The Reception of María de Zayas in Nineteenth-Century Britain

Abstract

This article examines the reception of the Spanish novelist María de Zayas (1590-after 1647) in nineteenth-century Britain. At the time, Spanish literature gained visibility and reputation in Britain, especially during the Romantic period and the last decades of the century, but attention tended to focus on male writers. Zayas, whose novellas had circulated in English translation between the 1660s and the 1770s without being attributed to her, was one of the few Spanish women authors who attracted the interest of British critics and translators back then. There are references to her in several critical pieces and studies of Spanish literature and two of her novellas were translated into English: *El castigo de la miseria*, which was included in Thomas Roscoe's *The Spanish Novelists* (1832), and *El jardín engañoso*, which was published in *The Parlour Magazine* (1851). Although Zayas started to be recognised as a novelist in the incipient British Hispanism of the time, her works were mostly considered indecent or at least non-conformant to nineteenth-century British values and morals.

Keywords: María de Zayas; reception studies; British Romanticism; Victorian era; Anglo-Spanish relations; cultural transfers.

Introduction

With a growing global empire and an increasingly dominant role in international affairs, nineteenth-century Britons were curious about foreign literatures and cultures. Recent studies have challenged the essentialist views of the insularity and separateness of nineteenth-century British literary culture by identifying and exploring cultural transfers between English and European literatures (Mortensen, 2004; Wohlgemut, 2009; Clark and Conolly, 2015). These cultural transfers should not be regarded as isolated or exceptional cases. As Saglia argues (2019, vii), "imported texts, forms, and cultural players from the Continent were not merely distinctive features of a few particularly receptive authors (Byron, for example), works (Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*), or cultural centres (Holland House)," but "were among the defining traits of an entire literary and cultural system." Saglia is referring to the Romantic period and, in particular, to the years immediately following the Napoleonic Wars, but contacts with non-English literatures did not come to an end with the decline of Romanticism. Although

the Victorian era has traditionally been associated with nationalism, over the last few decades some scholars have explored Victorian cosmopolitanism(s) and challenged or complemented nation-based approaches to the study of literature, underlining the role of translation in British culture (Anderson, 2001; Rangarajan, 2014; Drury, 2015).

The circulation and reputation of Spanish literature in Britain benefited from this renewed interest in foreign traditions and was further boosted by the reappraisal of Spanish culture, history and society in the Romantic period, which was closely linked to the turn in Anglo-Spanish relations with the outbreak of the Peninsular War (1808-1814). Their alliance against Napoleon was instrumental in the British rediscovery of Spain and its figuration as a land of romance, as studied by Saglia (2000), Coletes Blanco and Laspra Rodríguez (2013), Valladares (2015), and Saglia and Haywood (2018), among others. Then in the 1820s Spanish literature gained further visibility as a result of the increase in the importation of foreign books, the translation of Spanish texts into English and the growing number of reviews of Spanish works published in British periodicals (Saglia 2019; Perojo Arronte and Flores Moreno, 2022). This interest in Spanish literature waned in the mid-nineteenth century, as reflected in the decline in the number of texts translated from Spanish, and it was revived in the 1870s, when the increasing demand for popular novels led to the spread of Spanish naturalism in Britain (France and Haynes, 2006; Pym and Style, 2006).

Although in the last third of the nineteenth century the British turned their attention to Spanish contemporary narrative, in the preceding decades the scene had been dominated by the *romancero* and Golden Age authors such as Calderón, Lope de Vega and, of course, Cervantes (Garrido Ardila, 2009; Rodríguez Pérez, 2020; Perojo Arronte and Flores Moreno, 2022). The LHIBRO project, led by Perojo Arronte and Flores Moreno, mapped the canon of Spanish literature in Romantic Britain, especially as reflected in the periodical press of the time. This canon was almost exclusively male: among the 114 Spanish authors mentioned in the reviews analysed in the LHIBRO database, there is not a single woman (Flores Moreno, Medina Calzada, Perojo Arronte, Rodríguez Ortega and Villamediana González, 2022). Significant as this is, however, it does not mean that Spanish women writers went completely unnoticed: there are very few but remarkable traces of their presence in British print culture. Teresa de Ávila, for instance, became a source of inspiration for Coleridge, who regarded her as a feminine ideal and even considered publishing an expurgated version of her works suitable for a Protestant readership (Perojo Arronte, 2018). He never did so, but a translation of "Soneto

