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Spanish Women in British Literary Annuals (1823-1830)[1]

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This paper explores the representations of Spain, and particularly Spanish women, in five British literary annuals of the late Romantic period (1823-1830): *Forget Me Not*, *The Literary Souvenir*, *Friendship's Offering*, *The Keepsake* and *The Amulet*. Literary annuals were illustrated anthologies of poems, short stories and travelogues which started to be published in Britain in the 1820s and were sold annually as presents for Christmas and New Year. Mostly aimed at a female audience, these annuals were imbued with a spirit of cosmopolitanism, featuring texts about countries and regions from all over the world. Spanish themes were constantly present in the selected literary annuals, where with a few notable exceptions, most female Spanish characters are countermodels of femininity that deviate from the traditional feminine values fostered by these publications and defy the idealised depictions of (British) women appearing in their texts and engravings. These representations of Spanish women, which underline the ethnic and cultural differences between Spain and Britain, are in tune with the romantic image of the country promoted by British writers at the time.

Keywords: Anglo-Spanish relations; British Romanticism; Imagology; literary annuals; models of femininity; Romantic Spain; Peninsular War; Spanish Orientalism.

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1. Introduction

Spain undeniably became a source of inspiration for British Romantics. They wrote about Spanish patriots and freedom-fighters, recreated scenes from its past and described its picturesque landscapes and manners, providing their own figurations of Spain and its people. The Peninsular War (1808-1814) acted as a catalyst for the reassessment of Spanish culture, history and society, which led British authors to make "a substantial imaginative investment in Spain's past and present identity… forg[ing] a powerful and enduring image of the country" (Saglia and Haywood 2018, 2). This Romantic image of Spain in British literature and, more generally, the cultural contacts and transfers between Britain and the Hispanic world have received significant attention since the turn of the century: Saglia (2000), Almeida (2010), Valladares (2015), Saglia and Haywood (2018), and Beatty and Laspra Rodríguez (2019), among others, have examined the representations of Spain in British Romantic prose, drama and poetry; Coletes Blanco and Laspra Rodríguez (2013, 2019) have studied and edited the English poetry of the Peninsular War and the Liberal Triennium; and, more recently, Perojo Arronte and Flores Moreno (2022) have explored the reception and dissemination of Spanish literature in British periodicals. However, although the presence of Spain in Romantic print culture has been extensively analysed in recent decades, certain primary sources still require further examination. This is the case of the literary annual.

Literary annuals are illustrated anthologies of prose and verse texts that were sold annually, usually during the Christmas season, and were given as tokens of friendship and affection. These small-sized books had embellished boards and were lavishly decorated with engraved illustrations, which were privileged over the texts since authors usually had to write their contributions in response to the images that the editors had previously chosen. Some of these authors were second-rate men and women writers who have entirely fallen into oblivion, but the annuals also featured texts by renowned and reputed figures. Female authors like Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L.E.L.) were regular contributors, and even male canonical poets like William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who had certain reservations about the reputation of these anthologies, eventually accepted lucrative offers to collaborate on them (Harris 2015, 3).

British literary annuals are a product of the late Romantic period whose history starts in November 1822, when the German London-based publisher Rudolph Ackermann brought out *Forget Me Not: A Christmas and New Year Present for 1823*. This was the first volume of the successful *Forget Me Not*

series, edited by Frederic Shoberl, which served as model for the numerous annuals that started to be published in the mid-1820s, such as *Friendship's Offering* (1824–1844), *The Literary Souvenir* (1825–1837), and *The Keepsake* (1828–1857). The popularity of these publications peaked in the 1830s, but it gradually declined in the following decades (Harris 2015, 3).

