

## Definite Adjective Nominalizations in Spanish

Xavier Villalba

Xavier.Villalba<at>uab.cat

### 1 Introduction\*

The exact denotation of nominalizations based on property-denoting adjectives has been a matter of much concern in formal semantics, where a number of proposals have been suggested in terms of type-shift operations —e.g. the iota operator and its modifications as in Partee (1986)— or equivalent devices —e.g. Chierchia (1982) nominalization operator. Yet this interest has been mainly aimed at lexical A-to-N rules, without taking into account the rich gamut of nominal constructions involved. One recent attempt to fill this gap is Friederike Moltmann's work (Moltmann 2004a, b), who resorts to *tropes*, a concept borrowed from descriptive metaphysics. For her, the nominalization *John's honesty* denotes a trope, defined as a concrete instantiation of a property (that of being honest) in an individual (John). In contrast, the universal *honesty* would be the abstract representation of all concrete instantiations of the property of being honest (i.e. a kind of tropes).

The main goal of this article will be considering the viability of extending Moltmann's proposal to Spanish, which, besides the standard deadjectival lexical nominalization (1b), counts with a specialized syntactic nominalizer unique in Romance, the neuter article *lo* (1c):

- (1) (a) Juan es honesto.  
Juan is honest  
'Juan is honest.'
- (b) la honestidad (de Juan)  
the.F honesty of Juan  
'Juan's honesty'
- (c) lo honesto (de Juan)  
LO honest of Juan  
'Juan's honesty'

Since *prima facie* both standard and *lo*-nominalizations seem suitable candidates for a trope analysis along the lines suggested by Moltmann for English, we will explore in depth to which extent both constructions denote the very same semantic object. Particularly, grounding on corpus evidence, I will take as crucial the possibility of deriving tropes from two different sources of property-denoting elements. On the one hand, I will follow standard practice in considering adjectives (*honest*) to denote properties. On the other hand, I will follow Levinson (1976, 1980) in arguing that bare singular nominalizations (*honesty*) denote *qualities*, a more abstract type of attribute. As I will argue, this enrichment of our ontology will allow us to explain not only the disparate behavior of each nominalization construction

---

\* I would like to thank M. Teresa Espinal for her kind invitation to participate in the *IV Nereus International Workshop*, and for her patience during the manuscript preparation. Moreover, I am indebted to her for pointing out to me the relevance of Friederike Moltmann's work on tropes to the research on *lo*-nominalizations that Anna Bartra-Kaufmann and myself have been conducting in the later years. Obviously, as a consequence of this long-term collaboration, Anna's profound linguistic knowledge and sagacity permeate many parts of this paper, even though all inadequacies can only be attributed to me. I am also indebted with Louise McNally for her intelligent remarks, which have contributed to improve the paper. This research has been supported by grants HUM2006-13295-C02-01/FILO (MEC/FEDER), and 2005SGR-00753 (DURSI).

regarding genericity, but the special mixed behavior of bare abstract nouns in Spanish halfway between properties and individuals, as well.

The structure of the article is the following. In section 2, we will introduce Moltmann's theory of tropes as applied to English deadjectival nominalizations. Then, in section 3, I will consider in some detail the empirical challenges that Spanish poses to Moltmann's treatment of nominalizations. Section 4 will then be devoted to present my alternative proposal, which combines the trope analysis with the property-quality distinction originally developed by Jerrold Levinson. Finally, section 5 will raise the main conclusions of the article.

## 2 Tropes

Let us begin with the very concept of trope:

A trope is an instance or bit (not an exemplification) of a property or a relation; e.g. Clinton's eloquence, Sydney's beauty, or Pierre's love of Heloise. Clinton's eloquence is understood here not as Clinton's participating in the universal eloquence, nor as the peculiar quality of Clinton's eloquence, but simply as Clinton's bit of eloquence, the eloquence that he and he alone has. Similarly, Pierre's love is not his participation in love as such, nor the special way he loves, but the loving peculiar to Pierre as directed toward Heloise.

*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. *trope*

While the concept of trope has a long-run tradition in the metaphysical literature (including Plato, Aristotle, Avicenna, Averroës, Thomas, Scotus, Buridan, Suárez, Leibniz, Husserl, or Russell) as denoting a particular instantiation of a universal property in an individual, its development corresponds to the second half of the twentieth century through the work of P. Strawson, D. C. Williams (to which the name *trope* is due), and N. Wolterstorff, among others (Strawson 1953-4, Williams 1953, Wolterstorff 1970). Yet, the linguistic interest in tropes, and particularly its application to the semantics of nominalizations is due to Friederike Moltmann (Moltmann 2004a,b). Her basic idea is that tropes (e.g. *John's honesty*) are more concrete entities than the (universal) properties they particularize (that of being honest) in several respects, particularly tropes are entities situated in space and time, just as individuals are. In order to show this, she builds up a series of linguistic tests, which I cannot reproduce in full. Just to help the reader to catch her point, I am focusing on three features: spatiotemporal location, causation, and perception.