a Cristo crucificado," a sonnet attributed to Teresa de Ávila, although unlikely to have been written by her, can be found in John Bowring's *Matins and Vespers: With Hymns and Occasional Devotional Pieces* (1823). Bowring also translated two poems by the Spanish-Portuguese writer Violante do Céu and published them in *Ancient Poetry and Romances of Spain* (1824). Furthermore, some decades later, in the mid-Victorian period, the works by Fernán Caballero (i.e. Cecilia Böhl de Faber) were reviewed in several British periodicals and some of her novels, including *La Gaviota* (1849), were translated into English in the 1860s (Muñoz Sempere, 2022).

Exploring the translations and references to these authors is essential to reconstruct the neglected canon of Spanish women writers in Britain, but such a task would be beyond the scope of this article, which centres on the British reception of the Spanish novelist María de Zayas (1590-after 1647) in the nineteenth century. My aim is to analyse the English translations of her novellas that were published during this period and the references to her works that appear in English periodicals and critical writings of the time so as to determine how she was perceived and presented to nineteenth-century British audiences. In order to do so, this article first provides a brief overview of the translations of Zayas's novellas into English in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which is followed by the study of her reception in Britain during the Romantic and Victorian periods, paying special attention to the analysis of Roscoe's translation of *El castigo de la miseria* contained in *The Spanish Novelists* (1832) and an anonymous translation of *El jardín engañoso* published in *The Parlour Magazine* (1851).

The English Reception of Zayas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

By 1800 British readers were almost completely unfamiliar with María de Zayas's name, although some of her novellas had circulated in English in the previous centuries. A few of the stories contained in *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* (1637) and *Parte segunda del sarao y entretenimiento honesto* (also known as *Desengaños amorosos*, 1647) had been translated into English between the 1660s and the 1720s. None of these translations acknowledged Zayas's authorship; her name was never mentioned and, as this section explores, in most cases the texts were attributed to male writers and translated from French sources.

Zayas's novellas first reached England via France through Paul Scarron's versions of Zayas's stories. Scarron plundered her works and passed them off as his own—a relatively common practice at the time—but in doing so he became instrumental in the

spread of Zayas's works in England. Scarron's adaptations of Zayas's *El prevenido engañado*, *Al fin se paga todo*, *El castigo de la miseria*, and *El juez de su causa* were translated from French into English by John Davies and included in *P. Scarron's Novels* (1665), a collection of Scarron's works that enjoyed notable success as it was re-edited several times between 1665 and 1700 (Yllera, 1983). Also in 1665 another translation of Scarron's version of *El juez de su causa*, different from that by Davies, was included in *The Comical Romance or A Facetious History of a Company of Strowling Stage Players* by John Buteel. Further translations of Scarron's adaptations were to follow in the following decades: those of *El prevenido engañado*, *Al fin se paga todo*, *El castigo de la miseria*, and *El juez de su causa* were again translated into English and included in *The Whole Comical Works of Monsr Scarron* (1700), and a new English translation of *Al fin se paga todo* was printed in the fourth volume of *A Select Collection of Novels and Histories* (1722). Finally, there is an English translation of *El juez de su causa* in the second volume of *The Comic Romance of Monsieur Scarron* (1775), which is attributed to Oliver Goldsmith (Yllera, 1983). This translation is remarkably similar to that of 1700, which suggests that Goldsmith may have reproduced, with minor changes, at least certain passages from *The Whole Comical Works of Monsr Scarron* rather than translating the entire text from the French (Stein, 1934).

There were also translations of Zayas's novellas made directly from the Spanish. This would be the case of the English translations of *Estragos que causa el vicio*, *El traidor contra su sangre* and *Al fin se paga todo* in *The Diverting Works of the Famous Miguel de Cervantes, Author of the History of Don Quixot* [sic] (1709). Despite its title, *Diverting Works*, which was reprinted the following year as *A Week's Entertainment at a Wedding* (1710), does not contain any text by Cervantes but compiles two novellas by Juan Pérez de Montalbán (*Al cabo de los años mil* and *El piadoso bandolero*), a prose adaptation of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's comedy *Casa con dos puertas mala es de guardar* and the three texts by Zayas mentioned above (Bourland, 1927; Murillo, 1995; Murphy, 2018). Attributing all these texts to Cervantes was certainly a commercial ploy to capitalise on the popularity of *Don Quixote* in England at the time.