Texts and engravings depicting Spain and its people were not uncommon in British literary annuals. These portrayals, which have been neglected in previous studies, are of notable relevance for the study of the representations of Spain in Britain since the annuals achieved an enormous success and circulation that surpassed that of the poetry by reputed literati—for instance, the most successful annuals could sell between 6,000 and 15,000 copies, whereas *The Collected Works of S. T. Coleridge* (1828) was issued in only 300 sets (Sonoda 2005, 60). Given the spread and potential readership of these annuals, they could play an important role in the creation, consolidation and dissemination of romantic images of Spain among the British public. In addition, the emergence of the literary annual took place at a time in which Spain was again in the limelight due to the collapse of the Spanish liberal regime in 1823 and a renewed interest in Spanish literature and culture (Medina Calzada 2022, 43-44). With the purpose of examining how that interest manifested in British literary annuals, I surveyed the volumes of *Forget Me Not* (1823-1847, 1856), *Friendship's Offering* (1824-1844), *The Literary Souvenir* (1825-1835), *The Amulet* (1826-1836) and *The Keepsake* (1828-1861) that were published until 1830. The selection of these five annuals is motivated by their success and continuity, apart from the fact that all of them started to be published in the 1820s. Although I identified and examined all the references to Spain and its culture in the selected annuals, this paper centres on the representation of Spanish women in these volumes. Since the annuals have been traditionally considered a feminine genre targeted principally at the female public and with a moralising function, the ways in which Spanish female characters are depicted in these publications is of interest to shed new light on both the figurations of Spain and female representations in the British print culture of the late Romantic era. In the light of the principles of Imagology, the branch of comparative literature that analyses national characters and stereotypes in literature (Beller and Leersen, 2007), this paper thus demonstrates that, despite a few exceptions, most of the fictional Spanish women portrayed in the texts and engravings of the selected annuals serve as countermodels of femininity that deviate from—and even oppose—some of the ideals promoted in these publications. These Spanish women represent a female Other that underlines the cultural, social and ethnic differences between Spain and Britain.

2. Spain in British Literary Annuals

Over the last two decades, Romantic scholars have persistently undermined the myth of British insularity by uncovering and exploring the multiplicity of cultural contacts established between Britain and the Continent in the Romantic period (Mortensen 2004; Clark and Connolly 2015; Wohlgemut 2009; Saglia 2019). Britain's growing Empire and their involvement in foreign affairs together with the increasing circulation of people and cultural products in the early nineteenth century boosted the interest of British authors and readers in other parts of the world (Esterhammer 2018, 82). Romantic cosmopolitanism is displayed in the literary annuals, which include numerous poems, short stories, travelogues and engravings portraying a wide variety of regions and peoples. Texts and images of Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, India, China, the Americas, and Africa were not uncommon in these literary annuals, which ironically also show some commitment to the nationalist agenda consolidated in Britain in the 1820s.

The presence of Spanish themes in the British literary annuals of the late Romantic period is not overwhelming, but it reveals a continuous and constant interest in Spain as a source of literary inspiration. With the crisis and collapse of the Spanish constitutional regime in 1823 and the arrival of Spanish liberal exiles in London, Spain was in the spotlight for a couple of years, but attention gradually decreased as the hopes for a liberal uprising that would put an end to the absolutist rule of Ferdinand VII faded away. This tendency is reflected in the periodical press but not in literary annuals. Considering the volumes of *Forget Me Not* published between 1823 and 1830, all of them contain at least one text connected with Spain and its culture or including Spanish characters, and there is an increase in the number of those texts from 1825 onwards, with an average of three texts per issue. In the rest of the annuals analysed for this study, some of which started to be published in the second half of the 1820s, poems and short stories somehow related to Spain can be found in the vast majority of the volumes in similar or slightly lower proportions to those of *Forget Me Not*.

Before examining the representations of Spanish women, it is necessary to provide a general overview of the main themes and motifs in the texts about Spain included in British literary annuals to know the discourses, images and attitudes towards Spain and the Spanish people present in this type of publications. Considering this, I identified all the significant references to Spain and Spaniards contained in the volumes, whether they appear in texts that are evidently connected with aspects of Spanish history, culture and society or not. Obviously, the stories set in Spain and the poems about Spanish characters are central to the analysis, but apparently casual references in other texts can be meaningful too. In

addition, the engravings decorating the annuals were also considered, although only a few of the texts connected with Spain are illustrated. These engravings are mostly restricted to portrayals of Spanish women and are thus examined in the following section. Once the texts under analysis were selected, the next step was to identify any common themes or elements in their representations of Spain and the Spanish people. Although they engage with different generic conventions and explore a wide variety of topics, they can be classified into three main categories: Islamic Iberia, the Peninsular War and Spanish backwardness.

The appeal of Moorish-Spanish themes, a transnational phenomenon that can be traced back to the long eighteenth century, became more intense in Britain in the late Romantic period. The attempts to reconstruct Spain's Islamic past include scholarly studies, translations of Spanish ballads and more imaginative reinterpretations in literature and other popular forms of entertainment (Saglia 2000, 261-262). Unsurprisingly, British literary annuals contain some poems and short stories that reconstruct or evoke Al-Andalus and the struggles between the Christian and Muslim Iberian kingdoms in the Middle Ages. However, at least before 1830, this is not the dominant trend in the annuals as there are only four texts dealing with different aspects of Spain's Islamic past in the selected volumes.

