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Hero or Traitor? A Linguistic Analysis of the Literary Representation of Roger Casement in Sabina Murray's *Valiant Gentlemen*

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Abstract:

More than one hundred years after his death, the life of the controversial Irish nationalist and British consular official Roger Casement is still of great interest to historians and novelists alike. In this paper I explore the discursive representation of Roger Casement in Sabina Murray's *Valiant Gentlemen* (2016). In the light of theories on trauma and memory (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy 2011) I analyse the character's development in relation to his experiences in the Congo and the Amazon. From a critical linguistic perspective (Fowler 1986) combined with the system of Appraisal within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin, White 2005), I analyse the construction of this character's identity in the process of his transformation from a loyal British subject to an Irish revolutionary.

Keywords: Appraisal, Linguistic Analysis, Literary Representation, Point of View, Trauma Theory

1. Introduction

More than one hundred years after his death, the life of the controversial Irish nationalist and British consular official Roger Casement is still of great interest to historians and novelists alike. Casement is a historical figure who has inspired a variety of works in different genres – biographical accounts, poetry, prose, drama and critical essays. He has been recognized as a pioneer in the struggle for human rights in the Congo and the Amazon as he denounced the abhorrent working conditions resulting from the European ivory and rubber trade at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. However, while some have regarded him as an Irish hero, others have considered him

to be a traitor to the British Empire. Writer and human rights activist Rebecca Solnit states that his “biography is the tale of the evolution of a good imperialist into a great anti-imperialist, [...] a man rewarded and then terribly punished for following his principles” (2011, 40). In this paper I explore the discursive representation of Roger Casement in the historical novel *Valiant Gentlemen*, by Canadian author Sabina Murray (2016) – to my knowledge, the last novel published on his life – in relation to the process of his transformation from being in the service of the British government to becoming an Irish revolutionary.

In the light of theories of trauma and memory (Caruth 1995; Eyerman 2003; Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, *et al.* 2004; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy 2011), I analyse the character’s development in relation to the imperialist actions he is associated with through his positions as British consul in Africa and South America. His contact with traumatic events in those regions – a consequence of European colonialism – leads him to cease working as a colonial agent in order to become a fervent defender of the Irish nationalist movement. As Roy Eyerman posits (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy 2011), the notion of trauma as a profound emotional response is a fact which can acquire individual and collective connotations (304). I believe that in *Valiant Gentlemen*, the collective trauma produced by colonialism acquires individual relevance in the character of Roger Casement as he acknowledges a parallelism between the European imperial actions in Africa and South America and the history of Anglo-Irish relationships.

Stuart Hall (1997) states that representation is one of the central practices in the production of culture. He sees culture as a set of shared meanings which are produced and exchanged through language – one of the media through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a culture, in fact “the privileged medium in which we *make sense* of things” (1, emphasis in the original). Being central to meaning and culture, language has always been regarded as “the key repository of cultural values and meanings” (*ibidem*). Along the same lines, Halliday states that language has a representational function: “the speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena of the real world; and this includes his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness: his reactions, cognitions, and perceptions” (2008, 91). Following Halliday, Fowler (1986) posits that both experience and the way it is expressed in language differ from individual to individual depending on social conventions and the place the individual occupies in society, thus “a language embodies ways, not just *one* way, of looking at the world” (149, emphasis in the original). In the case of literary fiction, language allows readers to access the world view of an author, narrator or character. The writer’s regular and consistent use of linguistic choices builds up a particular representation of the world, which is at the same time the major source of point of view in fiction (150).

Since representation through language is central to the processes by which meaning is produced, I believe that a linguistic analysis of *Valiant Gentlemen* will be of value to disclose the resources used by its author to create one of the central characters in the novel, Roger Casement. From a critical linguistic perspective (Fowler 1986) in combination with the theory of Appraisal within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Martin, White 2005), I analyse the construction of this character’s identity in the process of his transformation from a loyal British subject into an Irish revolutionary, eventually executed as a traitor due to his association with the Irish nationalist cause and the 1916 Easter Rising. The study of the point of view from which the novel is narrated offers access to the ideological and psychological perspectives of the characters, and the analysis based on the Appraisal subsystems of Attitude and Graduation allows us to observe how the text communicates the values, beliefs and feelings of the protagonist, unveiling his ideology. References to cultural trauma theories and to Casement’s life will be used to provide a socio-cultural interpretation of the analysed sections.

2. Roger Casement: the Historical Figure

In Sabina Murray's words, Roger Casement is "an intriguing figure – humanitarian, Irish revolutionary, [...] a conflicted man, an Irish Protestant who spent much of his time representing England in different African nations, a gay man who, true to the times, kept his sexual orientation to himself" (Meidav 2017). This historical character – described by many as paradoxical, ambiguous, contradictory, multifaceted; praised as a hero but executed as a traitor – has awakened historical and literary interest for more than a century. In his article "From the Putumayo to Connemara: Roger Casement's Amazonian Voyage of Discovery", Peter Harris posits that while his investigations into the methods of white rubber traders in the Peruvian jungle granted him a knighthood from the British government, his hanging "placed him amongst the most prominent martyrs to the Irish nationalist cause" (2006, 143). He claims that these two moments in his life can be seen as representations of the dichotomies, ambivalences and paradoxes associated with Casement's personality. A brief reference to Casement's biography is due here, as the analysis presented in this paper follows the novel's portrayal of different moments of his life. Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916) was a diplomat in the service of the British government, for which he served as consul in both Africa (1895-1904) and South America (Mitchel 1997, 17). He wrote *The Congo Report* (1904) and the *Putumayo Report* (1911), in which he denounced the atrocities committed by the ivory and rubber merchants against the native populations. He was also co-founder of the Congo Reform Association (Mitchell 2012a, 82), which can be considered as the first massive human rights movement. For these tasks he was recognized as a humanitarian and granted knighthood in 1911 (Mitchell 1997, 26). He resigned from the Foreign Office in 1913 when he started to work for the cause of Irish freedom (17). As the First World War started, he thought that Irish independence could be achieved by siding with Germany (Mitchell 2012c, 7). He travelled to Germany in 1914 to form the Irish brigade with Irish prisoners of war and bought arms from the Germans to be used during the Easter Rising in 1916. His efforts to create a German Irish alliance were discovered by the British intelligence and he was arrested on his return to Ireland, hours before the Easter Rising in Dublin. He was charged with high treason against the British Crown and executed on the third of August 1916 (Mitchel 1997, 17).

As a diplomat, Casement carried out investigations on the work conditions established by the rubber producers in the colonies, adopting "a militant position in defence of the indigenous populations in various tropical regions, at a time when the question of alterity was not really valued in western forums" (Mitchell 2012b, 7). In his challenge to the imperial order, Casement exposed crimes against humanity and his later commitment to the Irish revolutionary cause may be interpreted as his way of expressing his outrage at the colonial system.

3. Valiant Gentlemen: An Historical Novel

According to the *Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Childs, Fowler 2005, 107), historical novels are set in a time recognized as historical in which the protagonists are real figures from the past or created characters involved in real events, thus creating a bridge between fiction and non-fiction. Although there are many issues surrounding the limits between history and historical fiction, according to Susan Peabody the main difference between them is related to the point of view. On the one hand, historians are concerned with telling the reader what happened from their point of view and thus they are held responsible for their arguments – which constitutes their identity as historians in the academic community. On the other, writers of historical fiction may tell the story from the point of view of real or ima-

ginary characters, and they may hide things from the readers in order to create mystery or suspense, thus stimulating in the readers the pleasure derived from discovering what happened by themselves (1989, 29-37).

