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TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

Walter Starkie's *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934)  
and *Don Gypsy* (1936)

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## ABSTRACT

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a tendency emerged among English-speaking authors to describe Spain from a romantic point of view, which derived in Spanish Orientalism. The aim of this B. A. Thesis is to demonstrate that, in the books *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* and *Don Gypsy*, Walter Starkie (a Hispanist born in Dublin, 1894-1976) is a chronicler instead of an Orientalist. To do this, I will first contextualize this travel literature to see if Starkie can fit or not into one of the three types of Orientalism I propose, and then delve into knowing the author himself to end with the analysis of the two works. As a result, we can conclude that, in *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* and *Don Gypsy*, there are more features of a chronicler than of an orientalist writer.

Keywords: Walter Starkie, chronicler, Orientalism, Spain, travel literature, Ireland.

## RESUMEN

En los siglos XVIII y XIX, surgió entre los autores anglosajones la tendencia de describir España desde un punto de vista romántico, la cual derivó en el orientalismo español. El objetivo de este Trabajo de Fin de Grado es el de demostrar que, en los libros *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* y *Don Gypsy*, Walter Starkie (hispanista nacido en Dublín, 1894-1976) es un cronista y no un orientalista. Para ello, primero pondré en contexto esta literatura de viajes para ver si Starkie puede encajar o no en uno de los tres tipos de orientalismo que propongo, y luego profundizaré en el conocimiento del propio autor para terminar con el análisis de las dos obras. Como resultado, podemos concluir que, en *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* y *Don Gypsy*, hay más rasgos de un cronista que de un escritor orientalista.

Palabras clave: Walter Starkie, cronista, Orientalismo, España, literatura de viajes, Irlanda.



To my family, for their unconditional support.



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## Introduction

The present dissertation seeks to demonstrate that, although Walter Starkie (a Hispanist born in Dublin, 1894-1976), shares some characteristics in two of his books with orientalist writers, he is not an orientalist but a chronicler. To this end, and with the intention of ratifying my theory, I will study the books *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934) and *Don Gypsy* (1936) by the Irish author.

There are no previous studies on Starkie from a chronicler's approach. Notwithstanding, it is true that some authors like Jacqueline Hurtle in her book *Walter Starkie 1894-1976: An Odyssey* (2013), or James Whiston in his article "Starkie, Walter Fitzwilliam (1894–1976)" (2011) have studied the life of this Irish scholar. For this reason, I want to delve into Starkie's life to learn more about him, but I also aim to analyze his books to demonstrate our hypothesis, a task that has not been carried out before. In order to do this, we will make a close reading of his two books to verify in them the main characteristics that distance him from being an orientalist writer, to bring him closer to the classification as a chronicler, like the interpretative quality of the author, or the break with the romantic and idealizing descriptions of Romanticism.

The structure of this B. A. Thesis is the following: the first chapter is the present introduction; the second chapter, entitled "Contextualization: Three types of Spanish Orientalism", will be based on the explanation of the concept of travel literature and Spanish Orientalism, where we will expose three types of the latter to see if Starkie could fit into any of them; the third chapter, "Walter Starkie: Hispanist, Fiddler and Wanderer", will be devoted to the life of this scholar; the final chapter, entitled "Walter Starkie, a Chronicler in Disguise", will be focused on demonstrating my thesis that, although Starkie shares some traits with the three types of Orientalism, his classification as a chronicler prevails given the evidence I provide after reading and analyzing these two books.



## Contextualization: Three types of Spanish Orientalism

There have been many literary productions that have been made about our country within the genre of travel literature, either by British or American authors. However, this fact is surprising because a few centuries ago this was unthinkable because Spain was not at all a tourist or artistic destination for foreigners. The spread of the Black Legend throughout the world in the sixteenth century by the English people did nothing to improve the image of Spain under the reign of Philip II. Apart from the excessive despotism of some Spanish rulers and the supposed instability of the country, Spain was left out of the chief European spots of interest. In addition, the proliferation of thieves and highway robbers made our roads unappealing to outsiders. That is why Spain was excluded from the plans of the Europeans to carry out their 'Grand Tour', which was a kind of journey that aristocrats (especially British) undertook throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to improve their general knowledge and obtain an acquaintance with diplomacy and languages.

However, there was a very important event that changed this trend: the publication in two parts of the work *Historia de los Bandos de Cegriés y Abencerrajes o Guerras Civiles de Granada* (1595 and 1604) by the Murcian writer Ginés Pérez de Hita. This book, which deals with the confrontations between Christians and Arabs during the Reconquest, had a great impact on Anglo-Saxon culture due to its subject matter and also due to the translations made by an English author of this book. That author in question was Thomas Rodd, who was inspired by Pérez de Hita to write two essential books on the Arab past in the peninsula: *The Civil Wars of Granada* and *Ballads from the Civil Wars of Granada and the Twelve Peers of France*, published in 1801 and 1803, respectively.

From the publication of these two books by Rodd, the curiosity for the Moorish past of Spain increases in England, and this tendency sees its peak in the nineteenth century. Thanks to this trend in literature, our country begins to be the focus of numerous trips and expeditions but, what is really this term and what does it mean? Edward W. Saïd

in his book *Orientalism* (1978) proposes different definitions of this term, but for our purposes it is useful to define it as an artistic movement that yearns to explore Spain's Arab past and whose main theme is the nostalgia for the reminiscences that endure of that civilization in our country.