The most relevant of these texts is Joseph Blanco White's short story "The Alcazar of Seville," published in *Forget Me Not* in 1825. Blanco, who had self-exiled in London in 1810, recalls the legends associated with the Alcazar that his mother used to tell him when he was a child and portrays this Sevillian landmark as an "enchanted place" inhabited by "the shades of both Moors and Spaniards who had dwelt there in the ages of love and romance" (*Forget Me Not* 1825, 32). The Alcazar represents the vestige of a long-gone era and, as Muñoz Sempere indicates, it connects the past and the present, Al-Andalus and the Romantic period (2021, 123). Blanco seems to feel a sense of nostalgia for his hometown, but he does not yearn for a return to the "ages of love and romance" to which he alludes. This yearning and glorification of the chivalric spirit displayed by medieval knights is more conspicuous in William Harrison Ainsworth's "The Fortress of Saguntum" (*Literary Souvenir* 1825, 259-282), a short story set in the times of the so-called *reconquista*. The wars and conflicts between Christian and Muslim forces for the control of the Iberian Peninsula are also the setting of Lord John Russell's "The Captive of Alhama" (*Literary Souvenir* 1829, 261-265), a retelling in verse of the story of El Abencerraje.[2] Finally, the

2 Different versions of the anonymous *Historia del Abencerraje y la hermosa Jarifa*, the story of a Muslim man captured by the Christian army on his wedding day, appeared in the 1560s, including the ones contained in Jorge de Montemayor's *Los siete libros de Diana* (1562)

fourth text about Muslim Iberia is "Abdoulrahman III. An Historical Sketch" (*The Amulet* 1829, 306-308), a poem by Charles Swain that evokes the luxury and grandeur of the palace of Abd al-Rahman III (890-961), the first Caliph of Córdoba. Swain imagines an Oriental and exotic setting that is not explicitly connected with Spain since the poem contains no allusions to Al-Andalus or any place in the Iberian Peninsula, although it is implicitly related to it since British and European Romantics considered Spain part of the Orient (Saglia 2005, 481; Grieve 2009, 214).

Texts about the Peninsular War, however, are more abundant than those about Muslim Iberia, showing that the conflict had a notable impact on British society which lasted still in the 1820s. The annuals feature poems about British heroism, such as Charles Maturin's "Wellington" (*Friendship's Offering* 1826, 48-49) or Allan Cunningham's "The British Sword" (*Literary Souvenir* 1827, 117-118), as well as elegies to British soldiers, including Robert Southey's "Lines to the Memory of a Young Officer, Who Was Mortally Wounded in the Battle of Coruña" (*Literary Souvenir* 1826, 341-344). They also contain some short stories set in Spain during the 1808-1814 conflict that abound in descriptions of cruel crimes to illustrate the horrors of war. Examples of this are "The Halt on the Mountain. A Tale of the Spanish War" by Emma Roberts (*Forget Me Not* 1828, 362-378) and "The Attacked Escort. A Spanish Scene" (*Forget Me Not* 1827, 333-343), which has been attributed to Mary Shelley (Crook 2019, 364-367). Despite their different attitudes towards the Peninsular War, these texts have something in common: Spain and Spaniards generally play a minor role. This contrasts with the early literary responses to the Peninsular War, in which British authors usually celebrated the Spaniards' heroic resistance against Napoleon and contributed to the reappraisal of Spanish culture and the spread of the romantic image of the country (Saglia 2000, 65-143; Coletes Blanco and Laspra Rodríguez 2013). Nevertheless, as observed by Saglia (2000, 23-24), gradually "Spain was edited out of the histories of a war that was increasingly turned into a British affair," and when the conflict ended, the Peninsular War became "part of a mythology of British heroism." This is perfectly reflected in some texts included in these literary annuals, such as Southey's "A Soldier's Epitaph" (*Literary Souvenir* 1827, 89-90), in which Spain and Spaniards are not even mentioned.

The third category is a jumble of different stereotypical traits or elements that somehow show and reinforce the image of Spain as a backward country. They range from the superstition and fanaticism promoted by the Catholic Church in

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and Antonio de Villegas's *Inventario* (1565). Russell's source, however, is José Antonio Conde's *Historia de la dominación de los árabes en España* (1821, III: 262-265), as Russell indicates at the beginning of the poem (*Literary Souvenir* 1829, 261).