Although *Diverting Works* contained an introduction by Edward Ward, the translator was in all probability John Stevens, who also translated *La esclava de su amante* for the periodical *The British Mercury* in 1713 (Murphy, 2018). This time Zayas's authorship was not acknowledged either, but Stevens was well acquainted with her works, as evidenced by his manuscript catalogue of Spanish books in the Sloane Collection at the

British Library. In it, he shortly comments on all the novellas included in both *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* and *Desengaños amorosos*, giving the titles of those he had translated. With the exception of those he deemed worthy of translation, Stevens did not hold Zayas's stories in high regard and described some of them as "intolerable," "impertinent," "preposterous" and "extravagant," being particularly disgusted by the supernatural and improbable events they contained (Williams, 1936, 153-154). Although unpublished, these brief remarks are the earliest critical commentary on Zayas's novels in English and the only ones before the nineteenth century as I have been unable to find any other references to her in English works.

Steven's catalogue of Spanish books attests that copies of her works in Spanish circulated in England in the early eighteenth century. At least he had access to a copy of one of the combined editions of her two collections of novellas that started to be published together after 1659 (Yllera, 1983), but he does not indicate the date, so it is not possible to know which one.[1] The dissemination of Zayas's works, however, was dominated by the influence of Scarron, whose adaptations of her stories were repeatedly retranslated into English in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This was followed by a period of about a hundred years in which Zayas's works faded into oblivion: from the 1720s until the end of the century the only trace of their presence in Britain is the translation of Scarron's version of *El juez de su causa* of 1775 attributed to Goldsmith. Although some of her novellas enjoyed a considerable circulation for several decades, she was completely ignored as an author and her name remained unknown to English readers. This was to change in the nineteenth century, when we find the first —albeit few—references to her in British publications and the first translations of her novels that acknowledge her authorship.

Zayas in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Romantic Period

Despite the interest that Spanish letters aroused among British Romantics, Zayas did not benefit from the prestige of Golden Age literature and the popularity of Cervantes's works at the time, but this does not mean that she was totally neglected either: her name appears in a couple of pieces on Spanish literature published in English, and a translation of *El*

[1] Steven lists it as *Novelas de Doña María de Zayas y Soto Mayor [sic], en dos Partes*, but this is not the actual title of any of the editions of the two collections of novels in a single volume which were published after 1659. His catalogue includes several books dating back from the 1660s, so he could have used the 1659 or 1664 editions or the more recent one published in 1705. For a list of these editions, see Yllera (1983).

castigo de la miseria, from *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares*, was included in Thomas Roscoe's anthology *The Spanish Novelists: A Series of Tales, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the Seventeenth Century. Translated from the Originals, with Critical and Biographical Notices* (1832).

The only two references to Zayas in English literary criticism before 1830 are contained in texts published in Britain but written by Spanish expats in London. The first is a mention of Zayas's *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* in a list of "novels and other works of the imagination" included in Ángel Anaya's *Essay on Spanish Literature* (1818, 52). Little is known about why Anaya was in London in the 1810s, but he actively contributed to the dissemination of Spanish culture in Britain as he also published *El teatro español* (1817-1821), a four-volume anthology of Spanish Golden Age drama (Lorenzo-Modia, 2022). The second reference to Zayas is much more extensive. In a review of several Spanish novels in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, Telesforo de Trueba y Cossío devotes considerable attention to Zayas, briefly discussing *La más infame venganza* and *Tarde llega el desengaño* and providing a lengthy summary of *Al fin se paga todo*. In his view, although Zayas's novels were "a production of genius" that showed her talent for storytelling, they were also remarkably immoral (1828, 499). For Trueba this was a terrible fault especially considering that they had been written by a woman. He was also dissatisfied with Zayas's bombastic style, arguing that the texts should be heavily expurgated to "be admitted among the classic compositions of Spain" (499). He thus excludes her from the Spanish canon, but at the same time he must have considered that she was worthy of consideration since he devotes more space to her than to writers that might have been more familiar to British readers at the time, such as Cervantes or Quevedo. This is related to the purpose of the article which is no other than to "pay a just tribute to the genius of Spanish novelists" and to rescue them from "unmerited oblivion" (488).