It should be noted that the rise of Romanticism in Great Britain and later in the USA helped to spread this artistic trend, as many postulates of Romanticism coincided and fitted perfectly with those of Spanish Orientalism. See, for example, the longing for the past, the tradition, the mystery and the ruins of an ancient civilization (a certain primitivism). Especially, one of the focuses of this trend in Spain is going to be the city of Granada and, above all, the Alhambra. The first contributions on this enclave appeared in the seventeenth century, but it is from the second half of the eighteenth century when this interest is clearly seen in the books of British travelers and especially in the first half of the nineteenth century with the rise of Romanticism, when English and North Americans longed to deepen into Spanish themes (Barrio and Fernández 5).

Once put into context, we have the background to analyze in the final chapter of this B. A. Thesis whether or not our author, Walter Starkie, belongs to this artistic and cultural movement. For this, within Spanish Orientalism, I will establish three branches with the intention of seeing if our Irish author could belong to any of them. The first would be a positive approach towards Orientalism, with plenty of soft descriptions and praises; the second would be an Orientalism with a neutral and objective approach mixing hues of Romanticism and Rationalism, as Barrio and Fernández suggest (128); and the third would be a romantic Spanish Orientalism that puts the spotlight on the existing decadence of the country and a little more negative, but not losing its orientalist essence, as I have already commented. Its representatives are Washington Irving, Richard Ford and Henry Swinburne, respectively.

Undoubtedly, when we speak of the romanticism and orientalism associated with Granada and the Alhambra, the name of Washington Irving comes to mind. Although in his beginnings he was not at all a romantic author, researching this beautiful city and its Moorish past made him change completely, feeling on many occasions enthralled by the magic of this place. As we see in *La imagen de la Alhambra y el Generalife en la cultura anglosajona* (2014), Irving's stories about the Alhambra mix fiction and reality, history

and legend, and include a variety of gothic elements. Among his most outstanding works on this subject we highlight “The Student of Salamanca”, and *Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*. But, without a doubt, the work where the features of this Spanish Orientalism are most clearly seen is *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832). In it, he describes with exactitude the mixture of feelings and emotions that enthrall him when contemplating the relics of the Spanish past; for him, La Vega and Granada are like a kind of ‘earthly paradise’, a term that Irving and other later authors will coin. This nostalgic and mystical description can be clearly appreciated in:

The transition was almost magical: it seemed as if we were at once transported into another times, and another realm, and were treading the scenes of Arabian story. We found ourselves in a great court, paved with white marble, and decorated at each end with light Moorish peristyles: it is called the Court of the Alberca. [...] It is impossible to contemplate this once favourite abode of oriental manners, without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony, or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice. The abode of beauty is here, as if it had been inhabited but yesterday, but where are the Zoraydas and Lindaraxas! (1870: 20-21)

The second branch of this Spanish Orientalism, so to speak, is headed by Richard Ford. This English author, apart from a great collector of Spanish art, wrote by commission what for many is considered one of the most important travel guides on Spain: *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain* (1845). Barrio and Fernández comment that this book is a counterpoint to Irving’s work, as it seeks to demystify that obsessive and sometimes irrational romanticism by contrasting romantic and rational elements. Thus, this book supposes an objective vision of Spain and, in particular, of Granada, narrating what Ford sees with his eyes in a transparent way. But not without abandoning the cynicism, sarcasm and irony that characterize him, as we can see in: “Granada, which under the Moors contained half a million souls, now barely numbers 80,000. The date of its ruin is Jan. 2, 1492, when the banner of Castile first floated on the towers of the Alhambra” (Ford 361), or also in: “Boabdil immediately put to death the Abencerrages, for amnesty is not a thing of this Oriental land” (362).

However, as happens to most authors who write about Granada and the Alhambra, once there they forget all their prejudices and succumb to the charm of the place that dazzles them with its spell. In addition, like most Romantics, Ford is fascinated by all the

legends that have to do with Arabs and the inhabitants who lived there in remote times, like Boabdil's one or the expulsion of the Moors.

Finally, in order to see if Starkie can belong to this artistic movement, I propose a third branch of Spanish Orientalism headed by Henry Swinburne, writer and traveler born in Bristol. As I mentioned earlier, this branch is still characterized by everything that has to do with Romanticism, but it is harder and more negative as far as the view of Spain from the outside is concerned. Swinburne will be one of the authors who will pay more attention to the decadence of Spain and will try to encourage even more the image of the Black Legend, as Pérez picks up in his article "Retrato de Granada, el Paraíso Perdido de Henry Swinburne, entre 1775 y 1776" (2005). First of all, Swinburne criticizes very harshly the journey and the conditions of the roads, insinuating that if it is not necessary, it is better not to go there. However, once in Granada, he greatly praises the Alhambra and its architecture.

However, for this author, the only thing worth visiting is this monument and the little that remains of the Arab past in Spain, because all the rest is not worth anything according to him, even though there are in Granada other architectural monuments of great value, such as the palace of Charles V. Swinburne is very hard on Spain, as in his most famous book *Travels through Spain in the years 1775 and 1776* (1779), where he makes a criticism of the Spanish rulers centered on the fact that one of our greatest errors in history was the expulsion of the Moorish civilization. Especially, it refers to the Catholic monarchs and the supposed hardness against the Moors in the Reconquest.

Although, as the good romantic author and worshipper of the exotic that he is, he cannot help but lavish compliments on the world of dream and fantasy that is contained in the Alhambra, which entralls him, describing this feeling in detail in:

The form of this hall, the elegance of its cupola, the cheerful distribution of light from above, and the exquisite manner in which the stucco is designed, painted, and finished, exceed all my powers of description. Every thing in it inspires the most pleasing, voluptuous ideas: yet in this sweet retreat they pretend that Abouabdulah assembled the Abencerrages, and caused their heads to be struck off into the fountain. (1787: 283)

With all this, it is time to analyze if Walter Starkie could belong to any of these branches of Spanish Orientalism or if, directly, he is not part of this artistic movement that saw its

peak in the nineteenth century. At first glance, we could say that Starkie is not an Orientalist because he does not focus most of his literary production on the exoticism of Granada and the Alhambra. On the other hand, in favour of establishing Starkie as an orientalist author we could say that in *Don Gypsy* (1936), when he speaks of southern Spain and specifically of Granada, he is ecstatic about the beauty of that place and longs for everything that has to do with the Arab past and the ruins of a lost civilization.