Spain—with allusions to the Inquisition—to references to the pride, indolence, festive mood and passionate nature of the Spanish people. Echoes of the Black Legend are present in several texts, including Thomas Frognall Dibdin's "The Two Pilgrims in Grey" (*Forget Me Not* 1825, 73-88), a short story set in the seventeenth century in which two friends were unfairly accused of crimes that they had not committed but managed to run away and retreated to a monastery. Monastic life sparked the interest of several contributors since there are other texts in which some of the characters enter a religious order, such as George Croly's poem "Maria de Torquemada Taking the Veil" (*Forget Me Not* 1827, 87-88) and John Bird's short story "The Convent of St. Ursula" (*Forget Me Not* 1830, 361-379). In Bird's tale, the villains are a proud abbess and a treacherous priest, and the Inquisition seems a constant threat, although in the end it does interfere in the course of events. Other stories also contain passing references to the Inquisition, even when the Holy Office is totally unrelated to the plot. This is the case of the anonymous "Double or Quits; or, The Inconstant" (*Keepsake* 1828, 247-265), a comic story about a man engaged with two different women in which the author mentions an *auto de fe* as if to provide local colour to his narrative (260).

In these texts, stereotypical references to the Inquisition and the Black Legend act just as theatrical props to set the scene since the authors hardly ever show a clear intention of criticising or denouncing Spaniards' intolerance and bigotry as British writers had done in the preceding centuries. In the Romantic period, these old stereotypes are reassessed, and, although they do not disappear, they have to make room for the new stereotypes that depict Spain as a land of romance inhabited by reckless patriots and alluring dark-eyed women who are still imbued with the spirit of chivalry. As Venegas (2018, 15) notes, both the old and the new stereotypes "function as a barrier between Spain and northern Europe" as well as between the past and the present. The Romantic image of Spain does not present a total rupture with preceding representations but a shift in the observers' outlook and interpretation of Spain and its culture. Like Protestant reformers and eighteenth-century French philosophers, Romantic writers regarded Spain as "a non-European Europe, a non-Western West" (Iarocci 2006, 15), but they were attracted by the non-modernity that their predecessors had despised (Andreu Miralles 2016, 64).

Texts about Spain published in British literary annuals underline the Spanish difference, establishing an often implicit—and occasionally explicit—contrast between Spain and Britain. Whether the focus is on Spain's Oriental roots, Spaniards' exalted passions or the fanaticism of the Catholic Church, the imagery about Spain in these texts usually places it in a pre-modern stage. This is also reflected in the portrayals of Spanish women that can be found in these annuals, which the following section explores.

3. Spanish Women: Countermodels of Femininity

The literary annual has traditionally been considered a feminine genre in which women played a key role as readers, authors and subjects. In the words of Harris (2005, 573), the annuals "exuded a feminine delicacy that attracted primarily a female readership" fascinated by these books' embellished boards, lavish illustrations, and sentimental stories. Certainly, the annuals were mainly targeted at a female consumer, although they were not exclusively read and possessed by women. Through the analysis of the handwritten inscriptions of a sample of 354 annuals, Feldman demonstrates that more than a quarter of the owners of the books that she could identify were men (2006, 57). Her study also challenges the traditionally assumed idea that these works were presents that women of marriageable age received from their suitors since givers were often family members or other women. Nonetheless, her findings still confirm that the majority of the recipients that could be identified were women (57-58).

Women were also among the contributors of literary annuals. Even if writers dominated the annuals until 1830 (Harris 2005, 612) and the editors of the volumes analysed here were all men, the annuals published in the 1820s also feature numerous texts by women authors, some of whom hid under male pseudonyms. These female contributors include not only Felicia Hemans and Laetitia Elizabeth Landon, two women writers frequently associated with literary annuals, but also Mary Shelley, Maria Jane Jewsbury, Mary Russell Mitford, Maria Edgeworth, Mary Howitt, Mary Diana Dods, and Susannah Strickland, among others. In the 1830s and 1840s, the feminisation of the literary annual became more prominent and the number of female contributors and editors increased significantly (Hootman 2004, 8-9).

Nonetheless, the feminisation of the contents of the annuals took place at an earlier date. In the *Forget Me Not* of 1823, the first literary annual published in Britain, the final part of the volume—around 120 pages—provides factual information on diverse issues: a genealogy of European sovereigns, a historical chronicle of 1822, and lists of diplomatic agents and the most populated cities in Britain and the rest of the world. Frederick Shoberl and Rudolph Ackermann, the editor and the publisher of *Forget Me Not*, must have considered that this information was useful or relevant to their readers, which probably also implies that they did not have an exclusively female audience in mind. This type of contents, however, soon disappeared from their annual. In the *Forget Me Not* of 1824, useful information is limited to an article about the post office in Great Britain (*Forget Me Not* 1824, 374-390), and this class of informative pieces cannot be found in subsequent volumes. In fact, although literary annuals include a wide variety of texts, those dealing with topics traditionally associated with the domestic and feminine sphere (e.g. love, marriage, family) generally prevail.

