Adaptation and Appropriation: The Afterlife of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the Spanish Press

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ALTHOUGH MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE RECEPTION of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in Spain, no previous attempts have been made to analyse the role that the nineteenth-century print culture of the Iberian nation played in the configuration of a public Coleridge persona. This article considers the most relevant imprints that Coleridge left in Spanish periodicals, and in doing so it raises a series of questions about his presence as a poet in this country throughout the nineteenth century. Whilst the major phase in the reception of Coleridge's poetry in Spain took place in the early twentieth century, scholars have successfully argued that its seeds were originally sown a century earlier, chiefly by a community of Spanish liberal émigrés based in London that included, among others, Joseph Blanco White (1775-1841), José Joaquín de Mora (1783–1864) and Antonio Alcalá Galiano (1789–1865).[2] After the Peninsular War was over, following the return of the absolutist regime of Ferdinand VII, Spanish Liberals faced persecution and they emigrated mostly to the safe haven of Britain, from where they 'played a crucial role as cultural mediators who […] wrote about Spain in English and Spanish, turning their country into a space of cultural and ideological intervention'.[3] These émigrés were ironically labelled by Byron in his Preface to Cantos I and II of *Don Juan* as 'Spaniard[s] who had travelled in England, […] Liberals who have subsequently been so liberally rewarded by Ferdinand, of grateful memory, for his restoration'.[4] London became the true political and intellectual centre of Spanish liberal emigration to Europe, with around one thousand families established in the city by 1824, after the failed attempt of the constitutional monarchy that put an end to the so-called Liberal Triennium.[5] The likes of Blanco White, Mora, and Alcalá Galiano thus 'absorbed, reformulated and took back to Spain their new understanding of British politics and culture', which was to eventually supply important new possibilities to late Spanish Romantics such as Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer.[6] Spanish Liberals found in the work of Romantics such as Coleridge the break they were so desperately

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[2] See, for instance, Derek Flitter, *Spanish Romantic Literary Theory and Criticism.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'Imaginative Romanticism and the Search for a Transcendental Art: Coleridge's Poetry and Poetics in Nineteenth-Century Spain'. *The Reception of S. T. Coleridge in Europe.* Eds. E. Shaffer and E. Zuccato. (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 135-166; or Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'Antonio Alcalá Galiano and the Idea of a Spanish National Literature in the Light of British Romanticism'. *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary.* Ed. J. Almeida. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 213-232.

[3] Diego Saglia, 'Iberian Translations: Writing Spain into British Culture, 1780-1830'. *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary.* Ed. J. Almeida. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 39.

[4] Lord Byron, *Don Juan.* Eds. T. G. Steffan, E. Steffan, and W. W. Pratt. (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 39.

[5] Vicente Lloréns, *Liberales y Románticos.* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1979), p. 23.

[6] Elinor Shaffer, 'Meteoric Traces: Coleridge's Afterlife in Europe'. *The Reception of S. T. Coleridge in Europe.* Eds. E. Shaffer and E. Zuccato (London, Continuum, 2007), p. 7.

seeking with the conservative and politically influenced literary tradition of Spain, as well as a move away from what they regarded as the poor and slavish influence of French letters. As Mora declared in August 1824 in an article on the nature of Spanish poetry for the *European Review*:

> The enlightened Spaniards have now no other country but England, and it is there they will find models analogous to the vigour and vivacity of their own imagination. The English style, free, natural, energetic, sometimes gloomy, but always independent, is much better suited to Spanish poetry, than the poverty, slavishness, and uniformity of the writers of the court of Louis XIV.[7]

The afterlife of Coleridge in Spain from the 1900s onwards, in turn, was much more significant. During the twentieth century this country and its literature saw a substantial increase in the reception of the works, ideas, and poetical theories of the British Romantics.[8] Wordsworth and Coleridge, above all, became a major shaping force in the poetic renewal led by some prominent Spanish literary figures, including Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), Juan Ramón Jiménez (1881–1958), Antonio Machado (1875-1939), and Luis Cernuda (1902-1963).[9] Coleridge's poetry also began to enjoy a privileged place in the Spanish publishing market, in contrast with the scarcity of translations available a century earlier.[10] This study argues that well before his writings were widely accessible to the Spanish reading public, throughout the nineteenth century there was a recurrent presence in newspapers and magazines of a multifaceted Coleridge persona.