It is no coincidence that these two references appear in texts written by Spaniards living in England at the time. Spanish exiles played a central role in the dissemination of Spanish literature in the late Romantic period, especially through the reviews that they published in some of the main literary magazines of the time (Medina Calzada, 2022). In addition, this circumstance illustrates that although Zayas was a relatively renowned and widely read author in Spain in the first decades of the nineteenth century, she was still virtually unknown in Britain.

The dissemination of her works, however, was promoted by the inclusion of the English translation of *El castigo de la miseria* in the second volume of Thomas Roscoe's anthology *The Spanish Novelists* (1832). Roscoe was a prolific writer and translator who by the time he published *The Spanish Novelists*, had already translated Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe* (1823) and two other anthologies of Italian and German novels in 1825 and 1826. *The Spanish Novelists* is not the only work connected with Spain that he produced: he also published the four-volume travel book *The Tourist in Spain* (1835-1838), a biography of Cervantes (*The Life and Writings of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, 1839), and some original literary works on Spanish themes like *Gonzalo, the Traitor; A Tragedy* (1820) and *The Last of the Abencerrages; or, The Fall of Granada. With Other Poems* (1850) (Lesser, 2006; Lora Márquez, 2024).

Roscoe's *The Spanish Novelists* is a three-volume anthology including the English translation of narrative texts by Don Juan Manuel, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (to whom he attributes *Lazarillo de Tormes*), Mateo Alemán, Miguel de Cervantes, Francisco de Quevedo, Juan Pérez de Montalbán, Cristóbal Lozano, and Luis Vélez de Guevara, among others. Zayas is the only woman writer included in the anthology, which mostly deals with Golden Age authors of the seventeenth century. The translated texts, which are preceded by a brief "Introductory notice," are not always the work of Roscoe, who used translations that had been already published elsewhere at least twice. One is tale 37 from Don Juan Manuel's *El conde Lucanor*, which is a reprint of the translation that Trueba incorporated in the above-mentioned article on Spanish novels in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. The other one is the text entitled *The History of the Life and Actions of Paul, the Spanish Sharper*, which consists of selected chapters from Quevedo's *La vida del Buscón*. The English translation is almost identical to the one published in 1798 in volumes 2 and 3 of *The Works of Don Francisco de Quevedo*.

By contrast, Roscoe's translation of Zayas's *El castigo de la miseria*, entitled *The Miser Chastised*, is original. It differs from the two English translations of this novella that had appeared in 1665 and 1700, which were based on Scarron's adaptation of Zayas's text. There is no reason to believe that Roscoe used a French or German translation either; in fact, the most plausible possibility is that he worked with the Spanish text, which was not difficult to find in Britain at the time. For example, the 1826 catalogue of Vicente Salvá's London bookshop lists the 1814 edition of Zayas's *Novelas ejemplares y amorosas*, in two parts (including *Desengaños amorosos*), which was the most recent edition of Zayas's works in 1832. It is not possible to know exactly which edition he used,

but as expected, it was not the first one of 1637 since for the second edition of that year Zayas revised the ending of *El castigo de la miseria*, making the main character die of natural causes instead of committing suicide. Furthermore, when comparing the source and translated texts, it must be borne in mind that until 1948 most editions of Zayas's works were based on a pirate edition of *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* printed in 1638, in which certain passages were omitted (Olivares, 2000). In the case of *El castigo de la miseria*, these changes are neither numerous nor particularly significant, but it must be considered anyway.

The introductory notice preceding *The Miser Chastised* is short but interesting. Roscoe admits that the only information about her life that he had found is that provided by Nicolás Antonio in *Bibliotheca Hispana Nova* (1672). This is one of his main sources for *The Spanish Novelists* and he refers to it in other introductory notices, but the information about Zayas contained in it is really scant, so Roscoe must have used other sources that he does not identify. One of them may have been Trueba's article on Spanish novelists in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, which he definitely knew because he reproduced Trueba's translation of tale 37 from *El conde Lucanor* in *The Spanish Novelists*. His views on Zayas, however, differed from those of Trueba. Roscoe offers a rather favourable assessment of Zayas's novellas, indicating that they have "much of the ease and elegance" of Bocaccio and well-conceived plots that "abound with incident, both humorous and tragic, and with chivalric and humorous adventure" (1832, II: 301).