Female presence is even more conspicuous in the engravings, which frequently portray idealised women undertaking activities that were supposed to be appropriate for their sex (Cruz 2012, 10). Even if, as Hootman (2004, 58) suggests, idealised depictions of women became more common after 1840, early literary annuals uphold an ideal of femininity that confines them to the domestic sphere and expects them to be virtuous, self-sacrificing and delicate (González-Moreno 2020, 53; Harris 2005). For instance, the engravings in the *Forget Me Not* of 1826 depict women in passive contemplation ("Contemplation"), tenderly looking at a sleeping infant ("The Child's Dream"), in love ("Woman's Love"), scared of a man dressed up as a ghost ("The Regretted Ghost"), and praying ("Evening Prayers" and "Sir Everhard"). These engravings had a didactic function as they presented women with "models of physical and moral beauty" (Cruz 2012, 13) and illustrated the ideals of femininity also promoted in the texts. Harris (2005, 592) contends that although female authors like Hemans challenged patriarchal femininity, the poetry contained in the annuals usually defines women as passive, uneducated, domestic, impotent or simple. Furthermore, fiction sometimes has a clear moralising function that is best reflected in the sentimental stories warning young women that passionate and irrational love may destroy their lives. The annuals could definitely be used to educate female readers, an idea also supported by González-Moreno (2020, 53), who argues that literary annuals were evolved forms of conduct books where women could find role models to imitate.

Most of the representations of Spanish women that can be found in the British literary annuals of the 1820s do not exactly correspond with these ideals of femininity—and sometimes, they totally oppose them. This is the case of the Spanish lady that appears in the anonymous short story "The Stauntons. A Fact" (*Literary Souvenir* 1828, 262-279), who is vilified as "a Phryne—a Circe—a Calypso" (273) in allusion to her cunning nature and active sexual life. This lady, called Countess Maria, is depicted as a *femme fatale* who seduces one of his husband's friends. She is said to possess "the talent of a man, with all the softness of her sex" (273) or, in other words, she has the beauty and gentleness that attract men together with some masculine attributes that are undesirable in a woman, such as vigour and intelligence. She lacks feminine virtues like modesty, decency and virtuousness and is portrayed as both dissolute and evil (274).

Countess Maria was not the only Spanish woman challenging ideals of femininity fostered in British annuals. Emma Roberts's tale "The Halt on the Mountain. A Tale of the Spanish War" (*Forget Me Not* 1828, 362-378) tells the story of Estela and Magdalena, two sisters whose friends and family had been murdered by the French during the Peninsular War. They managed to escape

and, in revenge, Estela killed dozens of French soldiers while pretending to assist them. After Magdalena's death, Estela joined the Spanish guerrillas posing as a man. Estela not only undertakes a role usually assigned to men but also ends up adopting a male identity to continue fighting for the Spanish cause. Despite her motivations, her actions are morally questionable, as her sister admits (374), but Roberts's intention is to denounce the evils of war in general—not Estela's behaviour. In fact, her story underlines female heroism and evokes the accounts of Spanish women fighters that spread since the outbreak of the Peninsular War in 1808. The most notable of these female heroines is Agustina de Aragón, celebrated by Byron as the Maid of Saragossa in the first Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and transformed into a legendary figure by the reports and literary representations of the Siege of Zaragoza (Saglia 2000, 194-196). The active role that Agustina and other women played in the resistance against the French offered "new models of female agency" exploited in the literature about the conflict (Valladares 2008, 110). As Saglia (2000, 148-149) argues, these models can be linked to traditional figurations of women who disguise as male soldiers and sailors that can be found in ballads and popular forms of literature. For Dugaw (1996, xi), female warriors in these ballads took up arms for love or for glory, but Estela and the female patriots and freedom-fighters of the Peninsular War fought to defend their home and nation against foreign aggression. In the case of Estela, by the end of the narrative she was completely alone and her domestic sphere had been destroyed, so the nation—the *homeland*—became her only home, and she was still determined to fight for it.