What is clear is that Irving, Ford, Swinburne, and Starkie were as fascinated by Spain's eastern past as so many other authors, thanks in large part to Ginés Pérez de Hita and Thomas Rodd's translations of the latter, which in turn inspired many orientalist authors. As a way of saying, without the existence of these romantic authors and their works, Walter Starkie would not have been curious to travel to Spain and know firsthand the reality of that country to capture it in his two most famous works: *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934) and *Don Gypsy* (1936), which I will analyze next.



## Walter Starkie: Hispanist, Fiddler and Wanderer

Walter Fitzwilliam Starkie was born in Dublin (Ireland) in 1894 and died in Madrid, where he had spent the last stages of his life in 1976. He is the son of William Joseph Myles Starkie (the last resident commissioner of education under British rule in Ireland) and May Caroline. Although it is true that he is not a very well-known author and has not been thoroughly studied, the truth is that our Irish scholar deserves greater recognition given his extensive contribution to the world of the humanities in general. He is known for his travel books, but it is also worth noting his many other contributions to the world of literature, music and theatre, among others. In order to deepen into the biography of this scholar, I will focus especially on the book *Walter Starkie 1894-1976: An Odyssey* (2013), written by the British Professor Jacqueline Hurlley, who studied the Irish writer for two decades.

At an early age, Walter Starkie developed a great taste for music, contrary to his father's ideals who favored a Classic studies orientation. In 1909, he was sent by his father to Shrewsbury School with the intention of diverting his son's early attention to music, since this school did not show at that time a clear tendency towards musical studies. Nevertheless, the truth is that his fondness for music and especially for the violin, of which he was already a virtuoso, increased. Such was his mastery of the instrument, that in the summer of 1909 the Shrewsbury School Musical Society was created, in which Starkie participated.

Not only did he stand out as a young man in music, but he was also a distinguished student in French, as Hurlley comments (50). His command of English was also impressive, and in 1910 he began his attraction for the world of theatre thanks to Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, performed at the Abbey Theatre. In spite of his family's complicated economic situation, he graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1917 in Classics and History and Political Science (Hurlley 68). As far as his first job is concerned, the young Irishman wanted to get a war-related job, if possible in the Foreign Office, to unleash his French and German skills.

At the age of twenty-four, he would already be working for the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in Italy, specifically in Genoa. There, he performed various tasks, from serving tea and coffee to caring for wounded soldiers on the northern front in the First World War. Thanks to his versatility, the tasks assigned to him grew in number. Thus, he was ordered to give lessons to the soldiers in French, Italian and Spanish, and also worked for other YMCA centers in the city, as well as playing the violin to hospital patients (a task he had already done in Ireland). J.O. Dobson, a YMCA leader in education, suggested that Starkie's work shall extend beyond Genoa to military centers in northern Italy. Once there, he was in charge of teaching, holding conferences, organizing plays and concerts, and mobilizing other people to take advantage of the talent that the other companions had and thus entertain the soldiers and instruct them.

After giving a recital in Montebello, five Austrian prisoners approached him (they worked for the British navy in hard field work until their repatriation). This fact is going to be of great importance, since these prisoners turned out to be Hungarian gypsies, this being Walter Starkie's first contact with the gypsy people, for whom he will develop a great admiration. This admiration was awakened when they were asked to play the violin and our author was impressed with their musical skills, saying: "their fiddles worked a potent spell when throbbing under the devilish fingers of the Romanichals. Such glamour the five cast over me that I would stand and stare at them time and time again like one in a trance" (Hurtley 81).

Some time later, on his journey from Taranto to Brindisi, he came across a gypsy camp, a fact that will mark his life as much as the previous encounter with the prisoners of war. It was from them that his taste for freedom, the avoidance of convention, and, above all, his nomadic character, were drawn. Such is his admiration for this ethnic group that he comments: "How could I find words to describe my feelings of ease and freedom, as I rested by the smouldering fires, surrounded by those dark-eyed vagabonds? [...] ever since, I have felt at certain moments a longing to be away on the plain, near the tents of the wandering folk" (Hurtley 85-86).

There, in the Italian country, he met his future wife, Italia, whom he married in Genoa on 10 August 1921. The couple's honeymoon took place in Spain, and it was this fact that triggered Starkie's return to Spain years later and the making of his travel books

based in that country. Thanks to this trip with his wife, he had the opportunity to visit numerous Spanish cities such as Madrid, Burgos or Granada, among others, as well as to meet various personalities of Spanish culture like the Basque writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno or the composer Manuel de Falla. Hurlley adds that he also had time to visit the Prado Museum and the National Library, as well as to visit the Palacio of the Escorial (97-98).

He will then return to his home country (Ireland) two months before the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. This return was propitiated by the delicate state of health of his father, as Starkie was happy with his life in Italian lands. Once settled in Ireland, with the aim of earning a living, he worked in various jobs, such as tutoring some students and advising them on their exams, giving lectures at Trinity College, as well as teaching at Earlsfort House School. However, William Alexander Goligher, Professor of Ancient History, advised him to focus on the study of Spanish. This recommendation led him to produce a PhD on the Spanish Nobel Prize-winning playwright Jacinto Benavente and to occupy the first position of Spanish teacher at Trinity College in 1926 (Hurlley 92).