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The first mention of Coleridge ever to appear in a Spanish newspaper dates back to 1821, way before any of his poetry was read in this country as far as we know. These were turbulent political times in the Iberian nation, for in January 1820 a military uprising had taken place against the absolutist rule of Ferdinand VII, which resulted on the King accepting the formation of a liberal government. During the rule of that government, Ferdinand VII lived under house arrest in Madrid, albeit those loyal to the King kept fighting to return

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[7] José Joaquín de Mora, 'Spanish Poetry: First Period'. *European Review* (Vol. I, August 1824), p. 383.

[8] See Richard Cardwell, 'Romanticism, Modernism and Noventa y Ocho: The Creation of a Poesía Nacional'. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies, Hispanic Studies and Researches on Spain and Portugal* 82 3-4 (2005), pp. 485-507.

[9] See, for instance, Peter Earle, *Unamuno and English Literature* (New York: Hispanic Institute in the United States, 1960); Cristina Flores Moreno, '"That Marvellous Coleridge": The Influence of S. T. Coleridge's Poetry and Poetics in Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936)'. *The Coleridge Bulletin* 32 (2008), pp. 41-47; Cristina Flores Moreno, 'Contemplative Unamuno: The Presence of S. T. Coleridge's 'Musings' in Miguel de Unamuno's Poetics'. *Comparative Critical Studies* 10 (2010), pp. 41-65; or Cristina Flores Moreno and Jonatan González García, '"Se hace camino al andar": El legado de la poesía pedestre del Romanticismo inglés en Miguel de Unamuno y Antonio Machado'. *EREBEA: Revista de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales* 6 (2016), pp. 169-195.

[10] Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'Las traducciones de la poesía de Coleridge al castellano'. *Hermēneus. Revista de Traducción e Interpretación 3* (2001), pp. 1-32; and Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'A Path for Literary Change: The Spanish Break with Tradition and the Role of Coleridge's Poetry and Poetics in Twentieth-Century Spain'. *The Reception of S. T. Coleridge in Europe*. Eds. E. Shaffer and E. Zuccato. (London: Continuum, 2007), pp. 167-196.

him to power, an endeavor in which they would succeed in 1823 with the aid of Louis XVIII of France and the so-called 100,000 Sons of Saint Louis. In this light, on July 5, 1821 the Spanish liberal paper *Correo Constitucional* (The Constitutional Courier) picked a fight with a prominent English newspaper, *The Courier*, on account of its being 'one of those ministerial papers that take delight in publishing ill-fated news about Spain, enlarge the bad reputation of our country, and forecast always greater problems'.[11] The Spanish periodical offered a lengthy attack on *The Courier* and a defense of the 'excesses' that Spaniards had been forced to undertake seeing the political climate of their country, and which *The Courier* so harshly criticised. It was precisely with reference to the issue of those 'excesses' that the *Correo Constitucional* used the figure of Coleridge and one of his poems to offer some sardonic advice to its British counterpart:

> We regret as much as it is possible to regret the excesses which, under a strong popular excitement, cannot fall to be committed; but we cannot help at the same time to be morally outraged by the chief cause of the excitement. The holy Alliance and their abettors in this and other countries, are the great cause of whatever excesses have taken and may take place. We recommend to *The Courier* the perusal of the 'Mad Ox' of Mr. COLERIDGE, written during a former attempt to drive a people to madness, in order to take advantage of it, where they will see the system now pursued by themselves and some others with respect to Spain, painted to the life.[12]

