent («acuciante»), indeed far from it in a significant number of cases cited, where we shall find characters whom Starkie comes across, in the pattern of the picaresque, voicing their dissidence with regard to the Republican regime and where a supporter of the *status quo* comes to be highlighted, he is represented in pejorative terms. The final chapter of the original text, XXXVI, in which Starkie foregrounds such progressive achievements as the Residencia de Estudiantes, mentioning the importance of Alberto Jiménez Fraud and José Castillejo as well as the significance of Ortega and the *Revista de Occidente*, constitutes a mere appendix to the main body in which the scales repeatedly weigh against the move towards modernisation in Spain. This may be appreciated early on in the narrative where a melancholic nobility in exile are depicted, Catholicism looms reverently large and individuals of established stature repeatedly contemplate Republican Spain in negative terms.

As the narrating traveller approaches Spain, he hears from «a chatty Parisian» that «Spain since the Revolution [begins] at Biarritz, not at Irún. 'There are nearly as many Spaniards as French on the Côte d'Argent —why the entire *noblesse espagnole* [sic] sits along the coast and looks with melancholy longing across the bay at Fuenterrabía» (Starkie 1934: 13). On arrival in Hendaye, he visits an old friend, «Don Gonzalo» (Starkie 1934, 27), now a shadow of his former self, who vindicates «the Monarchy and Religion» (Starkie 1934: 29). Another member of the aristocracy, one Doña Carmen Medina: «sprung from one of the old noble families of Spanish aristocracy and a sister of the Duquesa de Tarifa» (Starkie 1934: 121), will strike out against contemporary Spain in the wake of the traveller's having identified himself as «an Irish Catholic» (Starkie 1934: 121): «Why have you come from your beautiful island of Faith to this land of sin and blasphemy against God. Here we need soldiers with stout hearts to fight the battle of the Church against the forces of Satan» (Starkie 1934: 122). We are also informed that she is a daily communicant and spends the greater part of her day in prayer though she also «direct[s] many organisations connected with the Church and the exiled monarchy» (Starkie 1934: 124). In a similar vein to Don Gonzalo, she will speak of «the excesses committed by the Revolutionary forces in other parts of Spain» (Starkie 1934: 124). The presence of «Religion», that is, Catholicism, is further felt by the traveller pronouncing a prayer before a statue of «Our Lady» (Starkie 1934: 89) on a visit to the painter Ignacio de Zuloaga through his heading for the shrine of Saint Ignatius of Loyola (Chapter X), the three chapters devoted to the visions of Our Lady at Ezquioga, in one of which space will be given over to Doña Carmen's interpretation of the apparitions of the Virgin (Starkie 1934: 125):

Ezquioga is a symbol in Spain today, [...] the government may call it hallucination, obscurantism or whatever it likes, but Our Lady is appearing in order to inspire the people to defend their religion. And, I tell you that in many cases she is appearing holding a sword dripping with blood.

Indeed, we shall find little defence of the today of the Republic. A Basque fisherman is nostalgic:

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<sup>4</sup> The narrator of *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* identifies himself as «an Irish Catholic» (Starkie 1934: 121).

<sup>5</sup> Though some of the majesty and dignity is diluted in the translation as a consequence of excision. (See Starkie 1934: 303-307 and Espina 1937: 166. The traditional Burgos harvester's song, bars of which are reproduced (Starkie 1934: 303), are inserted earlier in the chapter in the Espina translation (Espina 1937: 163).

<sup>6</sup> «Madrid today is one of the few cities where the traveller finds a balanced and unprejudiced point of view towards European affairs. This is due mainly to the tremendous influx of new ideas from other countries. As I wandered around the *Puerta del Sol* [sic] examining the numerous bookstalls, I found cheap editions of translations from English, French, German and even Russian authors.» (Starkie 1934: 418).

<sup>7</sup> «Modern civilization has created a depressing monotony of type.» (Starkie 1934: 20).