In her article “What Can Historical Fiction Accomplish that History Does Not? On Time, the Past, and Einstein’s Theory of Relativity” Sabina Murray states: “I am a writer who often traffics in historical material” (2016b). In her view, historical fiction “thrives in the blank spaces between known and known, supplying plausible fillers” (*ibidem*). In the case of the novel under analysis, I believe the *plausible fillers* Murray mentions can be found in the author’s representation of Roger Casement’s thoughts, feelings and ideas and in those of the other characters who interact with Casement. Furthermore, in the *Acknowledgements* section at the end of the novel, Sabina Murray writes:

The reason I decided to write a novel that took on these particular historical figures is because I became fascinated with what it was like to be these people unaware of what the future held. [...] History is essential in the writing of a book like *Valiant Gentlemen*, but I wrote this book to understand what it was like to not know the outcome, to look at history that had not yet become history. (2016a, 488)

In order to achieve this aim, the author uses the present tense to unfold the lives of three characters: Roger Casement, his friend Herbert Ward and Ward’s wife, Sarita Sanford. The novel narrates the adventurous youth of the two friends in the Congo and the way their lives develop after that, as Ward marries Sarita and Casement becomes a member of the British diplomatic service. Their political differences become evident when Ward and his sons fight in World War I and Casement becomes involved with the Germans in the hope of freeing Ireland from British rule. These differences separate the friends to the point that Ward believes him to be a traitor and refuses to write a petition on behalf of Casement so that his life is pardoned, as other influential, powerful people had done. The novel ends with Casement’s execution in 1916 and Ward’s death in 1919, who is survived by his wife.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Cultural Trauma and Memory

The notion of trauma, which can be described as a deeply felt emotional response to some event, has both individual and collective connotations (Schudson 2011, 290). In “Toward a Cultural Theory of Trauma”, the American sociologist Jeffrey Charles Alexander offers a general theory of cultural trauma as an attribution of meaning to events. The author states that cultural trauma “occurs when members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (Alexander 2011, 307). Moreover, American sociologist Ron Eyerman presents the idea of psychological or physical trauma as opposed to that of cultural trauma. The former is described as a great emotional anguish at the individual level which occurs as a result of a traumatic experience, whereas the latter is referred to as “a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion” (2011, 304). This definition does not imply that cultural trauma is always experienced by every member of a group but rather that the traumatic meaning of an event is established and accepted as part of the culture of the community, that is, “a negotiated recollection of events” (306).

In her introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth refers to the need of literature (in addition to psychiatry, sociology and history) “to explain, to cure, or to show why it is that we can no longer simply explain or simply cure [...] beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma” (1995, 4). The representation of Roger Casement in Murray’s novel may be analysed by referring to the effects on the protagonist of the traumatic events experienced by the native populations of the Congo and the Amazon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which have such an impact on Casement that he later decides to abandon the British service to join the Irish revolutionary cause. Being witness to the violence the native workers were subjected to makes him confront the poverty and exploitation suffered by the Irish population under British rule, thus his individual experience acquires the collective connotation Eyerman and Alexander refer to. These shared histories of oppression and violence may be understood as examples of cultural trauma.

Much has been written about Roger Casement as a historical figure and he has also been widely represented in a variety of literary genres. By way of example, in her doctoral thesis, Mariana Bolfarine mentions an extensive list of works, including novels, plays and poems, in which one of the characters – sometimes the protagonist – is Roger Casement. In the light of trauma theory, she explores “the ways in which the figure of Roger Casement has been associated to the traumas that have tainted Anglo-Irish relations for at least 300 years” (2015, 14) in novels and plays by authors as varied as Mario Vargas Llosa and Arthur Conan Doyle, among others. I believe that a linguistic analysis on yet another work on Roger Casement can show the construction of this historical character in his transformation from a loyal British subject into an Irish revolutionary and the role played by cultural trauma in such transformation.

4.2 Point of View

To start unveiling the representation of Roger Casement in Murray’s work, I will follow Roger Fowler’s analysis of point of view. Though he distinguishes among three kinds of point of view – spatio-temporal, ideological and psychological – for the purposes of this article I will concentrate on the last two, which, according to Fowler, are more fundamental and complex as they overlap. As ideology refers to “the system of beliefs, values and categories by reference to which a person or a society comprehends the world” (1986, 130), in a narrative text an ideological point of view refers to the set of values and beliefs communicated by the language of the text. Fowler states that ideological perspectives can be clearly identified in different areas of linguistic structures (such as cumulative vocabulary patterns and certain syntactic structures) and that the style of the text may be adjusted to express ideological development (130-133).

The psychological point of view is concerned with who is presented as the observer of the events of a narrative, while the narrative may show an internal or external perspective. *Internal* narration may be subdivided into two different types: type A refers to narration from the point of view within a character’s consciousness, who manifests his or her feelings and evaluations of the events and characters of the story; type B refers to narration from the point of view of someone who has knowledge of the feelings of the characters – traditionally called *omniscient* narrator. *External* point of view is also subdivided into two types: type C relates the events and describes the characters from a position outside the protagonists’ consciousnesses, with no privileged access to their private feelings and opinions, while in type D the inaccessibility to the character’s ideologies stresses the limitations of authorial knowledge (135). In Murray’s view, historical fiction allows the writer to tell stories through created personal perspectives and to give voice to previously underrepresented populations. “Casement would have had his own

complex beliefs and my job – admittedly strange – is to provide a believable model of those beliefs” (2016b). She does this by resorting to a plurality of voices which allow her to build the representation of the main characters. As Fowler posits, a novel gives an interpretation of the world it represents and the vehicle for ideology is the narrative voice, which may coincide with the voice of a character or characters, thus showing one single dominating world view or a plurality of ideological positions (1986, 130-131).

4.3 Appraisal: Attitude and Graduation

Evaluative language allows speakers of a language to construe communities of shared values and feelings. The system of Appraisal within the framework of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics is an interpersonal semantic-discursive resource which, I believe, provides useful categories for the analysis of the literary representation of Roger Casement in *Valiant Gentlemen*, as evaluation is one of the main narrative resources used to indicate whose voice a writer is narrating from (Martin, White 2005, 72).

Appraisal focuses on the interpersonal metafunction of language by analysing the attitude writers/speakers adopt towards the content of their texts and towards their readership/audience. Texts are perceived as communities of feelings and values constructed with linguistic tools that express emotions, appreciations and normative evaluations (1). As regards interpersonal meanings, Halliday states that they “cannot easily be expressed as configurations of discrete elements” but are rather “strung throughout the clause as a continuous motif or colouring” (19). This produces a cumulative effect which is referred to as *prosodic realization*, that is “the meaning is distributed like a prosody throughout a continuous stretch of discourse” (*ibidem*). Thus, attitudinal values may work in combination to establish an evaluative prosody which reverberates across a span of text.

