Irony and Parody in a Spanish Translation of Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman:* A Relevance-Theoretical Approach

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Abstract. This paper seeks to explore the translation of irony and parody. The theoretical framework followed will be relevance-theory, which has highlighted that the expression of a certain attitude may be common to these two figures. The work under analysis will be a Spanish rendering of Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which criticism has regarded as a parody of nineteenth-century Victorian fiction. It will be assumed that for readers to be able to cope with the meaning of parody and irony, they will have to go beyond the propositional content expressed in the utterances in which these resources are found. Furthermore, their translation will necessarily require strategies that go beyond the "literal" level of the words through which irony and parody are expressed. Our contention is that the proposals put forward by relevance theory may be useful in this respect, since they stress the importance of the inferential recognition of the speaker's communicative intention. Both such recognition and its reflection in the target text, in such a way that it requires no extra processing effort from the readership are the main aspects to be faced by the translator.
Keywords: translation of irony and parody, relevance theory, Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

[es] La traducción de la ironía y de la parodia en *La mujer del teniente francés,* de John Fowles, desde la teoría de la relevancia

Resumen. Este artículo busca explorar la traducción de la ironía y de la parodia. El marco teórico que se seguirá será la teoría de la relevancia, que ha puesto de relieve que la expresión de una determinada actitud puede ser común a estas dos figuras. La obra que se analizará es una versión española de *La mujer del teniente francés* de Fowles, considerada por la crítica como una parodia de la narrativa victoriana del siglo XIX. Se partirá de la base de que, para que los lectores puedan desentrañar el significado de la parodia y de la ironía, deberán ir más allá del contenido proposicional expresado en los enunciados donde se encuentran estos recursos. Además, su traducción requerirá necesariamente estrategias que van más allá del nivel "literal" de las palabras a través de las cuales se expresan tanto la ironía como la parodia. Nuestro punto de vista es que las propuestas planteadas por la teoría de la relevancia pueden ser útiles para este fin, ya que subrayan la importancia del reconocimiento inferencial, por parte del receptor, de la intención comunicativa del hablante. Tanto este reconocimiento como su reflejo en el texto traducido –de tal manera que no requiera del lector un esfuerzo de procesamiento adicional–, son los principales aspectos a los que debe hacer frente el traductor.
Palabras clave: traducción de la ironía y de la parodia, teoría de la relevancia, *La mujer del teniente francés* de John Fowles.

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1. Introduction

The French Lieutenant's Woman by John Fowles has been described as a parody of the nineteenth-century realist Victorian novel (Onega, 1989). This paper will attempt to analyse the main translatological features that can be seen in a Spanish version of the novel, so as to trace how parody and irony are transmitted in translation.

Relevance theoreticians claim that they will be able to account for the similarities between the two, which have often been hinted at, but which in their view have been barely accounted for (Sperber and Wilson 1978/1981; Sperber 1984; Wilson and Sperber 1989/1992; Blakemore 1992; Wilson 2011; or Clark 2013). Whether the translation of either follows similar trends will be explored in this paper.

Thus, some of the most significant examples of irony and parody found in the work by Fowles (1969) *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and its translation into Spanish will be studied. The Spanish translation analysed is the one signed by Ana María de la Fuente (Anagrama 1995). We hypothesise that parody provides the overall framework, which is directly related to the author's communicative intention to parody or imitate with some jocularity nineteenth-century Victorian novels, made manifest in the text, with different degrees of strength. Within this general cognitive environment, which the author shares with his target readership, irony is manifested as an attitude and contributes to enhancing the message intended to be communicated.

2. The notions of irony and parody in relevance theory. Proposals to cope with their translation

Irony has been one of the most widely studied aspects within relevance theory, ever since the theory was first put forward (Sperber and Wilson 1978/1981; Carston 1980/1981), and proposals to cope with it extend up to the present (e.g. Clark 2013; Piskorska 2014, 2016; Wilson 2013, 2017; Yus 2016a, 2016b; 2016c; or 2018; to name but some of the most representative instances). The most important features that define irony within this framework at present, and which will be applied in the analysis are the following:

1. **Irony is a form of attributive, interpretive use:** this means that the proposition expressed by the utterance represents a thought or belief, which is implicitly attributed by the speaker to someone other than herself at the time of utterance.
2. **Attitude has a central role in irony, which within the relevance-theoretical framework has as a corollary that irony is essentially echoic:** therefore,

in being ironic, the speaker implicitly expresses her attitude[2] to the beliefs being represented. The attitude involved in echoic irony and expressed by the speaker corresponds to her *dissociation* from the thoughts being echoed. For the addressee to understand irony, he must be able to identify the speaker's attitude of dissociation or distance. In contrast, and as noted by Wilson and Sperber (2012), attitude has no role to play in other literary tropes or figures, such as metaphors. More recently, Yus (2018) has proposed to consider a double kind of attitude in ironic utterances: this echoic attitude of dissociation (*dissociative attitude*) by the speaker towards her utterance or what her utterance is about can go hand in hand with the expression of a certain *affective attitude*, particularly in those cases where irony and humour can combine. These proposals represent a substantial improvement of other pragmatic accounts of irony, which have always recognised the importance of attitude (Alba-Juez 1995a, 1995b), and more recently of evaluation to account for its meaning manifested in a certain contradiction or clash occurring at different levels (Alba-Juez and Attardo 2014).