«In the old days, this was a paradise for smugglers, and my father could make a tidy sum out of this strip of water between France and Spain, but nowadays all is changed.» (Starkie 1934: 34). Zuloaga is reported as referring to «these lean days of revolution» (98); a young Jesuit the traveller has occasion to speak to will speak of «this hour of peril for Spain», «this tragic Spain of ours [...] today» (Starkie 1934: 106; 109) and «a pale-faced priest [...], a member of an order which devotes itself to teaching the children of the poor» (Starkie 1934: 137) plaintively remarks: «nowadays: I am not allowed to have my school: Spain does not want me» (Starkie 1934: 138).<sup>8</sup> And the traveller's meeting in Burgos with a waiter and devout landlady, first encountered there in 1921, will find the former gloomier than ever and Doña Leocadia haughtily defiant in her defence of the monarchy when she comes across her lodger playing *La Marseillaise* at the request of a group of young girls: «In return for your Spanish songs, Señor [sic], here is the image of my King» (Starkie 1934: 267).<sup>9</sup>

It may not be surprising to find representative members of the monarchical establishment expressing little sympathy for the post-April 1931 order of things, but we shall also find those belonging to the lower ranks expressing dissidence. Thus, Juanito, the Manchegan picador, who declares (Starkie 1934: 163-4):

It is worse under the Republic than before. I am leaner than I was in the days of Miguelito [sic] Primo de Rivera. [...] What do I get out of it all, except a wretched pittance which hardly keeps my wife and children from hunger. [...] And yet there was a time when I had my hopes for the future. [...] Nowadays I'm like a man born dead.

The communist Mariano in Sepúlveda is convinced that «The Revolution of April did next to nothing: it was just a ripple on the water. 'Ha sido una verbena sin vino'» (Starkie 1934: 393).<sup>10</sup> The comb-maker, Juan José, in Zumárraga, will declare himself to be «a Spanish republican» (Starkie 1934: 113) but he will not be presented to us in the sympathetic light which colours the representation of Don Gonzalo or Juanito, for instance; his «big tie of violent red» (Starkie 1934: 113) hardly constitutes a seductive feature. All told, in the binary mode of representation adopted, the past constitutes good, the present-day bad.<sup>11</sup>

Following the original publication of *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* in 1934 it was reviewed by Lino Novás Calvo in the *Revista de Occidente* under the heading «El profesor excéntrico», but a Spanish rendering would not be produced until Antonio Espina's heavily excised version of 1937. In a recent article devoted to Antonio Espina's 1943 biography on Cervantes, Jordi Amat (2007: 4) has referred to Espina as «un hombre de la órbita de José Ortega y Gasset y Manuel Azaña, intelectual prototípico de *Revista de Occidente*, representante modélico de la europeizante Edad de Plata y la tradición liberal... [y] comprometido con las ideas de izquierda». His profile hardly makes him the most apt candidate for translating *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*, but following the outbreak of the Civil War, Espina wasn't in a position to choose. Amat (2007: 4) explains:

Tras las elecciones del 16 de febrero de 1936, Espina [...] fue nombrado Gobernador Civil de Ávila. Pocas semanas antes del 18 de julio se le encomendó el desempeño del mismo cargo en Baleares, pero el éxito inmediato de la insurrección militar en la isla de Mallorca le condujo rápidamente a la cárcel. La condena a muerte no se hizo esperar. Durante la espera macabra de su ejecución, tras el fracaso de un intento de canje, Espina, preso en el Fuerte de San Carlos, intentó suicidarse.

Therefore, I deduce that Espina took on the translation of *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* as a means of

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<sup>8</sup> These examples are taken from Part I of *Spanish Raggle-Taggle*. Part II reinforces the presence of Catholicism with, for instance, reference to a pilgrim of Saint James (Chapter XXII) and the space devoted to the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos, where we shall be introduced to Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel, organic intellectual of General Franco's regime who became abbot of the monastery at El Valle de los Caídos.

<sup>9</sup> The regrets of waiter Pablo and the Marseillaise incident are excised in Espina (1937: 155).

<sup>10</sup> Mariano appears in the Espina translation as «el comunista de Sepúlveda» (Espina 1937: 200) but his indictment of priests as «drones and parasites who prey on the workers» is excised (Starkie 1934: 393-4; Espina 1937: 201).

<sup>11</sup> Another case in point would be the nostalgic Madrid taxi-driver, Don Eleuterio, whose resistance to the modern is excised in the Espina translation (Starkie 1934: 426,427; Espina 1937: 217).

