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Trabajo de Fin de Grado

Lexical Networks in Media Discourse: A case-study

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Abstract

This dissertation is devoted to a case study of the lexical patterns found in the discourse of a set of selected articles from *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, all of them dealing with the announcement of the Noble Prizes in Literature and published over the time span of three decades. It aims to contribute to the study of how media discourse uses lexical networks in order to facilitate the reader the understanding of what they are intending to communicate. Seminal research works on lexical cohesion and, more concretely, Tanskanen's taxonomy, are the basis for this analysis of media discourse. The study will provide information about how the use of lexical networks found in articles dealing with the same topic has developed from a chronological perspective.

Key Words

Lexical cohesion, media discourse, lexical networks

Resumen

Esta disertación está dedicada al estudio de un caso de los patrones léxicos encontrados en el discurso de una serie de artículos seleccionados de los periódicos *The Guardian* y *The Independent*, todos ellos sobre el anuncio de los premios Nobel de literatura y publicados en un período de tiempo de tres décadas. El trabajo pretende contribuir al estudio de cómo el discurso de los medios de comunicación utiliza las redes léxicas para facilitar al lector el entendimiento de lo que pretenden comunicar. La investigación llevada a cabo sobre cohesión léxica y, más concretamente, la taxonomía de Tanskanen, son la base para este análisis del discurso de los medios de comunicación. El estudio proporcionará información sobre la evolución del uso de las redes léxicas encontradas en artículos sobre el mismo tema desde una perspectiva cronológica.

Palabras clave

Cohesión léxica, discurso periodístico, redes léxicas

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Theoretical Foundations.....	3
3. The Material of Analysis.....	7
4. The Method.....	9
5. The Analysis.....	11
6. The Interpretation of the Data.....	25
7. Complementary Analysis.....	30
8. Conclusion.....	34
9. Works Cited List.....	36
10. Appendix.....	37
10.1. Articles Analysed.....	37
10.2. Articles Compared.....	51

1. Introduction

This project is linked to the study of lexical networks in media discourse, and this topic was chosen mainly because it seemed interesting to me to investigate how lexical networks function in an article from a newspaper and how they help to its understanding. Then, I chose six articles dealing with Noble Prizes for Literature as it could be a way of learning more about those writers while working on this project. Although the articles are from *The Guardian* and from *The Independent*, these newspapers were chosen merely because of the facilities those newspapers offer in order to search for articles from many years ago, and not because of their ideology or any other reason.

The main aim of this project is to provide a case study of how the use of lexical networks has developed along the years, from a chronological perspective, and therefore, the possible differences which may be encountered in writing about a given topic due to the behaviour or changes found in those lexical networks. In order to achieve that goal it will be necessary to carry out an analysis of the chosen articles from a theoretical point of view. The theories which will serve as basis for this project are related to the discourse notion of lexical cohesion.

Consequently, the first part of this project will deal with theoretical foundations. It will include several theories from different authors who have studied cohesion in English during the last decades. This will show a way to understand how lexical cohesion works within a whole discourse. It will be indispensable to focus on aspects such as reiteration or collocation and how different authors understand them. Halliday and Hasan (1976) will be some of the authors who will be studied, although more concretely, Tanskanen (2006) will be considered as the central basis for the analysis.

Once the theoretical foundations are established, it will be necessary to present the material with which this project will be carried out. In this case, information about the topics

and newspapers of the chosen articles will be required. It will also be remarkable to explain why these articles were chosen and which selection criteria were used.

After that, I will present the methodology of the project, that is, how the whole analysis is carried out. It will be explained step by step and also making reference to the basis on which the analysis will be supported.

Subsequently, the results of the lexical analysis will be presented in charts which will show and classify the raw data obtained in the analysis of the articles based on Tanskanen's theory of lexical cohesion. This section will be followed by an interpretation of the data, in which I will show how the frequency results of the analysis can shed light on the differences found among the different articles and their lexical cohesion patterns.

2. Theoretical Foundations

When dealing with communication whether spoken or written communication we need to approach the relations occurring within the different sequences, as communication does not only consist of minimal units, such as sounds, words or sentences. Some of these relations are encountered within the concept of cohesion. Prior to considering what is exactly understood by cohesion, the concept of text should be clarified. Although apparently it does not seem to be a complex term, it is an arduous task to achieve a universally accepted definition for the notion of text. Moreover, it becomes even more intricate when trying to differentiate between text and discourse. There are probably as many possible definitions as authors have studied this, for “discourse falls squarely within the interests not only of linguists, literary critics, critical theorists and communication scientists, but also of geographers, philosophers, political scientists. . .and many others” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 3). According to Tanskanen, “a definition which has been widely used states that discourse includes text, or, more specifically, that text means discourse without context, while discourse means text with context.” (2006: 3). Furthermore, she points out that text is static whereas discourse is dynamic. Here we will follow de Beaugrande who offers a definition which is probably the most comprehensive one, viewing text “as a communicative event wherein linguistic, cognitive, and social actions converge, and not just as the sequence of words that were uttered or written.” Moreover, he adds the concept of discourse as “a set of interconnected texts” (Tanskanen, 2006: 4).

Once we have clarified the terms text and discourse, the relations existing within the text should be studied. Those relations are encountered in the term cohesion which according to Halliday and Hasan “refers specifically to these non-structural text-forming relations.” (1976: 7). According to these authors, cohesion comprehends the different types of ties which are essential to hold up the whole text as a unit. Usually, in order to study the cohesive ties

within a text, attention should be paid to the relations of one sentence to the previous ones. When cohesion is based on a presupposition from a previous item it receives the name anaphora (being the simplest way of cohesion), if the presupposed element follows it is known as cataphora and finally it can be exophora if the reference is outside the text. (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 14-18).

One of the most frequent types of cohesion used when analysing the possible relations holding the different sentences contained in a text is lexical cohesion which is directly linked with the choice of words (Halliday, 1985: 289). Different classifications have been made in the last decades as it seems to be rather complicated to achieve a convincing taxonomy for all authors. Therefore, each author has proposed different typologies and even the same author has produced different classifications considering the first one was not accurate or suitable enough.

In their seminal study *Cohesion in English* (1976), Halliday and Hasan divide lexical cohesion into the categories of reiteration and collocation. Thus, reiteration is described as “a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item” and collocation as “cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 278-284). On the one hand, as subtypes of reiteration they include: repetition, synonym, near synonym, superordinate and general word. For example if we take the word “ascent” we notice that “climb” would be a synonym, “task” a superordinate and “thing” a general word. On the other hand, they include words such as opposites, complementaries (boy – girl), antonyms (like – hate) and converses (order – obey) within the so-called category of collocation. Moreover, they also include pairs of words connected to each other by relations of part-whole (car – brake), part-part (mouth – chin) or even hyponyms of the same superordinate (chair, table are both hyponyms of furniture) in this type of lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 285). Whereas reiteration has been

used by many authors, collocation seems to be a more elusive and subjective category which in fact produces misunderstandings because “what is considered as a valid relation will inevitably slightly vary from one communicator to the next.” (Tanskanen, 2006: 34).

Tanskanen widely discusses the analytical framework proposed by different linguists, as a consequence of the problem surrounding the subjectivity of the collocation category of lexical cohesion. For example, Hasan, in a subsequent revision of lexical cohesion, decides to create new categories which are: general and instantial. The general category includes repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy (part-whole) and antonymy; whereas the instantial category includes relations which are not considered general such as relations of equivalence, naming and semblance. The controversial and questionable category of collocation is now incorporated into the general category already mentioned above. (Tanskanen, 2006: 35). Furthermore, Halliday also revised the first version of lexical cohesion and later stated that the ideal set of categories comprises repetition, synonymy and collocation. In this case, he keeps on using collocation although it seems to be a smaller category than before for it “covers those instances in which the relationship of the items depends on the association between them.” (Tanskanen, 2006: 36).

As it was mentioned above, there are probably as many different classifications as authors have studied lexical cohesion. Hoey is another author discussed by Tanskanen. His leading idea is “to stress the importance of the text-forming properties of lexis” (Tanskanen, 2006: 41), for he thinks that lexical cohesion has received little attention according to its significance in texts. He included the following categories in his classification: simple lexical repetition (a bear – bears), complex lexical repetition (a drug – drugging), simple paraphrase (to sedate – to drug), complex paraphrase (heat – cold), substitution (a drug – it), co-reference, ellipsis and deixis. (Tanskanen, 2006: 42). Although Hoey’s classification seems very accurate at first sight, it has been acknowledged that his

concept of paraphrase is considerably complex and in many situations it implies bringing items into a text which were not there before. Apparently, that would be even more subjective and less reliable than Halliday and Hasan's concept of collocation.

Tanskanen also addresses Martin's redefinition of the categories previously introduced by Halliday and Hasan. Martin establishes three categories which are taxonomic (including repetition, synonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, co-hyponymy, co-meronymy and contrast), nuclear and activity sequence. These last two are the innovating ones. "Nuclear relations reflect the ways in which actions, people, places, things and qualities configure as activities" whereas activity sequences "are themselves organised into composition (hyponymy) taxonomies: for instance, *player – opponent*" (Tanskanen, 2006: 45). The major problem found in relation to Martin's categories is that it becomes too complex and even "computer tools would be necessary" (Tanskanen 2006: 46).

In conclusion, there are many differing classifications when studying lexical cohesion. However, most of them present problems and that is why Halliday and Hasan's classification is the most widely used, although it is known that it presents some problems of subjectivity and that it is not totally reliable. Here, in this project, the taxonomy which will be followed and which will become the central basis for the analysis will be the taxonomy proposed by Tanskanen, who tries to reconcile different systems from different authors. As a result, she gets to create a more reliable taxonomy which will be followed in this project.

3. The Material of Analysis

The material of analysis used for this project has been taken from articles from two different English newspapers, which are *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. They are six articles; three of them are from one newspaper and three from the other one. All of them deal with news about Nobel Prizes for literature, concretely about Seamus Heaney, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1995; Harold Pinter, winner in 2005 and Alice Munro, who received the Nobel Prize in 2013. They were all published in the years in which the Nobel Prize was awarded to these authors; that is to say, two of them are from 1995, two from 2005 and two from 2013. The articles were chosen with approximately a decade of difference between them in order to facilitate the search for lexical cohesion differences through time. Thus, they were selected because they all address the same topic and also because of the time span between them.

In order to find out the differences mentioned above, special emphasis will be given to the categories of lexical cohesion recognised in Tanskanen's study, which are the basis for this analysis. They include simple repetition, complex repetition, equivalence, generalisation, specification, co-specification, contrast, ordered set, activity - related collocation and elaborative collocation.