3. As understood within the relevance-theoretical framework, the dissociation characteristic of irony can also be related to the *source of echo*: as noted by Sperber and Wilson as early as 1978/1981, and corroborated over the years in subsequent research, there may be echoes of different types or kinds: thus, they may be, for instance, *direct and immediate*, or else they may be *indirect*, where the source of echo will correspond to something that is implied or is meant to be inferred by the addressee. It appears that the recognition of the source of echo is closely related to the addressee's identification of the utterance as ironic. As noted by Wilson and Sperber, "echoic utterances [may] convey the speaker's attitude not to immediately preceding utterances but to more distant utterances, or to tacitly attributed but unexpressed thoughts" (2012: 217).

4. **Normative bias:** Irony is much more often used to blame than to praise. In many cases, irony can also be related to a disruption or contradiction of expectations. This has been a recurrent trait of irony throughout history. More recently, however, Alba-Juez and Attardo (2014) have demonstrated that irony can be used not only to praise or blame but also to express a certain stance.

5. **An ironical tone of voice:** Precisely, the *tone of voice* is one of the main aspects pointed at by Sperber (1984) to account for the differences between irony and parody. The tone of irony is characterised for its being flat and deadpan (Sperber 1984,135). This is retaken by Wilson and Sperber (2012) and by Clark (2013). Clark highlights that the ironic tone expresses certain *contempt* on the part of the speaker, so that she conveys a contradiction between the propositional content of her utterance and the tone in which she conveys it.

Sperber and Wilson (1981/1978) had claimed that their theory of irony as echoic mention would be able to account for the similarities between irony and parody, which had been often pointed at by traditional criticism, but which had often been

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2   Unless indicated otherwise in a particular context, the convention of using the feminine personal pronouns to refer to the speaker or communicator, and the masculine forms to refer to the addressee will be followed.

left unexplained. Whereas irony meant the mention of a proposition, parody repre-
sented the mention of an expression. However, in subsequent accounts of irony with-
in relevance theory (singularly, from the paper by Wilson and Sperber 1989/1992
onwards), the notion of *mention* is abandoned altogether, mainly because of its ina-
bility to make a clear difference between irony and parody and account for the latter.
In turn, the notion of irony as necessarily echoic has subsequently been stressed
(Sperber and Wilson 1998; Wilson 2006, 2009, 2013; Wilson and Sperber 2012; Yus
1997-98, 2000, 2000-01, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2016 b, c; 2018).

Traditionally, parody has been defined as follows:

> **Parody**: in literature, an imitation of the style and manner of a particular writer or
> school of writers. Parody is typically negative in intent: it calls attention to a writ-
> er's perceived weaknesses or a school's overused conventions and seeks to ridi-
> cule them. Parody can, however, serve a constructive purpose, or it can be an ex-
> pression of admiration. It may also simply be a comic exercise. The word *paro-
> dy* is derived from the Greek *parōidía*, "a song sung alongside another."
>
> (From the Encyclopaedia Britannica:
> https://www.britannica.com/art/parody-literature [Last accessed: 09.09.2018)

This definition reflects that parody involves *imitation*, but somehow on using parody
the speaker may tend to show an *attitude* of contempt, disdain, or at least, humour
towards its object or target. This is an aspect worth exploring further in connection
with irony, from a relevance-theoretical standpoint, since an element of attitude re-
curs in both irony and parody. Moreover, parody also implies a relationship of *inter-
textuality*, as it generally refers to an already existing text. In general, the more the
audience can recognise the text being parodied, the more they can understand and
perhaps enjoy the author's communicative intention. These aspects have been wide-
ly explored, amongst others, by Linda Hutcheon (1994, 1978) or Rossen-Knill and
Henry (1997).

Both in *Relevance* (1986/1995) and in later articles (Wilson and Sperber
1990/1992), relevance-theoreticians will maintain that the distinction between use
and mention is but a particular case of a more general contrast, established between
descriptive and *interpretive resemblance*. These authors have also argued that *echo*
does not necessarily have to refer to the linguistic context before the ironic sentence;
rather, echo can also be mutually manifest to both interlocutors as it may be a part of
their encyclopaedic knowledge of the world.

The *notion of echo* was also criticised for having been underspecified (e.g. Seto
1998 or Hamamoto 1998). Most recently, Wilson (2013, 2017), Piskorska (2014,
2016) or Yus (2016a) have highlighted that echo in relevance theory has been con-
ceived of as a deliberately broad notion, so that it is characterised by the speaker's
attitude of dissociation towards some thought, expression or proposition entertained
by anybody other than herself at the time of the utterance. Yet, the source of echo
may be wide and even unspecified, and it is, in our view, ultimately left for the in-
tended addressee to identify. It may be implicit, and refer to some unexpressed be-
lief, desire, hope or norm-based expectation, and it may not necessarily have an ex-
plicit victim (Wilson 2013, 46).

The following are the criteria from which relevance theoreticians distinguish be-
tween *descriptive* and *interpretive uses* of language:

> *Descriptive uses of language* represent states of affairs by expressing propositions which we can judge as true or not. *Interpretive uses of language* represent thoughts or utterances (or other representations with a conceptual content) by sharing logical or contextual implications with them, which means that we can judge them by how closely they resemble the thought or utterance they represent, or how 'faithful' an interpretation they present. Sperber and Wilson (1986: 224–31) suggest that interpretive representation is a sub-type of a more general notion of representation by *resemblance*.
> (Clark 2013: 259, my italics)

Hence, *descriptive* and *interpretive resemblance*, respectively, can be approached as possible ways of representing or referring to reality or objects. On the one hand, what is important in a *descriptive representation* of a certain state of affairs is that its propositional form truly *reflects* it; on the other hand, as far as an *interpretive representation* is concerned, it does not only refer to a state of affairs but rather *relates* it to any other state of affairs that can be expressed in a propositional form. In this way, what can be considered as characteristic of *interpretive resemblance* is that it not only relates in some way different states of things but also interprets this relationship. This difference is gradual; it does not result in two mutually exclusive terms.