In the introductory notice, he also explains why he chose that novella. *The Miser Chastised*, Roscoe argues, "is perhaps the only one of her novels in which the writer wholly adopts a comic tone and spirit, without any touches of a more sentimental kind" and that is the reason why he selected it (1832, II: 302). Roscoe also notes the similarities between *The Miser Chastised* and Moliere's *L'avare* (1668), which are obvious since both tell the story of a miser, a greedy man who lives miserably to save money. In Zayas's novel this miser is called Don Marcos and is a servant who managed to amass a fortune by starving himself. He marries Donna Isidora, wrongly believing that she is rich, but she is just a swindler who, with the help of her lover Agustín and two servants, robs Don Marcos of his money and runs away. Appalled and ashamed, Don Marcos finally dies.

Roscoe does not make any major changes to the plot, but he alters the text in other ways. He eliminates all the poems contained in *El castigo de la miseria*, simplifies the language and uses a clearer and more concise prose to adapt Zayas's text to a contemporary audience. To make the text more readable but at the same time emphasise

its Spanish character, Roscoe combines strategies of domestication and foreignisation. For example, he omits certain references that would have required an explanation, such as that to the legend of the Cave of Hercules in Toledo. At the same time, the English translation keeps a few words in Spanish probably to add local colour and even adds one, the greeting "hola" (spelled "holla"), which does not appear in the Spanish text (Roscoe, 1832, 331). Moreover, when describing Don Marcos's diet Roscoe transforms the "olla" mentioned by Zayas into "olla podrida," a dish frequently mentioned in contemporary English texts about Spain (Zayas, 1814, 60; Roscoe, 1832, 307).

More interestingly, Roscoe omits or modifies certain passages that he must have considered indecorous or immoral. The English translation does not mention Don Marcos's proposal to spend the night at his fiancée's house before the wedding nor does it refer to Inés's activities as a courtesan in Naples, which allow her to lavish her dear Agustín with gifts and luxuries. Roscoe also translates "[Agustín seguía] pasando muy buenas noches con su Inés, con la cual se reía las gracias de doña Isidora y desventuras de don Marcos" as "[Agustín continued] amusing himself with the witty remarks of his favourite Ines," thus eliminating any allusion to the carnal nature of Agustín and Inés's relationship (Zayas, 1814, 75; Roscoe, 1832, 326). Furthermore, in the English version, although Agustín and Donna Isidora also live together without being married, there is less emphasis on their condition as "amancebados." Roscoe thus provides an expurgated and more conservative rendition of Zayas's novel that eliminates or tones down the most controversial aspects of the text, even if he does not openly criticise or condemn Zayas's works as inappropriate.

Roscoe's *The Miser Chastised* was not only the main vehicle for the dissemination of Zayas's works in the late Romantic period, but also promoted the circulation of this story in the following decades since Susette M. Taylor included a fragmentary version of his translation in the anthology *The Humour of Spain* (London, 1894). Like Roscoe, Taylor underlines the humorous tone of Zayas's text and places her in the canon of Spanish literature. Her anthology, which celebrates the "spontaneous humour" of Spaniards, includes more than 70 texts from the Middle Ages to the late nineteenth century. Only two of them were written by women: Emilia Pardo Bazán's "First Love" (a translation of "Primer amor," one of the tales in *Cuentos de amor*) and Zayas's *The Miser Chastised*. Taylor's knowledge of Zayas's works seems to be exclusively based on Roscoe's *The Spanish Novelists* as she also reproduces his introductory note on Zayas in the "Notes critical and biographical" that close the volume. Sixty-two years separate the

publication of Roscoe's and Taylor's anthologies, a lapse of time in which there were further signs of the presence of Zayas's novels in Britain, as the following section explores.