At a later stage of the process, six more articles have been added to the corpus in order to do further research with a complementary analysis. The aim of this selection is to provide some indications as to whether the results found in the analysis of the six main articles are sustained or they are just random. These six complementary articles belong to the same English newspapers, that is, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. They all deal with the same topic, which is the Nobel Prize for Literature. Although the main articles were chosen with a time span of approximately a decade between them, these complementary articles have been chosen regardless of the time span. Two of the articles are from 2012, one from each

newspaper, and they deal with Mo Yan, the Chinese writer who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in that year. Tomas Transtömer is the subject of other two articles, as he received his Nobel Prize in the year 2011. And finally, the two last articles deal with Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian writer who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 2010. Although the analysis of these six complementary articles will not be as detailed and in-depth as that from the main articles, it will help to determine whether the main tendencies of the results are sustained or not.

4. The Method

This section will be devoted to the explanation of how the analysis has been carried out.

Firstly, in order to select the articles which were to be used for the analysis, it was necessary to look for them carefully in the available archives of the different newspapers in order to make sure that they all dealt with the same topic and also that the time span between them was the same. Originally, the idea was to focus the analysis on three articles from the same newspaper but from different decades and observe how the lexical cohesion patterns changed from one decade to another. However, it seemed interesting to add three more articles from another newspaper with the same topic and with the same time span between them in order to analyse both the differences and similarities from one decade to another. Moreover, the addition of three more articles facilitated the realization that differences between different newspapers could also be remarkable and worth analysing.

As has been mentioned above, Tanskanen's taxonomy has been the main basis for the analysis of the lexical cohesion patterns encountered in the chosen articles. Categories such as repetition (both simple and complex), equivalence, generalisation, specification, co-specification, ordered set, activity related and elaborative collocation, which are widely discussed by Tanskanen in her book *Collaborating Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse*, have been considered a central reference and, therefore, they have been applied to this analysis. These lexical categories have been identified in all the different articles which were chosen for this project and special emphasis was given to their frequency of appearance. In order to get to know all the words appearing in each article that belonged to each of the categories mentioned above it was necessary to carry out a mainly visual analysis. The visual analysis consisted basically on reading the articles as many times as it seemed necessary in order to underline each time the lexical elements related to the topic of the

discourse which belong to each category. In some cases, concretely when dealing with the repetition category, it was possible to use some computer tools in order to help to know how many times a word was repeated throughout the article. Once all the relevant lexical elements were found, they were organised into different charts which will be shown below. Moreover, this selection of lexical elements and its subsequent organisation into charts facilitates the observation of whether there is more relevance in the frequency the lexical elements appeared or the quality of the relations they establish among them. In fact, whereas in some cases the frequency is relevant, it is not so in every case.

The charts mentioned above are taken as reference for the interpretation and they will help to draw conclusions.

After the results were interpreted by comparing the different charts and drawing conclusions, it seemed interesting to add six more articles as a complementary analysis in order to find whether the tendencies and the conclusions could be sustained or they were just random, as the sample for this project is limited for time and space reasons. As it was explained in the previous section, these articles are from the same newspapers and they deal with the same topic which is the Nobel Prize for Literature. This analysis was not as detailed as the main one mainly because it is just a complementary analysis. Therefore, the main tendencies obtained from the interpretation of the results of the main articles were taken as a basis for this complementary analysis. Different pieces of information related to those tendencies were searched for within these six complementary articles in order to test whether the conclusions obtained in the first phase of the analysis could be supported or not.

5. The Analysis

After having analysed the six chosen newspaper articles according to the taxonomy proposed by Tanskanen, the results have been organised into different charts coinciding with the different categories. The following charts are the outcome of a really detailed recounting of the words corresponding to each category. The aim of this recount showed in charts is to facilitate the comparison and relations between the different articles through the interpretation of this information presented below.

THE GUTTURAL MUSE (THE GUARDIAN, 1995)

REPETITION	
WORD	NUMBER
Heaney	19
Poet/Poetry/Poem	15
Year	8
Win/winner	6
Who	5
Ireland/Irish	5
Nobel	4
Prize	4
Surprise	4
Time	4
Belfast	4
Violence	4
First	4
Book	4
British	4
Written	3
London	3
Wit	3
Award	3
Men	3
Writer	3
Themes	3
Contemporary	3
Appreciation	2
South	2
World	2
Schoolchildren	2
Living	2
Dig/ging	2

1983	2
Critic	2
Two	2
Muse	2
Literature	2
Friends	2
Dublin	2
Yesterday	2
Heard of	2
Letter	2
Laureate	2
Commend	2
Famous/Fame	2
Popular	2
Political	2
Withdraw	2
Earth	2
Quiet	2

EQUIVALENCE (SYNONYMY)			
Predicted	1	Gussed	1
Prize	4	Award	3
West	1	Europe	1
Popularity	1	Fame	1
World	2	Earth	1

GENERALISATION (superordinate)			
Foreign writers	1	Writers	3
Didactic writers	1	Writers	3
1983	2	Late 20th century	1
British	4	Nationality	1

SPECIFICATION (meronymy)			
Europe	1	London, Dublin, Belfast Stockholm	

CO – SPECIFICATION					
Stockholm	1	London	3	Belfast	4
Foreign writers	1	Didactic writers	1		
1981	1	1983	2		

ORDERED SET						
1981	1	1983	2	1960s	1	
West	1	South	2	North	2	
Two	2	Five	1	Eight	1	
15	1	56	1	200	1	33

ACTIVITY RELATED					
Win	5	Prize	4		
Written	3	Poems	5	Letter	2
Poetry	3	Collection	1		
Passport	1	Nationality	1		

ELABORATIVE COLLOCATION	
Nobel Prize	2
Swedish Academy	4
Northern Ireland	2
Ted Hughes	2
Sturdy rootsiness	2
Odd mix	2
Flickering wit	2
Seamus Heaney	3

NOBEL PRIZE GOES TO PINTER (THE GUARDIAN, 2005)

REPETITION	
Pinter	12
Writer	10
Prize	7
Academy	7
Year	7
Play	6
Poet	5
Award/ed	5
British / Britain	5
War / Postwar	4
Last	4
Announced	4
Poetry / Poet	4
Name	4
Theatre	4
Swedish	3
Author	3
Week	3
Act / Actor	3
Decision	3
Playwright	3
Characters / Characteristics	2
Drama / Dramatist	2
Nobel	2
Pamuk	2
Adonis	2
Laureate	2
Confounds	2
The Caretaker	2
Become	2
Recent	2
Declaring/ed	2
Written	2
Actor/s	2
Expectation / Unexpected	2
Won	2
Literary / Literature	2

EQUIVALENCE (SYNONYMY)				
Unexpected	1	Surprise	1	
To award	1	To name	3	To hand out 1
Author	3	Writer	4	
Theatre	4	Drama	1	
Works	1	Plays	6	
Foremost representative	1	Greatest	1	
Prize	7	Award	2	

GENERALISATION (superordinate)			
Lunchtime	1	Today	1
European	1	Different continent	1
War in Iraq	1	War	4

SPECIFICATION (meronymy)			
Second half of the 20th century	1	1960	1

CONTRAST			
Unexpected	1	Anticipated	1

ORDERED-SET															
1901	1	2001	1	1957	1	1960	1	1963	1	1981	1	2003	1	2002	1
First	1	Second	3												
50th	1	75th	1												
Nine	1	10	2	29	1										

ACTIVITY RELATED							
Win	2	Prize	7	Award	5	Victory	1
Theatre	4	Actor	2				
Performed	1	Plays	6				
Celebrations	1	Birthday	2				
Writing	5	Plays	6				

ELABORATIVE COLLOCATION	
Swedish Academy	2
Nobel Prize	2
Harold Pinter	2

**ALICE MUNRO WINS NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE
(THE GUARDIAN, 2013)**

SIMPLE REPETITION	
Munro	7
Win/won	7
Life	7
Writer	6
Prize	5
Short story	5
Nobel	4
Literature	4
Novelist	4
Said	4
Book	4
Year	3
Canadian	3
Alice	3
Reader	3
Seem	3
Frequently	2
List	2
Western Ontario	2
Favourite	2
13	2
Form	2
Sentences	2
Rare	2
Slow	2
Published	2
Awarded	2
Including	2
Recently	2
Work	2
Admiration	2
The Guardian	2
Living	2
82	2
Announce	2
Possible / Possibilities	2
Lorentzen	2

EQUIVALENCE (synonymy)			
Devoted readership	1	Fans	1

SPECIFICATION (meronymy)			
Media	1	Canadian Broadcaster CBC	1
Media	1	The Guardian	1

CO-SPECIFICATION (co-meronyms)			
Canadian Broadcaster CBC	1	The Guardian (media)	1

ORDERED SET									
First	1	Second	1						
1931	1	1971	1	1998	1	2006	1	2012	1
£400	1	£775,000	1						

ACTIVITY RELATED					
Awarded	2	Prize	5		
Win	6	Victory	1		
Published	2	Stories	7	Reading	1

ELABORATIVE COLLOCATION	
Alice Munro	2
Nobel Prize	3
Short story	5
Western Ontario	2

**SEAMUS HEANEY WINS NOBEL PRIZE
(THE INDEPENDENT, 1995)**

SIMPLE REPETITION	
Heaney	7
Irish / Ireland	6
Prize	5
Poet	5
Award	5
Winner	4
Seamus	3
Nobel	3
Yeats	3
Faber	3
Honour	2
Receive	2
Past	2
Literature	2
Recognition	2

EQUIVALENCE (synonymy)			
Award	4	Prize	5

GENERALISATION (superordinate)			
Catholic poet	1	Poet	3
Irish poet	1	Poet	3

SPECIFICATION (meronymy)			
Prizes	5	Chemistry, Physics, Physiology, Medicine, Peace	1

CO-SPECIFICATION			
Catholic poet	1	Irish poet	1

ORDERED SET			
1923	1	1992	1

ACTIVITY RELATED					
Win	1	Award	4	Prize	5
Receive	2	Award	4		

ELABORATIVE COLLOCATION	
Nobel Prize	2
Seamus Heaney	3

**JOHN WALSH: NOBEL FOR PINTER, MAN WHO UNLEASHED
“THE WEASEL UNDER THE COCKTAIL CABINET”
(THE INDEPENDENT, 2005)**

SIMPLE REPETITION	
Pinter	9
Play / Playwright	7
Honour	4
Novelist	3
Man	3
Birthday	3
Swedish	2
Academy	2
Theatre	2
Everyday	2
Career	2
Lifetime Achievement	2
Accept	2
Prize	2
Nobel	2
Violence	2
Stage	2
Innocent	2
Closed	2
Announce	2
Act	2
Writer	2

COMPLEX REPETITION			
Closed	1	Enclosed	1
Announced	1	Announcement	1
Play	6	Playwright	1
Acts	1	Actors	1
Screenplays	1	Playscripts	1

EQUIVALENCE (synonymy)			
Prize	2	Award	1

SPECIFICATION (meronymy)			
Writer	2	Playwright, Poet, Screenwriter, Novelist	
Plays	7	Early plays, screenplays, later plays	

CO-SPECIFICATION			
Novelist	3	Playwright	1
Early plays	1	Later plays	1

CONTRAST			
Refused	1	Accepted	2
Conservative government	1	Labour one	1
Early plays	1	Later plays	1