Moreover, it seems that one of the main reasons that may have initially led Sperber and Wilson (1992, 1989) to abandon their previous distinction between *use* and *mention* (1978/1981) is the inability to account for parody in terms of mention: "However, while both irony and parody intuitively involve echoic allusion, it is hard to see how parody can strictly speaking be analysed as a case of mention" (1992: 63). In this article, the authors specify that "mention (...) involves identical reproduction of an original", while, on the other hand, "parody is typically based on looser forms of resemblance". (1992: 63). It may be argued that these broader or looser forms of resemblance may be associated with interpretive resemblance and interpretive uses of language.

What defines *interpretive resemblance* for Sperber and Wilson is "a sharing of logical and contextual implications" (1992: 65), which, together with lexical entries, form concepts. Within relevance theory, *logical entries* provide the *content* of an assumption, while *contextual implications* spring as the result of the interaction or synthesis of known or old information and new information (Sperber and Wilson 1986, 108). This means that the propositions or states of affairs related using *interpretive resemblance* share not only certain logical, which have to do with the state of affairs they describe, but also certain contextual properties. For Sperber and Wilson, the important thing about propositions that maintain a relationship of interpretive resemblance is that they will show the speaker's attitude towards the propositional form expressed in them, and, regardless of the differences that may exist between them at the formal level, they will tend to have similar *contextual effects* in a given cognitive environment. This may be the reason why *interpretive resemblance* will play a crucial role in statements that admit an ironic or parodic interpretation, and also shows the importance of processing a given statement in the context in which it occurs, and with which it interacts. According to these authors, while its logical entries determine the content of a concept or an assumption, the context is determined, at least in part, by the *encyclopaedic entries*. Both, together with the *lexical entries*, form the basic components of any concept.

At present, the central proposal of the analysis of irony formulated by Sperber and Wilson regards it as *echoic attributive use*. This means the following:

> We define *echoic use* as a subtype of attributive use in which the speaker's prima-ry intention is not to provide information about the content of an attributed thought, but to convey her own attitude or reaction to that thought. Thus, to claim that verbal irony is a subtype of echoic use is to claim, on the one hand, that it is nec-essarily attributive, and, on the other, that it necessarily involves the expression of a specific type of attitude to the attributed thought.
>
> (Wilson and Sperber 2012: 128-9, italics as in the original).

Within the most recent tendencies in relevance theory, Wilson and Sperber (2012) draw a connection between irony and parody on the one hand, and on the other hand, the relationship established between direct and reported speech, and between direct and indirect quotation, respectively. Crucially, some manifestations of parody may be interpreted as conveying irony as long as it can be inferred from context that speakers or writers attribute a thought or an expression that they wish to make man-ifest they are dissociating themselves from (Clark 2013, 288). In the case of oral language, different intonation patterns associated with either irony or parody should be traced.

It may be argued that for parody to be related to irony, and therefore, admit an ironic interpretation, it must fulfil the features or requirements that define irony for Sperber and Wilson (2012), or Wilson (2013). These are, namely, the following: at-titude; an ironical tone of voice and a normative bias. The aspect concerning the existence of a possible normative bias in irony was experimentally confirmed by Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989): for these authors, this explains the reasons why irony is much more often used to criticise than to praise, and also the fact that addresses are much more likely to reach an ironically intended interpretation if the speaker's ironic communicative intention was made manifest in context.

Moreover, the distinction between *descriptive resemblance* and *interpretive re-semblance* also underlies the essence of the relevance-theoretical account of *transla-tion*. Every translation is in principle the interpretation of an existing source text. In fact, Gutt defines a *translation* as a target language text that *interpretively resembles* the original (2000a; 105, my italics). Thus, for the target text to have adequate con-textual effects, it may need to resort to additional explanations that are only implicit in the source text. For relevance theorists, especially in those cases of *covert trans-lation*, which are those which, according to House, enjoy the consideration of an original source text (ST) in the target culture (1977/81, 2014, 2016), the target text should aim to "convey to the receptors *all and only those explicatures and implica-tures that the original was intended to convey*" (Gutt, 1991/2000: 99, italics as in the original).

According to Gutt, the justification for interpretive use is based on the optimisa-tion of relevance:

> (...) In interpretive use the principle of relevance comes across as a presumption of optimal resemblance: what the reporter intends to convey is (a) presumed to inter-pretively resemble the original −otherwise this would not be an instance of inter-pretive use− and (b) the resemblance it shows is to be consistent with the presump-tion of optimal relevance, that is, is presumed to have adequate contextual effects without gratuitous processing effort.
>
> (1991/2000a: 106)

This shows that the expression of a given propositional content in an interpretive form is intended to be consonant with the principle of relevance in terms of a balance between processing efforts and contextual effects. Similarly, it also implies that the maintenance of premises or features that can be linked to a given concept in the source text can be more important than the maintenance or search for an equivalent lexical term in the target language. As Gutt himself notes, "in terms of our relevance-based account of faithfulness, the translation is presented by virtue of its *resemblance* with the original in relevant aspects" (1991/2000a: 118, my italics).

It can also be concluded that the opposition between *descriptive resemblance* and *interpretive resemblance* is *gradual*; there will probably be many intermediate cases that cannot be classified as either descriptive or interpretive, but which are at some point on the scale that can be established between both types of resemblance. We believe that this opposition can provide the reader and the critic with a useful instrument to cope with irony, parody and their translation. It can also be said that in order to correctly understand the cases of irony and parody, the translator must aim to infer the speaker's intentional meaning, the latter's attitude towards what she says, (which in the case of parody may be associated with a certain sense of ridicule or of mockery), and transmit them in the target text in such a way that they can be appreciated and understood by the reader without any additional processing efforts.