'A Tale', later reprinted as 'Recantation: Illustrated in the Story of the Mad Ox', had been originally published on July 30, 1798 in the *Morning Post*. As Coleridge explained in a note appended to the poem, 'The following amusing Tale gives a very humorous description of the French Revolution, which is represented as an Ox' (PW 1, 1, 505). In a handwritten prefatory note to an annotated copy of the poem, he argued some years later that this piece had been 'written during the Terror of the Invasion, when Sheridan made that celebrated Anti-gallican Oration, & Tierney voted with M^r^ Pitt for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. -- At the time all the Ministerial Papers were full of Tierney's & Sheridan's ~~Recan~~ *recantation* -- & to expose the falsehood of this phrase & the idea implied in it is the end of the Fable' (M I 92).[13] Accordingly, in like manner as the Revolution had liberated the people of France only for the revolutionary impulses of the French to end up destroying the country internally, Coleridge tells of how after the Ox is liberated in gladness by the

[11] Sebastián García, 'Noticias estrangeras'. *El Correo Constitucional. Literario, Politico, y Mercantil* (5 July 1821), p. 2. All the translations into English of excerpts from periodicals originally written in Spanish appearing in this article are by the present author owing to the fact that no published translations exist.

[12] Sebastián García, 'Noticias estrangeras', p. 2.

[13] See J. C. C. Mays, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Poetical Works: Corrections and Additions.* (November 2005) <http://www.friendsofcoleridge.com/CPWNov05.htm> [Last accessed 07.02.2017].

villagers, these drive it to madness, with the animal thereby being portrayed as merely a victim of the excesses of the people:

> The Ox drove on right thro' the town;
> All follow'd, boy and dad,
> Bull-dog, parson, shopman, clown!
> The publicans rush'd from the Crown,
> "Halloo hamstring him! cut him down!" —
> They drove the poor Ox mad.
>
> Should you a rat to madness teize,
> Why, ev'n a rat may plague you!
> There's no philosopher but sees,
> That rage and fear are one disease—
> Tho' that may burn, and this may freeze,
> They're both alike the ague! (PW 1, 1, 506-507)

But even though the picture of the Ox liberated in gladness and pushed into madness displays a greater sympathy with France than Whigs had held for quite some time, the political language Coleridge uses 'is tempered to suit the intentions of those who use and abuse it, […] and [his] oscillations should be re-read as the acrobatic feat of remaining in the public debates, when other radical voices had been either silenced or exiled'.[14] Nevertheless, in recommending to *The Courier* the perusal of the 'Mad Ox' so that 'they will see the system now pursued by themselves and some others with respect to Spain, painted to the life', the *Correo Constitucional* seems to be suggesting that *The Courier*'s indiscriminate attacks on Spain might end up themselves goading this country into madness in like manner as the French Revolution had done with France. Furthermore, the recommendation of this Coleridgean poem is clearly an ironic attack as well against the disputable and changing editorial policy of *The Courier*. When it was published in the *Morning Post* in 1798, Daniel Stuart was the manager of the paper, and up until 1822, when the attacks of Spain were being published in *The Courier*, Stuart was also the manager and owned shares of this other periodical. What is more, during the Peninsular War Coleridge had contributed eight 'Letters on the Spaniards' to *The Courier* (December-January 1809-10) whose subject, he hoped, was to 'entitle them to some degree of favour from all who sympathize with the Spaniards in their present struggle; whatever may be their political attachments at home' (EOT II 37-38). In being asked to look back at their editorial policy and what it had achieved some years earlier, and doing so by using Coleridge's shifting views on the French Revolution, *The Courier* was being paid back in its own coin.

The fact remains, however, that by 1821 Coleridge was almost unknown in Spain, and in order to produce and understand this sardonic attack an in-depth

[14] Paul Magnuson, *Reading Public Romanticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 79-81.

knowledge of his public persona, his writings, as well as of the state of the English press would have been required for both the journalist and readers of this periodical.[15] Since this was not the case with the vast majority of the population, Spanish readers would have arguably understood Coleridge through this reference as a radical English writer who had once 'attempt[ed] to drive a people to madness'.