ORDERED SET									
£735,000	1	£30,000	1						
2005	1	2001	1	1996	1	1960s	1	1970s	1
February	1	October	1						

ACTIVITY RELATED			
Garlanded	1	Honour	4
Announced	1	Prize	2
Celebrated	1	Birthday	3
Produced	1	Plays	7

ELABORATIVE COLLOCATION	
Lifetime achievement	2
Swedish Academy	1

**“I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD WIN”: ALICE MUNRO AWARDED
2013 NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE
(THE INDEPENDENT, 2013)**

SIMPLE REPETITION	
Munro	8
Canadian	6
Win/won	5
Prize	5
Short	4
Writer	4
Nobel	4
Author	4
Lives	4
Woman	4
People	4
Never	3
Thought	3
Alice	3
Story	3
Academy	3
Literature	3
Swedish	2
Married	2
Collection	2
Husband	2
Novelist	2
Contemporary	2
Art	2
Literary	2
Master	2

EQUIVALENCE (synonymy)			
The Swedish Academy	1	the secretive institution	1

SPECIFICATION (meronymy)			
Writer	3	Novelist, Documentary writer, dramatist	2

CONTRAST			
Obscure, unread	1,1	Globally acclaimed, popular, accesible	1,1,1
Married	1	Divorced	1

ORDERED SET													
1978	1	1931	1	1976	1	1977	1	2001	1	2009	1	2012	1
13th	1	14th	1										

ACTIVITY RELATED					
Win	5	Prize	5	Victory	1
Published	1	Stories	5		
Wrote	1	Book	1		

ELABORATIVE COLLOCATION	
Short story	3
Alice Munro	2
Nobel prize	2
Swedish Academy	1

6. The Interpretation of the Data

Once I have looked for the different categories of lexical cohesion recognised in Tanskanen's study (i.e., simple and complex repetition, equivalence, generalisation, specification, co-specification, contrast, ordered set, activity-related collocation and elaborative collocation) all along the different articles, I will proceed to analyse everything that was found through that process.

As it was mentioned in the section which presented the material of analysis, the original purpose of this project was to focus on the differences on media discourse reports which emerged across time, from one decade to another. Nevertheless, it seems relevant to remark also on the differences which arise from one newspaper to the other when covering the same news. That might be influenced or caused by the different ideologies or interests that each of the newspapers hold.

The chosen articles deal with news about different writers who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in different years. As a consequence, the most noticeable feature that all these articles have in common is that the most repeated word in all of them is directly connected with the author, being rather the first name or the surname of the winner. That is probably because the winner is the main topic of the whole article as readers would want to know who the winner is. However, although it seems obvious that the name or the surname of the winner should be the most repeated word, not every newspaper gives the same importance to this matter. According to the results, it could be pointed out that, in general terms, *The Guardian* gives more importance and puts more emphasis on the name of the winner than *The Independent*. Seamus Heaney was the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995 and in *The Guardian* "Heaney" appeared up to nineteen times, whereas in *The Independent* it just appeared seven times, less than a half from the previous one, which is a considerable difference. In 2005, Harold Pinter was the writer who received the Literature Nobel Prize and

while in *The Guardian* his surname appeared twelve times, in *The Independent* it appeared nine times. So, as it has been pointed out, generally *The Guardian* gives more importance to the name of the winner than *The Independent*. Those differences are more recognizable from one newspaper to the other than if the focus was in the time span between the articles. However, although in the case of the articles dealing with Harold Pinter as winner of the Nobel Prize these results could be considered reliable as the articles from both newspapers seem to have more or less the same extension, the same does not happen in the articles dealing with Heaney. In this case, it can be observed that the article from *The Guardian* is considerably longer than the one from *The Independent*. Consequently, in this case, the difference in the number of times that the name of the winner is repeated, being higher in the article from *The Guardian*, does not seem to be reliable as they are related to the different extension of each article. It can be concluded that although there seems to be a tendency of *The Guardian* giving more importance to the name of the winner of the Nobel Prize than that from *The Independent*, this tendency is not completely reliable as the extension of the articles from both newspapers is not the same, and it would require further research to prove if this tendency is sustained. Furthermore, it could be pointed out that both newspapers in any of the chosen years, give more importance to the surname of the winning author than to the first name, as if the analysis is observed, the surnames are the most repeated words.

However, the name or surname of the receiver of the prize should not be the only important words in those articles, as “Nobel”, “prize” or “win” are similarly essential words surrounding the topic of the articles. In spite of being such essential words, they do not appear in great proportions in none of the six articles which were analysed as they are not repeated more than an average of five times, which is considerably less than the name of the winner, being both of the same importance in the texts. Moreover, less relevant words such as “theatre”, “time”, “honour” or “author” appear in the articles as many times as more

important words such as the ones mentioned above. In fact, these words appear about an average of four times in each of the selected articles.

Another aspect which is relevant and worth mentioning would be the different levels of importance that each of the articles and in general each of the newspapers gives to the private life which has nothing to do with the literary life. To begin with, in the case of Seamus Heaney much more importance is given to his private life in the article published by *The Guardian* than the article from *The Independent*. In *The Guardian* they emphasise the polemic matter of his nationality, as he was categorised as “British” and he claimed that nations and nationalities matter and instead of being British he is a proud Irish citizen. However, although in *The Independent* it is said that Heaney is from Ireland, emphasis is not given to his polemic categorization as British and his consequent disagreement. His nationality is presented just as another piece of information of his identity.

Likewise, it is a similar situation when addressing the two articles which deal with Harold Pinter as a winner of the Nobel Prize in 2005. Both newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, mention the fact that he suffered cancer of oesophagus as it is a key event which has determined his life. However, the way in which they deal with that seems to be really different. While *The Guardian* deepens in how he felt during those harsh times, *The Independent* merely intends to inform about it in just a sentence without deepening more in the matter.

In the case of Alice Munro, winner in 2013, *The Guardian* is the newspaper which preferred not to mix private life and professional life, so they focus their attention mainly on her professional life as a writer, although they mention her father but just because he influenced her in her literary career. However, this time *The Independent* is the newspaper which decided to include in the article private aspects of Munro’s life which are not really relevant when intending to spread the news of her winning the Nobel Prize for Literature. In

fact, they keep a whole paragraph to let the reader know that she married once, then divorced and after that, she married again.

It could be said that *The Guardian* tended more to include private or “gossip” aspects than *The Independent*, although it seems that the situation has been changing along the time, becoming in the last years the other way round.

Another remarkable aspect which could seem worth analysing would be the importance that each of the newspapers gives to the famous works of each author, which are the main cause for them winning the prize. It seems that it should be one of the most important parts in the articles; however, if focus is given firstly to the articles from 1995, it can be observed that not both of them consider the works to be important. When talking about Seamus Heaney, winner in 1995, *The Guardian* includes the different periods in which his work can be divided and the themes that are present in each of them. Moreover, this newspaper even included quotations from Heaney’s most famous works. Nevertheless, *The Independent* did not find relevant mentioning his work and, in fact, there is no reference to any of his works.

Seeing that, it could be thought that there is a tendency of *The Guardian* to give importance to the work that has led the authors to be the winners of a Nobel Prize and of *The Independent* being the contrary, not giving importance to that matter. However, when the articles from 2005 and 2013 are analysed in order to prove if the tendency is kept, it can be said that this tendency is not followed. In the case of Harold Pinter, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005, both newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, mention his most important works. When focusing in Alice Munro, winner in 2013, both newspapers mention her works although in a different way. Whereas *The Guardian* just mentions some of the works in a brief way, *The Independent* devotes a whole paragraph to this matter. Therefore, although when paying attention to the articles from 1995 the tendency seemed to

be clear, it can be said that the tendency of one newspaper giving more importance to the author's works than the other could be just exceptional.

In spite of all these differences all these articles also have some aspects in common. All of them mention the Swedish Academy in their articles, which is the institution which decides who wins the Nobel Prize. Furthermore, all of them mention the so-called institution with reference to the fact that it usually gives the followers of the Nobel Prize a surprise as their chosen winners are almost always unexpected. This reference is made in the different articles in spite of the newspaper and the year of publication. Moreover, it is presented in a way that makes the reader adopt a damaging or detrimental idea of the Swedish Academy as it seems to be introduced from a negative perspective rather than a more positive one.

As a conclusion, it could be said that the differences in discourse among these articles are more noticeable when dealing with the same news but in different newspapers than if the focus is given to the span of time between articles from the same newspaper. Moreover, although several differences can be found when analysing the discourse of these articles, some common aspects can also be remarked.

7. Complementary Analysis

The previous section, called “The Interpretation of the Data”, was devoted to interpret the results obtained from the detailed analysis of the chosen articles based on Tanskanen’s taxonomy. As a consequence of that interpretation different conclusions were drawn with several tendencies which seemed to be followed by the different newspapers. However, as the sample used could not be so extensive, it seemed interesting and, to some extent, necessary, to add six more articles to the analysis in order to prove if the tendencies are sustained or not, as it has been already mentioned. One of the tendencies that were found dealt with the importance that each of the newspapers gives to the first name or surname of the winner of the Nobel Prize which should be the most relevant word of the articles. The other main tendencies that were found were related to the importance that each of the newspapers gives to the private life of the authors and to their most relevant works.

The first of the tendencies analysed in this complementary section is directly linked to the importance that each of the newspapers gives to the name or the surname of the author. In the interpretation of the data it was concluded that although the name or the surname should be the most relevant word not every newspaper gives the same importance to it. Generally, it was found that *The Guardian* gives more importance to the name or the surname of the winner than *The Independent*. However, the different extension of some of the articles analysed made the tendency slightly unreliable. According to the analysis of the new complementary articles, in 2012, the name of Mo Yan, who was the awarded author, was mentioned up to twelve times in the article belonging to *The Guardian* and nine times in the article from *The Independent*, being again *The Guardian* the newspaper which gives more importance to the name of the winner. In 2011, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature was the Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer. His name appeared eighteen times in the article from *The Guardian* and sixteen times in the one belonging to *The Independent*. Seeing that,

The Guardian continues to be the newspaper that gives more importance to the name of the author although in this case it is not a considerable difference. In the chosen articles from 2010, when Mario Vargas Llosa was the winner of the prestigious award, his name appeared ten times in the article from *The Guardian* whereas in *The Independent* it appears just five times. Nevertheless, this last case is not completely reliable as the extension of the article from *The Independent* is not the same as the one from *The Guardian*, being the first one briefer. In conclusion, it could be pointed out that in general terms the tendency found in the main analysis is sustained. It can be said that *The Guardian* usually gives relatively more importance to the name of the winner than *The Independent* although there can be some exceptions.