3. Irony and Parody in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and in its Spanish Translation

One of the possible readings of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is to approach it as a parody of the realist nineteenth-century Victorian novel, the latter generally told by an omniscient narrator. On this, Susana Onega has written: "The omniscient narrator, with his godlike capacity to alternately adopt the point of view of every one of his characters, ensured an 'objective' rendering" (1989: 72). However, as this author also notes, it is objectively difficult to imagine a person who could be everywhere at the same time, and who knew absolutely everything about the whole world. Onega has also studied the element of parody present in the book, and in connection with this point she remarks:

> The task of parody, therefore, is to assume well-known forms or styles of the past to underline their obsolescence and limitation. This is precisely the function of the narrator's asides and footnotes in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and no other is the intentional confusion of ontological and narrative levels.
>
> (1989: 79)

Parody can also be seen as an element of *style*. Within relevance theory, style is connected, on the one hand, to the way in which the speaker communicates, and, on the other, to what she chooses to express explicitly and to what she decides to leave implicit (Sperber and Wilson 1986/95: 218). More recently, Cave and Wilson have drawn on the relationship between processing efforts and style in the following way: "Information may be presented in a form which makes it more or less perceptually salient, more or less legible, more or less linguistically or logically complex, and

which therefore demands more or less processing effort from the individual to whom it is presented" (2018a: 12). In consequence, it will be shown that the object or target of parody may be not only expressions but also much more complex forms.

As a parody of the Victorian novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is characterised by certain aspects that will be detailed next and which will consequently be analysed in the original text and in the Spanish translation. These are the following: the role of the narrator, the breaking (or enhancement) of the illusion of fiction, with the consequent confusion of the threshold between reality and fiction, historical perspectivism, and also the multiple endings of the plot.

3.1. The role of the narrator

In general terms, the narrator's attitude in Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* can be described as a parody of the omniscient narrator, typical of the realist novel. That narrator used to demonstrate his knowledge of any data about the characters, anything that might have happened to them, or the places or the historical time in which they lived. As a result, the reader could have access to the subjective world of each of the characters:

> (1)
> As she [Mrs. Poulteney] lay in her bedroom she reflected on the terrible mathematical doubt that increasingly haunted her: whether the Lord calculated charity by what one had given or by what one could have afforded to give.
>
> (ST, p. 24)

> Tendida en su lecho, daba vueltas y más vueltas a la terrible duda de índole matemática que la atormentaba cada día más, a saber: si el Señor computaba la caridad por lo que uno había dado o por lo que uno habría podido dar.
>
> (TT, p. 27)

The Spanish text is interpretively similar to its English counterpart because it reflects the same propositional content in a different language. According to relevance theory, this is the main feature that underlies the essence of translation. Furthermore, the narrator parodies, in fact, the figure of the hypocritical woman who boasts about her charity, but who deep down feels neither charity nor love of any kind. The Spanish version emphasises the iterative aspect of the action, 'daba vueltas y más vueltas' ('twists and turns') and explicitly points out where the reader's attention should be focused by means of the addition of the phrase 'a saber:' ('namely').

Although in fragments like this the narrator's attitude is omniscient, in a way that recalls the nineteenth-century novel, on other occasions, he declares his knowing nothing about the subject in question. This is precisely what is innovative in Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and becomes a central aspect of a reading of this novel as a parody of Victorian fiction:

> (2)
> *I do not know what he expected*: some atrocious mutilation, a corpse ... he nearly turned and ran out of the barn and back to Lyme. But *the ghost of a sound* drew him forward. He craned fearfully over the partition.
>
> (ST, p. 210, my italics)

> *No sé lo que esperaba encontrar allí*, *tal vez,* una mutilación atroz, un cadáver ...
> Le faltó poco para dar media vuelta y echar a correr hacia Lyme. Pero un leve so-
> nido le impulsó a avanzar. Se asomó temeroso sobre las tablas.
>
> (TT, p. 237, my italics)

The Spanish text tends to reflect certain ideas, such as the expectations of the protag-
onist, Charles, in a much more explicit way than in the English text, and also insists
on the hesitating attitude of the narrator with phrases that are not found in the English
text, such as 'tal vez' (*maybe*).

Thus, the Spanish translation is based on a greater clarification of those parts of
the sentence that tend to manifest the narrator's *attitude*, which tend to enhance his
scepticism, his acknowledgement of his only partial knowledge of facts. This is an
attitude that echoes and distances itself from nineteenth-century Victorian fiction. In
this case, the narrator outlines a hypothesis that goes deeper into what Charles may
have thought at the time.

In this fragment, the narrator still sounds more surprising and unreliable, because,
just a few previous paragraphs above, in free indirect style, he had delved into the
depth of Charles's mind, and had informed the reader about the innermost feelings
of the character:

> (3)
> *His guilt had begun to attach itself* to its proper object. He tried to recollect her
> face, things she had said, the expression in her eyes as she had said them; but he
> could not grasp her. *Yet it came to him that* he knew her better, perhaps, than any
> Other human being did. That account of their meetings he had given Grogan …
> that he could remember', and almost word for word. Had he not, in his anxiety to
> hide his own real feelings, misled Grogan? Exaggerated her strangeness? Not
> honestly passed on what she had actually said?
> Had he not condemned her to avoid condemning himself?
>
> (ST, p. 205, my italics)