First, since tropes are particular instantiations of abstract properties, they can be placed on temporal and spatial axes:

- (2) John's happiness lasted only one year.

In contrast, a property cannot get such an interpretation. Therefore, a sentence like

- (3) Happiness lasted only one year.

can only be understood as referring to a particular instance of happiness salient enough in the context, not as involving a predication about the abstract property of being happy; as, for example, in the following context:

- (4) We married ten years ago. Happiness lasted only one year.

Second, since they are spatiotemporal entities, tropes can get involved in causal relations.

(5) The redness of the apple made Mary buy it.

In contrast, properties cannot under any natural reading.

(6) <sup>#</sup>Redness made Mary buy the apple.

Again, in order to rescue this utterance, we should provide it with a particularized reading salient enough in the context, as in the following case:

(7) Those apples were juicy, and crispy, but it was (their) redness what made Mary buy them.

Finally, tropes and properties contrast with respect to perception: the former can be perceived; the latter cannot. So then one can naturally realize or observe or note the redness of an apple, but one cannot realize or observe or note redness aside from an individual instantiating it. That's why to make the following sentences coherent, we systematically attribute the nominal a particularized reading through a contextually salient referent.

(8) John realized/observed/noted redness (<sup>#</sup>in that apple).

To sum up, the picture stemming from Moltmann (2004a,b) introduces a new ontological category, tropes, which are typically realized by means of deadjectival nominalizations with a complement introducing the individual which the property applies to: *John's honesty*. Moreover, just as individuals, tropes may construct a corresponding kind, which we represent by means of bare nominalizations: *honesty*. Schematically:

**Table (1): Range of entities in Moltmann's analysis**

	trope	individual	quantity
<i>kind</i>	honesty	tigers	water
<i>particular</i>	John's honesty	this tiger	this water

Interesting as it is, Moltmann's treatment of nominalizations heavily relies on the behavior of nominalizations *in English*. In the following section, I will show that when we move to Spanish, a major refinement is needed, involving a distinction between properties and qualities.

### 3 The Spanish Case

#### 3.1 Spanish nominalization structures

Moltmann's analysis runs into trouble when we move from English to Spanish, for in the latter language, the range of nominalizing possibilities increases dramatically.<sup>1</sup> I will

<sup>1</sup> Another problem of Moltmann's analysis lies in her treatment of bare nominalizations as kind of tropes, for it is grounded on the fact that bare mass nouns in English can denote kinds. Obviously, this is a major shortcoming when we move to Romance, where bare nouns in general, and bare nominalizations in particular cannot have a kind reading:

(i) (a) En este país, abunda \*(la) banalidad.  
in this country abunds the.FEM banality  
'In this country, banality abunds.'

(b) En este país, hace años que se extinguió \*(la) puntualidad.  
in this country makes yearsthat SE extinguished the.FEMPunctuality

concentrate on adjective *lo*-nominalizations, which have been described as involving two different interpretations (see Bosque & Moreno 1990 and Leonetti 1999).<sup>2</sup> The first one is partitive/referential —*individuative lo* for Bosque & Moreno (1990):

- (9) Lo interesante del libro es el primer capítulo.  
 LO interesting of-the book is the first chapter  
 ‘The interesting part of the book is the first chapter.’

The second interpretation is quantificational —*qualitative lo* for Bosque & Moreno (1990)— (see Bartra-Kaufmann & Villalba (2006a,b) and Villalba and Bartra-Kaufmann to appear):

- (10) Me asusta lo peligroso de la empresa.  
 to.me frightens LO dangerousof the.FEM enterprise  
 ‘It frightens me how risky the enterprise is.’

As the translations make clear, whereas the former refers to a part of the subject which can be characterized by the property denoted by the adjective, the latter involves degree quantification over the scale denoted by the adjective predicated of the subject.

Henceforth, the Spanish range of deajectival nominalizations duplicates that of English:

- (11) (a) la honestidad (de Juan)  
 the.FEMhonesty of Juan  
 ‘Juan’s honesty’  
 (b) lo honesto (de Juan)  
 LO honest of Juan  
 ‘Juan’s honesty’

My next move will be determining which nominalization mechanism corresponds best to Moltmann’s tropes.