The second tendency compared is the one dealing with the relevance given to the private life of the different winners of the Nobel Prize by each of the newspapers. As it was concluded in the previous section, *The Guardian* was the newspaper that seemed to include more aspects of the private life of the writer. This conclusion was drawn from the evidence obtained from two of the three authors analysed. Nevertheless, the two articles on Alice Munro, winner in 2013, showed that the tendency was the other way round. As a consequence, it was concluded that although *The Guardian* tends to include more content dealing with the private life of the author, the tendency could be changing in the last years or simply there could be some exceptions, maybe related to the variable gender, a factor which has not been investigated here but which could be the object of further work. In general, and according to the analysis of the six complementary articles, it can be observed that *The Guardian* keeps on including more aspects of the private life of the author than *The Independent*. In the case of Mo Yan and Tomas Tranströmer, winners of the Nobel Prize in 2012 and 2011 respectively, *The Guardian* is the newspaper that included more information about their private lives and more gossip content. Nevertheless, in the case of Mario Vargas

Llosa, awarded in 2010, *The Independent* includes more controversial aspects about his political life and his change of nationality from Peruvian to Spanish, whereas *The Guardian* includes some private aspects but without that sense of controversy. Taking into account both these results and the previous ones, it can be pointed out that the tendency is sustained and that *The Guardian* tends to include more aspects of the private life of the author in its articles although there can be exceptions.

The last of the tendencies analysed is related to the attention that each of the newspapers gives to the important works that made the authors be the winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature. In the main analysis the tendency was not clear and conclusions could not be drawn, although *The Independent* seemed to be the one giving more relevance to the writer's works. In the case of the complementary articles analysed, in 2012, *The Guardian* mentioned six famous works of the winner devoting a line to each work whereas *The Independent* just mentioned three of them in a short paragraph. However, the difference does not seem to be so relevant when seeing that both newspapers pay more attention to the controversy derived from his way of writing and the different opinions about the Chinese writer winning the prize. The difference is more noticeable in 2011. Whereas *The Guardian* just mentioned two Trótsky's works in a paragraph, *The Independent* mentions five of his works and it even includes important quotations of some of those works. In the case of 2010, *The Independent* just mentioned three works and *The Guardian* mentioned four works explaining each of them in a whole paragraph. However, this difference does not seem to be reliable as the article from *The Independent* is shorter than the other one. As a result of this complementary analysis, the tendency could be said to be unclear although in some clear cases *The Independent* gives more relevance to the author's works. In spite of this conclusion, it can be pointed out that, in general terms, the works are not considered to be one of the most

relevant parts of the articles and that could be the reason why none of the newspapers clearly stands out from the other one.

Furthermore, it can be observed that in general all the analysed articles, both the main articles and the complementary ones, share one aspect. Most of them cite the Swedish Academy making reference to some controversial aspect of the election of the winner, as was mentioned above in the interpretation of the data. This can also be observed in the complementary articles. In the case of Mo Yan, winner in 2012, there are references to the fact that the academy had spent many years choosing European authors or even references to opinion from people who thought his award was an insult to humanity. In 2011, when Tomas Tranströmer was awarded the prize, the fact that he was Swedish as well as the academy was controversial. There was also criticism of the academy in the sense that it was too Eurocentric. Therefore, the Swedish Academy is mentioned in all the articles and it is almost always related to some controversial aspects of their decision.

To conclude, it can be said that the tendencies found in the main analysis are mostly sustained by this complementary analysis, chiefly the importance that each newspaper gives to the name and to the private life of the author. Nevertheless, there should be further research in order to prove whether the unclear tendencies are sustained and whether the clearer ones are maintained, as the sample should be more extensive in order to draw definite conclusions.

8. Conclusion

As a conclusion, it could be pointed out that the aim of this analysis was mainly to provide a case study of how lexical cohesion patterns can be used to detect context and content changes in the presentation and discussion of a given topic in a number of selected media articles which deal with the same piece of news but with a time span of a decade between them. That time span was thought to be one of the bases for the analysis as the differences in lexical cohesion were to be found from one decade to another. The other would be that the chosen articles belonged to two different newspapers: *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Accordingly, at the beginning of the project, the main aim was to find lexical differences from one decade to another, that is, the focus was on chronological differences. However, as the articles were all about a culturally stable topic, the fact that the selected articles belonged to different newspapers was also considered of central interest. Actually most of the relevant lexical differences, which were observed in the frequency analysis and have been discussed in the interpretation of the data, were found from one newspaper to the other, rather than on the treatment each newspaper gave to this news over the years. The data analysed showed that some of these relevant differences dealt with the importance that each of the newspapers gives to details of the personal life of the author, and the times that each of the newspapers mentioned the name or surname of the winner. In general terms, *The Guardian* seemed to give more importance to the name of the author, whereas *The Independent* repeats fewer times the name of the winner. Moreover, there was also a tendency in *The Guardian* to include more private or “gossip” details related to the personal life of the winner, whereas *The Independent* included less private aspects. Nonetheless, and from a chronological perspective, a slight tendency has been observed in *The Independent* that seems to reverse the nature of these results in the last years. This led to the conclusion that major differences in the establishment of lexical cohesion patterns were due to differences between

the two selected newspapers while chronological differences were not as relevant. After the complementary analysis with six more articles from the same newspapers was carried out, the main tendencies found in the interpretation of the data appeared to be sustained, concluding that (a) *The Guardian* generally mentions more times the name of the winner and gives more details of his/her private life, and (b) the author's works are not so relevant for any of the newspapers although *The Independent* tends to include more information about that matter. Further research with a more extensive sample is now needed in order to make definite statements and conclusions, as well as to prove the real validity of the tendencies found in each newspaper and the differences observed from one newspaper to other.

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10. Appendix

10.1. Articles analysed

10/2/2014

The guttural muse | 1990-1999 | Guardian Century

The guttural muse

Seamus Heaney's winning the Nobel Prize hasn't surprised his fellow poets. His odd mix of flickering wit and sturdy rootsiness has made him the greatest Irish poet since Yeats

by Blake Morrison
Friday 6 October 1995
guardian.co.uk

The 18 men and women on the Swedish Academy who choose the Nobel Prize for Literature have been known to spring some surprises. Who, in 1983, would have predicted that the prize would go to the American novelist Pearl Buck? Who would have guessed Elias Canetti, a Bulgarian living almost anonymously in London, in 1981? How many of us in the West had ever heard of, let alone read, last year's winner from Japan, Kenzaburo Oe? The only surprise of this year's award is that it isn't a surprise. Though still, at 56, in his prime, Seamus Heaney has been tipped as a Laureate for some time. His friends Joseph Brodsky and Derek Walcott have both won the award in the past eight years, and as a poet he is at least their equal. He has won most of the honours that it's possible for an English-speaking poet to win. He is highly regarded throughout Europe and in the US, where he teaches for one term a year. He is one of the few living poets British schoolchildren have heard of. He has done time (five years) as Oxford Professor of Poetry. He has even been on "Desert Island Discs". He is Famous Seamus.

The first time I'd had any appreciation of that fame was in Belfast 15 years ago, when I met Heaney, up from the South for the day, at the railway station. We'd not walked 200 yards before a car screeched to a halt and a taxi-driver dashed over excitedly shouting "Mr Heaney, Mr Heaney" and demanding an autograph. It's hard to imagine this happening when Ted Hughes comes up to London.

Heaney's popularity is in part to do with his genial temperament, an odd mix of flickering wit and sturdy rootsiness. Both Prospero and Caliban, he can put a girdle round the world and perform equally well in Harvard seminar rooms, at London publishing parties, in Dublin, Belfast and further afield. Shy but affable, he is his own best ambassador.

Nice men have won the Nobel Literature Prize before (though not often). What in particular was it that commended Heaney to Stockholm? If the Swedish Academy had to suffer from the same time-lag as we do in the translation and appreciation of foreign writers, it would probably still be coming to terms with his early poetry from the late-1960s, which is loud with the slap of spade and earth. The first poem in his first collection, "Digging" ("Between my finger and thumb/The squat pen rests; snug as a gun") not only established Heaney as a precocious talent, but pointed to the essential themes he has pursued ever since: blood and soil; imminent violence; a need to dig

down, through history and language, to unearth the primal sources of the self. The early reviews of Heaney over-emphasised his rusticity and connections to Ted Hughes. One critic, A Alvarez, caricatured him as a lumbering peasant out of touch with the predominantly urban condition of late-20th-century life. His domain was always larger, his demeanour more subtle, and his tone more contemporary than that.

In any case, as schoolchildren here know, and as the Swedish Academy will also know, Heaney has come a long way since the richly sensuous poems of his first two books. His next two, *Wintering Out* and *North*, turned their attention to the mouth-music of dialect words and place-names, and to the troubled history of Belfast and the North. Under duress to "respond" to contemporary violence, terrorism and military repression, Heaney proved he could do reportage with the best of them ("Men die at hand. In blasted street and home/The gelignite's a common sound effect"). But he wasn't altogether comfortable with the results, which violated his deeper, instinctual, feminine muse, and at the end he withdrew, "a wood-kerne escaped from the massacre". *Field Work*, arguably his finest book, written when he'd moved south to County Wicklow, is a further withdrawal, but meditates beautifully on "responsibility", and on the conflicting demands of art and nation. Some of its elegies for dead friends and relations are the finest poems he's written.

In recent years, Heaney has turned to quieter, more domestic themes, back to childhood, and also (at the risk, in the allegorical parts of *The Haw Lantern*, of a kind of poetic Esperanto) to more universal themes. His range as a poet, translator (both from the Irish and from Dante) and as a critic is now so wide that it's hard to know which elements of his work the Swedish Academy was drawn to, but in a brief commendation, special mention was made of his ability to "exalt everyday miracles". This is an allusion to his most recent book, *Seeing Things*, which as its title hints, moves beyond literal annotation of the natural world into something more visionary, ecstatic and

10/2/2014

The guttural muse | 1990-1999 | Guardian Century

transcendental.

Cynics will say that - like the awards to Sholokov and Pasternak, Milosz and Seifert - here is another "political" Laureateship, given to Heaney in the year which has seen the peace process on Northern Ireland begin in earnest. Within an hour of yesterday's announcement, the wires were buzzing with stories of Heaney's alleged keep-everyone-happy chameleon-ism: how, for example, when travelling on the train from Dublin to Belfast he'll switch brands of whiskies at the border. But even supposing the incorruptible Swedes were swayed by extra-literary considerations, the argument is doubtful. In the past, it's seemed that the Nobel Committee has harboured a prejudice against politically clamorous or didactic writers, yet in its brief statement yesterday it commended Heaney for "speaking out as an Irish Catholic about violence in Northern Ireland".

This view of Heaney, as a writer who does, when need be, speak out, is much nearer the mark than the popular view of him in this country, which likes to present him as a man who's even-handed, sit-on-the-fence, without affiliations. Certainly, as Heaney himself admits and dramatises in the poems, he was reared on the attitude "Whatever you say, you say nothing", and is all for the quiet life, if he can get it. But take his open letter to the editors of *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry* (Andrew Motion and myself) in 1983. Heaney took objection to being categorised as "British", and, gently biting the hands that had colonised and anthologised him, declared: "My passport's green." His letter, all 33 stanzas, is a masterly display of tact, embarrassment, apology and sly wit. But in the end, it firmly insists that names, and nationality, do matter. "British, no, the name's not right./Yours truly, Seamus." Heaney, in public, is often a mediator, but no slippery mediator could have written that poem.

