

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY  
OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN, GAILLIMH  
SEMESTER II EXAMINATIONS, 2004-2005

FINAL ARTS SPANISH  
Unit Value: 10

SH301 SPANISH LANGUAGE III: PAPER II  
SH334.II SPANISH FOR VISITING STUDENTS III

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Time allowed: three hours.  
Answer both questions.

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Translate the following passages into Spanish:

1. In that dark winter, there were two police cars that appeared to have landed like spaceships out of the early morning light of the street. I saw their gleaming metal reflected in the window glass of the house next door as they took off with us. But first there was the search. A bright figure came through the bedroom door and stood with his back to the wall, switching the light on and off. He was shouting, but I was numb with shock and could see only his mouth opening and closing. They were, I knew, looking for the gun I had found the afternoon before in the bottom drawer inside the wardrobe of my sisters' room.

It was a long pistol which I had smuggled out the back to show to some boys from Fahan Street. I had been warned never even to mention the gun which, I was told, had been a gift to my father from a young German sailor, whose submarine had been brought in to the port at the end of the war. He had been held with about thirty others in huts down by the docks, and my father used to bring him extra sandwiches or milk every lunch-time when he was helping to wire up the huts for light and heat. Before he went away the young sailor gave my father the gun as a memento. But since we had cousins in gaol, we were a marked family and had to be careful. Young as I was, I was very stupid.

While we were gathered around the gun, measuring its length against our arms, I had felt eyes watching. Fogey McKeever, known to be a police informer, was at the end of the lane looking on. He was a young man of twenty or so with a bright smile and wide-spaced, rounded eyes. He had seen me bring the gun back into the house.

Seamus Deane, *Reading in the Dark* (1996) (adapted)

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2. Language must change. Even the most extreme pedant should acknowledge that. If it did not change it would stay the same. How's that for stating the obvious? Yet many yearn for the language of Shakespeare or Milton or Dickens. How rich their language sounds as we read and hear it today. What a great deal we have lost. Well, up to a point. If we spoke in the language of Shakespeare today there would be no way of describing soap operas or Premier League football. So it wouldn't necessarily be all bad. But on balance the drawbacks would outweigh the benefits.

The question is not whether language should change but how. This is why it is a mistake to talk about 'defending' the language. Defence implies building barricades or digging ditches. It is about keeping the invader out, rather than allowing him in and winning him over to your side. Instead of defending every lost cause that comes limping down the track we should be finding ways to keep what is vital and exploiting the infinite capacity of language to grow and enrich itself. Language serves us well when it allows us to become ever more expressive. There are dozens of different forces acting on language at any one time and some have the power to do the opposite of that. Instead of encouraging ever greater subtlety and refinement they coarsen and diminish. Taken to the most absurd extreme, Hamlet's soliloquy would (as various people have humorously pointed out) go something like this: 'To be or not to be... whatever'.

So, the point here is simple. If something expands our power of expression it is good, but if it limits it, it is bad. It is very bad indeed when words with clearly different meanings are used interchangeably. Distinction expands our scope for expression. Its removal constrains it.

John Humphrys, *Lost For Words* (2004) (adapted)