### 3.2 Tropes and Spanish nominalizations

When we consider the linguistic tests devised for tropes by Moltmann (2004a,b) under the light of Spanish nominalizations, the conclusion is that both definite nominalizations, and *lo*-nominalizations should be analyzed as tropes.

Consider first the spatiotemporal location of both kinds of nominalizations in the following examples from the *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* (CREA), available online at <http://corpus.rae.es/creanet.html>):

---

<sup>2</sup> ‘In this country, punctuality became extinct many years ago.’  
 The neuter article *lo* works as a wide-range nominalizer in Spanish:

- (i) (a) lo justo [property]  
 LOfair  
 (b) lo sucedido ayer [event]  
 LOhappened yesterday  
 (c) lo que has comprado [individual]  
 LOthat have.2SG bought  
 (d) lo más alto del rascacielos [location]  
 LOmorehigh of-the skyscraper

- (12) (a) Todos comentaban lo imposible de aquella imagen afuera...  
all.PL commented LO impossible of that.FEM image outside  
'Everybody was talking about the impossibility (of having) that image out there...'
- (b) De ahí lo necesario de corregir esta situación.  
of here LO necessary of correct this.FEM situation  
'Hence the need to correct this situation.'
- (13) (a) la sequedad de nuestro país en los meses de diciembre...  
the.FEM dryness of our country in the.PL months of December  
'our country's dryness every December...'
- (b) Me negué en principio, por la inutilidad de aquel viaje.  
to.me refused in principle by the.FEM uselessness of that travel  
'First, I refused, because of the uselessness of that travel.'

Consider now the causation test (again, the examples are from the CREA corpus):

- (14) (a) La estrechez del camino dificulta el rescate de un vecino.  
the.FEM narrowness of-the path makes.difficult the rescue of a neighbor  
'The narrowness of the path makes a neighbor's rescue difficult.'
- (b) habiendo sido rechazadas [...] a causa de la limitación de espacio.  
having been rejected to cause of the.FEM limitation of space  
'since they were rejected [...] due to space limitation.'
- (15) (a) debido a lo estrecho de sus calles y andenes  
due to LO narrow of its streets and platforms  
'due to the narrowness of their streets and platforms'
- (b) están obligados a subsistir debido a lo limitado de sus ingresos  
are forced to subsist due to LO limited of their incomes  
'they are condemned to subsistence, due to their meager income'

Here, both nominalization structures pass the test, suggesting they should both be analyzed as involving a trope.

The very same conclusion follows with respect to the perception test (examples from the CREA corpus)

- (16) (a) también es capaz de apreciar la belleza de su obra.  
also is capable of appreciate the beauty of his/her work  
'(s)he can also appreciate the beauty of his work.'
- (b) aprendió a ver la belleza de las cosas cotidianas.  
learned to see the.FEM beauty of the.FEM.PL things daily  
'(s)he learned to see the beauty of everyday things'
- (17) (a) Al ver lo imposible de su amor...  
to-these see LO impossible of his/her love  
'When (s)he saw the impossibility of his/her love...'
- (b) Como estudiante veo lo necesario de respetar nuestras costumbres.  
as student see.1SG LO necessary of respect our customs  
'As a student, I see that we must respect our traditions.'

Again, no difference exists between definite and *lo*-nominalizations, which suggests that both denote tropes, in Moltmann's sense.

### 3.3 Spanish nominalizations and genericity

We have just seen that both kinds of nominalizations pass Moltmann's trope tests. However, a closer examination shows us that they don't occur in the same contexts. One such context is generic sentences. Consider the following contrasts with typical characterizing predicates yielding generic statements:

- (18) (a) En este país, la banalidad de la política suele salpicarlo todo.  
in this country the.FEMbanality of the.FEMpolitics uses.to spill.it all  
'In this country, the banality of politics spreads everywhere.'  
(b) En este país, la credibilidad de los políticos ya se extinguió.  
in this country the.FEMcredibility of the.PL politicians alreadyget.extinct  
'In this country, politicians' credibility get extinct.'
- (19) (a) \*En este país lo banal de la política suele salpicarlo todo.  
in this country LO banal of the.FEMpolitics uses.to spill.it all  
(b) \*En este país lo creíble de los políticos ya se extinguió.  
in this country LO credibilityof the.PL politicians alreadyget.extinct

Whereas definite nominalizations are perfect, *lo*-nominalizations are impossible.<sup>3</sup>

A similar result obtains when we move to individual-level predicates, which as is well-known, typically allow their subjects to obtain a kind reading:

- (20) (a) Firemen are altruistic.  
(b) Lions are fierce.

In contrast subjects of stage-level predicates cannot obtain the kind reading, just the specific one:

- (21) (a) Firemen are available.  
(b) Lions are hungry.