10/2/2014

Nobel prize goes to Pinter | Books | theguardian.com

Nobel prize goes to Pinter

Swedish Academy confounds expectations by naming Harold Pinter as this year's laureate

Sarah Crown

theguardian.com, Thursday 13 October 2005 15.34 BST

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Ahead of the game... Harold Pinter. Photograph: Graham Turner

This has been quite a week for literary coups. In an almost entirely unexpected move, the Swedish Academy have this lunchtime announced their decision to award this year's Nobel prize for Literature to the British playwright, author and recent poet, Harold Pinter

and not, as was widely anticipated, to Turkish author Orhan Pamuk or the Syrian poet Adonis.

The Academy, which has handed out the prize since 1901, described Pinter, whose works include *The Birthday Party*, *The Dumb Waiter* and his breakthrough *The Caretaker*, as someone who restored the art form of theatre. In its citation, the Academy said Pinter was "generally seen as the foremost representative of British drama in the second half of the 20th century," and declared him to be an author "who in his plays uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms."

Until today's announcement, Pinter was barely thought

10/2/2014

Nobel prize goes to Pinter | Books | theguardian.com

to be in the running for the prize, one of the most prestigious and (at €1.3m) lucrative in the world. After Pamuk and Adonis (whose real name is Ali Ahmad Said), the writers believed to be under consideration by the Academy included Americans Joyce Carol Oates and Philip Roth, and the Swedish poet Thomas Transtromer, with Margaret Atwood, Milan Kundera and the South Korean poet Ko Un as long-range possibilities. Following on from last year's surprise decision to name the Austrian novelist, playwright and poet Elfriede Jelinek as laureate, however, the secretive Academy has once again confounded the bookies.

Pinter's victory means that the prize has been given to a British writer for the second time in under five years; it was awarded to VS Naipaul in 2001. European writers have won the prize in nine out of the last 10 years so it was widely assumed that this year's award would go to a writer from a different continent.

The son of immigrant Jewish parents, Pinter was born in Hackney, London on October 10, 1930. He himself has said that his youthful encounters with anti-semitism led him to become a dramatist. Without doubt one of Britain's greatest post-war playwrights, his long association with the theatre began when he worked as an actor, under the stage name David Baron. His first play, *The Room*, was performed at Bristol University in 1957; but it was in 1960 with his second full-length play, the absurdist masterpiece *The Caretaker*, that his reputation was established. Known for their menacing pauses, his dark, claustrophobic plays are notorious for their mesmerising ability to strip back the layers of the often banal lives of their characters to reveal the guilt and horror that lie beneath, a feature of his writing which has garnered him the adjective "Pinteresque." He has also written extensively for the cinema: his screenplays include *The Servant* (1963), and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981).

10/2/2014

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Pinter's authorial stance, always radical, has become more and more political in recent years. An outspoken critic of the war in Iraq (he famously called President Bush a "mass murderer" and dubbed Tony Blair a "deluded idiot"), in 2003 he turned to poetry to castigate the leaders of the US and the UK for their decision to go to war (his collection, *War*, was awarded the Wilfred Owen award for poetry). Earlier this year, he announced his decision to retire from playwriting in favour of poetry, declaring on BBC Radio 4 that. "I think I've stopped writing plays now, but I haven't stopped writing poems. I've written 29 plays. Isn't that enough?"

In 2002, Pinter was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus and underwent a course of chemotherapy, which he described as a "personal nightmare". "I've been through the valley of the shadow of death," he said afterwards. "While in many respects I have certain characteristics that I had, I'm also a very changed man." Earlier this week it was announced that he is to act in a production of *Krapp's Last Tape* by Samuel Beckett as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the English Stage Company at London's Royal Court Theatre. Last weekend some of Britain and Ireland's finest actors got together at Dublin's Gate Theatre to celebrate Pinter's 75th birthday, which was on Monday.

Horace Engdahl, the Academy's permanent secretary, said that Pinter was overwhelmed when told he had won the prize. "He did not say many words," he said. "He was very happy."

10/2/2014

Alice Munro wins Nobel prize in literature | Books | The Guardian

Alice Munro wins Nobel prize in literature

Canadian short-story writer, 82, was one of favourites to win honour, awarded in same year she announced retirement

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Charlotte Higgins, chief arts writer

The Guardian, Thursday 10 October 2013 12.33 BST

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Alice Munro, winner of the 2013 Nobel prize in literature. Photograph: Andrew Testa/Rex Features

Modesty, that rare virtue, has this year alighted upon the Nobel prizes.

Physicist Peter Higgs evaporated into a Highland walking tour to evade media attention, then [Alice Munro](#), the 82-year-old doyenne of the short story, outdid him – by being simply unaware that there was a certain literature prize in the offing.

"Mom, you won," said one of her daughters, waking her up with the news.

"I was kind of dazed about what I had won," Munro told the Canadian broadcaster CBC in a brief and rare interview. "I had no idea of it. I don't think I knew I was even on a list until maybe yesterday."

10/2/2014

Alice Munro wins Nobel prize in literature | Books | The Guardian

Munro is the second Canadian-born writer to win be awarded the [Nobel prize for literature](#) – after Saul Bellow – and the 13th woman. "Can this be possible?" she asked. "Really? It seems dreadful there's only 13 of us."

With her acceptance of the 8m Swedish krona (£775,000) prize she joins a rollcall of 110 past winners including Thomas Mann, Harold Pinter, Toni Morrison, Doris Lessing, Albert Camus and Ernest Hemingway.

Frequently compared to Chekhov and Mansfield for the deft originality of her [short stories](#), she had always been among the favourites to win, alongside novelist Haruki Murakami and Belarusian investigative journalist Svetlana Alexievich.

It is a victory that has delighted many of her literary colleagues as well as her devoted readership – to whom she has always seemed something of a cherished secret. That she has been frequently omitted from conventional lists of the greatest writers of her age is perhaps because of her chosen form, the short story, as well as the apparent narrowness of her palette, since most of her works explore the warp and weft of smalltown life in Western Ontario.

"This is the Nobel announcement that has made me happiest in the whole of my life," said novelist AS Byatt, "She has done more for the possibilities and the form of the short story than any other writer I know."

Fans praise her ability to express, in brutally honed sentences, not just the nature of small human hardships and dilemmas, but the very feeling of living within them.

Novelist Anne Enright said: "[Her characters] are like you, actually - or a heightened, more perceptive version of you - the way they think about life and realise things late and carry on."

10/2/2014

Alice Munro wins Nobel prize in literature | Books | The Guardian

The writer and poet Colm Toibin described one of her stories as "tough, tough, but yet written using sentences of the most ordinary kind, and constructed with slow Chekhovian care".

Munro was born Alice Laidlaw on 10 July, 1931, near Wingham, Ontario, and through her father, who was a farmer of silver foxes, traces her ancestry back to James Hogg, author of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*.

As a child "books seem to me to be magic, and I wanted to be part of the magic," [she once told the Guardian](#).

Her first story was published when she was a student at the University of Western Ontario. More followed, and even a book approaching a novel, a Bildungsroman called *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971). It contains a passage marking out the territory of her artistic vision: "what I wanted was every last thing, every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark or walls, every smell, pothole, pain, crack, delusion, held still and held together - radiant, everlasting."

Her [fiction](#) has been published in 17 volumes, including *The Love of a Good Woman* (1998) *The View From Castle Rock* (2006) and, most recently, *Dear Life* (2012) – which she claimed was her valedictory work.

Admiration for Munro is not quite universal. Christian Lorentzen, senior editor at the *London Review of Books*, [recently battered *Dear Life*](#). "Reading 10 of her collections in a row has induced in me not a glow of admiration but a state of mental torpor," he wrote.

He dislikes her repetitiousness of material, he told the *Guardian*: "Minor adulteries committed or contemplated; sibling rivalries; occasionally sibling rivalries and minor adulteries mixed; the slow march of

10/2/2014

Alice Munro wins Nobel prize in literature | Books | The Guardian

dementia or cancer". She was, he said slightly, popular among "readers of the New Yorker wondering what it was like living out in the sticks." However, even Lorentzen was happy Munro had won: he took £400 at the bookie's.

10/2/2014

Seamus Heaney wins Nobel Prize



Seamus Heaney wins Nobel Prize

MARIANNE MACDONALD Arts Reporter

Friday, 6 October 1995

MARIANNE MACDONALD

Arts Reporter

The world learnt of the long-awaited award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Seamus Heaney yesterday - with the exception of the Irish poet himself, who was walking in Greece.

His publishers, Faber and Faber, said through a harassed spokeswoman: "It's a case of him happening to call us, because we don't know where he is. I suppose he might only find out about the prize from the newspapers."

Heaney, 56, was chosen as winner of the award, worth about pounds 635,000, by the Swedish Academy, which praised his "works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past".

It is an honour that has been predicted for the past six years as the Catholic poet - who retired last year as Oxford Professor of Poetry - has inexorably grown in stature.

He will receive the cheque at a ceremony in Stockholm on 10 December, along with the laureates for the other prizes - Chemistry, Physics, Physiology or Medicine, and Peace.

The son of a cattle-dealer, Heaney is regarded as the most important Irish poet since WB Yeats, who was also awarded literature's most prestigious prize in 1923. He is Ireland's fourth winner this century, following Shaw, Yeats and Beckett.

Mary Robinson, the Irish President, said Heaney had brought "great honour to Ireland". Matthew Evans, the chairman of Faber, said: "We are absolutely delighted and very moved by this recognition."

The 1992 Nobel winner, Derek Walcott, said: "As the guardian of Irish poetry, Seamus Heaney has, like his predecessor Yeats, received his just recognition." But Heaney's brother Hugh remained as down-to-earth as the poet is expected to be. "This award won't change him," he said.

Irish patriot, page 3

10/2/2014

John Walsh: Nobel for Pinter, man who unleashed 'the weasel under the cocktail cabinet' - John Walsh - Columnists - The Independent

John Walsh: Nobel for Pinter, man who unleashed 'the weasel under the cocktail cabinet'

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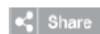
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The prize - worth 10m krone (£735,000) and the highest honour available to any writer in the world - was announced by the Swedish Academy yesterday. "Pinter," said the Academy's chairman, Horace Engdahl, "restored theatre to its basic elements: an enclosed space and unpredictable dialogue, where people are at the mercy of each other and pretence crumbles."

He called Pinter an artist "who in his plays uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms." It's a judgement close to Pinter's own half-serious summation of what his plays are about: "The weasel under the cocktail cabinet."

The announcement was a surprise for Nobel-watchers. Pinter's name has not featured in speculative discussions among the bookish chattering classes. Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish novelist who is now facing a jail sentence, was spoken of as the hottest contender, followed by the American novelist Joyce Carol Oates, the Swedish writer Tomas Tranströmer, and Bob Dylan, whose career has been spectacularly revived in 2005.

Pinter is the first British author to have won the prize since the Trinidad-born novelist V S Naipaul in 2001. He has been garlanded with many previous honours, including the prestigious £30,000 David Cohen lifetime achievement award.