A female Spanish patriot is also represented in the anonymous poem "On the Portrait of a Spanish Princess," published in *Forget Me Not* (1830, 417-418). The poem is illustrated by "The Spanish Princess," an engraving by Robert Graves based on David Wilkie's *The Spanish Girl*, which he painted while in Spain in 1828. In the same year, Wilkie produced other Spanish paintings in tune with the Romantic image of the country, such as *The Spanish Posada: A Guerilla Council of War* and *The Defence of Saragossa*, both of which are preserved in the Royal Collection. In *The Spanish Girl* he depicts a girl with dark hair, dark skin and big dark eyes. She is dressed in typical and recognisable Spanish garments: she is wearing the traditional *peineta* and *mantilla* and is holding a fan. The anonymous poem, "On the Portrait of a Spanish Princess," is not addressed to a child but to an unidentified young woman. The poet does not refer to any real Spanish princess, but alludes to the contemporary political scene in Spain in the second stanza. The lady's eyes were not as bright as they used to be because she had been crying for what had happened "when the sword / Did reap her country's corn-fields, and the hoof / Of the proud war-horse press'd her grapes" and "the blood of patriot martyrs was pour'd forth / Upon the earth like water"

(417). Although the author could be alluding to the Peninsular War, the reference to “patriot martyrs” is more likely connected with the martyrs of the liberal cause and the restoration of absolutism in Spain in 1823, when the country was again invaded by French troops to put an end to the Spanish constitutional regime established in 1820. Liberals were persecuted and thousands of them exiled to France and England; others could not escape and were imprisoned or sentenced to death, such as the ill-fated leader of the Spanish Revolution of 1820, Rafael de Riego, who was hanged for treason in November 1823.

The poet of “On the Portrait of a Spanish Princess,” however, seems more interested in celebrating women’s beauty than discussing recent events in the Iberian Peninsula. Beauty, he argues, is a divine quality attributed to women, and female beauty possesses “an all-surpassing magic” (418). For the author, no man should look a woman “with eyes unholy of her loveliness” because “she is a temple which th’ Eternal One / Hath built him to inhabit” (418). Nonetheless, the attitude of the Spanish Princess seems to defy the poet’s ideas about female beauty and men’s right to “inhabit” women. He considers her beautiful, but he is somehow dissatisfied with the girl’s pensive and proud expression. He remarks that he does not fear the frown and “dangerous smile” of this woman, who was destined to be queen, but he does not explain what makes her smile dangerous. It could be her intelligence, to which he also alludes, or it can be that despite her beauty, the poet does not find her pleasing. He dares to contemplate her image, but he does not interact with her in any way and, certainly, he seems unable to understand her—even less to subdue her.

William Kennedy, the author of “The Spanish Flower Girl” (*The Amulet* 1829, 367-368), is even more displeased with the lady to whom his poem is devoted. The engraving illustrating it is based on Bartolomé Esteban Murillo’s *Muchacha con flores* (c. 1665-1670), where we see a young girl with a turban and flowers in her hair.[3] The girl’s smile is elusive and also poses a threat to the poet, who is hurt by her indifference and mocking attitude. A feeling of resentment towards the Spanish flower girl pervades the poem since the author feels tricked by her and claims that, despite loving her, he would not tolerate such behaviour. “I would not be a woman’s toy / For all the gold in Spain” (368), he affirms. Yet he does not renounce her and, adopting a rather condescending attitude, he makes harsh reproaches about her appearance. He dislikes the flowers she wears in her hair, which are typical of Andalusian women, because they were taken from Pérez’s garden, and instead he wants to crown her with a garland made of his “poor

3 By the time the poem and engraving were published, *Muchacha con flores* was part of the collection of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, so it was well known in Britain, where Murillo’s paintings were in vogue in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Kent 2020).

flowerets in the field" (368). For him, wild flowers suited her better than the ones cultivated by Pérez, her "purse-proud" Spanish lover, which may imply that her hair ornaments should be in tune with her lack of refinement. On the other hand, it may also imply that in the same way that the poet is attracted by a rustic girl, he also prefers the rural countryside to Pérez's Spanish garden, implicitly comparing his frankness and unaffectedness with the Spaniard's artificiality and pretension. It should be noted that in garden design Spanish gardens show clear patterns and are more artificial than the irregular and presumably more natural English gardens. Considering this, by telling the girl how she should arrange her hair, he is trying not only to make her conform with his own taste but also to erase the Spanish difference imposing on her a model of femininity more appropriate to British readers. Apart from being jealous, the poet seems molested by the girl's Spanishness, understood here as playfulness, frivolity, sensuality and pretension.