In Spanish, this contrast correlates with the use of a particular copulative verb: *ser* 'to be' for individual and *estar* 'to be' for stage-level predicates.<sup>4</sup> Consider the Spanish version of the above examples:

- (22) (a) Los bomberos son generosos.  
the.PL firemen are altruistic.PL  
(b) Los leones son fieros.  
the.PL lions are fierce.PL
- (23) (a) Los bomberos están disponibles.  
the.PL firemen are available.PL  
(b) Los leones están hambrientos.  
the.PL lions are hungry.PL

<sup>3</sup> Crucially, we are considering nominalizations with a PP complement, which denote tropes. If we suppress the PP, the nominalizations denote kinds, and consequently may appear in generic environments. See section 4.2 below.

<sup>4</sup> Even though a fairly reliable test, it should be noted that the *ser/estar* alternation doesn't perfectly match the individual/stage level distinction. See Fernández Leborans (1999: 37.5) and Bosque & Gutiérrez-Rexach (2008: 5.7.1).

As a consequence, if it is the case that only standard nominalizations are amenable to a generic reading, we expect that, under normal conditions, *lo*-nominalizations cannot be the subject of individual-level predicates. This prediction is borne out:

- (24) (a) Eneste país, la banalidad de la política es muy común.  
 in this country the.FEMbanality of the.FEMpolitics is very common  
 ‘In this country, the banality of politics is very common.’  
 (b) Eneste país, la desvergüenza de los políticos es destacable.  
 in this country the.FEMshamelessness of the.PL politicians is remarkable  
 ‘In this country, the shamelessness of politicians is remarkable.’
- (25) (a) \*En este país lo banal de la política es muy común.  
 in this country LO banal of the.FEMpolitics is very common  
 (b) \*En este país, lo desvergonzado de los políticos es destacable.  
 in this country LO shamelessness of the.PL politicians is remarkable

To reinforce the point, let us consider nominalizations with an intrinsic generic value, like the following:

- (26) (a) la pequeñez del hombre/ser humano  
 the.FEM smallness of-the man/being human  
 ‘the smallness of man/the human being’  
 (b) la crueldad del hombre/ser humano  
 the.FEMcruelty of-the man/being human  
 ‘the cruelty of man/the human being’  
 (c) la inmortalidad del alma  
 the.FEM immortality of-the soul  
 ‘the immortality of the soul’  
 (d) la solubilidad del gas  
 the.FEM solubility of-the gas  
 ‘the solubility of gas’
- (27) (a) lo pequeño del hombre/ser humano  
 LO small of-the man/being human  
 ‘the smallness of man/the human being’  
 (b) lo cruel del hombre/ser humano  
 LO cruel of-the man/being human  
 ‘the cruelty of man/the human being’  
 (c) lo inmortal del alma  
 LO immortal of-the soul  
 ‘the immortality of the soul’  
 (d) lo soluble del gas  
 the.FEM soluble of-the gas  
 ‘the solubility of gas’

All these nominalizations typically favor a generic interpretation; therefore they offer us a good test for determining the degree of abstractness of the semantic objects they denote. Hence, a Google search was carried on March, 12<sup>th</sup> 2009, which gave the following results (where *standard* refers to standard nominalizations and *lo* to *lo*-nominalizations):

**Table (2): Occurrences of nominalizations with generic value**

	standard	lo
<i>inmortal (alma)</i> ‘immortal (soul)’	46000	8
<i>inmenso (universo)</i> ‘immense (universe)’	43400	104
<i>cruel (guerra)</i> ‘cruel (war)’	20600	1550
<i>cruel (hombre/ser humano)</i> ‘cruel (man/human being)’	12640	9
<i>pequeño (hombre/ser humano)</i> ‘small (man/human being)’	4610	963
<i>estupidez (hombre/ser humano)</i> ‘cruel (man/human being)’	4600	409
<i>creíble (políticos)</i> ‘credible (politicians)’	4390	0
<i>soberbio (hombre/ser humano)</i> ‘haughty (man/human being)’	4106	0
<i>inmutable (Dios)</i> ‘immutable (God)’	3160	3
<i>insignificante (hombre/ser humano)</i> ‘small (man/human being)’	1765	192
<i>invisibilidad (mujer)</i> ‘invisibility (woman)’	718	1
<i>honesto (políticos)</i> ‘honest (politicians)’	711	1
<i>soluble (gas)</i> ‘soluble (gas)’	1540	1
Total	148240	3241

The figures speak for themselves: given the 1/46 ratio favoring standard nominalizations, we cannot conclude that they denote the very same semantic object that *lo*-nominalizations.