Such was his knowledge of the Spanish language and culture, that in November 1921 he was commissioned to give three public lectures at the Regent House (campus of Trinity College). The first one was focused on the novel in Spain; the second one was about Spanish poetry; and the last one dealt with his impressions of the country (Hurlley 100). Besides being a follower of Jacinto Benavente, he declared himself a faithful admirer of Miguel de Unamuno, with whom letters were exchanged where he gave his opinion on the works of the Basque writer. Furthermore, he included *El sentimiento trágico de la vida* as one of the works to be studied in his Spanish lessons at the university, in addition to other books and essays.

In 1926, apart from his appointment as Chair of Spanish at Trinity College, Dublin, there were a series of trips to countries he had never visited before, such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Already by this year, the Irish author's knowledge of Europe in general was immense, proof of his travelling and wandering nature. Given his familiarity with British, Spanish, and Italian theatre, he was appointed in 1927 by Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats as the new director of the Abbey Theatre, with preference over other candidates.

The reasons for this appointment are, according to Hurlley, his docility, tractability, and the fact that he would not cause any problem to the other members, which made him the perfect candidate (Hurlley 129). In addition to those attributes, the fact that he wrote a book about Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello, and that he was already a Professor of Spanish and Italian at Trinity College at that time, made him the ideal person for that job.

The year 1928 was going to be a busy one for our scholar, since he presented his candidacy to occupy the Chair of Spanish at the University of Oxford, since the shortage of Hispanists made him a potential candidate for that job. However, to his great disappointment and despite having the support of the Duke of Alba, the Spanish Ambassador to Britain, and the Spanish Academy philologist Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Salvador Madariaga won by only one vote. His disagreement with the decision was followed by two others in 1931 and 1953, when Starkie applied again for the position unsuccessfully (Hurlley 146).

The next year (1929) was to be more fruitful for Starkie. First of all, it was in that year when we are certain of his first recorded journey with the gypsies in Hungary and Romania, from which he learned aspects like their lifestyle in the gypsy camps, their personality, or their skill for music. Also, in that same year, owing to his economic situation, he decided to give a tour of conferences in the United States, the first of three in total. The content of the conferences would be based on areas of interest related to Spain, Italy and Ireland.

Already back in Ireland after his summer tour of conferences in the USA, thanks to the knowledge acquired in his travels studying the gypsies in Hungary and Romania, he gave in November a 'Special Lecture' at the Royal Dublin Society entitled 'Recent Rambles among the Gypsies of Southern Europe', and later this year, he was also a speaker at a conference inspired by the gypsies at a meeting of the Dublin Literary Society. Hence, these trips not only gave him the possibility to offer conferences based on them, he would also publish two books based on his adventures in Hungary and Romania: *Raggle-Taggle. Adventures with a Fiddle in Hungary and Romania* (1933) and *In Sara's Tents* (1953).

At the beginning of the thirties, Starkie continued with his particular ‘odyssey’ through the world, in this case through the Spain of the Second Republic. Although his first experience through Spain during Primo de Rivera’s regime was important and strengthened his already known love for the Spanish country, this second trip will result in two key aspects, the first being the possibility of compiling his adventures in two travel books, *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934) and *Don Gypsy* (1936), which I will analyze in depth in the next chapter. The other important event was the offer in April 1940 to found the British Council Institute in Madrid, as Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, then Chairman of the British Council, believed that Starkie was the ideal candidate to carry out this task given his knowledge of the territories of Spain and of the Spanish language and culture.

Moreover, the fact that the Irish scholar had the approval of celebrities from Spain and England was the trigger for his election. In a letter to the Duke of Alba, he proudly expressed his new challenge: “nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to be able to establish closer relations between Spain and Great Britain and draw the true Spain nearer to the true England” (Hurtley 254). By 1943 the set of activities organized by Starkie in the British Council was enormous, among which we can highlight the fortnightly *tertulia*, concerts, gramophone recitals, conferences and exhibitions of art and books, as well as dinners to bring together important personalities and foster contact between countries. Starkie also facilitated connections with various Spanish institutions, such as The Higher Council for Scientific Research in Madrid or the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat in Catalonia, and at the end of the year another Institute would be opened in Barcelona, followed by others that closed eventually, such as the one in Valencia (Hurtley 268).

Thus, since Starkie’s appointment, the ties between Britain and Spain intensified, also promoting campaigns to advertise British books in Spain, which contributed greatly to the dissemination of the British culture. What is more, thanks to his good relationship with the Spanish Minister of Education Ibáñez Martín, the status of the English language gained greater strength in Spain (Hurtley 272). In addition, the minister facilitated another conference tour throughout Spain in 1945, with Starkie intending to visit all Spanish universities. In December 1947 he was appointed Professor of English Literature at the University of Madrid and it was rumored that he would also hold the position of Literary Director at the María Guerrero Theatre in Madrid (Hurtley 277).

Starkie's idea was to establish himself continuously in Spain, a country he regarded with great esteem, and in which he felt comfortable, but in 1956 Starkie and his wife decided to spend a year in the USA, a period that would be longer than expected given the wandering personality of our writer. Finally, in 1975 he settled definitively in Madrid with his wife, and he died there the following year (1976), ending a life full of travels and more than important contributions to British culture and its dissemination through other countries.

To conclude, as far as his whole literary production is concerned, travel literature, translations of Spanish classics, and his introductions to other books stand out. Among his own books, we can highlight *Luigi Pirandello* (1926), *Raggle-Taggle. Adventures with a Fiddle in Hungary and Romania* (1933), *The Waveless Plain* (1938), *In Sara's Tents* (1953), *The Road to Santiago* (1957), *Spain. A Musician's Journey through Time and Space* (1958), or *Scholars and Gypsies* (1963). Of his translations, special attention should be paid to that of *Don Quixote of la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes in 1957, and *The Spaniards in their History* by Menéndez Pidal in 1950. Though, without any doubt, his two most outstanding books are *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934) and *Don Gypsy* (1936), which I will analyze in depth in the fourth chapter of this B.A. Thesis.