> *Su sensación de culpabilidad* empezó a unirse a la causa que la producía. Trató de
> recordar el rostro de Sarah, sus palabras, la expresión de sus ojos cuando las decía;
> pero no conseguía representársela. *Y, sin embargo, tenía la sensación de que tal
> vez* la conocía mejor que nadie. Recordaba perfectamente el relato que le había
> hecho a Grogan de sus encuentros. Casi palabra por palabra. ¿Acaso, en su afán
> por ocultar sus sentimientos, había inducido a Grogan a error? ¿Había exagerado
> el misterio que envolvía la conducta de Sarah? ¿Había falseado las palabras de
> aquella mujer sin darse cuenta?
>
> (TT, pp. 231-32, my italics)

The translation of this fragment shows certain interesting features. Thus, the tenden-
cy already observed in the previous fragment continues, so that certain abstract
nouns appear reinforced and their content is made more specific in the translation:
for example, *his guilt* is interpreted as 'su sensación de culpabilidad'. The narrator
tends to reflect the flow of the character's thinking or his stream of consciousness,
and does so mainly by breaking the 'usual' syntactic word order, and thematising as
a result what seems most important to Charles: "That account of their meetings he

had given Grogan (…) that he could remember, and almost word for word". What is more important is highlighted. However, such a clear hyperbaton is not maintained in the translation, which uses an ellipsis instead: "Recordaba perfectamente el relato que le había hecho a Grogan, de sus encuentros. Casi palabra por palabra".

Gutt has written the following about a similar case, and stresses that it may be that the author has sought certain *stylistic effects* through a certain syntactic structure: ".... The change of syntactic characteristics in the translation can lead to the loss of subtle, but nevertheless important clues to the intended interpretation" (1991/ 2000a: 146). And yet, in this text, it could be the case that the translator had sought a certain balance, because indeed it emphasises a parallel construction, at the end of the quoted fragment, through the repetition of the verb 'había', which is omitted in the English text.

However unreliable it may seem, and regardless of the extent to which it seems to contradict the nineteenth-century omniscience of the realist narrator, the truth is that this narrator sounds much more "realistic" and credible than the former.

3.2. The break (or enhancement?) of the illusion of fiction

While the realist novel of the nineteenth century tended to be regarded as the precise outline of anything that happened and sought to be a faithful mirror of objective 'reality', *The French Lieutenant's Woman* will tend to offer a much more subjective view and to question (or enhance) the existence of any kind of gap between reality and fiction. Thus, in Victorian novels like *Middlemarch* the reader could be expected to find detailed portraits of the society of the time. An example is the following fragment:[3]

> (4)
> Old provincial society had its share of this subtle movement: had not only its striking downfalls, its young professional dandies who ended by living up an entry with a drab and six children for their establishment, but also those less marked vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse, and begetting new consciousness of interdependence. Some slipped a little downward, some got higher footing: people denied aspirates, gained wealth, and fastidious gentlemen stood for boroughs; some were caught in political currents, some in ecclesiastical, and perhaps found themselves surprisingly grouped in consequence; while a few personages or families that stood with rock firmness amid all this fluctuation, were slowly presenting aspects in spite of solidity, and altering with the double change of self and beholder.
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> (p. 85-86)

This passage shows that the nineteenth-century narrator aimed to be an objective and reliable chronicler of the world around him, and his canvas conveyed the impression of being totally impartial, sometimes even aseptic. On the contrary, the narrator of

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[3]   In the paper, some references have been made to George Eliot's *Middlemarch* as an epitome of Victorian novels, so as to illustrate and highlight some of the main aspects parodied by Fowles in his novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman.*

The French Lieutenant's Woman can offer descriptions, which, although they seem detailed and reliable on the surface, are only a pretext for him to exhibit his knowledge of the people or the objects described, or even to parody them:

> (5)
> The door was shut then, and none too gently. Charles winked at himself in the mirror. And then suddenly put a decade on his face: all gravity, the solemn young paterfamilias; then smiled *indulgently* at his own faces and euphoria; poised, was plunged *in affectionate contemplation* of his features. He had indeed very regular ones —a wide forehead, a moustache as black as his hair, which was tousled from the removal of the night-cap and made him look younger than he was. His skin was suitably pale, though less so than that of many London gentlemen —for this was a time when a sun-tan was not at all a desirable social-sexual status symbol, but the reverse: an indication of low rank.
> *Yes, upon examination, it was a faintly foolish face, at such a moment.*
> <div align="right">(ST, p. 40, my italics)</div>

> Entonces la puerta se cerró, y no precisamente con suavidad. Charles le guiñó un ojo al espejo. Y entonces, de pronto, adoptó una expresión de hombre maduro, todo gravedad, como un solemne joven padre de familia; luego sonrió *con indulgencia, como* disculpándose por sus muecas y su euforia, adoptó un aire de naturalidad y se sumió en una afectuosa contemplación de sus facciones. Verdaderamente, éstas eran armoniosas: la frente ancha, un bigote tan negro como su cabello, revuelto ahora por la brusquedad con que se había quitado el gorro de dormir, lo que le hacía parecer más joven de lo que era, y la tez adecuadamente pálida, aunque menos que la de muchos caballeros londinenses, pues en aquella época el bronceado no era símbolo de una apetecible condición sociosexual, sino, por el contrario, manifestación de ordinariez. *Sí, mirándola detenidamente, en aquel momento resultaba una cara un poco tonta.*
> <div align="right">(TT, p. 45, my italics)</div>

As this example also reflects, the narrator can even contradict himself in order to parody something, thanks to his perspectivism and omniscience. All this allows him to penetrate deep into the character's mind, approach whatever he may be thinking, and then laugh at all this. Concerning relevance theory, it could be said that he implicitly echoes his own words, and distances himself from them. It also reveals to the reader that he consciously selects what he wants to tell:

> (6)
> But his gloom (and *a self-suspicion* I have concealed, that his decision was really based more on the old sheep stealers adage, on a dangerous despair, than on the nobler movings of his conscience) had an even poorer time of it there; (…)
> <div align="right">(ST, p. 207, my italics)</div>