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In spite of the fact that the first recorded imprint of Coleridge in a Spanish newspaper dates back to 1821, five years would elapse until the next remarkable mention to STC featured in the print culture of the country. It was Pedro Pascual Oliver, another of the Spanish liberal émigrés that had found refuge in England following the return to power of Ferdinand VII, who brought Coleridge to the spotlight of the Spanish reading public in the July 1826 issue of *Ocios de Españoles Emigrados* (Pastimes of the Spanish Émigrés) with a free translation of 'Something childish but very natural': [16]

> If I had but two little wings
> And were a little feath'ry Bird,
> To *you* I'd fly, my Dear!
> But Thoughts, like these, are idle Things—
> And I stay here.
>
> But in my sleep to *you* I fly,
> I'm always with you in my sleep—
> The World is all one's own.
> But then one wakes—and where am I?
> All, all alone!
>
> Sleep stays not, tho' a Monarch bids:
> So I love to wake ere break of Day:
> For tho' my sleep be gone,
> Yet while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,
> And still dreams *on*! (PW 1, 1, 534)

Ocios de Españoles Emigrados was the most enduring political and literary journal to be established by the England-based Liberals, published monthly from April 1824 to October 1826, and quarterly from January to October 1827. There was barely an issue that did not feature poetic compositions, and, what is more,

[15] A comprehensive archival research has revealed that an article bearing a striking resemblance to the one published in the *Correo Constitucional* had actually seen the light on May 8, 1821 in the *Morning Chronicle* as part of the ongoing dispute that this periodical had with *The Courier* and other ministerial papers on narrating the issues taking place in the Iberian Peninsula. Accordingly, it appears as if the *Correo Constitucional* had only translated this piece to the letter and made it look as its own original contribution so as to defend its country from the attacks of English periodicals.

[16] Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'Imaginative Romanticism and the Search for a Transcendental Art…', p. 166.

starting in mid-1825 translations of English poetry began to be published regularly, particularly Romantic-period pieces, which provided Spanish letters, at long last, with a new lyrical freshness, a more flexible rhythm, and new possibilities for versification.[17] Despite Coleridge's poem being a short lyrical composition of fifteen lines divided into three stanzas, the translation published in *Ocios de Españoles Emigrados*, entitled 'Imitacion de una composicion de Coledridge [sic], titulada: Something childish but very natural' and dedicated 'to Nice', is comprised of ninety-six lines divided, in turn, into eight stanzas. What Pascual Oliver does is, in fact, an exercise of secondary authorship, offering in the first place a free rendering of the actual lines of the poem before moving on to develop an extension of the piece that Coleridge actually wrote, but in imitation of his style. The first lines of this rewriting are as follows:

> Si alas yo tuviese, Nice,
> O ave voladora fuera,
> Volara, hermosa hechizera,
> Siemdre [sic] al rededor de tí.
> Pero ¡ai [sic] infelice!
> ¡Que idea tan vana!
> [¡]Cual mi mente insana
> Deliria sin fin!
> Ni alas tengo, ni soi [sic] ave
> Y aunque por verte suspiro,
> De tí apartado me miro
> Sin poder volar á ti.[18]

Pascual Oliver takes advantage of Coleridge's lines, originally composed for and sent to his wife in a letter from Göttingen dated April 21, 1799 (CL I 488-489), and adapts them for his own purposes in addressing it possibly to his own lover, Nice. What is more, he tries to go beyond the simplicity of Coleridge's imagery in these opening lines—and, in fact, all through his translation—exploiting and considerably expanding here the metaphor of the lyrical voice being 'a little feath'ry Bird' ('Si alas yo tuviese, Nice, / O ave voladora fuera') so that, although in a style relatively close to Coleridge's piece, it does constitute an important point of departure from the original poem. As can be seen in the first stanza of the translation, whereas the lyrical voice in the original only expresses that 'To *you* I'd fly, my Dear!', in turning Sarah into Nice, Pascual Oliver further characterises his lover as a beautiful sorceress, 'around' which he would be flying 'ceaselessly': 'Volara, hermosa hechizera, /Siemdre [sic] al redeor de tí'. More importantly, whilst in Coleridge's piece those thoughts are the product of his idleness, in Pascual Oliver's rewriting the

[17] Vicente Lloréns, *Liberales y Románticos*, p. 322.