## Walter Starkie, a Chronicler in Disguise

*Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934) and *Don Gypsy* (1936) are two books by Walter Starkie that fall within the category of travel literature. In both works, our Irish scholar will travel through Spain from top to bottom, describing with astonishing liveliness and great realism the territories, people and culture (among other aspects) of Spain in the early 1930s. Although the subject matter and style are very similar in both books, the truth is that they are based on different geographical areas.

In *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* (1934), Starkie travels the north of Spain accompanied by his inseparable fiddle as a minstrel, passing through the Basque Country or Galicia to go to Castile and then to Madrid. In this journey, our traveler gives an account of his numerous adventures in the north of Spain. For example, he enjoys the Villafranca festivities and the typical Basque dances; he has the opportunity to visit a gypsy camp; he meets a pilgrim who is making the way to Santiago; and he is even enthralled when he remembers the honeymoon with his wife in Burgos, among other aspects. As a matter of interest, he introduces a novel touch in travel literature, as he transports us inside the Monastery of Silos, where he narrates with great details the physiognomy of that religious place and makes a depiction of the life of the monks that live there.

On the other hand, in *Don Gypsy* (1936) he gives an account of the boat trip from Morocco to Spain, his stay in Andalusia passing through Granada and the Alhambra, and his subsequent tour through Castile la Mancha imitating Don Quixote. It is worth mentioning his passage through the city that aroused the interest of so many Orientalists in literature, Granada, to which he dedicates four chapters (XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX). Once there, he will have the opportunity to meet different people and to contemplate with his own eyes what remains of the Arab past in Spanish lands, as well as to visit the Sacro Monte district. In addition to this, our Irish scholar will deliver his vision of the Holy Week in Seville.

It should be noted that these trips entailed many problems, as Starkie lived quite a few misfortunes due to his condition as a vagabond and the fact that he wanted to travel

to Spain in a different and original way compared to other English-speaking travelers. His only means of subsistence was to play the violin in order to beg and live on the charity of the Spanish people, a novel fact in the travel literature trend. These two books are loaded with experiences and testimonies that give a great vivacity and dynamism to the story. In addition, at the end of both books, the author includes a glossary with Spanish terms and others coming from *caló*, the language of the gypsies, increasing the interest of these two books for linguistic purposes.

What interests us most about these two books is to demonstrate through them our theory exposed in the introduction of this B. A. Thesis, which is based on the fact that Walter Starkie is not an orientalist writer (contrary to what we could think), but a chronicler. As a case in point, I will take the chapters dedicated to Granada in *Don Gypsy*, since this city was the main interest of the Orientalists who travelled to Spain. In the chapter devoted to the contextualization of this travel literature, I proposed three kinds of Orientalism in literature: the first was a positive approach (headed by Washington Irving); the second was a more neutral and objective approach (incarnated by Richard Ford); and the third was a negative view centered on the decadence of the country (Henry Swinburne).

Although Walter Starkie resembles these three authors in some aspects, we will see that this is not going to be enough to classify him as an orientalist writer. In his works we will not find the tendency to describe Spain from a romantic or idealized point of view, longing for the past and the ruins of this country, although some of his descriptions of the Alhambra resemble those of Irving, highlighting the majesty and magic of that place, as can be seen in: “It was Pan himself, the god of Nature, who had called the birds and insects to build the palace [...] Thus it became a magic world of countless notched arches, gleaming ornaments saturated with colours” (Starkie, 1936: 276).

Another quote that resembles Irving’s approach is: “Hence it was not surprising that during my first few days in Granada I forgot all about the Alhambra or Generalife: I might have been in a city of North Spain, so little was there to remind me of the land of the Arabian Nights on the hill above, unless an occasional vision of a beautiful Moorish arch such as that which frames the entrance to the “Casa de Carbón”” (1936: 226).

Regardless of these romantic strokes, he does not hesitate to add some hints of criticism as Swinburne did, though in a different manner. In an excerpt he comments that little remains of the glorious past of the Arabs, as if the Spanish authorities had insisted on hiding any reminiscence of that period of time. He also criticizes at some point the parody of the eastern past of Spain as a tourist attraction to gain money, exaggerating some features in an excessive manner, as in:

The golden rule is to exaggerate and parody. As soon as the globe-trotter enters the glass swing-doors of the hotel at Malaga or Granada, he must be dazzled by exotic colours: the Moorish tiles must be gaudy, the walls and ceilings must be strident in colour with plenty of red, yellow and gilt [...] Are we for ever to be exposed to grotesque parody? Was it not enough to have driven out the Moors four hundred and fifty years ago that we should be tortured unceasingly by this phantom mockery of the past? (1936: 156-157)

With Richard Ford, Starkie also shared some traits, such as his way of narrating from a neutral point of view, mixing praise with criticism at the same time, as can be seen in: “In the halls of the Alhambra, the most dazzling jewel is always the ogive-shaped window with its vision of green forested slopes stretching away to the distant white sierra. The Christians, on the contrary, when they raised their city in the valley between the Alhambra and the Albaicín, turned their backs on all this beauty as if it had been the creation of Satan” (1936: 226). In this quotation, the Irish scholar flatters the Moors whereas, in the next sentence, he criticizes the Christians. And also, another parallelism with Richard Ford is the fact of narrating his travels throughout all Spain as the British writer did in his travel books.

However, as we said before, there are certain aspects that clearly distance the Irish scholar from this classification as an orientalist writer. One of them is the fact that he has travelled all over Spain and not just Granada, to get to know the reality of the country firsthand by playing the violin like a minstrel. Another main characteristic that indicates that Starkie is not an orientalist writer is the vividness of his descriptions and the amount of details he includes, resembling more a realistic writer than a romantic one.