Within Appraisal, the system of Attitude is concerned with the linguistic resources used to construe feelings (subsystem of Affect), value judgements (subsystem of Judgement) and evaluation of objects (subsystem of Appreciation). These refer to three semantic regions covering what has been traditionally referred to as emotion, ethics and aesthetics. Affect analyses the linguistic resources that construe emotional reactions, registering both positive and negative feelings. Emotions are classified in four big groups of binary oppositions, each one having in turn additional specifications which relate those general emotions to more specific feelings:

Inclination: desire / Disinclination: fear
 Happiness: joy or affection / Unhappiness: sadness or antipathy
 Security: self-trust and trust in others / Insecurity: disquiet or surprise
 Satisfaction: interest or pleasure / Dissatisfaction: ennui or displeasure. (48-51)

Judgement is concerned with the linguistic resources that construe attitudes to people and the way they behave or their character, and it can be subcategorized into those evaluations that deal with *social esteem* and those oriented to *social sanction*. While social esteem refers to *normality* (how normal or usual someone is), *capacity* (how capable they are) and *tenacity* (how resolute they are), social sanction has to do to do with *veracity* (how truthful someone is) and *propriety* (how ethical they are). This system allows the writer/speaker to show admiration or criticism (52). Finally, Appreciation deals with the evaluation of things including semiotic and natural phenomena. It can be subcategorized into our *reactions* to things (do they please or attract us), their *composition* (their balance and complexity) and their *value* (how valuable they are) (56).

In addition to the system of Attitude, the system of Graduation refers to the upgrading or the downgrading of the value of lexical items. In relation to Attitude, Graduation builds greater or lesser degrees of positive or negative values. On the one hand, the subsystem of *Force* establishes the intensity (force or weakness) of the emotion, and it is frequently realized through intensification, comparative and superlative morphology, repetition, graphological features and intensifying lexis. On the other hand, the subsystem of *Focus* is used to adjust the strength of linguistic items by sharpening or softening their meanings (37)¹. It is also important to bear in mind that the linguistic expression of all the attitudes in the system can be inscribed – that is explicitly evaluative – or evoked – implicitly evaluative – and that the meaning of the evaluation will be associated with the context in which the linguistic items occur.

This framework will enable the exploration of the way in which the text communicates the representation of the characters' values, beliefs, and feelings, thus exposing their ideology and showing their position towards the narrated events in terms of approval vs. disapproval, enthusiasm vs. rejection, or applause vs. criticism.

5. Methodology

The analysis was carried out by selecting excerpts of the novel that refer to different moments in Roger Casement's life. One hundred and sixty-one excerpts of different length were identified and later analysed according to the type of evaluation used by the author to build Casement's attitudes towards people and events, and other characters' attitudes towards Casement.

The analysis of the excerpts includes both individual words or phrases and whole clauses, and in all cases, the context in which the evaluative items occur was taken into account to interpret their meanings. As a result, the same excerpt was occasionally classified as expressing meaning in more than one system and/or subcategory. The excerpts were selected on the basis of the following topics: Casement's representation of the Congo and the Putumayo, his views on colonialism and slavery, Casement in the eyes of other characters, Casement as a humanitarian, and the representation of Ireland and England in relation to Casement's identity – this last topic being analysed with particular reference to the notion of cultural trauma. Finally, the evaluative language was analysed to show the representation of the different topics outlined above.

The quotations chosen to exemplify the analysis are consecutively numbered and are transcribed using italics for the evaluative linguistic items classified for Attitude and additional upper-case letters for those items which suggest Graduation. Square brackets after the quotes enclose the categories of Attitude identified in the extract and the Graduation involved, if present. Besides, the letters P or N are sometimes included to show the interpretation of the Attitude used in each particular context as providing positive or negative value, respectively. When there is more than one type of evaluation in an example, the words suggesting the evaluation are included between brackets after the classification to avoid confusion. Finally, the page number corresponding to each quotation is included after the quotation.

¹ Both Attitude and Graduation allow for further sub classification, which gives the systems a greater degree of delicacy. Given that such degree of detail goes beyond the aim of this paper, it will not be considered here.

6. Analysis

In the interview “Every Woman is a Nation unto Herself: A Conversation with Sabina Murray” Murray explains that she decided to present the events as narrated by the characters and therefore aligned according to their perspectives. She adds that she decided that her narrative “would have to be about a relationship. Casement needed an adversary or a friend” (Meidav 2017). Consequently, the novel has three points of view corresponding to the perspectives of Roger Casement, his best friend Herbert Ward, and Sarita Sampson, Ward’s wife. Though the third person is used throughout, the reader has access to the feelings and thoughts of the character or characters from whose point of view the chapter is narrated. In addition, other voices are present through dialogues among the three main characters and other minor ones. As Fowler states, a character’s point of view will be revealed through the linguistic structures used to express his or her emotions, thoughts and perceptions. Linguistic markers such as syntactic patterns, modal structures, lexical and verbal choices will account for the characters’ mental processes, feelings and perceptions of the world, thus allowing the disclosure of their psychological stances and their ideological positions (Fowler 1986, 131-138).

The novel is divided into 38 chapters organised in three parts, each corresponding to a stage in the characters’ lives. The first one (8 chapters) relates the experiences of Casement and Ward in Africa; the second one (16 chapters) refers to the period of Casement’s diplomatic service and that of Ward’s married life; the third one (14 chapters) deals with the characters’ experiences in Europe, Ireland and the United States. Each chapter receives the name of a place and date and narrates the events taking place in the corresponding setting and from the point of view of one or more characters. Casement’s point of view seems to dominate the novel not only because more chapters contain narration from his point of view (24 chapters vs. 18 having Ward’s point of view and 19, Sarita’s point of view) but also because 14 of those chapters include only Casement’s point of view while there is only one for Ward’s and 4 for Sarita’s. In addition, there are 3 chapters in which the three points of view are included. The novel presents two types of internal narration (A and B) combined into what is called *free indirect discourse* (138), which shows an internal perspective in which the character’s subjective feelings (type A) are transformed into third person and interwoven with the narrator’s account of the inner state of mind of the character or characters (type B). In the linguistic analysis that follows, the representation of the different topics will take into account whose viewpoint corresponds to the evaluation present in the selected excerpts.

6.1 Casement’s Point of View: Congo and Putumayo

Roger Casement was a member of the British consular service for eighteen years, serving the British Government in Portuguese West Africa, South Africa, the Congo State, Portugal and Brazil. However, he had previously been in Africa working for Belgian and British trading expeditions.