[18] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Imitacion de una composicion de Coledridge [sic], titulada: Something childish but very natural'. Trans. P. Pascual Oliver. *Ocios de Españoles Emigrados* VI (July 1826), pp. 85-87.

lyrical voice declares that his feelings are vain and rather the deliriums of an insane mind, '¡Que idea tan vana! / Cual mi mente insana / Deliria sin fin!', for he has neither wings nor is a bird but simply finds himself away from his loved one. Translations do manipulate the original 'image' of poetical pieces in the act of rewriting they constitute, and they do so effectively, even if the reasoning behind such alterations might not necessarily, or even primarily, be 'because translators maliciously set out to distort that reality, but because they produce their translations under certain constraints peculiar to the culture they are members of'.[19]

That said, the framework in which this particular rewriting is to be understood is precisely, as its Spanish title indicates, as an imitation of Coleridge's poem. The fact that this translation was an imitation arguably had strong implications for the reading public of the Spanish press,[20] since Coleridge was thus presented as a literary model 'to be followed', even if only to the community of Liberal émigrés based in England, whose interest in him and in English literary developments, as Elinor Shaffer illustrates, was precisely reflected in the very periodicals they produced.[21] Indeed, the field of translations of Coleridge reflects a general silence over the figure of this author all through the nineteenth century in the Iberian nation, the only two renderings of his poetry up until the 1900s dating from 1826 and ca. 1890.[22] As the aforementioned émigré Alcalá Galiano would acknowledge in 1860, 'Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Crabbe, Rogers, Campbell, and some other poets, either not inferior, or if at all, little inferior in merit than the others [Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Moore and Southey], are they not entirely unknown to most Spaniards?'.[23]

The reception of Coleridge in the Spanish press throughout the nineteenth century is hence characterised by the fact that, even if his works were neither widely available nor read in this country, there was a markedly public Coleridge persona, above all from 1855 onwards, when he became a recurrent presence in Spanish periodicals. It was precisely Alcalá Galiano, dubbed as 'the first ambassador of British Romanticism in Spain',[24] who set off this trend in *El*

[19] André Lefevere, 'Translation and Canon Formation'. *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Eds. R. Álvarez and Mª C. A. Vidal. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), p. 139.

[20] Curiously enough, 'Something Childish but very Natural' was itself an adaptation of the German folksong 'Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär'. What is more, the poems Coleridge wrote during his German travels were composed in the habit of imitation that would ultimately culminate in the publication in 1802 of 'Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouny', silently adapted from Friederike Brun. See Tilar J. Mazzeo, 'Coleridge's Travels'. *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 89-106.

[21] Elinor Shaffer, 'Coleridge's Reception on the Continent'. *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 704. In spite of that fact that *Ocios de Españoles Emigrados* was published in British soil, its being a paper produced by and intended for exiled Spaniards does qualify it as part of the print culture of Spain. So much so, that following the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, when freedom of press was restored in Spain, many of these expatriates went back, and brought with them all the knowledge they had gathered during their exile, including that of English literature in general, and of Coleridge in particular.

[22] Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'Las traducciones de la poesía de Coleridge al castellano', pp. 1-32.

[23] Antonio Alcalá Galiano, 'Del célebre escritor inglés Lord Macaulay y de su historia de Inglaterra'. *Crónica de Ambos Mundos* I (Madrid, 1860), p. 201. I am grateful to Dr Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte from the University of Valladolid for her assistance in tracking down this reference.

[24] Mª Eugenia Perojo Arronte, 'Antonio Alcalá Galiano and the Idea of a Spanish National Literature...', p. 214.