In order to solve this quandary, we will argue that both nominalization constructions denote tropes, but of a slightly different character, for they are based on two different property-denoting elements: properties and qualities. This enrichment of our ontology of semantic objects will allow us to cope with the empirical challenge posed by Spanish nominalizations while maintaining the basic insights of Moltmann’s trope analysis.

#### 4 A new analysis: Properties and qualities

The gist of my solution to the empirical challenge posed by Spanish nominalizations is resorting to a finer-grained ontology of property-denoting elements, like the one developed by Levinson (1978, 1980) for attributes. Levinson distinguishes three basic levels of attributes. First we have ‘ways of being’, which are typically represented by adjectives (or adverbs, if one include as a subclass ‘ways of acting’). So, if we consider politicians honest, we can say that ‘honest’ is a way of being of politicians:

- (28) (a) How are politicians?  
(b) Honest./\*Being honest.

Even though this is what one could commonly call a property, Levinson argues that properties are constructed in a different way, namely conceiving the attribute as a condition or a state that an object is in. For instance, one could ask about the honesty of politicians in the following terms:

- (29) (a) Which condition/property should politicians satisfy/have?  
(b) (That of) being honest./>(\*That of) honest.

Obviously, these two objects are tightly related, since the condition is constructed over the former attribute; e.g. one is in the condition of being honest if one is of a certain way, namely honest. Yet, the crucial point is the different way we conceptualize the very same relation: as a way of being (*honest*) or as a condition that an object is in (*being honest*).

Yet, the picture becomes more complicated when we consider another kind of attribute that has commonly being analyzed as a property: deadjectival nominalizations like *honesty*. Levinson argues that these nominals, which he names *qualities*, denote an *abstract substance*,



similarly to concrete mass nouns.<sup>5</sup> Hence, he notes (Levinson 1978: 10):

One difference between being blue, being patient, being charitable, etc., which Wolstertorff recognizes but unaccountably dismisses as insignificant, is that the latter seem to admit of quantization, whereas the former do not. We can speak of an *abundance* of charity in a community, of displaying *much* patience, of one's tie having *more* redness than another—but not of an abundance of being charitable, of displaying much being patient, of having more being red. A person can possess *some* tenacity but not *some* being tenacious. Qualities thus show themselves as differing from properties in being somewhat substance-like, in that varied amounts of them can be doled or parcelled out in a particular instance.

Hence, if we incorporate qualities to the picture, we obtain the following typology:

**Table (3): Levinson's typology of attributes**

attribute	denotation	example
adjective <sup>6</sup>	'way of being'	<i>honest</i>
property	'condition/state of being in a certain way'	<i>being honest</i>
quality	'abstract substance'	<i>honesty</i>

Once we have introduced Levinson's typology of attributes, we have the bricks to build an answer to the quandary posed the existence of *lo*-nominalizations. The gist of my proposal is taking advantage of the distinction between properties and qualities, as the source of two different kinds of tropes: *property-tropes*, which are realized by means of *lo*-nominalizations, and *quality-tropes*, which are realized by means of standard nominalizations. I will sustain my claim on the following kind of evidence. First, I will show that *lo*-nominalizations cannot receive a 'substance-like' reading, in accordance with their property-status, while standard nominalizations can. Then I will show that the quality-property distinction helps us to reinterpret the contrast on the generic reading of nominalizations described in 3.3. Finally, I will show that this finer-grained typology of attributes paves the way for an account of the mixed behavior of bare nominalizations, which seem to share features of both properties and individuals.

#### 4.1 Conditions and substances

If we apply Levinson's distinction between properties and qualities to the Spanish catalog of nominalizations, one can easily expect *lo*-nominalizations to correspond to property-tropes and standard nominalizations to quality-tropes. If this move is correct, we only expect the latter to admit quantization, which is fulfilled:

- (30) (a) \*Lo honesto de los políticos aumenta día a día.  
           LO honest of the.PL politicians increases day to day  
       (b) La honestidad de los políticos aumenta día a día.  
           the.FEMhonesty of the.PL politicians increases day to day  
           'The honesty of politicians is increasing everyday.'

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that Levinson, in recent work (Levinson 2006), has changed his mind on the issue and denies the very existence of qualities (and tropes).

<sup>6</sup> Levinson doesn't use a specific label for this kind of attribute, probably for he is interested in the property-quality distinction.