Without a doubt, there is one aspect that makes all the difference though: the fact that Starkie came to Spain not to behold the Alhambra and what was left of the Arabs there, but his main interest being the study of the Spanish people and, especially, the

gypsy ethnicity. Such is his interest in the gypsies that he travels to Granada with the chief intention of knowing these people who live in the caves of the Sacro Monte.

The richness of Starkie's descriptions of the Spanish people and culture resemble those of a camera that records the country from top to bottom, almost like a diary of his experiences and adventures. That is why I maintain my theory that in these two books Starkie, more than an Orientalist, is a chronicler, which I will demonstrate and analyze below.

In order to do this, we must first know what a chronicle is. In his book *La crónica periodística: Un género personal* (2007), Álvaro De Diego proposes several definitions, among which we can highlight: "the chronicle in its origin was a literary work consisting of the compilation of historical facts narrated in a sequential way, that is, in chronological order. This story was usually written by eyewitnesses who recorded data together with their evaluations of the same" (13-14), or the following one: "the chronicle is a genre in which narrative ingredients and argumentative or evaluative elements are combined. It is the interpretative genre par excellence" (14). Basically, De Diego emphasizes that interpretative value of the chronicle in which the chronicler showed the reader his/her personal opinion and assessment of the facts, an aspect that can be clearly identified in *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* and *Don Gypsy*. For this reason, I will now analyze various themes located in the two books that may be useful for our purpose, proving in them the implication of Walter Starkie as a chronicler.

Concretely, the themes on which I will focus are three aspects that are relevant in both books owing to their frequency of appearance, and because it is in them where Starkie's evaluative quality as a chronicler is most clearly seen. These three elements are: Starkie's portrait of Spanish society, Starkie's anti-Orientalist portrayal of Granada, and Starkie's negative assessment of Spain's political situation. We will see that this last one will be approached in a different way than the two previous ones, but without losing the evaluative feature of a chronicle. Although the choice of these three elements has been in accordance with personal criteria, it would be interesting if more research were carried out on these two books in order to assess the rest of the themes found in them.

## Starkie's portrait of Spanish society

Regarding the first theme analyzed in these two books, Starkie will portray the Spanish people, creating a portrait of that society. This portrayal of the characteristics of the Spaniards will be far removed from that made by romantic writers, who presented the Spaniard as a mystical figure descendant of the Arabs and with oriental features. Our author's depiction of the Spanish people reflects more accurately the reality and makes a parody of a very concrete type of Spaniard that may be found in Seville, Cadiz, Ronda or Algeciras (the stage-Spaniard).

On the one hand, Starkie presents the northern man (embodied by the Basques and Castilians), whom he describes as melancholic, reserved, solemn and philosophical. On the other hand, very different from the people of the north, the scholar will reflect the personality of the people of the south, although we will see that some of them have more northern than southern features. During his time in Andalusia, Walter Starkie introduces the Andalusian man. He begins by saying that the Andalusian man is very different from the one found in Castile or the Basque Country, since the former loves to brag and act as if he were on stage performing, while the latter is more reserved and solemn. Specifically, Starkie portrays the Sevillian: "This is so true of Seville that the traveller suspects the inhabitants of having agreed to take part in a magnificent ballet which has been advertised on the hoardings with the title 'Seville'" (1936: 157).

From this, he proposes the term of 'stage-Spaniard' (an imitation of what is known as the stage-Irishman), which is a kind of stock character to define a stereotype of the people of some Andalusian cities like Seville or Cadiz. The Irish scholar distinguishes several types of stage-Spaniard. The first of them is a warm-blooded, brutish man who makes a living bluffing. According to Starkie, he can be found in taverns, brothels and bullrings. Its origin goes back to the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*, in which this character was incarnated in the role of a Spanish soldier. Our author comments that this type of man causes him embarrassment, since he attracted all eyes when he is spoken to in a tavern. A quote that illustrates this first type of stage-Spaniard is the following:

Still he is essentially a companion for red-blooded men and is his best in tavern, brothel or bull-ring. If you go out with him for the evening he will challenge you to a drinking competition; he

will swear blood-curdling oaths and bang the counter with his fist, making the glasses quiver; his laughter is so loud and prolonged that it grates upon your nerves. Being a timid traveler you resent his loud manner, because it draws the attention of the whole tavern to yourself. (1936: 158)

However, W. Starkie depicts this type of man not only as rude and noisy, but he also mentions that he can become very emotional, to the point that his honor can be hurt. This guy is also passionate and enjoys the beauty of the Spanish woman. A quote that reflects this contrast in the first type of stage-Spaniard is:

Then from coarse laughter he will turn suddenly to sad topics; his eyes will fill with alcoholic tears and he will dramatize himself with an excess of gesture. "I am 'Andalú.'" He will say—"that is why I am emotional. How I wish I had your Anglo-Saxon poise and restraint." Mention a girl's name and he will jump up and kiss the tips of his fingers, bursting out into a flood of rhetorical compliments [...] Such is the first and commoner type of stage-Spaniard. (1936: 158-159)

The second type of stage-Spaniard that our Irish author proposes is totally different from the first, a counterpoint. Although the first one was fat, rough and foul-mouthed, this second type is going to be the opposite: skinny, effeminate, and romantic. According to Starkie, they are a kind of gigolos whose prey are young American women of Anglo-Saxon descent who go in search of a Spanish man who reminds them of those Arab romances of centuries ago. This second type is an expert in flirting with such women and is responsible for most of the weddings that take place in southern Spain between English-speaking women and handsome men without money who go in search of fortunes from outside Spain (1936: 159). A quote that reflects this kind of stage-Spaniard is: "This type of stage-Spaniard is a positive peril to American ladies of Anglo-Saxon descent, who have a fatal yearning for "a passionate, continental lover." [...] They associate the tall effeminate young stage-Spaniard with the exotic novelettes they have read and the films they have seen; they transform him into a hero of Moorish romance" (1936: 159).

