New voices:

Linguistic aspects of translation theory and application to

the works of three Ecuadorian women writers

by

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DEDICATORIA

Para mi padre, William Benner, mi primer maestro de la traducción, quien me enseñó como traducir el significado que queda detrás de las palabras, como traducir entrelineas lo que quería decir--pero nunca pudo. Te oí, Papito.

y

Para Pablo, quien me enseñó que 'el' alma es femenina, hablando en términos de la gramática--pero que en verdad el alma no tiene género. . .

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For my father, William Benner, my first translation teacher, who taught me how to translate the meaning which lies behind the words, how to translate between the lines what he wanted to say, but never could. I heard you, Papito.

and

For Pablo, who taught me that, despite the masculine article, 'el alma' (the soul) is feminine, grammatically speaking--but who also taught me that in truth the soul has no gender . . .

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Finally, a special thanks, in memorium, to Hugo Federico Vayas for his sweet, furry, kitty company during the hours of typing this thesis. I'm just sorry you couldn't be here, Chiquikitty, to celebrate its end with a bit of catnip and a warm lap.

CHAPTER 1.   INTRODUCTION: TRANSLATION AS
A DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The process of translation is a complicated one, and one which happens on many levels at once. To the uninitiated, however, it often seems fairly simple: the translator merely takes what is written in language A (the **source language** or **SL**) and puts it into language B (the **target language** or **TL**). If she or he knows both languages well, this should not be difficult, and it is often believed that if the translator has problems, it is only because she or he is not sufficiently fluent in one of the languages being used. However, if we examine this process more closely, we find it is not so simple. Let us translate a sentence from English to Spanish--for example, the first sentence with which this paragraph begins. We can start with *el proceso de la traducción es. . .*--but we have already run into trouble. In Spanish one cannot use a noun substitute in the way that "one" is used in the sentence under discussion. We can say *el proceso de la traducción es un proceso complicado,* or *la traducción es un proceso complicado,* or *el proceso de la traducción es complicado.* All get the idea across, but each one says it in a different way with a slightly different effect. Which choice should we make? This is the dilemma of the translator.

There are many ways of looking at translation, probably as many ways as there are translators, but one thing seems clear: translation is a process of making decisions. The translator is continually faced with making choices between a certain number of alternatives, and while all alternatives may be valid in their own right, they are not equivalent (Levy´, 1967). The example given here illustrates a rather minor decision. Either choice will work, and which one the translator chooses will probably not have much effect on the final product. However, the sum of all of the

various choices made, major and minor, adds up to a very large influence on the final translation as a whole. It is this sum of choices and the way they interact which determines the final effect, the final sense, the final feel of the translation, and indeed which creates the translation itself.

How does the translator choose which alternative to use? The decisions a translator makes are not arbitrary or random. They are motivated decisions, that is, made for distinct reasons, which are mediated by the context of the text itself and the environment in which it occurs (Levy´, 1967). Most translators would probably say that they do this by "feel," by instinct, yet there is a body of knowledge from various fields which can be useful in helping the translator make choices. The process of translation is a multidisciplinary one, requiring expertise in many areas, including literary criticism, linguistics, psychology and cultural studies. However, in this thesis I wish to outline some of the decisions translators face from a linguistic point of view, and to examine some of the contributions the field of linguistics can make in informing those decisions, in particular as they relate to the translation of literary prose.

In looking at this issue I begin with a review of the literature pertaining to linguistic aspects of translation, which is organized in a hierarchical manner from macro level to micro level. It opens by discussing several of the major debates and issues involved in translation: the question of how literally the translator chooses to translate the original, and a brief discussion of the issue of "equivalence." It goes on to examine some linguistic theories which shed light on translation, moving from the pragmatic and textual level in chapter three, to the grammatical level in chapter four, and finally the word level in chapter five. In chapter six I will then discuss several specific issues in translation which illustrate the interconnectedness of the

different levels of analysis. By using this hierarchy I do not mean to imply that any one level is more important than another, nor that the translator necessarily works in this direction. This division into discrete levels is of course artificial, and all levels are interconnected. In making decisions at text level, the translator is also making decisions about an individual word, and vice-versa. Each decision she or he makes affects all levels , and the translator is usually working on several, if not all levels at once. However, I also believe there are some textual variables and overarching decisions that the translator should consider before beginning to translate, and the *general* movement in translation should be from text analysis to lexical analysis.

Then in chapter seven of this study I move from the formal literature review to a more personal discussion of the actual application of these findings in the process of translating three short stories by Ecuadorian women. Here I describe some of my experiences in the act of translating, the approaches I used based on information gleaned from the review of the literature, and the process of decision making in which I engaged in light of these findings. Finally in chapter eight I look at some of the implications of this information in a brief conclusion.

CHAPTER 2.   SOME MAJOR DEBATES IN TRANSLATION

"Literal" versus "Free" Translation

Probably the oldest and most consistent polemic in the history of translation is the debate over how closely the translator should try to reproduce the shape and structure (grammatical, cultural, rhetorical, etc.) of the original work and how much latitude he or she has to adapt the original to the target language and culture. This debate over a "faithful" or "literal" versus "free" translation is probably as old as translation itself. One of the first recorded accounts of this controversy comes from Cicero, who in the first century BC emphasized the difference between a word-for-word and a sense-for-sense translation. Against the commonly accepted practice of his time, he argued the superiority of the latter (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980), and this controversy has continued throughout history.