Correo de Ultramar (The Overseas Courier), a periodical published from Paris and distributed in several Spanish-speaking nations, and which presented itself as creating a forum large enough to bridge the cultural gap between Spain, France and Latin America.[25] In an article on the state of literary criticism in Spain, Alcalá Galiano argued that when it 'took off and then dazzlingly settled […] in Great Britain in this very same century, Byron and Walter Scott distinguished themselves at first, only to be followed, not diminishing their merit and renown, by Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Crabbe [and] Moore'.[26] The name Coleridge soon began to be thought of as being among the foremost in British literature, and only one year later in that same periodical the Venezuelan anglophile and translator J. M. Torres Caicedo featured the poet in an article on 'illustrious men', arguing that in the long history of literature 'there are two kinds of poets: ones whose inspiration is on the soul; and others, whose fire is to be found in their hearts'.[27] Coleridge was then ranked among the illustrious 'poets of the heart' together with Petrarch, Wordsworth, Schiller, Lamartine, and Zorrilla, whilst among the 'poets of the soul' one could find the likes of Calderon, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Victor Hugo, and Espronceda.

Coleridge thus began to be mapped into Spanish culture through specific mechanisms of adaptation and appropriation, which resulted in his soon becoming a staple author to be mentioned whenever the literature of Britain was discussed. The steady prominence that British Romanticism began to gain in the Iberian nation was certainly important in this respect. Hence, when periodicals such as *El Isleño* (The Islander) delved during the late 1850s into how in the late eighteenth century 'English poetry rose from its ashes when the winds of liberty were blowing', Romantic poetry was presented to Spaniards as being 'the glory of England', as were 'the glorious names of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Walter Scott, Thomas Moore and Byron'.[28] This eventually paved the way for STC to be recurrently discussed along with other prominent figures in European letters. It is no surprise then that in an 1878 piece on the poetry of Catalonia, written by the renowned Catalan poet and historian Adolf Blanch i Cortada (1832-1887), the 'harmonious Coleridge' not only shared the spotlight with 'the profound Shelley, the vigorous Byron, the courteous Keats, the suggestive Lamb, the innovative Cowper and the humble yet utterly eloquent Wordsworth', but also with prominent German and French figures such as Eichendorff, Hoffman, Lamartine, Hugo, Muset, Gauthier, Baudelaire, Bauville, and Mallarmé.[29]

Even when these were only mentions in passing, the epithets that Spanish papers and magazines used when introducing him also played a prominent role

[25] Annette Paatz, 'The Socio-Cultural Function of Media in Nineteenth-Century Latin America'. *Comparative Literature and Culture* 3 (2001), p. 6.
[26] Antonio Alcalá Galiano, 'De la crítica literaria en España'. *El Correo de Ultramar* 125 (1855), p. 330.
[27] J. M. Torres Caicedo, 'Hombres ilustres'. *El Correo de Ultramar* 125 (1856), p. 74.
[28] Florencio Janer, 'La literatura y bellas artes inglesas'. *El Isleño* (5 May 1858), pp. 2-3.
[29] Adolf Blanch i Cortada, 'La poesía catalana'. *La Academia. Semanario Ilustrado Universal* 11 (23 September 1878), pp. 167-170.

in shaping this Coleridgean myth. Some of the most notable examples include 'the subtle and somewhat tender Coleridge',[30] 'he who was excessively overgenerous with his ideas, the idle yet frenzied Coleridge',[31] or, as the celebrated member of the Royal Spanish Academy and Nobel Prize for literature nominee Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo dubbed him, 'the delicate and profound Lake poet Coleridge'.[32] By the same token, after the turn of the century, in 1907, Emilia Pardo Bazán, one of the leading figures in nineteenth-century Spanish letters, argued in one of a series of articles on modern French literature that she wrote for *La España Moderna* (The Modern Spain) that whilst 'we [Spanish writers] could not be influential on account of our individualities, less original and of less brilliance (we must confess it), […] Schiller and Schlegel, Byron and Coleridge, the false Ossian and the eccentric Walter Scott exerted over France and its authors such a decisive influence'.[33] In fact, ever since it was established in 1889 the monthly cultural magazine *La España Moderna* played a significant role in the mapping of Coleridge into Spanish culture, with frequent mentions to the poet and his literary works across several issues, and even some brief excerpts of his writings being translated into Spanish.[34] The name Coleridge thus moved quickly from being virtually unknown to Spaniards to being frequently brought up when foreign literature was being discussed in cultural and literary periodicals. What is surprising, however, is that his popularity soon developed as well into something like a celebrity culture whereby various provincial and national papers began to construct an eccentric Coleridge persona in a tabloid-like spirit.