Zayas in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Victorian Era

The study of the translation and reception of foreign literatures in the Victorian era has received less scholarly attention than that of the Romantic period probably as a consequence of the apparent waning of interest in European literatures in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century. There was a decline in the number of new translations from the Spanish in the early and mid-Victorian period, particularly between 1840 and 1870, but Spanish literature—and foreign literatures, in general—was still present in some periodical publications, where we can also find a good number of translated texts (France and Haynes, 2006; Pym and Style, 2006). Some magazines had a clearer transnational orientation, such as *The Parlour Magazine of the Literature of All Nations* (1851), the short-lived publication where we find a translation of *El jardín engañoso*, the last of Zayas's *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares*. The editorship of this magazine has been attributed to Fitz-James O'Brien (1828-1862) and Robert Kemp Philp (1819-1882), two figures actively involved in several journalistic and editorial projects, including the magazine *The Family Friend*, where the translation of *El jardín engañoso* was reprinted in 1860 (Chase, 2018; Bleiler, 2021). By 1860, however, none of them were working in *The Family Friend*; Philp had edited it from 1849 to 1853, and O'Brien had also written for it in the 1850s too.

The title of the magazine where the translation of Zayas's *El jardín engañoso* first appeared is revealing of the scope and aims of this publication: as indicated in its address, *The Parlour Magazine of the Literature of All Nations* aims to form "a rich mosaic of the mental labour of all Nations . . . for the benefit and instruction of the English people," combining texts originally written in English with "carefully selected Translations from the best Authors in most of the modern languages" (1851, 1). Although the address openly defends the superiority of Great Britain, it also argues for the need to know about the "virtues" and "failings" of other nations so as to "mingle in an intellectual companionship with them" (1). The rationale of the publication is line with the values and practices of the Great Exhibition of London of 1851 and, in fact, *The Parlour Magazine* is closely associated with it since its volumes were printed at the Crystal Palace, the venue of the

exhibition. The target of the magazine was also universal as the editors sought to reach readers of all ages and social classes.

Regarding the literature of other nations that *The Parlour Magazine* was to incorporate in the magazine, the editors mention French, German, Danish, Swedish and North American literatures. They do not refer to Spanish literature in the address, but the two volumes contain several translations from the Spanish, which range from texts by contemporary writers like the Duke of Rivas or José Bermúdez de Castro to others by medieval and early modern authors such as Jorge Manrique, Francisco de la Torre and Lope de Vega. Once again, Zayas is the only Spanish woman writer anthologised in *The Parlour Magazine*. On the whole, the selected texts represent a very wide variety of genres, periods and literary traditions which feature canonical figures like Alexandre Dumas (*père*), Torquato Tasso and the Brothers Grimm as well as anonymous pieces from non-European literatures and compositions by second-rate or less relevant authors.

The Marvellous Garden, the English translation of *El jardín engañoso*, was published anonymously. Neither O'Brien nor Philp translated other texts from the Spanish or had any connection with Spain or Spanish literature, so it could have been translated by one of the anonymous contributors to the magazine. The text could have also been translated from the French, although there is no evidence of this. A new edition of Zayas's novels, including both *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* and *Desengaños amorosos*, was produced in Paris in 1847. Following it, Arthus Fleury translated the novellas *El juez de su causa* and *El jardín engañoso* into French: the former was published as *Le Juge de sa propre cause* in the magazine *La Silhouette* between March and April 1850; the latter is listed as *Le jardin merveilleux* among Fleury's publications in an advertisement of his works (Fleury, 1860), but I have been unable to find the text. It must have been published in a magazine—certainly not in *La Silhouette*—in the late 1840s or early 1850s, but I could not trace that information either. Whether the English translator used Fleury's French translation or a Spanish text, what is clear is that this is the first English translation of *El jardín engañoso*.

The English translation is shorter and more concise than the Spanish original, even more than the already expurgated version of this novella that can be found in the 1638 pirate edition of *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* and in later editions until the twentieth century. The translator rewrites the text to make it easier to understand for a nineteenth-century readership, simplifying the syntax and using a clearer and simpler language. Besides summarizing some passages, the translator omits certain sentences altogether.