> Pero su mal humor (*y la sospecha* que le concomía, *una sospecha* que les he ocultado hasta ahora, de que su decisión obedecía más a una peligrosa desesperación que a los más nobles impulsos de su conciencia) se acrecentó allí; (…)
> <div align="right">(TT, p. 233, my italics)</div>

The translation of this fragment is interesting for several reasons. It can be seen that the Spanish text is based mainly on the echoic repetition of 'sospecha', which constitutes an amplification of the original, and thus creates a parallel structure, absent in the original text. Yet, the reflexive component expressed in English (*a self-suspicion*) has been lost in the translation. In relevance-theoretical terms, it seems that in the translation, repeating previously said words could be a productive resource for the transmission of irony. Something similar also happens in fragments such as the following:

> (7)
> He said it to himself: It is the stupidest thing, but that girl attracts me. It seemed clear to him that it was not Sarah in herself who attracted him - how could she, he was betrothed - but some emotion, some possibility she symbolised. She made him aware of a deprivation. His future had always seemed to him of vast potential; and now suddenly it was a fixed voyage to a known place. She had *reminded* him of that. Ernestina's elbow *reminded* him gently of the present.
>
> (ST, p. 114, my italics)

> Entonces se dijo: «Es una estupidez, pero esa muchacha me atrae». Le parecía, sin embargo, que no era Sarah, la mujer, quien le atraía —¿cómo podía *atraerle,* si estaba comprometido?-, sino cierto sentimiento, cierta posibilidad que ella simbolizaba. Siempre había pensado que su futuro encerraba innumerables posibilidades, y, de pronto, se convertía en un viaje predeterminado a un lugar conocido. Sarah le *había hecho recordar* el pasado.
> *Y* el codo de Ernestina *le hizo recordar* suavemente el presente.
>
> (TT, p. 129, my italics)

This fragment presents another case in which the translator has reinforced the ironic intention by repeating a word that only appears once in the original: '... Sara, la mujer, quien le atraía —¿cómo podía atraerle ...?', which corresponds to: 'it was not Sarah in herself who attracted him — how could she?'. Here we find, repetition in the target text, which corresponds to an *ellipsis* of the main verb in the source text. This example is particularly significant since the echoic repetition marks the beginning of the narrator's ironic commentary, in which the narrator denies Charles's thoughts and intends to go a step further, and infer the consequences of those, however unconscious or reluctant the character may be about them.

And yet, in Victorian novels like *Middlemarch*, we find cases in which the narrator distances himself from the events he tells, and comments on the reactions of the characters from the outside, although in the end this is only another way of demonstrating his omniscience:

> (8)
> *I am sorry to add* that she was sobbing bitterly, *with such abandonment to this relief of an oppressed heart* as a woman habitually controlled by pride on her own account and thoughtfulness for others will sometimes allow herself when she feels securely alone. And Mr Casaubon was certain to remain away for some time at the Vatican.
>
> (p. 176, my italics)

That is, although the narrator in *Middlemarch* also seems to distance himself from the character, he finally seems to express a feeling of some pity or solidarity. In contrast, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the narrator uses techniques associated with the stream of consciousness, to show that he is able to know what characters are thinking exactly:

> (9)
> Yet this time he did not even debate whether he should tell Ernestina, he knew he would not. He felt as ashamed as if he had, without warning her, stepped off the Cobb and *set sail for China.*
>
> <div align="right">(ending of chapter 18, ST, p. 128, my italics)</div>
>
> *The China-bound victim* had in reality that evening to play host at a surprise planned by Ernestina and himself for Aunt Tranter.
>
> <div align="right">(beginning of Chapter 19, ST, p. 129, my italics)</div>
>
> Sin embargo, esta vez ni se le ocurrió preguntarse si debía contárselo a Ernestina; sabía que no. Se sentía tan avergonzado *como si se hubiera embarcado para la China* en The Cobb sin avisar a su prometida.
>
> <div align="right">(ending of chapter 18, TT, p. 145, my italics)</div>
>
> Aquella noche, *la víctima embarcada para la China* debía, en realidad, hacer de anfitrión en una cena con la que él y Ernestina querían obsequiar por sorpresa a la tía Tranter.
>
> <div align="right">(beginning of Ch. 19, TT, p, 145, my italics)</div>

This fragment also shows that the echoic repetition does not necessarily affect an entire expression, but may only partially repeat it, or restructure it, as in the case mentioned above. Be that as it may, an analogous effect is achieved. It may also go beyond units that can be recognised as such: thus, as these examples show, here echoic repetition covers the end of one chapter and the beginning of the next. In the English text, perhaps it is even more marked, since the author has moved to the end of the sequence the part of the utterance that will be repeated echoically in the following chapter.

The narrator's attitude towards the target or victim of irony is reinforced through his use of free indirect speech. He also plays on the contrast between a certain possibility and its real actualisation: Thus, on the one hand, at first Charles feels ashamed, and the narrator associates this with the hypothetical situation that Charles had flown away escaping from an embarrassing situation ("as if he had"). On the other hand, at the beginning of the following chapter, Charles is implicitly referred to and therefore identified as "the China-bound victim" (*reference assignment*).[4] There is also a *transposition*, or change of syntactic category, which is maintained in the translation. In the translation, the syntactic construction makes it necessary to emphasise and amplify the narrator's mockery of Charles; yet, it also maintains this *contrast* between

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[4]   Within relevance theory, *reference assignment* is one of the tasks involved in the identification of a propositional form (together with *disambiguation* and *enrichment*). Its function is to make it possible that pronouns and other deictic expressions are related to the conceptual entity they make reference to.

potential and *factual* situations: 'como si hubiera embarcado para la China' (which presupposes or lets the reader infer that he need not have done so), becomes 'la víctima *embarcada* para la China' (which certainly implicates that Charles, being the victim, had *actually* set off for China).