In the first chapter of the novel the reader is introduced to Casement’s impressions on the Congo and its native population in his role as a member of a British ivory trading company. The character’s first words on the native workers (example 1 below) portray them as *savages*, which in its implicit opposition to *civilized* creates a negative evaluation. The evaluation is intensified by the repetition of the word *savage* and the upscaling value infused in the word *eternity*:

- (1) Down that path exists an *ETERNITY* of *savages* and *SAVAGE* custom (5-6) [Graduation: force: intensification + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: repetition & infusion]

In the following quote 2, we can appreciate a slightly different attitude, as he seems to show affection through the choice of word related to a family member to describe the natives. However, this affection is tainted with a downgrading attitude because of the use of the word *cousins* rather than *brothers* (which would imply a closer, more balanced relationship) and the modifying adjective *dark* – showing Appreciation –, which in this context constitutes the devalued member of the binary opposition white/black:

- (2) These *dark COUSINS* (7) [Affect: happiness: affection + Appreciation: reaction + Graduation: downscaling]

In the next two quotes, both the native population in the Congo (example 3) and in the Amazon (example 4) are represented in Casement's view through positive evaluation in ethical (*honest, hardworking*) emotional (*easy relationship*) and aesthetical (*the most beautiful*) terms:

- (3) Many Bakongo, who are an *honest* people and *hard-working* and with whom, since he's known to them and speaks the language well, he shares an *easy relationship* (10) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (honest, hard-working) + Affect: security: trust (easy relationship)]
- (4) The *gentle* Boras with their *bright skin and warm eyes, straight and strong*, are perhaps *THE MOST beautiful of God's creatures* (328) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (gentle) + Appreciation: reaction/composition P (bright [...] strong) + Graduation: upscaling: superlative (the most)]

Quotes 3 and 4 are examples of the prosodic realization of *amplification*, that is, the evaluation is turned up by the combination of adjectives operating together to create a cumulative effect which intensifies the character's positive viewpoint.

In contrast with Casement's point of view, other characters in the novel display an attitude easily associated with the colonizer's perspective. For example Barttelot, a fellow trader, distrusts the natives and portrays them as dishonest and dangerous, thus passing negative judgement on their ethical behaviour:

- (5) It is the Manyema that *lie*. The black man *LIES* (39) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: upscaling: repetition]
- (6) Take some of these *savages – arm them*, and good luck to you (39) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

6.2 Colonialism and Slavery

Colonialism and slavery are two topics which pervade the novel. As Murray states, “all my work deals with notions of colonialism – an alien force subjugating other peoples and using a sense of superiority to justify the oppression” (Meidav 2017). Thus, the novel includes many instances in which there is a detailed portrayal of what some of the characters think about the subjugated populations. In this section I focus on Casement's viewpoint as regards three groups of people fulfilling tasks related to colonialism: those who participated in the trading business in the Congo – the English, the Belgians and the Arabs. The Belgians were present in the Congo as a result of king Leopold II's annexation of a huge region around the Congo river: the Congo Free State, privately owned by the monarch and used for personal profit. In time, the region became

notorious for the cruel means by which the native population was made to work, “administered as a work camp with such brutality that it was rapidly being depopulated” (Solnit 2011, 45). Many died of starvation or worked to death, others were beaten and tortured when not killed.

Casement’s experience in the Congo as a member of trading expeditions (both Belgian and English) leads him to find differences between the behaviour of the English traders and that of the Belgians. From his point of view, the English traders are portrayed as more compassionate than the Belgians in their treatment of the native workers:

- (7) *BETTER* that Casement hires these natives for the English, who will *AT LEAST pay them for their labor and treat them well, and with kindness*, as these dark cousins *ought to be treated* (7) [Graduation: force: comparison (better, at least) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Judgement: social sanction: modality (obligation: ought to)]

Although at the beginning of the novel Casement seems to justify the European intervention in Africa in order to *civilize* the continent – as seen in 8 – quote 9 shows his questioning of the methods used to achieve this aim. Thus, the evaluative language of these sections is related to judging the morality of the actions. Example 9 shows Casement is beginning to question the European behaviour in the colonies, simultaneously portraying his disillusionment with the civilizing mission preached by the Europeans, which turns out to be an excuse to exploit the land and the native populations of the conquered territories. However, at this stage in the novel, he still holds only the Belgians and their sovereign as responsible for this cruelty. In Harris’ words, at this time in his life “Casement suffered no conflict of loyalty provoked by his Irish nationality and his duty to his British employer” (2006, 145):

- (8) There is talk of a railway from Boma to Leopoldville, which would *tear up the country* but most likely have *a civilizing function* (10) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (tear up the country) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (civilizing function)]
- (9) *How many men will die* in the construction of this railroad? [...] Why build a railroad? And how will they do it without *enslaving* villagers, *scaring* them senseless, *whipping* them? And now the practice of *kidnapping* wives and children has been introduced. [...] that’s the Belgians [...]. How is that not *slavery*? (59) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

The Arabs’ role in the region was to provide slaves for the European enterprises. They are represented in Casement’s eyes as contributing to colonisation through their trading with human beings and are evaluated negatively in terms of Judgement and of the negative Affect they produce in the native workers:

- (10) And these porters are *a deeply miserable lot, malnourished and overloaded, living with the chicote snapping at their heels*. These men are *strung along with iron collars and heave clanking chains*. They are slaves *hunted* and *captured* by Arabs, leased to the Belgians (61) [Affect: unhappiness: misery (as deeply [...] heels) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (strung [...] chains, hunted, captured)]

Nevertheless, the reader can ultimately perceive that the difference among all three groups Casement presents at this stage in the narrative is essentially based on the degree of cruelty with which each one treats the native population. This unequal power relation between the colonised and the coloniser is graphically portrayed by his metaphorical reference to hunting, in which a parallelism is established between animals and human beings thus increasing the force of the statements.

- (11) And what is “game” after all, but the acknowledgement of an inferiority, as if we had lined up all creatures and decided, “You, gazelle, prey,” and “You, lion, predator”? [...] Would this same dividing intellect look upon Casement’s rifle, Bongo Nsanda’s spear, and say, “You, white man, predator,” and “You, black man, prey”? (56-57) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: comparison]

In the prologue to the book *Roger Casement en Sudamérica* (2012b), Laura Izarra states that Casement’s performance in his 1903 investigation into “the atrocities committed in the name of civilization during the reign of Leopold II in the Congo” (13) led the British government to appoint him, in 1910, to accompany the commission investigating alleged atrocities of the Peruvian Amazon Company, a British-owned company which collected rubber in the region of the River Putumayo. As regards the situation in the Putumayo – the Amazon area covering the frontier between Peru and Colombia – Casement expresses his view by comparing this situation to what he had already seen in the Congo. In his investigation of the behaviour of the employees of the company towards the native workers, he finds that they are as cruel as, or even crueller than those he had seen in Africa. The enslavement of the native population both in Africa and South America is evaluated through Judgement as unethical due to its cruelty and ruthlessness:

- (12) It’s *THE SAME TACTIC* that the Belgians use to bring in workers to collect rubber. *They round up the wives and children and keep them in pens.* [Men] work to pay off the ransom (234) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: comparison (same tactic)]
- (13) The thought that *the Congo could represent A HIGHER STANDARD of justice* to any place anywhere seems impossible (324) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: comparison (higher standard)]
- (14) Casement tells Ward of *the practice of cutting hands, how even children can be found maimed in this way* (244) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

Three words used in quotation 15 help summarise Casement’s negative impression of what he sees in Putumayo. The negative evaluation is upgraded by the use of commas separating the three nouns, suggesting an incomplete list, as if open to the reader to add more nouns with similar connotations. The force of the statement is also increased by assembling terms which are closely related semantically, which results in an amplifying effect (Martin and White 2005, 144):

- (15) He’s going upriver in search of *atrocious, butchery, horror* (257) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N + Graduation: force: intensification: repetition]

As regards the topic of colonisation and slavery, the novel represents Casement’s criticism of the brutal treatment of the native populations both in Africa and South America by the Belgian traders and the British trading company respectively, which were exposed in his reports to the British government. This is also present in his travel accounts along the Putumayo river, the *Amazon Journal*², which contains frequent expressions of his outrage at the discovery of the English complicity in the Putumayo atrocities.