- (31) (a) \*Lo honesto de los políticos es mayor que lo honesto del gobierno.  
 LO honest of the.PL politicians is bigger than LO honest of.the government  
 (b) La honestidad de los políticos es mayor que la honestidad del gobierno.  
 the.FEMhonesty of the.PL politicians is bigger than LO honesty of.the government  
 ‘The honesty of politicians is bigger than the honesty of the government.’
- (32) (a) \*Lo honesto de los políticos supera lo honesto del gobierno.  
 LO honest of the.PL politicians exceeds LO honest of.the government  
 (b) La honestidad de los políticos supera la honestidad del gobierno.  
 the.FEMhonesty of the.PL politicians exceeds LO honesty of.the government  
 ‘The honesty of politicians exceeds the honesty of the government.’

It should be taken into account that the impossibility of conceptualizing property-tropes as quantities of an abstract substance doesn’t entail that the adjective representing them cannot be modified by a few degree words:

- (33) Lo poco/\*muy/\*bastante honesto de los políticos  
 LO little/very/quite honest of the.PL politicians

Yet, this fact doesn’t seem to improve the sentences above (I disregard the reading where the quantity increased, compared or exceed corresponds to that of the degree word *poco* ‘little’):

- (34) (a) \*Lo poco honesto de los políticos aumenta día a día.  
 LO little honest of the.PL politicians increases day to day  
 (b) \*Lo poco honesto de los políticos es mayor que lo poco honesto del gobierno.  
 LO little honest of the.PL politicians is bigger than LO little honest of.the government  
 (c) \*Lo poco honesto de los políticos supera lo poco honesto del gobierno.  
 LO little honest of the.PL politicians exceeds LO little honest of.the government

Clearly, this behavior suggests that *lo*-nominalizations don’t denote an abstract substance, in contrast with standard nominalizations.

## 4.2 Genericity

As discussed at length in 3.3, *lo*-nominalizations are far less common in generic environments than their corresponding standard counterparts. Yet, we didn’t offer an explanation of this disparate behavior. Now we have the formal tools to offer a possible line of solution: the trope analysis plus the property-quality distinction. The idea that I will suggest resorts to the basic distinction between properties conceived as conditions objects are in, and qualities, conceived as universal abstract substances.

As Levinson (1980) argues from a metaphysical point of view, properties and their particular instantiation involve imposing a condition on the way an object is, and hence we create a new state of affairs: e.g. regarding an apple, that of being red. In contrast, qualities in objects involve the possession of particular bits of an abstract substance, which can only be

identified with respect to their possessors: e.g. John's honesty.<sup>7</sup> Even though admittedly speculative, I would like to suggest that the fact that trope properties involve a situated state of affair renders them less suitable to enter into generic statements; for particular states of affairs must be inherently or at least highly contextualized on spatiotemporal basis. In the case of abstract substances we are just dealing with possession, which doesn't require such a contextualization. That's why we are prone to consider qualities, for instance, in persons, as atemporal features one possess.

Even though tentative, this line of reasoning fits in with what the corpus survey told us in 3.3 (see Table 2). We are not saying that property-tropes (realized by means of *lo*-nominalizations) cannot appear in generic statements, but rather than we expect them to be far less suitable for this task than quality tropes.

Finally, to reinforce our point, just note that once we eliminate the PP complement of the nominalizations, we obtain a kind of trope (be it a property trope or a quality trope), so that the inclusion in generic statements becomes possible for *lo*-nominalizations. Consider the following example from the novel *Tu rostro mañana. I Fiebre y lanza* by Javier Marías:

- (35) Hoy se aborrecelo definitivo y seguro y en consecuencia lo ya fijado  
 today SEhates LO definitive and certain and in consequence LO alreadyfixed  
 en el tiempo  
 in the time  
 'Today people hate definitive and sure things and, as a consequence, what is already fixed on time.'

Here, the kind reading of the *lo*-nominalizations perfectly fits in with the generic nature of the sentence, which shows two prototypical features of generic statements: present tense, and impersonality. This impression gets easily confirmed when one considers typical Spanish sayings:

- (36) (a) Lo cortés no quita lo valiente  
 LO polite not takes LO brave  
 'Being polite is compatible with being brave.'  
 (b) Lo bueno si breve, dos veces bueno  
 LO good if brief two times good  
 'Good things, when short, are twice as good.'

Henceforth, the proposed typology of Spanish nominalizations and their denotations is the following:

**Table (4): Typology of Spanish nominalizations**

nominalization	denotation	example
standard	quality trope	<i>la honestidad de Juan</i>
	kind of quality trope	<i>la honestidad</i>
<i>lo</i>	property trope	<i>lo honesto de Juan</i>
	kind of property trope	<i>lo honesto</i>

#### 4.3 Bare singular nominalizations between properties and individuals

There is a fast-growing literature arguing for the view that bare nouns (may) denote properties, not kinds (Dobrovie-Sorin et al. 2006, Farkas & de Swart 2003, Espinal &

<sup>7</sup> The substance-bit-like conception of qualities leads Levinson (1980) to consider that qualities must be infinite and independent of the objects that possess it, hence Platonic entities.