In other cases, the twentieth-century narrator of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* may also parody the omniscience of the narrator traditionally accepted and assumed by exaggerating its most appreciable features:

> (10)
> *So let us kick Sam out* of his hypothetical future and back into his Exeter present. He goes to his master's compartment where the train stops.
>
> (ST, p. 296, my italics)

> *Conque* saquemos a Sam de su hipotético futuro y devolvámoslo a su presente en Exeter. Cuando se detiene el tren, se presenta en el compartimiento de su amo.
>
> (TT, p. 330, my italics)

This fragment reflects the attitude of the omniscient narrator, who acts as he pleases with his characters, as if they were puppets, and even uses colloquial expressions, which at the same time are very graphic to refer to their actions, an aspect on which he has also made his decisions and choices: this is reflected by the use of a colloquial verb in English: "So let us kick Sam out . . .", and in Spanish also with the use of a consequence connector typically associated with the colloquial register: 'Conque'. However, this same narrator (and author) does not hesitate to proclaim the freedom of these characters, and in fact, seems to believe in freedom, despite everything: "There is only one good definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist" (Ch. 13, p. 86). It is, in the end, the Post-Modernist open questioning of realistic omniscience. The author-narrator seems to abide by the realism and omniscience of the Victorian tradition, only to subvert it next:

> (11)
> *Oh, but you say, come on - what I really mean* is that the idea crossed my mind as I wrote that it might be more clever to have him stop and drink milk … and meet Sarah again. That is certainly one explanation of what happened; but I can only report —and I am the most reliable witness— that the idea seemed to me to come clearly from Charles, not myself. It is not only that he has begun to gain an autonomy; I must respect it, and disrespect all my quasi-divine plans for him, *if I wish him to be real.*
>
> (ST, p. 86, my italics)

> ¡*Venga, hombre* …!, dirán. **Lo que quiero decir** es que mientras escribía se me ocurrió que sería mejor hacerle detenerse en la Granja para beber un tazón de leche ... y para que volviera a encontrarse con Sarah. **Desde luego**, *esto es una explicación de lo que ocurrió*; **pero sólo puedo decir** —y soy el testigo más digno de crédito— que me parecía que la idea partía del propio Charles, no de mí. No se trata tan sólo de que él haya empezado a obrar con libertad, es que tengo que respetarla, renunciando a los planes casi divinos que haya concebido para él, *si quiero que sea real.*
>
> (TT, p. 98, my bolding and italics)

In this fragment, the author meditates about the process of creation through writing itself, and about the relationship between fiction and reality. Both seem to merge: if fiction is to be real, it means freedom, choice, but in the 'real world' we cannot be sure if we are, in the end, perhaps, a part of 'fiction'. At the level of translation, if this can be considered as a parody, and what is more, as an open questioning of the omniscient basis of traditional realism, it is striking that the Spanish version thematises all those expressions that indicate attitude or intention: 'Lo que quiero decir ...'; 'Desde luego,…'; 'Pero sólo puedo decir…'. The Spanish version also introduces verbal periphrases that express objectivity, or references to reality, such as 'es que' ... while the English text is based on juxtaposition.

Essentially, the metafictional comment that this fragment expresses is thus enhanced. In short, this novel makes readers be aware of the status of fiction of what we are told: on the one hand, it underlines the idea that we are reading about facts, characters, etc. of fiction, but on the other hand, this general impression of fictionality reaches what we would consider to be reality itself at large, which then turns out to be as fictional as the story that is narrated to us.

3.3. Historical perspectivism

The French Lieutenant's Woman tells a story that happens around the year 1867, but which is narrated from the perspective of almost a century later. This time lapse will be, in fact, an important source of irony, humour and parody in the novel. This is so because the narrator will tend to judge characters, facts and ideas on the basis of the criteria of his own century and will also introduce data that the characters could hardly have known during their lifetime:

> (12)
> Though Charles liked to think himself as a scientific young man and would probably not have been too surprised had news reached him out of the future of the aeroplane, the jet engine, television, radar: what would have astounded him was the changed attitude to time itself.
>
> (ST, p. 15)

> Si bien Charles gustaba de verse como un joven hombre de ciencia, y quizá no se hubiera sentido demasiado asombrado de haber tenido noticias sobre el futuro del aeroplano, el motor de propulsión, la televisión o el radar, se habría quedado atónito por el cambio de actitud del hombre ante el tiempo en sí.
>
> (TT, p. 17)

Shortly after, this same idea will be insisted upon through parallelisms:

> (13)
> The problem was not fitting in all that one wanted to do, but spinning out what one did to occupy the vast colonnades of leisure available.
> One of the commonest symptoms of wealth today is *destructive neurosis*; in his century it was *tranquil boredom*.
>
> (ST, p. 16, my italics)

> El problema no consistía en abarcar todo aquello que uno quería hacer, sino en dilatar lo que uno hacía a fin de que ocupara los amplios espacios de ocio disponibles. Hoy día, uno de los más frecuentes síntomas de prosperidad es *la destructiva neurosis*; en el siglo de Charles, era el *tranquilo aburrimiento*.
>
> （TT, p. 18, my italics）

In this case, the Spanish translation maintains the parallel structures compensated, which nevertheless reflect a contrast of ideas: "destructive neurosis" *versus* "tranquil boredom", which have become 'destructiva neurosis' and 'tranquilo aburrimiento', respectively. This occurs even in the second part of this fragment, where the translator has thematised the adverbial expression in the first sentence: 'Hoy', which directs the reader's attention to the established temporal contrast.

