

RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ, Félix (2014): *Diccionario de la droga: vocabulario general y argot*, Madrid, Arco/Libros, LV + 563 pp.

The deluge of drugs is upon us. We are flooded by them. Drugs (narcotics) have always been with us, but our times seem characterized by their all-pervasiveness, social acceptance (and/or covert prestige), variety and constant renewal, the artificial ones being those that most rapidly change in substance, usage and use. Due to this, a dictionary such as the one under perusal is of marked importance, despite the fact that some of the terms registered may be fleeting. (Thanks to modern techniques and technology, lexicographers of today have a decided advantage over their predecessors, for they can document much more speedily and with accuracy the ever-surfacing terms which may for a time be in vogue and are later banished to a limbo of passive vocabulary—or they may simply disappear from speech and mind if they have not been recorded). The *Diccionario de la droga: vocabulario general y argot* will assure us that those that may fall out of usage will be adequately documented (jargon and slang, we know, can move along much faster than any other language area) before this happens. The adjective «adequately» refers to the assiduousness with which Rodríguez González covers a number of aspects of vocabulary, usage, meaning and register, cross references entries and establishes etymologies and translations from English to Spanish and/or vice versa.

Since drugs will continue to be with us for as long as we can foresee, humans being what we are, the latter part of the 20th century singled out only by a freer use and wider acceptance of narcotics—legal or not—and an increasing production of the artificial kind as mentioned before—no walls stop the movement of drugs from one country to another—the study of the phenomena related to them has become a subject for social scientists of varying hue. It is part and parcel of, among them, linguists, one of whose purposes is to describe speech. This is what Rodríguez González has committed himself to do, in reference to Peninsular Spanish, because the elements of fringe or non-mainstream groups remain so only for a time, for they seep into general usage and become current among majorities. (For instance, «bajón», originally referred to the waning effect of a drug on the user; it is now a synonym of ‘anticlimax’, ‘depression’ or ‘frustration’ in certain areas).

The illegal (or illegally used) drug industry, unfortunately of world wide import, is certainly not limited to street vendors and/or users. It reaches into and commingles with the universe of terrorism and money laundering. Even more, it delves into areas that would shock some well-meaning folk: governmental corruption, human trafficking and/or human slavery, the blight that law enforcement looks on with dismay. Therefore, learning about the ups and downs, twists and turns revealed in its lexical varieties is essential not only for the members of law enforcement who may need to be up to date with the common terms, but also for the general public. This is what is done in the *Diccionario de la droga*, which documents a wide, ever-changing swath of contemporary language.

The compiler of this substantial tome, Félix Rodríguez González, has etched his name in the field of Spanish lexicography by dint of publications appearing over the years. Those that, off-hand, come to mind, of which Rodríguez González is either author, editor or coordinator are *Prensa y lenguaje político* (1991), *Spanish Loanwords in the English Language* (1996), *Nuevo Diccionario de anglicismos* (1997), *El lenguaje de los jóvenes* (2002), *Diccionario gay-lésbico* (2008), *Diccionario del sexo y el erotismo* (2011) or his *Gran diccionario de anglicismos* (2017). They are not the only ones, though they point to continuous research and coherent organization of different materials.

By training an anglicist, Rodríguez González has most often referred to the use of anglicisms in Spanish, shedding light on real or purported words of English origin as used in Spanish

(Rodríguez 2013 is a clear example of how many words and/or expressions believed to be of English origin have entered Spanish from other languages). This is very much in the tradition of the late Emilio Lorenzo, whose well-researched papers and diligent observation of the Spanish language proved his deep knowledge of his mother tongue and its changes over the years due to foreign influence, and which garnered the erudite professor a well-earned seat in the Real Academia Española. (A scholar of similar background and elan seems lacking in the institution today).

Enthusiasm for an oeuvre such as this should not mask that all will not be satisfied with it. Items will always be missing. (Examples unnecessary due to the permanently changing ambience of drug use). The author perhaps leans too much on English. (Why not mention non-Anglic sources with equal insistence?). Some definitions are inadequate, especially when they include drug jargon as part of the metalanguage. (See *churizada*, defined as «Acción y efecto de *chutarse*», *chutarse* being an inappropriate term for scientific writing. Mistakes of this nature are not limited to this example, but rather are repeated throughout. There are, also, examples that do not seem entirely appropriate either due to their length or additions. (See *jena*, that refers to *gena*). But, despite these caveats and others, is this dictionary worthy, recommendable? By all means, yes.

Towards the attainable and objective goal of registering contemporary Spanish usage, the needful *Diccionario de la droga: vocabulario general y argot*, is —and will remain for quite some time— of the greatest help and referral. When many of its entries have passed away or been modified, along with the (sadly) eager users of the signifiant/signifié, the *Diccionario de la droga* will still be of use to scholars checking the meanderings of European Spanish of the 20th and 21st centuries in this particular field.

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