McNally 2007, among others). One major piece of evidence favoring this property-denoting analysis concerns scope, namely mass nouns and count bare singulars lack scope:

- (37) (a) No té aigua.  
not has water  
'(S)he has no water.'/'(S)he doesn't have any water.'  
(b) Tots tenen aigua.  
all.PL have water  
'Everybody has (a different quantity of) water.'
- (38) (a) No té cotxe.  
not has car  
'(S)he has no car.'  
(b) Tots tenen cotxe.  
all.PL have car  
'Everybody has a (different) car.'

Standard deadjectival bare nominalizations are scopelessness as well:

- (39) (a) No demostró sensatez.  
not showed sense  
'(S)he showed no sense.'  
(b) Todos demostraron sensatez.  
all.PL showed sense  
'Everybody showed (a different degree of) sense.'

A second argument for the property analysis of bare nominalizations follows from the possibility of obtaining a subkind or type reading:<sup>8</sup>

- (40) (a) Jamás encontré ??(una) resistencia así/como esa.  
never encountered a resistance so/like that  
'I never found such a resistance.'  
(b) Jamás había bebido ??(una) agua así/como esa.  
never had drinken a water so/like that  
'I'd never drunk such a water.'

Bare singulars can hardly obtain a subkind/type reading, as expected if they denote properties. This is confirmed by corpus queries. For instance, a search carried on the CREA corpus showed *no* occurrence of any of the following combinations typically related to subkind/type readings:

---

<sup>8</sup> Yet, one must take into account that bare plurals, which are also analyzed as property-denoting entities, do admit this reading:

(i) Jamás había leído (unos) libros así/como esos.  
never had read a.PL books so/like those

- (41) (a) resistencia así/parecida/semejante  
 resistance so/similar/similar  
 ‘such a resistance’  
 (b) amabilidad así/parecida/semejante  
 kindness so/similar/similar  
 ‘such a kindness’  
 (c) sinceridad así/parecida/semejante  
 sincerity so/similar/similar  
 ‘such a sincerity’  
 (d) generosidad así/parecida/semejante  
 generosity so/similar/similar  
 ‘such a generosity’

In contrast with the evidence just reviewed for the property-denoting analysis, bare singular nominalizations behave as individuals in several aspects. First, they can be antecedents of pronominal anaphora or of relative clauses:

- (42) (a) No pretendía ofrecer resistencia, pero la opuso.  
 not pretended offer resistance but her opposed  
 ‘(S)he didn’t mean to offer resistance, but (s)he did offered it.’  
 (b) No esperaba amabilidad, pero la recibió a manos llenas.  
 not expected kindness but her received to hands full.PL  
 ‘(S)he didn’t expected any kindness, but (s)he received plenty of it.’
- (43) No quiso ofrecer resistencia que se pudiera malinterpretar.  
 not wanted offer resistance that SE could be misunderstand  
 ‘(S)he didn’t want to offer resistance that could be misunderstood.’

Second, regardless of the previous evidence for scopelessness, Spanish bare nominalizations do seem to scope out of conditionals, just like indefinites and bare count singulars do:<sup>9</sup>

- (44) (a) Si un líquido encuentra (alguna) resistencia, siempre la acaba venciendo.  
 if a liquid finds (any) resistance always her ends wining  
 ‘If a liquid meets (any) resistance, it always ends up overcoming it.’  
 (b) Si un líquido encuentra una barrera, siempre la acaba venciendo.  
 if a liquid finds a.FEM barrier always her ends wining  
 ‘If a liquid meets a barrier, it always ends up overcoming it.’  
 (c) Si buscas piso, siempre lo acabas encontrando.  
 if seek.2SG flat always him ends finding  
 ‘If you are seeking for a flat, you end up finding it.’

Now it’s time to fit this mixed behavior of bare singular nominalizations within our enriched typology of attributes, particularly regarding the fact that standard nominalizations denote qualities and quality tropes, which we have applied to genericity in 4.2. The key feature is the fact pointed out by Levinson (1980: 110) that, unlike properties, “[q]uality-bits

<sup>9</sup> Here, Spanish shows a sharp contrast with a language like Hungarian, which is cited by Farkas & de Swart (2003) as a clear case of the impossibility of bare singulars of scoping out of a conditional:

- (i) Ha János olvasna újságot tudná a híreket.  
 if Janos read.COND newspaper.ACC know.COND the news.PL.ACC  
 ‘If Janos read the newspaper he would know the news.’

are identified by reference to their bearers, as are pains and sneezes.” Given this tight identity connection with the object, it makes perfect sense to take qualities as semantic objects suited to individualization tasks, while retaining basic features one could standardly associate with property-denoting objects. In this respect, taken at face value, the quality-trope analysis of standard nominalizations in Spanish may help us to understand the mixed behavior facts reported above.