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He refused a knighthood from John Major in 1996, saying he was "unable to accept such an honour from a Conservative government". But he accepted a Companionship of Honour from a Labour one.

His lifetime achievement - as a playwright, poet, screenwriter, polemicist and all-round stirrer-up - was celebrated last week, when a glittering throng of actors, including Michael Gambon, Jeremy Irons, Derek Jacobi, Stephen Rea and Penelope Wilton, gathered in Dublin to toast his 75th birthday on 10 October.

Pinter's career falls into three acts. Early plays, such as *The Caretaker*, *The Birthday Party* and *The Homecoming*, explore a world where characters move in an atmosphere of menace and threat, tremors of approaching violence ripple the surface of family relationships and everyday language is freighted with foreboding.

It's a theatre in which a vacuum cleaner on a darkened stage becomes an agent of terror, where two frightening interrogators bully an innocent man with nonsensical questions, and a young wife, brought home to meet her in-laws, is sent to work as a prostitute

The adjective "Pinteresque" derives from these days, as does the famous stage direction "Pause" which peppers his play-scripts like buckshot.

The 1960s and 1970s were taken up with film screenplays, *The Servant*, *The Go-Between* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, but also produced his most popular play, *Betrayal*, which was based on Pinter's affair with the broadcaster Joan Bakewell.

His later plays - *One for the Road*, *The New World Order*, *Ashes to Ashes*, *Mountain Language*, *Party Time* - evolved from the personal into the political, their subjects state-sponsored violence, torture, the abuse of

power, the crushing of the innocent. Pinter became increasingly vocal, public and declamatory, about Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay,

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/columnists/john-walsh/john-walsh-nobel-for-pinter-man-who-unleashed-the-weasel-under-the-cocktail-cabinet-319486.h...> 1/3

10/2/2014

John Walsh: Nobel for Pinter, man who unleashed 'the weasel under the cocktail cabinet' - John Walsh - Columnists - The Independent

Brazil, before turning the howitzer force of his wrath on America, and her interventions in Latin America, Israel, Afghanistan and Iraq. He fulminated against the Anglo-American alliance ("The United States is a monster out of control ... The country is run by a bunch of criminal lunatics, with Blair as their hired Christian thug"), showing he had lost none of his old fire.

A large, truculent man, invariably dressed in black, he radiates a hum of intensity, a rumble of hard, masculine energy. His posh-stentorian voice tends to slam down like a jackboot on certain words, his conversation is salted with obscenities, and he tends to inspect outsiders (and journalists) with suspicion.

Three years ago, he was diagnosed with cancer of the oesophagus. In February this year, he said: "I think I've stopped writing plays now ... I've written 29 plays. Isn't that enough?" But typically, he crafted a new one called *Voices* - a patchwork of moments from his totalitarian-regime dramas, with music by James Clarke - which had its premiere on Radio 4 on his birthday. He told *The Independent*: "I will continue to write what I want to write until the day I die."

10/2/2014

'I never thought I would win': Alice Munro awarded 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature



'I never thought I would win': Alice Munro awarded 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature

Canadian author described as the 'master of the contemporary short story'

Boyd Tonkin

Thursday, 10 October 2013

Hailing the 13th woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature with a gender-blind turn of phrase, the Swedish Academy today praised Canadian author Alice Munro as a "master of the contemporary short story".

Speculation over the past few days had seen foes of the Academy sharpening their knives for a routine assault on the secretive institution as a friend of (to them) obscure and unread writers. Romanian novelist Mircea Cartarescu, Norwegian dramatist Jon Fosse and - most recently - Russian documentary writer Svetlana Alexievich had all surfaced as favourites.

In the event, the Academy kept up its reputation for surprise by picking a globally acclaimed, popular and accessible English-language writer - as it has since the millennium when bestowing the prize (worth eight million Swedish krona or £770,000) on Doris Lessing, VS Naipaul or Harold Pinter.

"I knew I was in the running, yes, but I never thought I would win," said Munro when contacted by The Canadian Press.

Born Alice Laidlaw to a hard-pressed farming family of Scottish and Irish origins in rural Huron County, Ontario, in 1931, Munro studied at the University of Western Ontario. She married James Munro, later a bookseller, while still a student and did not complete a degree. The couple had four daughters but divorced in 1976; she married her second husband, geographer Gerald Fremlin, in 1977.

Munro published her first collection of stories - *Dance of the Happy Shades* - in 1968 and her 14th, *Dear Life*, in 2012. Over those 45 years, the "Canadian Chekhov" has won both critical reverence and the loyalty of fans across the world for stories that can encapsulate a life within a dozen pages, and for a tender but unsparing gaze on the ordinary events that assume giant dimensions in all our lives.

She underwent heart surgery in 2001 but the new millennium ushered in some of her boldest and frankest work, in collections such as *Runaway* and *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*. In 2009, she won the biennial Man Booker International Prize for career-long achievement.

After her husband's death this April, she announced that *Dear Life* would be her final book. In response, American novelist Jane Smiley wrote: "Thank you for your unembarrassed woman's perspective on the lives of girls and women, but also the lives of boys and men. Thank you for your cruelty as well as your kindness, because the one plus the other is the essence of truthfulness."

Fellow Canadian Margaret Atwood, who acknowledges Munro as a shame-busting, truth-

10/2/2014

'I never thought I would win': Alice Munro awarded 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature

telling pioneer, has stressed the broad life-spanning perspective in her tales: "She writes about the difficulties faced by people who are bigger or smaller than they are expected to be. When her protagonists look back... the older people they have become possess within them all of the people that they have been. She's very good on what people expect, and then on the letdown."

Her Nobel accolade counts as a victory for women authors, for Canadian literature and for the often-marginalised art of the short story. Not since Isaac Bashevis Singer in 1978 - another author who began with the narrow horizons of life in small communities and lent them a universal resonance - has a figure best known for short fiction taken the prize.

Munro has written that, "What I wanted was every last thing, every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark or walls, every smell, pothole, pain, crack, delusion, held still and held together - radiant, everlasting."

Now the world's most solemn literary honour has gone to a modest, immaculate but far-sighted miniaturist. That ringing endorsement of a viewpoint and an art-form that more pompous literati might brand as "domestic" will, for some, be a shockingly radical gesture in itself. Never write off the Nobel.

10.2. Articles Compared

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Nobel prize for literature goes to Mario Vargas Llosa

Peruvian novelist and sometime politician takes literature's highest reward

Richard Lea
theguardian.com, Thursday 7 October 2010 12.50 BST

The Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa today won the 2010 [Nobel prize for literature](#), crowning a career in which he helped spark the global boom in South American literature, launched a failed presidential bid and maintained a 30-year feud with the man he now joins as a Nobel laureate, Gabriel García Márquez.

Cited by the Swedish Academy for "his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt and defeat", the 10m SEK (£1m) award is the culmination of a literary life that began in 1963 with the publication of his novel *The Time of the Hero*, and includes further books such as *Conversation in the*

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/oct/07/nobel-prize-literature-mario-vargas-llosa/print>

1/4

16/7/2014

Nobel prize for literature goes to Mario Vargas Llosa | Books | theguardian.com

Cathedral (1969), *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* (1977) and *The Feast of the Goat* (2000).

"I am very surprised, I did not expect this," Vargas Llosa told Spanish National Radio, saying that he thought it was a joke when he received the call. "It had been years since my name was even mentioned," he added. "It has certainly been a total surprise, a very pleasant surprise, but a surprise nonetheless."

According to the Uruguayan publisher and journalist, Andreas Campomar, the award is "not before time".

"It's something he should have won ages ago," said Campomar, who described himself as "so chuffed for" the author. "I feared that his time might have passed." Campomar acknowledged that a political journey which saw the writer move from supporting the regime of Fidel Castro to running for president on a right-wing platform of reform had made him a "polarising figure", but suggested that the award would be celebrated by

many in South America as a way of "putting Latin American literature back on the map".

"First and foremost, he's a great man of letters," he continued. "He has a formidable style, but as with most Latin American writers, at the bottom of all his work, as well as power, and the abuse of power, is the question of cultural identity - what it means to be a European in this Amerindian continent."

Born in 1936 in the provincial city of Arequipa, Vargas Llosa began working as a crime reporter for the Lima newspaper *La Crónica* at the age of 15. He eloped with his aunt by **MARRIAGE**, Julia Urquidi, in 1955, when he was 19 and she 32, a development saluted by his father as a "virile act". He moved to Paris in 1959 and from there to London and Barcelona, working as a Spanish teacher, broadcaster and journalist and as a visiting professor in universities in Europe and America, before returning to Peru in 1975.

He returned to his homeland in fiction far earlier, however. The Leoncio Prado military academy where he went to school inspired *The Time of the Hero*, the novel that made his name. A vibrant, violent evocation of Peruvian society under military rule, it tells the story of a murder which is covered up to protect the school's reputation. The book was ceremonially burned in the grounds of the academy, and its author barred from the grounds.

His third novel, *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1969), traces the role of a minister in the murder of a notorious figure in the Peruvian underworld. The author and critic Jay Parini, a friend of Vargas Llosa's for some years, called the novel "a consummate portrait of Peru under the malign dictatorship of Manuel Odría. One got to know Peruvian society from such a variety of angles, and the novel is so vivid on the page, fresh and real." He is, Parini suggested, "surely one of the least controversial of writers to get the

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2/4

16/7/2014

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prize. His industry and intelligence are models of their kind. He is a bright spirit, brave and ebullient, and his novels and stories will last."

Vargas Llosa's first marriage ended in divorce in 1964. A year later, he married Patricia Llosa, and wrote a study of his friend Gabriel García Márquez, who became godfather to Vargas Llosa's son. The friendship ended in 1976, after a brawl in a Mexican cinema, though Vargas Llosa allowed an excerpt from his study of Márquez to be published as part of a celebratory edition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, to mark the 40th anniversary of its publication in 2007.

A succession of novels, short stories and plays cemented his literary reputation, but as his fame grew he became increasingly involved in politics, moving steadily away from the Marxism of his early years. As his profile rose he began hosting a talk show on Peruvian television, and backed the conservative government of Fernando Belaúnde Terry from 1980-1985, turning down an invitation in 1984 to become Terry's prime minister.

In 1987 he led protests against a plan to nationalise the Peruvian financial system, drawing 120,000 people to a rally, and launching his own presidential campaign. After three years of death threats and abusive phone calls, however, he was defeated in the second round by the eventual victor, Alberto Fujimori. Vargas Llosa left the country within hours of a defeat he blamed on a "dirty war", taking up Spanish citizenship in 1993. "I didn't lie," he explained. "I said we needed radical reforms and social sacrifices, and in the beginning it worked. But then came the dirty war, presenting my reforms as something that would destroy jobs. It was very effective, especially with the poorest of society. In Latin America we prefer promises to reality."

