

Celia M^a Cruz Rus (U Málaga), “Distinguishing neo-Edwardianism from neo-Victorianism”

Ever since the 1930s, with Vita Sackville-West's *The Edwardians* (1930), representations of the Edwardian period can be found in British fiction. However, those have evolved throughout the years, as neo-Edwardian novels seem to incorporate postmodern ideas and share more features with neo-Victorian fiction than with their rather conservative predecessors. Furthermore, some of these novels, in which the crucial parts of the action take place in the Edwardian era, start in the Victorian period.

Aligned with current debates in historiography about periodization of the late nineteenth - early twentieth century, this paper aims to add a new point of view by analysing recent representations of the Edwardians in contemporary fiction through a close analysis of novels that could be called neo-Edwardian and show ways in which they collide with and differ from representations of the Victorians, as it is the case with Julian Barnes's *Arthur & George* (2005) and Tracy Chevalier's *Falling Angels* (2001) among others.

In order to do so, it will be necessary to revisit Linda Hutcheon's theories about postmodern historical fiction found in her *Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) and reach recent critical trends like the ones appearing in Nicola Parsons and Kate Mitchell's *Reading Historical Fiction: The Revenant and Remembered Past* (2013), which show an evolution away from historiographic metafiction. Also, the definition of neo-Victorianism provided by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewelyn in *Neo-Victorianism: The Victorians in the Twenty-First Century, 1999-2005* (2010) will be essential to articulate this paper.

Out of this exploration, the question whether neo-Edwardian novels talk about the twenty-first century in spite of their setting will arise too, re-opening the discussion on nostalgia initiated in the 1980s.

As a result, it will be shown that, although the relationship between neo-Edwardian fiction and neo-Victorianism is close, the former can be interpreted as a different subgenre with quite an ambivalent attitude towards the past, ranging from nostalgia to an anti-nostalgic impulse.