² The *Amazon Journal* is the name given to the diary kept by Casement during his journey into the South American rainforests. “It is a major primary source for the history of the Amazon, in the most decisive moment of its destruction [...] It is also a basic source for the history of the humanitarian movement a subject that is in need of much greater historical research” (Mitchell 1997, 47).

6.3 Roger Casement in the Gaze of Other Characters

Murray's representation of Casement is also accomplished by resorting to the perspective of other characters in the narrated events. As regards this technique, she states: "I felt fully invested in my three major characters, and was equally at home in each of their psyches" (Meidav 2017). The author uses two different ways to achieve this aim. On the one hand, Casement is seen through the eyes of the two other major characters – Herbert and Sarita Ward – whose narration gives the reader access to their thoughts and feelings. In addition, Casement's imagined perception of what other characters think of him are also available to the reader. On the other hand, Murray states that "since so much of this book relies on dialogue, it therefore relies on what people are thinking, and how they interact" (*ibidem*). Thus, we have access to the actual voices of these characters through their conversations. The minor characters' viewpoint is also perceived through dialogue, for example in their conversations with Casement.

To begin with Herbert Ward's point of view, Casement's good friend and fellow trader in the Congo portrays him not as a simple man but as one with conflicts and contrasts. In the next three excerpts (examples 16, 17 and 18) we can observe that his evaluation through linguistic choices deploying Judgement is highly positive:

- (16) "You're a *PERFECT gentleman*" (8) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: force: intensification]
- (17) He is a *GREAT humanitarian* (314) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: force: intensification]
- (18) He cannot associate Casement – *straight-spined, sunburned, articulate* Roddie – with [Belfast] (178) [Appreciation: composition P (first two adjectives) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P (last adjective)]

Examples 16 and 17 both judge Casement in terms of appropriate social behaviour. Quotation 16 refers to the nickname given to Casement by the native workers during his trading expeditions and the evaluation points at qualifying his manners and behaviour towards them as ethical. In 17, Ward refers to Casement's work in favour of the natives while he was a member of the Foreign Office, again showing approval for his actions. On the other hand, in example 18, Ward's evaluation shows positive appreciation of Casement's physical features and positive judgement of his intellectual capacity, both stressing Ward's high opinion of his friend despite his low opinion of Irishmen in general.

However, Ward also chooses to portray what he sees as Casement's less admirable side. The next quote 19 shows a shift from positive to negative evaluations which are evidence of the alternation in Ward's perception of his friend. In this case, the use of full stops isolating each adjective in the list creates individual focuses of information, which upscale the value of each word:

- (19) [Casement] who is *clearheaded and fair to a fault. Judgmental. Noble. Arrogant. Blind* (38) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity + social sanction: propriety P to N]

Towards the end of the novel Ward's opinion of Casement has changed so drastically that he believes him to be a traitor, thus expressing a negative moral judgement. The *lines* mentioned in quotation 20 may be interpreted as a reference to Ward's refusal to write a letter asking the British authorities to pardon Casement's life:

- (20) Just the knowledge that his friend is *NO LONGER* his friend, that this man *who was ONCE all things noble and admirable to him* is in cell somewhere awaiting judgement. Ward knows what to say, he has his lines. Hang him. *He is a traitor. He is a disgrace* (466) [Graduation: force: comparison (no longer, who was once...) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

Sarita Sampson, Ward's wife, is also represented as developing a friendship with Casement. Her opinions point at Casement's personality (examples 21 and 22) and at her admiration for his humanitarian work (23):

- (21) He's one of the *LEAST conventional* people I've ever met (169) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N/ social esteem: normality N + Graduation: force: superlative]
- (22) Maybe next time I see you, you'll be *A WORLD-FAMOUS hero* (358-9) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity/normality P + Graduation: force: intensification]
- (23) How *still* Casement looks, and *fragile*. It's hard to believe that this man is *SINGLE-HANDEDLY trying to overthrow King Leopold and save thousands of Congolese from slavery* (229) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet (still, fragile) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (trying [...]) slavery) + Graduation: force: intensification (single-handedly)]

Some other characters provide their own perspectives, which help the reader to have a more exhaustive image of Casement. In all these quotes (24 to 27) we see an anticipation of his future revolutionary behaviour and heroic character:

- (24) [Irish-Americans] Casement is *activist, an organizer, a man who will change the face of Ireland* (349) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity P]
- (25) Devoy: He's taking in Casement's *height, the posture, the elegant brow*. [...] *looks quite the dandy*. [...] the beard that makes him *A CONQUISTADOR*, that makes him *A DON QUIXOTE* (366) [Appreciation: composition / reaction P (height [...] dandy) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P + Graduation: force: intensification (metaphor)]
- (26) Adler "Someone was saying at dinner that *you're like Wolfe Tone*³" (369) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (reference to a hero) + Graduation: force: comparison (simile)]
- (27) Alice Stopford Green: "You're *needed* here." [...] "Ireland is *counting on you*" (290) [Judgement: social sanction: modality (needed) + Judgement: social esteem: tenacity (counting on you)]

Finally, another means by which the author represents Casement is through what he himself imagines others think of him. The following quotes (examples 28 and 29) also point to the ambiguous nature of this historical figure by again showing a shift from positive to negative evaluation. The fact that we find words which can be considered to carry positive values adjacent to negative ones, such as *useless* and *kind*, or *intelligent* and *irrational* seems to increase the value of their meanings in context:

³Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) was an Irish republican and rebel who sought to overthrow English rule in Ireland and who led a French military force to Ireland during the insurrection of 1798 (Britannica 2020, <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wolfe-Tone>>, 03/2021).

- (28) [Casement] sees a look flicker across Conrad's face and he knows that the captain has already heard about *his poor business skills, his useless, kind nature* (152) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (poor business skills, useless nature) + social sanction: propriety P (kind nature)]
- (29) [Casement] wondered how they [men either toughened or diminished by Africa] might perceive him. *Tall, sunburned, intelligent, forceful. Irrational. Sentimental. Lonely* (185) [Appreciation: quality P + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P to N + social sanction: propriety N]

In addition, the positive judgement in 29 is presented in a list of adjectives separated by coma, linking the items in one grammatical unit. Again the list is incomplete, as if the reader could continue adding positive meanings creating an amplifying effect. On the other hand, the three negative evaluations are presented separated by full stops, which, as mentioned before, increases the force of their value by focusing on each word individually.

The diversity of points of view present in the novel offers readers the opportunity to have access to varied perspectives on the representation of Roger Casement. This also contributes to explain the ambivalences associated with the historical figure. We can agree with Rebeca Solnit that "he was among the most thoughtful of Ireland's heroes, and so complex a character" (2011, 38).

6.4 Casement, the Humanitarian

Although the discourse of human rights is a product of recent times, becoming a "widespread and motivating cause for public activism and international law" in the 1970s (Mitchell 2012a, 79), the struggle for a set of universal values to protect those abandoned by the state is the result of earlier struggles and activisms (80). Mitchell refers, for example, to Casement's campaigns against the atrocities related to the rubber business as "a bridge linking nineteenth century antislavery campaigning and humanitarian endeavour with the modern discourse of human rights" (*ibidem*).