### 3. Conclusions

In this article I have considered extending Moltmann’s (2004a,b) trope analysis of English deadjectival nominalizations to Spanish, which counts with a specialized nominalizer unique in Romance: the neuter *lo* article. I have shown that while *lo*-nominalizations (*lo honesto (de Juan)* ‘(John’s) honesty’) seem to correspond to Moltmann’s tropes and kinds of tropes, the coexistence of standard nominalizations (*la honestidad (de Juan)* ‘(John’s) honesty’) poses an empirical challenge which calls for an enrichment of the ontology of property-denoting items. My solution has followed Jerrold Levinson’s difference between properties and qualities, the former being represented by *lo*-nominalizations and the later by standard nominalizations. I have shown that this enrichment of our ontology allows us to explain the disparate behavior of each construction in generic statements, while offering a possible explanation for the reported special behavior of bare abstract nouns in Romance, halfway between properties (more accurately, qualities) and individuals.

### 4. References

- Bartra-Kaufmann, Anna & Xavier Villalba 2006a. Agreement and predicate inversion in Spanish DP. In: J. Doetjes & P. González (eds.). *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 23–41.
- Bartra-Kaufmann, Anna & Xavier Villalba 2006b. Spanish non-agreeing quantificational nominals. In: L. Brugè (ed.). *Studies in Spanish Syntax*. Venice, Libreria Editrice Ca Foscari, 15–46.
- Bosque, Ignacio & Javier Gutiérrez-Rexach 2008. *Fundamentos de sintaxis formal*. Madrid: Akal.
- Bosque, Ignacio & Juan Carlos Moreno 1990. Las construcciones con *lo* y la denotación del neutro. *Linguística* 2, 5–50.
- Chierchia, Gennaro 1982. Nominalization and Montague grammar: A semantics without types for natural languages. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 5, 303–354.
- Dobrovie-Sorin, Carmen, Tonia Bleam, & M. Teresa Espinal 2006. Bare nouns, number and types of incorporation. In: L. Tasmowski & S. Vogeeler (eds.) *Non-definiteness and Plurality*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 51–79.
- Espinal, M. Teresa & Louise McNally 2007. Bare singular nominals and incorporating verbs. In: G. Kaiser & M. Leonetti (eds.) *Proceedings of the III NEREUS International Workshop. Definiteness, specificity and animacy in Ibero-Romance Languages*. Universität Konstanz, 45–62.
- Farkas, Donka F. & Henriëtte de Swart 2003. *The Semantics of Incorporation: From Argument Structure to Discourse Transparency*. Stanford: CSLI.
- Fernández Leborans, M. Jesús 1999. La predicación. Las oraciones copulativas. In: I. Bosque & V. Demonte (eds.) *Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 2357–2461.
- Leonetti, Manuel 1999. El artículo. In: I. Bosque & V. Demonte (eds.) *Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española*. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 787–890.
- Levinson, Jerrold 1978. Properties and related entities. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 39, 1–22.
- Levinson, Jerrold 1980. The particularisation of attributes. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 58, 102–115.
- Levinson, Jerrold 2006. Why there are no tropes. *Philosophy* 81, 563–580.
- Moltmann, Frederike 2004a. Properties and kinds of tropes: New linguistic facts and old philosophical insights. *Mind* 113, 1–43.
- Moltmann, Frederike 2004b. Two kinds of universals and two kinds of collections. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27, 739–776.
- Partee, Barbara 1986. Noun phrase interpretation and type-shifting principles. In: J.A.G. Groenendijk, D. de Jong & M.B.J. Stokhof (eds.) *Studies in Discourse Representation Theory and the Theory of Generalized Quantifiers*. Dordrecht: Foris, 11–143.
- Strawson, P.F. 1953–1954. Particular and General. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 54: 233–260.

- Villalba, Xavier & Bartra-Kaufmann, Anna (forthcoming). Predicate focus fronting in the Spanish determiner phrase. *Lingua*.
- Williams, D.C. 1953. On the Elements of Being. *Review of Metaphysics* 7, 3–18. Reprinted in Mellor and Oliver (eds.), *Properties*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, 112–124.
- Williams, D. C. 1954. Of Essence and Existence and Santayana. *Journal of Philosophy* 51: 31-42.
- Wolterstorff, N. 1970. *On Universals*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.