On many occasions the narrator will speak as a man of the twentieth century, watching from above, with a blending of irony, admiration and disdain towards the reactions of all these nineteenth-century people:

> (14)
> *After all, he was a Victorian. We could not expect him to see what we are only just beginning −and with so much more knowledge and the lessons of existentialist philosophy at our disposal− to realise ourselves:* that the desire to hold and the desire to enjoy are mutually destructive.
>
> （ST, p. 63, my italics）

> *Al fin y al cabo, Charles era un victoriano. No podemos esperar que viera lo que nosotros −con muchos mayores conocimientos y con las lecciones de la filosofía existencialista a nuestra disposición− apenas estamos empezando a* entrever: que el deseo de poseer y el de disfrutar se destruyen mutuamente.
>
> （TT, p. 72, my italics）

> He had not the benefit of *existentialist terminology*; but what he felt was really a very clear case of the anxiety of freedom -that is, the realisation that one is free and that the realisation that being free is a situation of terror.
>
> （ST, p. 296, my italics）

> Charles no podía servirse de la terminología existencialista; pero el suyo era un caso clarísimo de la angustia que causa la libertad, es decir, darse cuenta de que se es libre y, al mismo tiempo, de que ser libre es una situación aterradora.
>
> （TT, p. 330, my italics）

In many cases, it will also be a resource that will allow the narrator to show off the superiority he feels over the Victorians, in a scarcely nostalgic attitude for the past.

3.4.　The multiple endings of the plot of Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

The different endings of the novel can also be interpreted as a parody of a Victorian novel, such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*: it is this feature that characterises Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as an eminently open novel, perhaps as complex as *Middlemarch*, formed by several plot lines, but with important differ-

ences from it, which can be accounted for in terms of parody. While George Eliot provides readers with a "Final" where the conclusion of each of the different arguments is explained ("Who can abandon these young lives after staying in long company with them, and not wanting to know what they are doing? What happened in the years to come?", p.760), in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, several possible denouements are offered. Susana Onega writes that these different endings spring as a consequence of the freedom that characters have been endowed with:

> (…) breaking the illusion of verisimilitude, the narrator openly informs us that he has decided to give us two alternative versions the novel's ending in order to preserve his objectivity, thus taking to its final consequences his former contention that "I do not fully control these creatures of my mind, any more than you control your children, colleagues, friends, or even yourself".
>
> (1989: 88)

So, if we contrast *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Middlemarch*, it seems that both George Eliot and John Fowles have intended to be 'objective': while for the narrator in *Middlemarch* this must have meant offering the most accurate account of each character's life, even continuing when the narration stops, for Fowles it means being consistent with the supposed freedom of the characters. This gives us an idea of a very different approach to knowledge and one's own reality: if for the nineteenth-century writer it must have been possible to apprehend and describe reality in an objective way, this is precisely what the general cosmovision of the twentieth century will question in a clear and open way, thus penetrating the conflicting gap between the self and the world.

4. Conclusions

This paper has attempted to show that relevance theory can contribute to the translation of certain resources, such as irony and parody, which, as pragmatics has claimed, can be approached in terms of attitude. The analysis carried out also shows that irony, understood in terms of echoic attributive use, together with the manifestation of the speaker's attitude toward the content that she seeks to transmit, can be a very productive resource for the expression and translation of utterances where irony or parody are involved.

The French Lieutenant's Woman has been described as a parody of the realistic Victorian novel. It can be concluded that in this work parody provides the overall framework for the interpretation of the novel, and more specifically, of irony as an essential aspect of the message intended to be communicated by the author. However, it is our intuition that the relationship between irony and parody is best studied in each particular case. In principle, Clark's contention that parody can be understood as being ironic if the speaker or writer attributes a thought she wants to distance herself from has been confirmed in our analysis (Clark 2013, 288). Moreover, the identification of the speaker's (or writer's) echoic and affective attitudes and their conveyance in the target text are aspects worth considering both by the translator and the assessment of the translation of irony as a whole.

It has been found that in order to render an appropriate version of a literary text in the target language (in this case, Spanish) the translator must first recognise the speaker's communicative intention (and often also the narrator's), and transmit it in the target text in such a way that it is also possible for the audience to recognise it without any further processing costs. In an application of the central core of relevance theory, the translator can be expected to head for a balance between the communicative effects to be achieved by the target-text readership (which should optimally be as rewarding as those obtained by the source-text reader) and the effort or processing cost necessary to infer or apprehend it (which ideally should not be any more significant than the one invested by the original readership). This is one of the main aspects and implications of the relevance-theoretical notion of interpretive resemblance for translation: the reader of the target text is therefore expected to derive similar implicatures and contextual implications as those obtained by the source-text reader, without being requested to perform any greater processing effort to do so.

Moreover, as this is a literary text, both source-text and target-text readers will enjoy the most as long as they are able to reach their conclusions on their own, particularly regarding those aspects that are only weakly implicated in the text. This relative strength of implicatures and also of explicatures becomes, therefore, another possible criterion with which to assess a translation and its degree of resemblance to the source text.

Sometimes, what the author chooses to do is carry out some greater explanation that allows the audience to obtain similar results, even at the cost of increasing their cognitive processing. The tendency observed in the translation analysed has been found to be to enhance or emphasise the attitude that characterises irony and parody, so that the Spanish reader is not required any further processing effort to achieve similar cognitive and contextual effects. The result has tended to slightly strengthen those aspects that set the *tour de force* between the narrator's omniscience and the characters' unawareness of the consequences of their actions, let alone of the timeline, which is only offered to the narrator's, the internal author's and, most importantly, the external readership's delight.

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