Rather than strictly concentrating on his poetry or on his political, philosophical or religious writings, many periodicals focused on the singular behaviour of Coleridge the husband, the father, the drunkard, or the opium eater, to name but a few examples. But since some of those articles appeared not only in popular newspapers but in cultural and literary magazines as well, his writings were also explored there to justify discussing such matters in such periodicals. For instance, the nature of Coleridge's 'absolutely disastrous relationship' with Sarah was featured in an article originally published in *El Noroeste* (The Northwest) as one of the twenty-three most notorious examples of 'great English and American writers' that suggested that 'learned and educated' men like Coleridge, Milton, Swift, Dickens or Thackeray should not get married, for matrimony prevented them from making the most out of their

[30] Villemain, 'Poetas ingleses'. *Diario Oficial de Avisos de Madrid* (21 August 1876), p. 2.
[31] Baltasar Champsaur, 'Sobre arte'. *Revista Contemporánea* (30 June 1894), p. 567.
[32] M. Menéndez Pelayo, 'Blanco White III'. *Revista Hispano-Americana* 7 (July 1882), p. 96.
[33] Emilia Pardo Bazán, 'La literatura moderna en Francia'. *La España Moderna* (January 1907), p. 94.
[34] For illustration purposes, between 1892 and 1910 thirty issues of *La España Moderna* featured articles that, to a lesser or greater extent, mentioned Coleridge. See, for instance, Emilio Castelar, 'Crónica internacional'. *La España Moderna* (February 1892), pp. 174-189; Luis Marco, 'La prensa internacional'. *La España Moderna* (June 1897), pp. 102-167; Rafael Altamira, 'Psicología del pueblo español'. *La España Moderna* (March 1899), pp. 5-59; Emilia Pardo Bazán, 'La literatura moderna en Francia'. *La España Moderna* (February 1900), pp. 34-76; Fernando Araujo, 'Revista de revistas'. *La España Moderna* (January 1904), pp. 176-202; or Fernando Araujo, 'Revista de revistas'. *La España Moderna* (November 1905), pp. 165-201.

literary genius;[35] whilst Sara and Hartley Coleridge were showcased in other periodicals as examples of a theory that hinted at the fact that literary genius could be hereditary, and therefore marriage among men of letters a thing to be encouraged.[36] During the nineteenth century and beyond, Coleridge was also portrayed in the Spanish press, for instance, as a failed writer of Christmas carols,[37] the source of inspiration for an international terrorist,[38] or as a literary genius whose drug and alcohol addiction were precisely what led to the creation of some of the finest compositions in world literature, as was the case with others like Charles Baudelaire or Edgar Allan Poe.[39]

But, above all, a case in point that lays bare the dynamics of adaptation and appropriation is found in a piece published in *El Lábaro* (The Labarum), where Coleridge was portrayed as a philosopher who influenced the structure of the postal service in late nineteenth-century Europe. This periodical was actually 'born out of a decent inclination in the tastes of the people, which is not satisfied with what is on offer these days, and which easily allows us to manage without chronicling facts and events known to all'.[40] In its September 2, 1897 issue *El Lábaro* published an article arguing that in spite of the fact that the origins of the postal service as such were to be found in France during the reign of Louis XI, 'it has considerably improved since then, [...] but in order to arrive to the present state of things it took an observation made by the English philosopher Coleridge'.[41] This remark is immediately followed by a rather long paraphrase, which comprises half of the article, of the following fragment that originally appeared in Thomas Allsop's 1836 collection of Coleridge's *Letters, Conversations and Recollections*…

> One day, when I had not a shilling which I could spare, I was passing by a cottage not far from Keswick, where a carter was demanding a shilling for a letter, which the woman of the house appeared unwillingly to pay, and at last declined to take. I paid the postage; and when the man was out of sight, she told me that the letter was from her son, who took that means of letting her know that he was well: the letter was *not to be paid for*. It was then opened, and found to be blank![42]

[35] Anon, 'Por esos mundos. La desdicha del genio'. *El Noroeste* (29 April 1910), p. 1.