Kennedy's poem and the engraving of *Muchacha con flores* attracted the attention of the reviewer of *The Amulet* in *The Paisley Magazine* (1828).[4] Besides praising "the simple, artless, and delicious lines" written by Kennedy, the anonymous reviewer expresses his fascination with Murillo's painting and, in particular, with the girl it portrays. He refers to her as a "little gipsey [sic]" with a "dainty smile" (543). The fact that he regards her as a gypsy woman deserves consideration since Kennedy does not even mention that term in his poem. In fact, there are no references to *gitanos* or *gitanas* in the texts about Spain contained in the literary annuals. As noted by Charnon-Deutsch (2004, 58), Spanish Calés "became an object of intense international curiosity" in the Romantic period, but such interest was more prominent in French literature and after 1830. Certainly, it is not present in the annuals. In fact, although references to Spanish gypsies may appear in travel narratives and other literary texts, this is not a central theme in the representations of Spain in the Romantic period.

The girl's turban in Murillo's *Muchacha con flores* is reminiscent of Spain's Oriental past, which is more intensely evoked in "A Spanish Lady," the engraving by J. H. Robinson after a picture by G. S. Newton that illustrates Felicia Hemans' poem "A Spanish Lady. From a Picture by G. S. Newton, Esq." (*Literary Souvenir* 1827, 119). The poem and, especially, the image show stereotypical features of Spanish women and national character. The Spanish lady, with remarkably dark hair and skin, almond-shaped eyes, and big lips, is dressed lavishly and covered with jewels and reminds us of the Romantic representations of Oriental luxury.

4 There is a logical explanation why *The Amulet* of 1829 was reviewed in *The Paisley Magazine* in 1828: it was a common practice that literary annuals were published in autumn, before the Christmas season, but their date was that of the following year.

She is playing a guitar, but for Hemans this is not a sign of her cheerful and joyful character. On the contrary, the lady is singing a sad love song and is totally absorbed in her feelings. The poem exemplifies what Hoagwood and Ledbetter (2005, 37-38) call "aestheticized objectification" in relation to Hemans's poems in the annuals. They argue that her poems are secondary to the engravings illustrating them—a circumstance that applies to other texts in the annuals and certainly to the ones discussed above—and, as a consequence, the imaginary characters of the poems are less important than their pictorial representation and become mere ornaments. Moreover, through this objectification Hemans detaches her female characters "from the world of action," making them prisoners of their "own supposed feeling-states" (37). This is clearly seen in Hemans's "A Spanish Lady" as the woman is incarcerated within her sorrow and shows no desire to escape from it. She is deprived of agency and rationality and reduced to her emotions alone. This emphasis on the lady's feelings also connects her with the more passionate character usually attributed to southern Europeans. Hemans's poem, in fact, alludes to the "sweet south," a phrase borrowed from Byron's *Beppo* that implicitly invites comparison with the colder and more rational north, although she fails to comment on it further.

There are more examples of Spanish women trapped within their feelings in British literary annuals. One of them is Mary Howitt's "Queen Catharine's [sic] Sorrow" (*Friendship's Offering* 1830, 145-148), a poem about the sadness and loneliness experienced by Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536) after Henry VIII married Anne Boleyn. Secluded in her chamber and in a state of inertia, Queen Catherine could not stand listening to her maid's melancholic song, which caused even more distress to her. Howitt describes her as a faithful and loyal wife—a saint in Henry VIII's words (148)—whose only ambition was to be loved by her husband, not to be queen.

Another queen reduced to her role of loving wife—or rather grief-stricken widow—can be found in Samuel Carter Hall's poem "Juana, of Torquemada" (*The Amulet* 1828, 403-406), which alludes to a passage from Southey's *History of the Peninsular War* (1823, I: 352) where he explains that while mourning his husband in the small town of Torquemada, Queen Juana I of Castile (1479-1555), Catherine of Aragon's sister, was told of another dead king who resurrected. A totally devastated Juana wanted to believe that the story was true, and she remained by his husband's corpse side because she wanted to be the first one to see him restored to life. An even more passive queen of Iberian origin appears in Bernard Barton's poem "The Coronation of Ines de Castro" (*The Amulet* 1830, 310-312). Ines de Castro (c. 1320-1355) was a noblewoman from Galicia and the lover of Prince Peter, heir to the Portuguese crown. Peter's father, Afonso IV, ordered to kill her, but then when the Prince became Peter I, he claimed

that they had been secretly married, and therefore he recognised her as his wife and queen.[5] The legend claims that Ines de Castro was crowned posthumously and Portuguese noblemen were forced to swear allegiance before her remains. Barton's poem reconstructs this episode in which the corpse of the lady is placed upon a throne while Peter I contemplates how she receives the homage that noblemen could not grant her when she was alive. Her objectification is complete: her lifeless female body, adorned by embroidered robes and a golden crown, is revered by a group of men who render homage to her now that the influence of Castile that she represented is no longer a threat to the Portuguese monarchy.