However, within the Andalusian population we will find some exceptions, like the people of Granada. According to Starkie, the people of Granada have Andalusian features but they also share quite a few characteristics with the northern Spaniard (1936: 252). The scholar adds: "Many of the types I conversed with in the squares and cafés reminded me of Basques and Castilians because of their solemn dignity. I found myself waiting open-mouthed for the saline wit of Andalusia that never came" (1936: 252-253). This, Starkie explains, is because after the Conquest in 1492, many people from northern Spain

settled in Granada. The Irish writer makes a final comment on the Granadans: “I always give the Granadino credit for being a measured, philosophical individual—a Castilian in a minor key” (1936: 253).

With all this, we can conclude the section by saying that, indeed, Starkie’s portrait of the Spanish people is very faithful to reality. The distinction he makes between people from the north and the south is very realistic and accurate, just as a lifelong Spaniard who knows more about the reality of the people with whom he lives would say. Moreover, the description that he makes of the stage-Spaniard (concept a priori difficult to understand) is replete with details and examples, which helps the reader to create a very precise image in his/her head although he/she does not know that specific term.

### **Starkie’s anti-Orientalist portrayal of Granada**

Now, we move on to the next theme. Here, he will move away from the idealistic descriptions of orientalist writers to portray the stark reality of Spain, which has shifted from being a country that centuries ago was a kind of ‘Mecca’ for many Romantics attracted by the beauty, exoticism and cultural richness of the place, to being a country plunged into poverty and decadence.

To do so, he will make a very realistic portrait of the city of Granada, since for many foreigners this city represented Spain. This generalized poverty of Granada that Starkie proposes contrasts harshly with the vision of romantic writers. Granada goes from being a city full of beauty to being full of poor people. Starkie’s harsh but realistic assessment is due to two factors: one is the ineffectiveness and incompetence of the Spanish rulers (as we will see in the next topic), and the other is the expulsion of the Moors in 1492. For example, Starkie places special emphasis on the number of beggars that are seen all over the city begging and with nothing to eat. He explains that this is due to the country’s disastrous economic situation and he is pessimistic about that: “There are so many poor in Andalusia to-day that they will all be emigrating to ‘Morocco’” (1936: 138).

Thus, our scholar criticizes the government because it has not done enough to reverse this situation according to him, impoverishing the city and the whole country more and more as can be seen here: “Spain is worn out, friend- exhausted, and Andalusia

is the worst of the whole country. The people have lost heart. To-day the whole country is as bad as hypnotized” (1936: 139). By means of a dialogue between people from Granada he wants to transmit the decline suffered by this city: “Think of what Granada was in the past and look at it now,” said one. “Yes, indeed. Granada was the principal city in Spain in 1490” [...] “Granada was the Mecca of the West,” said the first speaker, “and the roads leading to it were thronged with caravans”” (1936: 251).

Starkie’s portrait of Granada is that of an abandoned and soulless city. He criticizes not only the abundance of poor people on the streets, but also the shortage of people in the city and the lack of economic activity. For this reason, he criticizes Spain as a nation for having expelled the Moors, who encouraged trade and agriculture in the city. Many industries disappeared and agriculture became deteriorated by this cause, which led to the decline of Granada as seen in: “it is a dingy, dismal town; why, the whole of the province does not contain more than half a million people [...] First of all the Jews and Moors were driven out and its industries and agriculture in consequence became paralysed” (1936: 251-252). Likewise, another of the causes of the passage from heavenly Granada to economically and culturally poor Granada has been the last Spanish governments, which according to Starkie have done little to restore that splendor and grandeur of remote times to the city. This portrait of the status of the city can be clearly seen in:

What I say is—why have all the modern governments of Spain humiliated Granada? Only a while ago she was the base for cavalry and infantry regiments. And now by a stroke of the pen the wretched government takes it away from us [...] “As soon as Granada lifts her head: Zas! down comes a decree from Madrid lopping off yet another one of our ancient privileges. Up there they have an edge against Granada [...] No wonder the streets are crammed full with beggars.” (1936: 252)

To sum up, the idea that our scholar wanted to convey is that of a decadent and ruined Granada, a faithful reflection of the reality of the country at that time. This realistic vision, although a harsh one, has no other intention than to draw the reader’s attention towards his interpretation of the situation: that Spain is not doing things well.

## **Starkie's negative assessment of Spain's political situation**

With this, we move on to the last theme to analyze: the Spanish political situation as soon as the Second Republic is proclaimed in 1931 onwards. At that time, Spain was in times of change, as the dethroning of King Alfonso XIII after a revolution of the Republican side inaugurated the new and Second Republic in the history of Spain. And, as in any process of political transformation in a country, people give their opinion about this transmutation.

However, our Irish scholar preferred to remain neutral in this respect and not to let his political inclinations show up. This approach is interesting because Starkie is going to continue with that role of chronicler with the aim of portraying different aspects as in the two previous topics, but in this case in a different way, abandoning the use of the first person to let the people express their ideas and then extract his own interpretation. Thus, as we will see at the end of this section, after compiling the testimonies of the people, the scholar will give a personal evaluation of what he has extracted, in a kind of dialogue with the reader.

One of the reasons is that he wanted to know the political reality of the country firsthand through the testimonies of the people, leaving aside his opinion. Another important reason is his affability and desire to make new friends in Spain in order to be able to converse with the people and draw his own conclusions; he did not want to express his personal political ideology, since that could create reticence in the people and reduce the number of testimonies.