[36] G. H. Lemes, 'Ciencias naturales. De la herencia de los caracteres'. *La Abeja. Revista Científica y Literatura Ilustrada* I (1862), p. 370; Mariano Delgado, 'Ciencia popular. La consanguinidad'. *Revista Popular* 4 (15 November 1890), p. 3.

[37] Anon, 'Las fiestas de Navidad en Inglaterra'. *El Correo de Ultramar* 15 (1856), p. 391. Coleridge's only Christmas Carol (PW 1, 1, 626-628) was originally published in the *Morning Post* on December 25, 1799 and included a year later in Robert Southey's *Annual Anthology* (1800). In a letter to Southey from December 1799, Coleridge claimed that 'my Xmas Carol is a quaint performance, and, in as strict a sense as is *possible*, an Impromptu' (CL I 552).

[38] P. J. Gelabert, 'Noticias estrangeras'. *El Isleño* (25 February 1858), p. 2.

[39] See, for instance, Anon, 'El genio y la locura'. *El Defensor de Córdoba. Diario Católico* (29 September 1900), pp. 1-2; Ramiro de Maeztu, 'El comedor de opio'. *La Correspondencia de España. Diario Universal de Noticias* (14 October 1907), p. 1; or Fernando Araujo, 'Revista de Revistas'. *La España Moderna* (May 1908), p. 190.

[40] Editorial Team, 'El Lábaro'. *El Lábaro. Diario Independiente* (24 March 1897), p. 2.

[41] Anon, 'El servicio de correos'. *El Lábaro. Diario Independiente* (2 September 1897), p. 2.

[42] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge*. Vol. II. Ed. Thomas Allsop (London: Edward Moxon. 1836), p. 114.

For the convenience of its readers, the Spanish periodical then made sense of the story explaining why 'the philosopher' Coleridge should not have paid the postman. He had wasted his money for the son had resorted to that device of communication, sending a blank piece of paper, to let her mother know that all was well with him, so that she could have news from her son without incurring in any expense. Despite Sir Rowland Hill having put forward a campaign in 1837 for a comprehensive reform of the postal system, popularized by his pamphlet *Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practicability*, it was argued in *El Lábaro* that had Coleridge not observed while in Keswick how essential a reform of the postal service was, it would have been still unaffordable for the vast amount of the European population to post a letter. While that is a strong argument, we should not forget that Hill actually reproduced Coleridge's account in his pamphlet,[43] chiefly to illustrate how the Post Office was open to fraud. This article, as indeed many others that helped to build up an unconventional image of Coleridge, was then reprinted in minor provincial papers, thereby reaching more audiences and more layers of the Spanish reading public.[44]

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No name among the Romantics was so generally present as that of Coleridge across the print culture of Spain throughout the nineteenth century, while his writings were virtually unavailable, either in English or in Spanish. In fact, it was chiefly the name that was known of Coleridge, thereby turning the poet into a conveniently blank slate onto which periodicals could project the image that suited best either their editorial stances or the need to entertain their audiences. As evidenced in this article, cultural and literary magazines focused primarily on his prominent place in world literature and his poetical, political or philosophical writings, whereas tabloid-like periodicals opted for portraying an eccentric Coleridge persona that lays bare the implications of the adaptation and appropriation of literary figures across time and space. And yet, the importance of both kinds of publications cannot be sufficiently stressed. Even if his poems were not being read in the Iberian nation as far as we know, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century the Spanish press helped shape a complex and multifaceted public face for Coleridge that was to pave the way for his reception in twentieth-century Spain, when he was to become a major shaping force in the poetic renewal led by some prominent literary figures, including the aforementioned Miguel de Unamuno, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Antonio Machado, and Luis Cernuda.

[43] Rowland Hill, *Post Office Reform: Its Importance and Practicability*. (London. Charles Knight and Co, 1837), p. 86.

[44] For illustration purposes, only two days later it appeared again in the front-page of the provincial paper of the Balearic Islands *El Bien Público*. See Anon, 'El servicio de correos'. *El Bien Público* (4 September 1897), p. 1.