In the *Amazon Journal*, Casement expresses his pain and indignation at the atrocities he witnessed, and he states his willingness "to trace those atrocities, and that anger, to their bases in British venture capitalism in colonised territories" (83), also anticipating his realisation of Ireland's position with respect to the British empire. This idea relates to the concept of cultural trauma, which implies the engagement with an event "that involves identifying the nature of the pain, the nature of the victim and the attribution of responsibility" (Eyerman 2003, 3).

Sabina Murray portrays Casement's humanitarianism in different ways which go from expressing his feelings and thoughts to showing his deeds in favour of the oppressed populations. She states that one "compelling reason to write historical fiction is its ability to perform. Fiction takes historical figures – significant or not – and turns them into actors. Casement was a grand humanitarian, so – as he performs in his fictional narrative – he must accomplish some grand humanitarian acts" (Murray 2016b). Thus, the novel presents numerous examples of Casement's performance in favour of the native workers, as the following quotations demonstrate. In these cases, the evaluative items are basically related to the areas of emotion and ethical behaviour:

- (30) [The wounded porter] *will be paid for his labor and should take care with his foot* so that it heals now rather than becomes more infected (14) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (will be paid) + Judgement: modality: obligation (should) + Affect: happiness: affection (take care)]
- (31) "*I don't want anyone in the sun. And please take a bucket of water and go up and down the line. There are children and they must have a drink in this heat*" (262) [Affect: happiness: affection P (I [...] sun) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + modality (obligation) (must [...] heat)]

- (32) When Casement's little column passes them [men in chains, loaded with iron], he can feel the fear rise among his people. *He'll chat to them, to try to keep them calm* (61) [Affect: security: trust]

According to Mitchell (2012a) the official investigations into the administration of the Congo and the Putumayo “detail the degeneracy of the colonial system by using the victims of that system to tell their own stories” (83). Casement's reports were based on interviews with the native workers, who told him of the mistreatment of their employers. His interest in producing a convincing report on his findings was motivated by his willingness to help stop the atrocities he had been told about and had witnessed himself. Murray's desire to show the character's performance also appears in the description of his writing, whose aim is in this case to generate deep changes in society. However, as example 34 shows, he is also aware that his efforts might be useless. Thus, there is an alternation of positive and negative evaluation in examples 33 and 34:

- (33) A persuasive essay, a paragraph *with the capacity to enrage the public, to make them weep*. Yes, *WEEP* and *then act* (270) [Affect: unhappiness: antipathy (enrage) and sadness (weep) + Graduation: force: repetition + Judgement: social sanction: modality (obligation – make them)]
- (34) He's writing a report for the Foreign Office on the use of slavery in the region, and the possible ramifications of such a document, should he execute it well, weigh heavily. *He could save a lot of people*. Or he could *exert great effort and manage nothing* (255) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (save, exert great effort) + social esteem: capacity N (manage nothing)]

Casement is represented as being aware of complaints raised against him about his behaviour towards the natives; however, he is also conscious of his worth for the company (example 35). While the criticism is expressed linguistically by means of negative judgement related to social sanction, his being necessary for the company is expressed through positive judgement related to social esteem. Additionally, his empathy with the suffering of the natives is conveyed by example 36, in which the prevailing Attitude is related to Affect:

- (35) I am reportedly *TOO lenient with the natives*. The only reason I am still here is because I'm necessary. [...] *Good at keeping the porters healthy*.” (53) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (too lenient) + Graduation: force: intensification N (too) + social esteem: capacity P (good [...] healthy)]
- (36) Casement outpaces his depression by escaping into a *PROFOUND world pity*. He is *DROWNING in sympathy, empathy, sliding into self-loathing, bursting to the surface with anger*. [...] They have arrived at some destination, *some suppurating ulcer on the wall of this intestine that is the Congo* (261) [Affect: unhappiness: misery (world pity, drowning [...] empathy) and antipathy (sliding [...] anger) + Graduation: force: intensification (infusion: profound, drowning) + Affect: dissatisfaction: displeasure (some suppurating ulcer) + Graduation: force: comparison (metaphor)]

Positive judgement as regards his moral standards is also present in his response to Sarita (37), who, being worried about his health, tries to convince him not to go back to the jungle. To her comment “It's not your responsibility to save these people”, his answer is:

- (37) “It is *the right thing* to do” (248) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P]

The literary construction of Casement's humanitarianism is then achieved by representing his actions, his thoughts and his actual words in conversation. Furthermore, he is also represent-

ed through his relationship with other characters who share his views and who work together with the aim of producing actual changes in society. His relationship with the Irish historian Alice Stopford Green “wealthy and very much into supporting radical causes, in this case the publication of the *West African Mail*, devoted to exposing the use of slavery in the Congo” (Murray 2016a, 256) and with Edward Morel, its editor and co-founder of the Congo Reform Association, is crucial in turning Casement’s attention to the suffering in his own country and in securing his support in campaigns in favour not only of the Congo rubber workers but also of the “illiterate, starving children in Connemara” (352).

6.5 National Identity: Ireland vs England

Along the novel Casement is represented as having contradictory feelings as regards his national identity:

(38) And he is *somewhat displaced*, first as *one who is Irish when he’s not being British, British when he’s not being Irish, and sometimes both simultaneously* (16-17) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

Evaluative language related to insecurity continues to be used to refer to his difficulties in finding a home. The impossibility of identifying himself as an Irishman or feeling at home in Northern Ireland also contributes to his unrest. The following quotations seem to exemplify Solnit’s opinion that “for Casement, Ireland seems to have functioned more as an ideal home, a ground for identity, than as a place that could contain him” (2011, 47):

(39) Home leave is most welcome, and the leave part of it he wholly understands, although *the home part is still a bit of a mystery*. Where is his home, really? (221) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

(40) Belfast *should feel like home, but it doesn’t*. No place does, really (339) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

Casement’s sense of displacement as represented in the novel can also be related to the ambivalence often associated with this historical figure. Murray’s portrayal seems to coincide with Solnit’s view that he “dangled between two worlds for most of his life, two countries, two churches, two philosophies, between the respectable and the revolutionary in both his private and political lives, exiled, no matter which he chose” (40). Exemplified below is the idea of displacement expressed in terms of Affect, in particular insecurity. Additionally, in quote 42, the binary opposition civilisation vs. nature points to the industrial vision of England and the pastoral view associated with Ireland, respectively; while both become united, and therefore in a superior position, in comparison to the Congo:

(41) In Africa, he is *one of the English*, but *not in England*. Places do that – throw you into some sort of relief against themselves (191) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet]

(42) It was a childhood split between *the lush green of the Antrim countryside* and *rattling commerce of his cousins in Liverpool*. Then, he had thought Liverpool and Ballycastle *opposites*, but here, in the Congo, *this feels like an opposite* (6-7) [Appreciation: reaction P (lush green, rattling commerce) and N (opposite to previous ideas)]

Peter Harris considers that the months Casement spent travelling in the South American rainforest were crucial in the process of recognition of his Irishness, representing “the begin-

nings of an Irish homecoming” (2006, 143). Furthermore, Izarra states that his trips in the Amazon sharpened his perception of the destructive power of empires (2012b, 14) and his investigations in Congo and Putumayo “informed his aspirations for an Éire Nua (New Ireland) rooted in a modern code respecting humanity and encouraging empathy for the marginalised and dispossessed” (2012a, 83).