survival,<sup>12</sup> like so many in the postwar period which followed. The original is 465 pages long, made up of thirty-six chapters divided into two parts together with a preface and an epilogue.<sup>13</sup> Both parts carry eighteen chapters. Espina's *Aventuras* is two hundred and forty pages in length and made up of only thirty-two chapters divided into two parts together with a preface and epilogue. Part I carries seventeen chapters; Part II fifteen. The three chapters dedicated to the visions at Ezquioga in Part I of the original are reduced to two in the translation. In Part II, «The Pilgrim of Saint James» chapter (XXII) is omitted as are «The Ballad of Fernando» (XXVIII) and «The Seven Heads of Salas» (XXIX). As can readily be appreciated, two of the four chapters omitted foreground Catholicism; of the remaining two, Espina might have considered that they could have been informative for a non-Spanish reading public but dealt with material that would be more familiar to a Spanish one. Apart from these wholesale omissions, Espina will liberally excise on the grounds of concision (already in Chapter II, when the traveller will indulge in a two and a half page account of his dream, Starkie 1934: 10-12,<sup>14</sup> and much of little substance is omitted from Chapter III), but also for ideological reasons. The first inkling one acquires of excision on explicitly ideological grounds is when Don Gonzalo is quote in Chapter IV of *Aventuras*. The original reads (Starkie 1934: 28):

Don Gonzalo at first was stiff and formal and I felt that since his exile he was determined to wrap himself up in a cloak of impenetrable reserve. Gradually, however, as I spoke words of comfort, he began to shed his mask of bitter disillusion. With flashing eyes and excited gestures he told me of the burning of convents and churches by bands of wild revolutionaries, led by «irresponsible intellectual theorists».

Espina will simplify the style and qualify the «irresponsible intellectual theorists», who will be reduced to «unos cuantos» (Espina 1937: 28). In the second chapter of the original text devoted to the visions at Ezquioga (XII), Doña Carmen's faith in the Basques and her determination in the defence of Catholicism are heavily excised (Starkie 1934: 124-5; Espina 1937: 95), as are several later pages in this chapter over which the recitation of the Rosary and the Litany are referred to, the threat of Civil War in the Basque Country between Catholics and non-Catholics is voiced and «Acción Católica» is twice referred to. In chapter XV, Juanito el picador's comment that life is worse under the Republic is excised (Starkie 1934: 163-4; Espina 1937: 107).

Another area in which we shall find changes between the source text and the translated version is in connection with women. In chapter XV, at Zumárraga, a young girl, Carmen Alberdi, enters the third-class carriage in which the traveller is already seated. The following patronising reflections are excised (Starkie 1934: 165; Espina 1937: 108):

Poor girl, thought I, you should not travel third class: no, you should travel first accompanied by a severe duenna and you should be heavily veiled. Though the Republic has come to Spain, bringing the modern ideas of hiking maidenhood, you will still remain attached to your feudal traditions.

In the chapter devoted to proverbs (XXX) in the second part of the text, a section records proverbs which touch upon women. The section begins: «When women come into their own in modern Spain they will revenge themselves on the nation's proverbs» (Starkie 1934: 383). Here Espina will produce a significant addition: women's true place in modern Spain will possess a European dimension, thus: «Cuando las mujeres conquisten su puesto verdadero y europeo en la España moderna se vengarán seguramente de los refranes que les atañen» (Espina 1937: 192, my underlining). As regards the representation of women, Espina will repeatedly opt to leave out the sometimes prurient and titillating episodes with girls met hither and thither by the traveller. Thus,

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<sup>12</sup> I have been unable to trace any 'Espina Papers', where other information might be provided.

<sup>13</sup> *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* also carries «A Wanderer's Library», subtitled a «Short Bibliography», which carries texts on «The Spirit of Spain», titles relevant to the Basque and Castilian landscapes, travel books devoted to Spain, and others which deal with the picaresque, gypsy culture and Spanish music. The bibliography is followed by «Notes» to eight of the chapters, a «Glossary» and, finally, a map of north west Spain which traces the «Route of Dr. Starkie's Travels». None of this material appears in the Espina translation.

<sup>14</sup> Chapter XXVI / XXIV provides an example of the excision of a nightmare sequence (Starkie 1934: 325-328; Espina 1937: 178).