These omissions do not modify the main events of the plot significantly, but they somehow alter the message that Zayas wanted to convey in *El jardín engañoso*. This novella tells the story of Constanza, a married woman who after being constantly harassed by Jorge, her former fiancé, and concerned about the health of her sister Teodosia, who was secretly in love with Jorge, promises to meet Jorge's demands if he manages to build a beautiful garden in one day; otherwise, he would have to marry Teodosia and put an end to his unwanted advances. Jorge accepts the deal and then makes a pact with the Devil, who takes his soul and creates the most wonderful garden Constanza had ever witnessed. Horrified at the prospect of bringing dishonour to her family, she begs her husband, Carlos, to kill her to spare them the shame. Her husband, incapable of doing so but also anxious to protect her wife's honour, prefers to commit suicide and is only stopped by Jorge himself, who regrets having acted in this way and claims that he is the only one who deserves to die. At this point comes the Devil, who is disgusted by Jorge's weakness and gives him back his soul. In the end, Jorge marries Teodosia and they all live happily ever after.

In the pirate edition of 1638 and those that followed it, including that of 1847, certain commentaries of the narrator and the characters on Constanza's honour are left out, but the English translator reduces them even further. For example, when she desperately asks her husband to kill her, she says:

> "Ya, señor mío, si quieres tener honra, y que tus hijos la tengan, y mis nobles deudos no la pierdan, sino que tú se la des, conviene que al punto me quites la vida; no porque a él ni a ellos he ofendido; mas porque puse precio a tu honor y al suyo, sin mirar que no le tiene. Yo lo hiciera imitando a Lucrecia, y aun dejándola atrás, pues si ella se mató después de haber hecho la ofensa, yo muriera sin cometerla; mas soy cristiana, y no es razón que pues yo estoy sin culpa, pierda la vida, y te pierda juntamente a ti, que lo eres mío, y pierda el alma, que tanto costó a su Criador." (Zayas, 1847, 179)

By contrast, in English she simply exclaims "Take my life, for by my heedless words I have forfeited all claim to your affection" (1851, 83), thus removing any allusion to her honour and the moral and religious dimension of her actions. Other references to the garden as the price of Constanza's virtue, the characters' souls or God are omitted in the English text as well. Furthermore, the English translation deletes one of the final scenes in which Jorge and the main female characters begin to pray to thank God for the restoration of his soul. This affects the way in which the characters' motivations, beliefs

and worldviews are presented, making them more conformable to those of the target audience.

There are also changes in the characterisation of the Devil and the moral of the story. In the English translation, the Devil, dressed in a red cloak of which nothing is said in Zayas's text, does not need to ridicule Jorge's *feminine* tears and appeal to his masculinity to convince him to accept the deal, although Jorge is remarkably more sceptical about the Devil's real powers than in the original Spanish version. In addition, at the end of Zayas's story the Devil seems disgusted with the generosity shown by all the characters, who would rather die than stain their honour, and gives his soul back to Jorge, not wanting the soul of someone who had been defeated so easily and reproaching him for his apparent (unmanly) weakness. In the English translation, this passage is deprived of the comic undertones of Zayas's text: paradoxically, the Devil becomes a sort of righteous judge who thinks that Jorge had been "foolish and wicked in [his] attempts to destroy the happiness of a good and virtuous family" but deserves to have his "independence and reason" restored for having "gained a victory over [his] passions" (1851, 83). The English translator thus emphasises the fact that Jorge eventually renounced his improper intentions towards Constanza, providing the story with a moral conclusion.

Propriety and decorum must have been central concerns for the English translator, who also toned down or eliminated any explicit or implicit references to sex. For instance, "caricias" is translated as "attentions," and whereas the Spanish text clearly indicates that Jorge's intention in courting his former fiancée is to "gozar de su hermosura," the English translation eliminates this phrase, although Jorge's intention is essentially the same (Zayas, 1847, 176; *Marvellous Garden*, 1851, 82). Similar uses of the verb "gozar" are modulated into expressions devoid of sexual connotations as in "goce Costanza a Carlos, y Carlos a Costanza, pues el Cielo los crió tan conformes que solo él es el que la merece y ella la que es digna de ser suya," which is translated as "Carlos belongs to Constance, and Constance to Carlos. Heaven intended them for each other" (Zayas, 1847, 180; *Marvellous Garden*, 1851, 83). Moreover, Constanza's disgust with Jorge is more pronounced in the translation than in the source text, where even if she loves her husband, she rejects Jorge out of modesty ("recato") but not necessarily for lack of desire (Zayas, 1847, 177). In fact, at the end of the story, Constanza affectionately embraces Jorge and almost kisses his forehead, prompting the narrator to comment that he could achieve through virtue what he could not achieve through love. This scene is eliminated in the translation.