The deep emotional engagement with suffering that Casement experiences in the Congo and the Amazon help him become aware of the harm caused by imperialism throughout the world. This harm can be interpreted as a traumatic experience that “unsettles and forces us to rethink our notions of experience” (Caruth 1995, 4). His association of such experiences with those of the Irish under British imperialism can be appreciated throughout the novel. The following excerpts show Murray’s representation of Casement’s coming to terms with his Irish identity. To begin with, his empathy with the natives in the Congo leads him to identify himself with their lack of understanding based on his experience as an Irishman. The text also demonstrates his contradictory feelings in terms of his sympathy for the natives and his duty to the British government. The portrayal of his Irish *heroes* as *losers* may also feel as an anticipation of his own fate:

- (43) *The natives don't understand tax – DONT UNDERSTAND* why suddenly what was theirs now demands payment to another. *Casement understands*. As an Irishman, living on contested land is, if nothing else, familiar. And Casement, because of his Irish childhood, where his heroes were, although *heroic*, also *losers*, is a *natural sympathizer with those in opposition* to the Hut Tax, although now *as Acting consul, forced to at least act supportive of British policy* (206) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (don't understand) + Graduation: force: intensification: repetition (don't understand) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity P (Casement understands) + Affect: happiness: affection (sympathiser) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety (be supportive) and modality (obligation: forced to)]

At the beginning of the novel, Casement is not yet fully aware of the similarity that he will later find between Ireland and the subjugated populations of the colonies. However, his interest in the history of Ireland foreshadows his gradual discovery of his national identity. The reasons for his writing about Ireland while in Africa are not clear for him: “his poem, all Irish history. [...] Why write about post-Plantation Ulster⁴ in the Congo?” (Murray 2016a, 16-17). Later on, his trips around Ireland in some of his health leaves put him again in contact with his native land eventually leading him to identify himself as an Irishman, which allows him to express his criticism of the British behaviour towards the Irish. In the quotation below (example 44) on the one hand, Casement judges negatively the British action of preventing the Irish from speaking Gaelic while, on the other, he establishes the need to recover it as a moral obligation:

- (44) He's come in the shoes of Synge, and all those Irishmen *who had their language stolen* somewhere in the past and now *have to go retrieve it* (280) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (stolen) + P (retrieve) + Graduation: force: modality (obligation: have to)]

His new stance towards Ireland makes him disregard the importance of the honour the British government has granted him, dismissing it as a *joke* and something *funny*, suggesting the irony of the situation:

⁴The Plantation of Ulster is the name given to the movement of British settlers into Ulster during the seventeenth century, Macafee 1992, <<https://www.ancestryireland.com/understanding-plantation/movement-ofbritish-settlers-into-ulster-during-the-17th-century/>> (03/2021).

- (45) There he is, Roger Casement, British consul, honorary Englishman. To deepen *the joke*, now he's received the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George. That makes him Sir Roger Casement. That is *funny* and he finds a smile for himself (286) [Affect: happiness: joy]

As the novel moves forward and Casement identifies himself as an Irishman, the critical views of the English become more frequent (examples 46-48). They are represented in terms of both negative judgement and negative affect:

- (46) But these are *the English, and their treachery has been proven* (349) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]
- (47) "*England is not our friend*" (409) [Affect: insecurity: disquiet / unhappiness: antipathy]
- (48) In his quiet moments he acknowledges that he has lost his faith in Germany, but not in Irishmen: these Irishmen who will form his Irish Brigade, fighting on the side of Ireland, against *the English tyrant* (408-9) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

On the other hand, Casement's best friend, Ward, represents the English vision of the Irish. In example 49, Ward judges the Irish negatively, which may also explain why he cannot understand Casement's political views, as seen in example 50:

- (49) Ward, who manages *MATCHLESS sympathy for the natives of the Congo*, has *nothing but derision for the Irish, or rather Irishness*, which he sees as *some degraded form of Englishness* (286) [Affect: happiness: affection (sympathy) + Graduation: force: superlative morphology (matchless) + Affect: unhappiness: antipathy (derision) + Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (degraded)]
- (50) [Ward] has a *hard time understanding* how Casement can support the British in Africa and want an Irish Parliament – *how these two things are not at odds with each other* (201) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N (hard time understanding) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N (how [...] other)]

At some other point in the novel, Irish characters also voice the negative judgement of the English behaviour towards the Irish:

- (51) "*The English wanted us all on donkeys so that we'd look silly*," O'Malley had interjected. "*Also, so that they could look down on us*." (350-1) [Judgement: social esteem: capacity N + Judgement: social sanction: propriety N]

As the narrative advances, Casement's feelings of displacement and his ambiguities as regards his national identity seem to be solved:

- (52) He feels *his TRUE purpose* is here in Ireland (285) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: focus (true)]
- (53) He does not know *what would be BEST for him*, but *clings to what is BEST for Ireland – an Irish Republic* (417) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P + Graduation: upgrading: superlative /repetition]

Casement eventually recognized the British participation in human rights violation in Africa and South America. Consequently, he resigned his post in the British government and

started an active participation in the Irish nationalist movement (Mitchell 2012b, 14) and with the outbreak of the war in 1914 “Casement turned on the British Empire and advocated global colonial revolution” (Mitchell 2012a, 84). In the novel, Murray also wants to represent Casement’s performance in favour of the Irish rebellion: “Casement was an Irish revolutionary, so he must have problems with the English and then he must act on them” (Murray 2016b). His trip to Germany to gather this country’s support shows his determination to take action in favour of Irish independence. However, his determination is not completely devoid of doubts. Though the character justifies his actions by judging them positively as appropriate (quote 54), he seems not to feel at ease with the implications of such resolves (quotes 55 and 56).

- (54) “I’m a diplomat. We’re not planning a prison break. We’re *negotiating* with Germans, *creating allies, creating a future for Ireland* that will hold in the new order” (366) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P]
- (55) How can Casement reconcile his life of *seeking peaceful means* with *organizing the purchase of weapons*? (349) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (seeking peaceful means) and N (purchase of weapons)]
- (56) On the one hand, he was a *humanitarian*, and entertaining an alliance with Germany was *in opposition to his instinct to peace*. On the other, the Germans wanted Ireland on their side, and the Irish might actually be in league with the winners (349) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (humanitarian) and N (opposition to peace)]

As he is in prison, facing his own death, he seems to have found his true identity. Yet, he still manifests his confusion as regards the standards used to judge moral behaviour depending on whose side one is:

- (57) He is dead and, *as a TRUE Irishman*, has the document to bind to the body. He is not going to fail his people in the one moment when the world can be made aware of what it is to be Irish. [...] Why is it *noble* to lay down one’s life for England, with its history of harm and oppression, yet *not noble* to lay down one’s life for Ireland, who never harmed anyone (473) [Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (an Irishman) + Graduation: focus (true) + Judgement: social sanction: propriety P (noble) and N (not noble)]

Finally, a longer quote is worthy of attention here to relate to the notion of cultural trauma:

- (58) How could this German man, never enslaved by another nation, understand the subtle, *de-humanizing* way a *conqueror* justified his actions? Casement had been born into this *anger*, had watched his older brothers *beaten* on the streets of London. He had sat through dinners listening to Englishmen *joke* about their “Irishness” as a *romantic, poetic, irrational* thing – what made men sing when drunk. He’d bitten his tongue, not pointing out that a romantic, poetic, singing thing – in essence, the soul – was all one had left after *being robbed, enslaved, and forced by starvation to abandon one’s country*. Also, that this “irrational” and therefore *savage Irish ethos* was used to shore up the sense of *English civility and reason* which is what allowed the English to unleash their *criminal abuse across the globe* and persuade themselves that all their victims were somehow raised up in the process (350)

The previous quotation can be analysed basically in terms of the system of Judgement, by considering both subsystems of social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem tends to be regulated in the oral culture, through chat, gossip, jokes and stories of various kinds (Martin, White 2005, 52). In the example above, narrated from Casement’s viewpoint, the English are

portrayed as downgrading the Irish by means of *jokes* about their *romanticism* and its association with *irrationality*, which dooms them liable for being conquered in order to bring them *civility* and *reason*, thus justifying the British unethical behaviour. Considering that social sanction is often organised in writing as rules, regulations and laws about how to behave (*ibidem*), the British behaviour towards the Irish *being robbed, enslaved, and forced by starvation to abandon one's country and their criminal abuse across the globe* should be interpreted as immoral and illegal. However, this behaviour seems to be socially accepted as they *persuade themselves that all their victims were somehow raised up in the process*. The British self-justification can be explained in terms of cultural trauma theory as “by denying the reality of others’ suffering, people not only diffuse their own responsibility for the suffering but often project the responsibility for their own suffering on these others” (Alexander 2011, 307).

7. Discussion

The role that linguistic analysis can play in the analysis of a literary text is sometimes disregarded in favour of other approaches. However, the present analysis attempts to reveal its value in the literary representation of a contested historical figure. Departing from the point of view of the protagonist, the analysis based on Appraisal raises awareness of how his experiences impact on his emotional state and his ideological stance and how they influence his transformation into an Irish revolutionary. Not surprisingly, within the system of Attitude, Judgement and Affect dominate the analysis of the linguistic choices which express evaluation. Judgement – the category which refers to ethical evaluation – is widely present both in the expression of Casement’s thoughts and feelings and in those of other characters evaluating Casement. Affect – the category related to the expression of feelings and emotions – also pervades the narrative. The system of Graduation sometimes accompanies the other systems, in particular to highlight the figure of the protagonist. The analysis allows us to see how these linguistic resources vividly represent the events in Casement’s life, many of which appear as associated to the traumatic experiences he was exposed to during his work in Africa and South America.

Considering first the subsystem of Judgement, statements dealing with both social sanction and social esteem allow us to understand the admiration Casement has inspired due to his humanitarian work and his commitment to the Irish cause. Particularly prominent is the sense of *propriety*, within the category of social sanction, which is highly suitable to trace Casement’s strong criticism of imperial powers on ethical grounds. This can be observed by following his thoughts and opinions as regards the enslavement and appalling working conditions of the native inhabitants of the Congo and the Amazon. In addition, his recognition of the similarities between the British behaviour in Ireland and in the colonies enacts what Caruth states in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*: that “trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures” (1995, 11). As regards the category of social esteem, it is most often related to the sense *capacity*, especially evaluating Casement’s aptitude.

As regards the subsystem of Affect (and to a lesser degree, Appreciation), we can identify mostly positive evaluations in relation to the different characters’ views of Casement, though they also point to his ambiguities and contradictions. In this case the predominant categories are *happiness* and *insecurity*. As regards the former, it is expressed in the sense of *affection* in Casement’s view of the native populations in the colonies. In the case of insecurity, the sense *disquiet* is mostly related to his feelings as regards his national identity. Most negative evaluations in both subsystems are related to the representation of colonialism and slavery, and to the representation of Britain from Casement’s point of view, which is consistent with the character’s ideological

evolution. Therefore, the dominant categories are *unhappiness* in the sense of *misery* (related to the native workers and their working conditions) and *antipathy* (related to the imperial powers). The variety of points of view the author includes in the narration contributes to the richness of the construction of the protagonist's personality, since the reader can see how the different value-systems articulated in the work can explain the contradictory views associated with this historical figure. The novel shows "not one overall world-view subordinating every philosophy to a single point of view, but a range of alternative and interacting views of life" (Fowler 1986, 131).

Moreover, Casement's doubts and contradictions are vividly represented, and they seem to be resolved when he identifies himself as an Irishman and eventually joins the Irish cause. This is in line with Alexander's view that "trauma will be resolved, not only by setting things right in the world, but by setting things right in the self" (Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, *et al.* 2004, 5). The evaluative prosody of the text reflects the relationship between Casement's experience in Africa and South America and his own experience as an Irishman under British rule. Casement's contact with the traumatic experiences of colonization in the Congo and the Amazon awakens his memory of the Irish trauma at the hands of the British government: the loss of the Gaelic language, the massive emigration due to the potato famine and the exploitation and humiliation suffered by the Irish people. The relevance of this realization is recognized by Rebecca Solnit, as she writes "Casement was perhaps the first to see Ireland as a colony [...] and he came to understand his own country's situation by analogy with that of the Congo and the Putumayo of Peru" (2011, 43). The novel also contributes to keep alive the history of exploitation of native populations by imperial powers, coinciding with Izarra's view that "the rubber stories bring to light the politics of memory and the silences of history" (2012b, 14)⁵.

8. Concluding Remarks

A linguistic analysis framed by a socio-cultural interpretation can shed light into the meanings transmitted by language in a particular text. Focusing on the representation of Roger Casement in *Valiant Gentlemen*, I believe the analysis of the evaluative language used in the novel provides insights into the ideological and psychological views of this character in his evolution from a British diplomat to an Irish nationalist. Evaluative language expressing moral judgement, unhappiness and insecurity allows the reader to understand Casement's behaviour and, as a result, the question posited in the title of this paper can be answered. In fact, the opposition hero/traitor may be seen as the two sides of a coin: depending on who is looking at it, the observer will have a different opinion. However, once Casement decides which his true national identity is, he gives his allegiance to Ireland and therefore he becomes loyal to the country of his birth. Thus, he cannot be considered as a traitor to a country which he does not believe to be his own. I consider that in this particular novel Roger Casement is essentially represented neither as a hero nor as a traitor, but rather as a human being with all its complexities and contradictions but whose actions have heroic relevance. This may also explain Casement's pervasive presence in literature and history, even one hundred years after his death. I hope the linguistic analysis offered here can contribute to explain how Sabina Murray portrays Roger Casement's resignation to the British service in favour of his participation in the fight for Irish freedom. The success of a historical novel is achieved, in Peabody's words, by "mak[ing] the past come alive" (1989, 30) and this is, in my opinion, what Murray has done in this novel. Finally,

⁵ My translation.

if we agree that there is a need for the historic recognition of Casement's humanitarian work in favour of his own country and other subjugated populations, I believe *Valiant Gentlemen* is a contribution in this direction.

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