the encounter with Germaine in Chapter III (Starkie 1934: 21-26); the observation of the «woman of mountainous bosom» and two Russian girl acrobats in Chapter VII (Starkie 1934: 67); Dolores in Chapter XII (Starkie 1937: 147-150); the traveller's antics performed on behalf of landlady Doña Leocadia's eighteen year-old niece, Isabel, and her «novio» (Starkie 1934: 261-263); the description of the twenty year-old gypsy dancing girl in Chapter XXIV (Starkie 1934: 276); that of Rosario, daughter of the innkeeper at Retuerta in Chapter XXV (Starkie 1934: 307-309) and the depiction of Luz and Lola in Chapter XXXIII, resident in «a dilapidated house» on the so-called «Street of Love» in Segovia (Starkie 1934: 407-408). However, the assertion of Mariano, the communist of Sepúlveda, that «[i]n new communist Spain» (Starkie 1934: 395), woman «will have complete independence at home and abroad» (Starkie 1934: 395) is excised, as is Russia's model for divorce and Mariano's own wedding ceremony, to take place in front of a statue of Lenin and with the bride carrying «the gilded sickle and hammer of the communist» (Starkie 1934: 395) as her bouquet. Finally, when drawing parallels between Galicia and Ireland, the traveller's reproduction of the stanza from the Irish writer J.C. Mangan's nationalist poem «Dark Rosaleen» (Starkie 1934: 194; Espina 1937: 126), and in particular the stanza in which dark Rosaleen / Ireland is assured that papal aid and Spanish relief are en route, might be mentioned. It is omitted in Espina's rendering though what becomes a cryptic mention of «nuestra morena Rosalía» (Espina 1937: 126), juxtaposed to that of the Galician writer Rosalía de Castro, remains.<sup>15</sup>

One discourse on which both source and target texts might be seen to agree is in relation to the nation state. Neither of the two reveal any sympathy for, respectively, Irish nationalism<sup>16</sup> or Basque and Galician independence (Chapters V and XVII, the latter XVI in Espina). Indeed, in the earlier chapter, on arrival in Spain through the Basque Country, the traveller will pronounce himself to be «Irish» (Starkie 1934: 36) though he will make light of the Irish Gaelic written into his passport, qualifying it parenthetically as: «a little touch of nationalist self-expression» (Starkie 1934: 36). However, later, we shall find him asserting: «I am not a Celt» (Starkie 1934: 194; Espina 1937: 125) and going on to elaborate with the following claim: «many of us are not Celts by race, but by emigration» (Starkie 1934: 194; Espina 1937: 126), the identity becoming defused into a consequence of displacement and sentiment.

Both Basque and Galician identity are relayed in terms of regional variety at best (though the Basque tongue is referred to as a «language» whilst Galician is qualified a «dialect») (Starkie 1934: 132; excised in Espina 1937)<sup>17</sup> and it is Castilian hegemony which is firmly asserted, voiced by the «costumbrista» painter Ignacio de Zuloaga (Starkie 1934: 97; Espina 1937: 77):

I am born a Basque from Eibar yet I refuse to sacrifice my universal heritage for any regionalism. It was Castile that made Spain and every one of us whether we are Basques, Galicians or Andalusians must go forth from our narrow [sic] regions and become Castilian, for it was Castile that made the Spanish world.

The place of Catholicism within the state would be a controversial subject over the years of the Second Republic in Spain. As has been seen, religious allusions are played down to some degree in *Aventuras*, as are references to superstitious practices. However, it seems to me to be significant that *Spanish Raggie-Taggle* appeared in Spanish translation (albeit selectively) when it did. Reflected in *Aventuras* is an anxiety to play down any apocalyptic representation of the end of monarchical rule in Spain in 1931. Thus, what might simply stand as a throw-away comment, the remembered words of «an older Romany rye» (Starkie 1934: 269), a friend of the traveller's: «today, when Spain is topsy-turvy after the revolution» (Starkie 1934: 269) will be neutralised to: «España está como está» (Espina 1937: 157). Undoubtedly, the text may profitably be read within the context of the Republic's gestures towards the Church (1937) in a year in which, on the one hand, a collective

<sup>15</sup> I suspect that not many Spanish readers of *Aventuras* would pick up the allusion to Mangan's poem. Indeed, Espina may have omitted it since he was unable to provide the source. No reference is provided in Starkie's text.

<sup>16</sup> In this connection, it seems significant that the traveller / narrator projects himself as an Irish Catholic rather than a Catholic Irishman.

<sup>17</sup> The reference to Basque and Galician appears on a page within ten in Chapter XII of the source text (Starkie 1934: 128-138) which are excised in Espina (Espina 1937: 97).

letter from the Spanish bishops had endorsed the Franco regime whilst, on the other, private religious ceremonies were once again allowed in Republican Spain (Graham 2005: 162). Similarly, on the occasion of the publication of the source text in 1934, the foregrounding of the Irish Catholic becomes a strategy for forging sympathetic links with Spanish Catholicism. The authors of source and target texts shaped the adventures each according to his ideological convictions or those he sought to represent: Starkie's, those of the pre-Republican Establishment; Espina's, those in Spain in pursuit of moderate change.

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