For this reason, Starkie chose this technique of putting aside his ideology and collecting people's testimonies in order to gather information and show the opinion that Spanish citizens had on their country. Nonetheless, we will see that this neutral position will become the opposite: a negative assessment of the country's political situation by the scholar, since most testimonies are directed against the current government at that time.

The first testimony is that of Mariano 'the Communist'. Although a fervent communist, he does not hesitate to criticize the government of the Republic: "The Revolution of April did next to nothing: it was just a ripple on the water" (1934: 393). Mariano also criticizes the false promises that Republican leaders made to the people:

What have the workers derived from this much-vaunted revolution except tantalizing promises? All that has happened is that the bourgeois parasite has gobbled up the spoils. Spain has exchanged

one set of capitalists for another, and, as for me, I would even prefer the old-fashioned aristocrat, who believes in his blood and race, to the pestiferous, place-hunting bourgeois, who shouts himself hoarse in the name of Socialism, and loosens his belt as his belly swells with loot. (1934: 393-394)

Furthermore, Mariano ‘the Communist’ comments that another revolution is coming, predicting what would happen years later with the Spanish Civil War, as we can see in: “No, comrade, the true Revolution has yet to come in Spain. Watch events to-day and you will see the disillusion of the people” (1934: 394), or also in: “But one day that revolution will come” (1934: 394).

Starkie also collects the testimony of Don José, a conservative. The contrast between the two of them (Mariano and Don José) is interesting, because indeed both share a distinctive element that the Irish scholar wants to stress: the disastrous situation of Spain in political terms at that time, making a kind of indirect criticism. In fact, this man will support Starkie’s condemnation of the Spanish government and, especially, the recently inaugurated Second Republic. We can see his discontent in: “The Republic has misled people sadly and the people have been the prey for unscrupulous propagandists, [...] And the demagogues who shout still have their way, but it will not be for long, for the people are disillusioned and there is hunger everywhere” (1936: 285).

Also, the Irish author wants to make a criticism towards Spanish authorities by referring to Catalonia, a northeast region of Spain. According to him, Spanish politicians are the main cause of the deterioration of Andalusia because they have taken away many privileges from the southern region to give them to Catalonia. Thus, our scholar wants to make an assessment of this issue through the words of Don José ‘the Conservative’, who blames the rulers of Spain for the widespread poverty of Andalusia because most factories and companies are located in the Catalan region, as can be seen in: “And yet, in the material things of life they let themselves be completely dominated by Catalonia. Catalonia, by its industries, has the stranglehold upon the rest of Spain [...] The Andalusians are the victims of the Catalan agents. Catalonia in my opinion symbolizes materialism: its domination means for us the loss of the nobler and more artistic qualities of life” (1936: 285). To solve this situation, the scholar proposes through Don José’s words a split with the northeast region, that is, Spain would become independent from Catalonia as Don José points out: “I once said to Fernando de los Rios that I should like

to propose in parliament a Bill of Spanish Independence, for up to the present Spain has been under the heel of the Catalan industrialists” (1936: 285).

To end with this topic, it is worth recalling what I stated at the beginning of it: that, although the Irish author was going to adopt a neutral position in terms of politics in order to include testimonies from people in line with his political thought and not to let his ideology be glimpsed so directly, in the end he will give an assessment of this bad situation. His assessment is that Spain is in a disastrous political situation, and that the country shall suffer a dramatic change in order to recover. Starkie himself, in this case, predicts the uprising of General Francisco Franco and the victory of the national side in the Civil War, giving room to a military government as can be seen here: “The remedy which most of the Conservatives suggest for present ills in Spain is to go back to strong government by the army until order is restored. How often in Spanish history has that remedy been applied! The mass of the people are familiar with it and they would, presumably, welcome it on the principle that the Devil you know is better than the Devil you do not know” (1936: 286).



## Conclusions

The aim of this study was to demonstrate that, although Walter Starkie resembles in a few ways the orientalist writers, he is not an Orientalist but a chronicler, particularly in *Spanish Raggle-Taggle* and *Don Gypsy*. In order to ratify this hypothesis, a double study was carried out. Firstly, in the second chapter of this B. A. Thesis, we introduced the subject of travel literature and proposed three types of Spanish Orientalism, in order to see if Starkie could fit into any of them. Once the bases were established on what an orientalist text should look like, we were able to confirm that Starkie shares some characteristics with the three types of Spanish Orientalism, like the taste for Spain's Arab past, and the nostalgia for the reminiscences of the Moorish civilization in Spain.

Nevertheless, we have verified that these similarities are not enough to support the labelling of Starkie as an Orientalist, since the differences are greater than the similarities with this artistic movement. Finally, once it has been ratified that he is not an orientalist writer, in the fourth chapter we carried out a close reading of the two books (*Spanish Raggle-Taggle* and *Don Gypsy*) to prove why he is a chronicler. Undoubtedly, the characteristics of a chronicler prevail over those of an orientalist writer. As we have seen, these two books are loaded with interpretations by the author (like the one he extracts from Spain's worrisome political situation, predicting a civil war in the country), and are approached from a more realistic and less idealizing manner, in contrast with the idealization proposed by orientalist writers, like his stark portrayal of the city of Granada (evincing the poverty of the city, and declaring that it is in a state of abandonment), or his sharp depiction of Spanish society, in which he proposes various types of Spaniards (including the stage-Spaniard, a kind of parody of some Andalusian people that contrasts with the mystical conception of the Andalusian man delivered by orientalist writers).

We believe further research can support our theory, since there are other themes within these books different from the ones we tackled, and which may also ratify Starkie's classification as a chronicler, so the path is open to continue the investigation we carried out in this B. A. Thesis.



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