The Feast of the Goat (2002), widely viewed as his most recent masterpiece, returns to dictatorship, offering a portrait of Rafael L Trujillo Molina, who ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 until 1961. Vargas Llosa draws him as an incontinent hyper-villain, ruled by the outbursts of a body and mind that are out of his control. The novel circles around Trujillo's attempt to have sex with the 14-year-old daughter of his chief minister, and his assassination two weeks later.

He has described it as a "realist treatment of a human being who became a monster", adding that he is distrustful of "the idea that you can build a paradise here in history. That idea of a perfect society lies behind monsters like the Taliban. When you want paradise you produce first extraordinary idealism. But at some time, you produce hell."

Nobel prize for literature goes to Tomas Tranströmer

Swedish poet acclaimed for 'condensed translucent images' which give us 'fresh access to reality'

Richard Lea and Alison Flood

The Guardian, Thursday 6 October 2011 14.36 BST

The Swedish Academy has awarded the 2011 [Nobel prize for literature](#) to one of its own: the Swedish poet [Tomas Tranströmer](#).

Tranströmer becomes the eighth European to win the world's premier literary award in the past 10 years, following the [German novelist Herta Müller in 2009](#), the [French writer JMG le Clézio in 2008](#) and the [British novelist Doris Lessing in 2007](#).

Sweden's most famous poet becomes the 104th literature laureate, and is the first poet to take the laurels since Poland's Wislawa Szymborska in 1996. Praised by the judges for his "condensed translucent images", which give us "fresh access to reality", Tranströmer's surreal explorations of the inner world and its relation to the jagged landscape of his native country have been translated into more than 50 languages.

Peter Englund, permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, admitted that the choice of a Swede could be seen as controversial internationally but said that it hadn't happened for almost 40 years; in 1974, Swedish authors Eyvind Johnson and Harry Martinson took the prize jointly.

"It's not that we spread them around on Swedes each and every year," said Englund. "We have been quite thoughtful about this. We have not been rash in choosing a Swede."

The Scottish poet Robin Fulton, who translated the volume *New Collected Poems* and has worked on Tranströmer's writing for years, said: "In some sense the win was expected – it's looking back on a life's work. He's terribly famous already, just about as famous as a poet could be. Some writers become famous after they get the Nobel – he was famous before."

The poet Robin Robertson, who wrote versions of Tranströmer's poems for the collection *The Deleted World*, said: "Readers of Tomas Tranströmer had almost given up any hope

that this extraordinary poet might ever be recognised by his own country and receive the Nobel prize."

He called the decision "a happy end to a long wait: joy with a wash of relief. Tranströmer is not only Scandinavia's most important poet, he is a writer of world stature – and that has finally been publicly acknowledged."

Fulton said: "Some poets use their own language so densely they won't translate at all. Tranströmer is not one of these. In many ways the language he uses is relatively unadventurous and simple [but] he gives people unusual images [which are] sometimes very surprising and give the reader a shock. That should be what poets do."

Although Englund said that Tranströmer's production had been "sparse – you could fit it into a not too large pocket book, all of it" – he praised the poet's "exquisite" language. "He is writing about the big questions – death, history, memory, nature. Human beings are sort of the prism where all these great entities meet and it makes us important. You can never feel small after reading the poetry of Tomas Tranströmer." Born in Stockholm in 1931 and raised by his mother, a teacher, Tranströmer studied at the University of Stockholm and worked as a psychologist at an institution for young offenders.

His first collection of poetry, *17 Dikter* (17 Poems), was published in 1954, while he was still at college. He has since reflected on his travels in the Balkans, Spain and Africa, and examined the troubled history of the Baltic region through the conflict between sea and land.

He suffered a stroke in 1990 that affected his ability to talk, but has continued to write, with his collection *Sorgegondolen* (The Sorrow Gondola) going on to sell 30,000 copies on its publication in 1996. At a recent appearance in London, his words were read by others, while the poet, who is a keen amateur musician, contributed by playing pieces specially composed for him to play on the piano with only his left hand. "He is very gifted," said Fulton. "He has hardly any words, though. His wife communicates for him."

Tranströmer has described his poems as "meeting places", where dark and light, interior and exterior collide to give a sudden connection with the world, history or ourselves. According to the poet: "The language marches in step with the executioners. Therefore we must get a new language."

Metaphysical and personal

Tomas Tranströmer is Scandinavia's best-known and most influential contemporary poet. Go into any bookshop in his native Sweden, and if they have any poetry at all on their shelves, you can be sure to find the collected Tranströmer, sometimes the only living poet to share space with the Swedish and European classics. A comparable figure

18/7/2014

Nobel prize for literature goes to Tomas Tranströmer | Books | The Guardian

in the English-speaking world would be Seamus Heaney (who has written on Tranströmer).

To win the Nobel prize, a writer has to have a readership in many parts of the world, and Tranströmer has been translated into 50 languages. One of the reasons he has been taken up by so many poets, translators and readers is that his poetry is universal and particular, metaphysical and personal.

There has also been a mistaken sense that he's an easy poet to translate. In fact, his poetry is highly musical and multilayered, with each word or phrase having particular resonances for Swedish readers – sometimes many associations coming together in his particular choice of words.

His early work was rooted in the landscape of the island where he spent his summers in childhood, drawing on the tradition of Swedish nature poetry.

His later work is more personal, open and relaxed, reflecting his broad interests: travel, music, painting, archaeology and natural sciences.

He has become known as a "buzzard poet", a term coined by a fellow-poet Lasse Söderberg to express how he views the world from a height, in a mystic dimension, while bringing every detail of the natural world into sharp focus. His poems are often explorations of the borderland between sleep and waking, between the conscious and unconscious states.

Neil Astley

Neil Astley is editor of Bloodaxe Books, which most recently published Tranströmer's New Collected Poems

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Mo Yan wins Nobel prize in literature 2012

Novelist, the first ever Chinese literature Nobel laureate, praised for 'hallucinatory realism'

Alison Flood

theguardian.com, Thursday 11 October 2012 12.38 BST

Chinese author **Mo Yan**, who left school for a life working the fields at the age of 12, has become the first Chinese citizen ever to win the Nobel prize in literature, praised by the Swedish Academy for merging "folk tales, history and the contemporary" with "hallucinatory realism".

The win makes Mo Yan the first Chinese citizen to win the Nobel in its 111-year history: although Gao Xingjian won in 2000, and was born in China, he is now a French citizen; and although Pearl Buck took the prize in 1938, for "her rich and truly epic descriptions of peasant life in China and for her biographical masterpieces", she is an American author.

The Nobel, worth eight million kronor, goes to the writer "who shall have produced in the field of literature the most outstanding work in an ideal direction", with previous winners including Samuel Beckett, Doris Lessing and, last year, the Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer. Over the past month the Chinese press has become increasingly vocal about the possibility of a Chinese writer taking the award, with commentators equating "bagging the prize to Chinese literature gaining the world's recognition".

With the Nobel going to a European seven times in the last decade, all evidence was pointing to a winner from outside Europe, and Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami emerged as the frontrunner at betting firm Ladbrokes. Mo Yan, at 9/1, "definitely slipped under the radar", said the firm's spokesman Alex Donohue.

Born in 1955 to parents who were farmers, Mo Yan - a pseudonym for Guan Moye; the pen name means "don't speak" - grew up in Gaomi in Shandong province in north-eastern China. The cultural revolution forced him to leave school at 12, and he went to work in the fields, completing his education in the army. He published his first book in 1981, but found literary success in 1987 with Hong gaoliang jiazou (Red Sorghum), a novel

16/7/2014

Mo Yan wins Nobel prize in literature 2012 | Books | theguardian.com

that an internationally successful movie by director Zhang Yimou, set against the horrific events that unfolded as Japan invaded China in the 1930s.

"He writes about the peasantry, about life in the countryside, about people struggling to survive, struggling for their dignity, sometimes winning but most of the time losing," said permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy Peter Englund, announcing the win. "The basis for his books was laid when as a child he listened to folktales. The

description magical realism has been used about him, but I think that is belittling him – this isn't something he's picked up from Gabriel García Márquez, but something which is very much his own. With the supernatural going in to the ordinary, he's an extremely original narrator."

Informing Mo Yan of his win today, Englund said the author, who was at the home in China where he lives with his 90-year-old father – was "overjoyed and scared".

Nicky Harman, a Chinese translator and lecturer at Imperial College, London, hailed Mo Yan's win as "amazing" news. "He's a great writer and will now be better known. That's good news for all Chinese writers, because it will bring English readers a bit closer," she said. "I'm sure they will be deliriously happy in China. He's very well thought of there."

SOAS professor of Chinese Michel Hockx, who knows Mo Yan personally, said the author was probably the most translated living Chinese writer, "very well known, very respected [and] although he's had his spats with the literary censors ... generally speaking not regarded as politically sensitive".

Hockx dismissed criticism from China that the author is "too close to the establishment to merit the Nobel". "I don't like the idea that Chinese writers are only good if they challenge the government – a good writer is a good writer. It's not a good yard stick of anything; are the only good British writers the ones who speak out against the war?" he said. "Choosing a dissident is the safe choice [for the Nobel committee] – to choose an author with a strong literary reputation, because of the strength and power of his work, is a very brave choice."

Speaking to Granta earlier this year, Mo Yan – one of a group of Chinese writers to travel to the UK for the London Book Fair – said that avoiding censorship was a matter of subtlety. "Many approaches to literature have political bearings, for example in our real life there might be some sharp or sensitive issues that they do not wish to touch upon. At such a juncture a writer can inject their own imagination to isolate them from the real world or maybe they can exaggerate the situation – making sure it is bold, vivid and has the signature of our real world. So, actually I believe these limitations or censorship is great for literature creation," he said.

Mo Yan, according to Hockx, "knows how to write a good story", filling his tales of

16/7/2014

Mo Yan wins Nobel prize in literature 2012 | Books | theguardian.com

remote communities "with a magical atmosphere, without shying away from the harsh and sometimes violent realities that he has witnessed". His 1996 novel *Fengru feitun*, translated into English as *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* in 2004, starts with the story of Xuan'er, six months old in 1900 when she is abandoned in a vat of flour, and follows her family's life through the war with Japan and the cultural revolution. *Wa (Frog)*, Mo Yan's most recent novel, tells of the consequences of the single-child policy implemented in China through the story of a rural gynaecologist.

"He expertly handles the use of local language and dialect, and as his career progressed he became increasingly experimental with his narration, to the extent that he once even made himself a character in one of his novels," said Hockx. "All his novels create unique individual realities, quite different from the political stories that were told about the countryside in the Maoist years, when Mo Yan grew up."

The eminent professor of Chinese literature Howard Goldblatt, who has translated many of Mo Yan's works into English, compared the author's writing to Dickens in a recent interview with China Daily, saying that both write "big, bold works with florid, imagistic, powerful writing and a strong moral core".

Goldblatt said that the author's satirical novel *Jiuguo (The Republic of Wine)* "may be the most technically innovative and sophisticated novel from China I've read", while his *Shengsi pilao (Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out)* is "a brilliant extended fable", and *Tanxiangxing (Sandalwood Death)* "is, as the author contends, musical in its beauty".