Catherine, Juana and Ines are depicted as victims of love and passive characters whose lives are determined by other peoples' actions. Their apparent disregard for political intrigues, their inaction and the emphasis on their role as loving wives make them conform with idealised models of femininity promoted in the annuals. At the same time, they are different from most of the Spanish female characters analysed above, which should make us wonder whether social class is a determining factor in the depictions of these women. It is tempting to argue that the higher their status, the greater their compliance with traditional feminine values, a thesis that is partially but not totally confirmed. Definitely, the three most passive and unresisting female characters are these three queens; two of them, Catherine and Juana, are even presented as models of piety. Hemans's Spanish lady, in sumptuous Oriental dress in the engraving illustrating the poem, is also a rather passive character trapped in her feelings. Suffering is also present in the portrayal of "The Spanish Princess," although her attitude is different. She is not a real princess—actually, she wears a *peineta* not a crown—and her "dangerous smile" suggests that she is not willing to accept the current situation in Spain and the fate of its people with resignation. Even more menacing are "The Spanish Flower Girl," a character clearly belonging to the lower classes, and the avenging patriot Estela, whom the war had reduced to poverty. Countess Maria, the cunning and lustful Spanish noblewoman in "The Stauntons. A Fact" is by no means a model of behaviour, but the British middle class generally

5 The story of Ines de Castro, retold by Luís de Camões in *Os Lusíadas* (1572) and Aphra Behn in *Agnes de Castro* (1688), among other, captivated the imagination of some British Romantic writers. Barton may have been written his poem in response to Felicia Hemans's "The Coronation of Inez de Castro," which appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1828. Walter Savage London also authored two brief plays on episodes of her life: "Ines de Castro at Coimbra" and "Ines de Castro at Cintra," both included in *Gebir, Count Julian, and Other Poems* (1831). Furthermore, the *Literary Souvenir* of 1829 also includes a poem by Alaric. A. Watts entitled "King Pedro's Revenge" preceded by a historical note explaining the events after Ines de Castro's murder (159-170).

regarded the aristocracy with some contempt for their ostensible corruption and vices. Consequently, class is important in the characterisation of these Spanish women, in which the behaviour codes, expectations, preconceived ideas about the different social classes also play a part.

The three queens of Iberian origin are also the only ones in which the Spanish difference is completely erased. In other words, they lack any specific features or traits that would *make* them Spanish. By contrast, the other female characters are constructed upon difference: they look differently as their skin and eyes are darker; they are dressed differently as they wear exotic turbans, *mantillas* and *peinetas*; they are more passionate, more sensual, more courageous and also more dangerous than the (British) women who are presented as models of femininity in the annuals. The portrayals of the three queens, however, seem immune to national stereotypes. They are also the only ones based on real historical characters, a circumstance that may explain why they do not possess traits connected with the idea of Spanishness that the annuals promote. In fact, the characterisation of these queens is not original since it is based on well-known historical or pseudo-historical accounts. On the contrary, authors enjoyed more freedom when creating the other female characters and provided them with features and elements that they associated with Spain and its people. Those features and elements were not necessarily real because they do not aim to describe how Spanish women were but how they imagined them to be.

4. Concluding remarks

Whether they are feminine models conforming with the passive roles and domestic values promoted in literary annuals or countermodels deviating from them, the representations of all the female Spanish characters analysed in this paper comply with patriarchal constructions of femininity. What is particularly interesting about the countermodels is that they underline their Spanishness, understood as those distinguishing features that make them different from British women and the potential female readers of the annual. The Spanish woman is thus imagined as a female Other, an exotic, intriguing, or menacing figure who is sometimes difficult to understand and subdue for the narrators and poetic voices that we find in the texts. The representations of these Spanish women, however, are perfectly consistent with the figurations of Spain in Romantic Britain and offer a relatively wide variety of female characters connected with diverse stereotypes or preconceived ideas about the country, complementing the cliché of the dark-haired black-eyed beauty.

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