Apart from making the text more decorous and in line with the moral standards of the target readership, the English translator makes a couple of apparently minor but very significant changes that undermine female agency in the story. The first one is connected with the house where Constanza and Carlos live: in the source text the house belongs to Constanza's mother, who plays a very active role in arranging her daughter's marriage and was definitely in a better financial position than her son-in-law; in the translation, that house belongs to Carlos, who is not as rich as he makes the others believe, but still is the head of the family. The second one has to do with the authorship of the story. In Zayas novella, the implied author is Teodosia, who is said to have written down the story, but in the English translation this information is not revealed and we are only told that after Jorge and Teodosia died, "the narrative of these events was found among their papers" (*Marvellous Garden*, 1851, 83). In this way the translator makes Teodosia invisible just as English and French translators did with Zayas in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Fortunately, this time Zayas's name appears at the beginning of the translation, but the identity of the translator is not revealed. This anonymous translator does not comment on the text or the author, so it is impossible to know why he or she decided to translate it and publish it in *The Parlour Magazine*, but the changes in the translation suggest that the translator felt the need to censor or revise certain aspects of the text. This is consistent with what Roscoe did in his translation of *El castigo de la miseria* and, more generally, with the reception of Zayas's works in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. As Olivares observes (2000), in these years Zayas became the victim of a puritanical backlash that condemned the obscene and erotic character of her works. This is perfectly reflected in the negative opinion of Zayas by the American Hispanist George Ticknor. In the third edition of *History of Spanish Literature* (1864), Ticknor argues that Zayas's *El prevenido engañado*, "though written by 'a lady of the court' is one of the most gross [he] remember[s] to have read" and stands out for its "shameless indecency" (Ticknor, 1864, 143). Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature* had an enormous influence on both British and American Hispanism, so his brief remarks on Zayas's novel reached a wide audience and may have had a negative impact on the dissemination and reputation of her works.

There are other references to Zayas in British literary criticism of the Victorian era, mostly in periodical publications. Not all of them are negative, but they tend to be brief and her name is usually mentioned in relation to other authors. John Ormsby calls her

"the Spanish Aphra Behn," which is an apt comparison, although he does not comment on it further (1877, 43). Octave Delepierre claims that her stories "bear a strong resemblance to those of La Fontaine," but he does not explore this resemblance either (1870, 51). For the author of the biography of Cervantes in *Lives of the Illustrious* (1853), her novels are much more inferior to the "ever-varied productions of Cervantes" (Edwards, 1853, 222), and for Henry Butler Clarke they are "wearisome and colourless," as he observes in *Spanish Literature. An Elementary Handbook* (1893, 93).

Clarke, Ormsby and Delepierre were all Hispanists well versed in Spanish literature, which suggests that the knowledge of Zayas in the Victorian era was largely confined to scholars and experts in Spanish literature. Only the anonymous English translation of *El jardín engañoso* published in the *The Parlour Magazine*, and then reprinted in *The Family Friend*, made at least one of Zayas's novellas available for a wider audience, albeit in expurgated form.

Concluding remarks

The presence of Zayas in nineteenth-century Britain is minor but not non-existent, and as such she deserves to be considered in the study of the reception of Spanish literature—and more particularly, Spanish women writers—in both the Romantic period and the Victorian era. It was not until the twentieth century that Zayas's works were vindicated and celebrated for their portrayal of female agency, also arousing considerable interest among British and American scholars, but it was in the nineteenth century that she started to be recognised as a novelist in Britain, at least among Hispanists and *aficionados* of Spanish literature, although their views about her works were not always favourable. It is also in the nineteenth century that the first English translations of her novellas acknowledged her authorship, but in both cases the translators made the language clearer and more concise and introduced certain changes in the texts to make them more conformable with the moral standards of the time. In this way they provided simplified and more conservative versions of *El castigo de la miseria* and *El jardín engañoso*, which appeared in two publications with a clearly transnational outlook that demonstrate the role that foreign literatures and translation played in nineteenth-century British print culture.

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