17/7/2014

Peru's Mario Vargas Llosa wins Nobel Literature Prize



Peru's Mario Vargas Llosa wins Nobel Literature Prize

AFP

Thursday, 7 October 2010

Peruvian-Spanish author Mario Vargas Llosa won the 2010 Nobel Literature Prize on Thursday, the Swedish Academy said.

The 74-year-old author, a one-time presidential candidate, is best known for works such as "Conversation in the Cathedral" and "The Feast of the Goat" but is also a prolific journalist.

Announcing the award, the academy hailed "his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat."

Vargas Llosa has won a string of major literary awards, including the most prestigious of all for a Spanish-language author, the Cervantes Prize, and had often been tipped to win the Nobel prize.

Born in Arequipa, Peru, Vargas Llosa grew up with his mother and grandfather in the city of Cochabamba in Bolivia before moving back to Peru in 1946.

He then became a journalist, moving to France in 1959 where he worked as a language teacher and as a journalist for Agence France-Presse as well as for French television before establishing his reputation as an author.

His first major success came with the novel "The Green House" which appeared in English in 1966. He has since continued to produce a string of bestsellers, many of which deal with political themes and the troubled history of Latin America.

He ran for the Peruvian presidency in 1990 on a centre-right ticket, but was badly beaten by Alberto Fujimori, later to be disgraced after a string of political scandals.

Disappointed by his defeat and upset at the dictatorial turn of Fujimori's 1990-2000 regime, Vargas Llosa took on Spanish nationality in 1993 - a controversial move that angered many Peruvians.

The following year he was elected to the Spain's Royal Academy of Language, the final authority in Spanish-language grammar and vocabulary.

Last year, German author Herta Mueller took the Nobel Literature Prize for her work inspired by her life under Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship in Romania, and the year before it went to French author Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio.

The Literature Prize is the fourth of six awarded this Nobel season, following the prizes for medicine, physics and chemistry earlier this week.

Next in line is the other big crowd-pleaser, the Peace Prize, which will be announced on Friday, with many observers saying a Chinese dissident might follow in the footsteps of US President Barack Obama, who took the honour last year.

The Economics Prize will wrap up the Nobel season on Monday, October 11.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/peru-mario-vargas-losa-wins-nobel-literature-prize-2100582.html?printService=print>

1/2

17/7/2014

Peru's Mario Vargas Llosa wins Nobel Literature Prize

This year's laureates will receive 10 million Swedish kronor (1.49 million dollars, 1.09 million euros) which can be split between up to three winners per prize.

The Peace Prize will be handed out in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death in 1896 of the prize's creator, Swedish industrialist and inventor of dynamite Alfred Nobel.

The other Nobel laureates will pick up their prizes in Stockholm on the same day.

The prizes were first awarded in 1901.

17/7/2014

Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer awarded Nobel Prize



Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer awarded Nobel Prize

By Karl Ritter and Malin Rising

Thursday, 6 October 2011

The 2011 Nobel Prize in literature was awarded to Tomas Tranströmer of Sweden today, whose surrealistic works about the mysteries of the human mind won him wide recognition as the most influential Scandinavian poet of recent decades.

Characterized by powerful imagery, Tranströmer's poems are often built around his own experiences and infused with his love of music and nature. His later poems are darker, probing existential questions of life, death and disease.

Tranströmer is considered a master of metaphor, weaving powerful images into his poems without much embellishment. The award citation noted that his collections "are characterized by economy."

"Waking up is a parachute jump from dreams. Free of the suffocating turbulence the traveler sinks toward the green zone of morning," reads the prelude to "The Great Enigma," his last collection, released in Swedish in 2004 and two years later in English.

"Things flare up. From the viewpoint of the quivering lark he is aware of the huge root systems of the trees, their swaying underground lamps," Tranströmer wrote. "But aboveground there's greenery — a tropical flood of it — with lifted arms, listening to the beat of an invisible pump."

A psychologist and avid amateur pianist, Tranströmer (TRAWN-stroh-mur), 80, suffered a stroke in 1990 that left him half-paralyzed and largely unable to speak, but he continued to write, publishing "The Sorrow Gondola" in 1996 and the "The Great Enigma." He has since retired from writing.

Tranströmer has been a perennial favorite for the Nobel and in recent years Swedish journalists have waited outside Tranströmer's apartment in Stockholm on the day the 10 million kronor (\$1.5 million) award is announced.

17/7/2014

Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer awarded Nobel Prize

"He is overjoyed," Anna Tillgren, spokeswoman for Tranströmer's publisher Bonniers, told reporters at the apartment Thursday. She said Tranströmer had managed to utter two words after learning about the Nobel: "very good."

"He's writing about big questions. He's writing about death, he's writing about history and memory, and nature," said Peter Englund, permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, which awards the prize.

Tranströmer is the first Swede to receive the literature prize since Eyvind Johnson and Harry Martinson shared it in 1974. Englund has said that the academy is especially cautious about awarding Swedish writers out of fear of being seen as biased.

"I think we've been quite thoughtful and haven't been rash," Englund said after the award was announced.

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt said the award made him "happy and proud," and he hoped it would draw global attention to Swedish literature.

The Swedish Academy has also been criticized for being too Euro-centric, ignoring writers from other parts of the world. Seven of the last 10 winners have been Europeans.

While critics are impressed by the beauty of his writing, some have criticized it for a lack of social commentary, so often found in the works of other Nobel winners, including last year's laureate Mario Vargas Llosa of Peru.

Humble and unpretentious, Tranströmer has always avoided political debates and has stayed away from the public eye as much as possible.

"I think dad above all thinks this is great for his readers," his daughter, Paula Tranströmer, said about the prize. "That's most important to him."

Born in Stockholm in 1931, Tranströmer was raised by his mother, a teacher, after she divorced his father — a journalist. He started writing poetry while studying at the Sodra Latin school in Stockholm.

His work was published in several journals before he published his first book of poetry, "17 poems," in 1954, winning much acclaim in Sweden.

17/7/2014

Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer awarded Nobel Prize

He studied literature, history, poetics, the history of religion and psychology at Stockholm University, and later divided his time between poetry and his work as a psychologist. Between 1960 and 1966 he worked as psychologist at Røxtuna, an institution for juvenile offenders.

Tranströmer's most famous works include the 1966 "Windows and Stones," in which he depicts themes from his many travels, and "Baltics" from 1974.

Since the 1950's, Tranströmer has had a close friendship with American poet Robert Bly, who translated many of his works into English. In 2001, Tranströmer's Swedish publishing house Bonniers published the correspondence between the two writers in the book "Air Mail."

Earlier this year, Bonniers released a collection of his works between 1954 and 2004 to celebrate the poet's 80th birthday.

"We have waited and waited, we had nearly stopped hoping (for a Nobel) but still not given up the last strand of hope," said Tillgren, the Bonniers spokeswoman. "We are overwhelmed. This is the happiest day ever for many of us working at the publishing house."

British bookmaker Ladbrokes said a surge of late bets on Thursday had made Tranströmer the 4/6 favorite for the prize.

"He was second favorite to begin with and stayed quite prominent throughout," said spokesman Alex Donohue.

"This morning he became the favorite after a surge of late bets, several of which were from Sweden," he said, adding the betting pattern wasn't suspicious.

"The nearer you get to the event, there are always going to be people who have an idea of what is going on ... we're certainly not suggesting anything untoward was going on."

The Nobel Prize, considered one of the highest accolades in literature, is given only to living writers. The academy's choices sometimes spark heated debate among literature experts.

17/7/2014

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Some of its previous picks were obscure even to literature experts, while others were widely celebrated authors decorated with numerous other awards.

Acclaimed writers who never won the Nobel include Leo Tolstoy, Marcel Proust, James Joyce and Graham Greene.

AP

17/7/2014

Ai Weiwei brands Nobel Prize for Literature decision an 'insult to humanity' as China's Mo Yan named winner



Ai Weiwei brands Nobel Prize for Literature decision an 'insult to humanity' as China's Mo Yan named winner

Nick Clark and Clifford Coonan

Thursday, 11 October 2012

One of the "grand old men" of Chinese literature, who has chronicled the changing landscape of the country in the 20th century, was yesterday awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. Yet the news sparked fury from dissident artist Ai Weiwei, who called it an "insult to humanity and to literature".

Peter Englund, permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, announced at midday that Mo Yan was the 2012 Nobel Literature Prize winner, saying the writer "with hallucinatory realism, merges folk tales, history and the contemporary."

Michel Hockx, professor of Chinese at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, said: "He's one of the grand old men of Chinese literature," adding: "He has a substantial oeuvre. He writes big novels about big issues."

Mo Yan, was hailed in his home country. The Communist Party's official organ, the People's Daily was ecstatic in its reaction. "Mo Yan wins the Nobel Prize for Literature! This is the first Chinese writer who has won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Chinese writers have waited too long, the Chinese people have waited too long."

The paper ignored Gao Xingjian, who won the prize in 2000, because the author had emigrated and taken French citizenship by the time of the award, which was criticised by the Chinese Government.

Artist Ai Weiwei, however, was furious that Mo Yan had won. "Giving the award to a writer like this is an insult to humanity and to literature. It's shameful for the committee to have made this selection which does not live up to the previous quality of literature in the award."

The author deals with "big issues but is not a political activist," Professor Hockx said. Mr Ai pointed to Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo who is in jail for subversion, before slamming Mo Yan for having "no involvement with the contemporary struggle". He added: "You can never separate literature and struggle from today's current political situation. China is a state with no freedom of expression."

The dissident artist's views were not shared by award-winning Chinese film director and novelist Xiaolu Guo, who said: "His writings are deeply rooted in the Chinese peasant soil and in the historical context.

"I am so glad that he won, because this prize will open up a much deeper understanding of what Chinese literature's essence really is in the contemporary world - beyond all

17/7/2014

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superficial discussion focused on a clichéd China and economic reports.”

Mo Yan, who was born in the Shandong province, rose to fame in the 1980s as part of a generation “who were writing novels that hadn’t been seen before,” the professor said, adding: “He is possibly the most translated living Chinese author, and has built up a strong following abroad.”

He was in the UK earlier this year to attend the London Book Fair, and was one of the star attractions. “He has considerable standing,” the professor said. The author’s real name is Guan Moye. Mo Yan is a pen name that means “do not speak”.

His most famous global work is *Red Sorghum*, published in Chinese in 1987, which was later made into a film. Others include *The Garlic Ballads* and *Big Breasts & Wide Hips*.

“How do you write about the history of 20 century China?” Professor Hockyx said. “His answer has always to tackle the subject on a local level. He is not overtly political, but breaks down the official narrative and shows it from the perspective of those living in a rural area.”

A spokeswoman for Methuen, which has published three of his titles, said the group was “pleased to learn that Mo Yan has received the recognition that he justly deserves”.

Last year the prize was awarded to Swedish writer Tomas Transtomer, who followed Mario Vargas Llosa in 2010. Other recent winners of the 111-year old prize have included Doris Lessing, Harold Pinter and Orhan Pamuk.