The tension between "literal" versus "free" or "word" versus "sense" translation, rather than being a simple dichotomy, is best envisioned as a continuum which has been described in various terms by different theorists. Hervey and Higgins (1992) describe this as a continuum from extreme source language (SL) bias on one end to extreme target language (TL) bias on the other. On the extreme end of SL bias they place "interlinial translation," a word-for-word translation which follows the SL grammar and conventions. On the extreme end of TL bias, they place what they call "free translation," in which the general idea of the original text is conveyed, but little attempt is made to reproduce the forms of the original. They then posit a number of degrees between these two extremes. Larson (1984) proposes a spectrum ranging from "very literal" (word-for-word), through

"literal," "modified literal," "near idiomatic," "idiomatic," to "unduly free." Hatim and

Mason (1990) describe this polemic as a continuum between author-centered

translating and reader-centered translating. Placing the debate in these terms

reinforces recent theories of reading which suggest that there is no one correct

reading of a text, but rather that each reader interprets the text according to his or

her own needs, assumptions, and predispositions (Kolodny, 1985). Gideon Toury

(1980), noting that language and linguistic systems are different from each other not

only in terms of structure, but also in terms of traditions, norms of usage and textual

expectations, posits a continuum with total acceptability in the target culture at the

one extreme and total adequacy to the source text at the other. Peter Newmark has

engaged in a number of discussions of this issue (see for example Newmark, 1981,

1986, 1988, 1991), and has developed the continuum shown in figure 1:

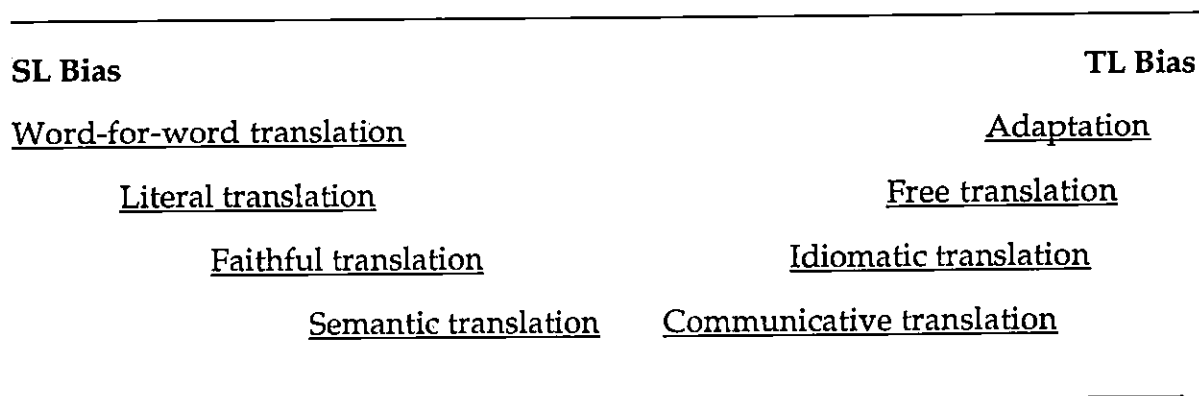| SL Bias	TL Bias
Word-for-word translation	Adaptation
Literal translation	Free translation
Faithful translation	Idiomatic translation
Semantic translation	Communicative translation

Figure 1.   Adapted from Newmark, 1988, p. 45

Most translators throughout history have sought some compromise in the middle of this continuum, but just where the compromise should fall has varied considerably from culture to culture and historical period to historical period. Today, most modern translators tend to lean more toward TL bias and focus on making the translation easily acceptable to the target audience. They advocate an idiomatic rendering of the source text which retains the meaning of the original, but uses the natural forms and expressions of the TL and does not read like a translation (for example, see Attwood, 1986; Hervey and Higgins, 1992; Larson, 1884; Lefevere, 1992; Toury, 1980; Viaggio, 1991a, 1991b). This position is not universally supported, however, and even within the area we might designate as "middle ground," there is still a great deal of disagreement as to what the ideal compromise should be. Vladimir Nabokov supports a more literal translation than the norm, and in a scathing attack on those who would attempt a more "free" rendition, states "The term 'free translation' smacks of knavery and tyranny. It is when the translator sets out to render the 'spirit'--not the textual sense--that he begins to traduce his author. The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase" (Nabokov, 1955/1992, p. 127). More recently Venuti (1991) has argued that free, or what he calls "fluent," translations impose TL cultural values on a text, doing violence to the cultural values of the source culture. He proposes "resistant translations" which retain many of the forms of expression of the original, and thus help preserve the cultural values and unique ideas of the source culture. On the other hand, Viaggio (1991a) attacks what he considers extreme adherence to a literal approach, and says of Nabokov that "striving for fidelity to Pushkin's words, he ends up murdering Pushkin's poetry" (p. 3), while Gregory Rabassa, as renowned and acclaimed for his translations from Spanish as Nabokov is from Russian,

comments that "translation is an approach and not an equivalency, and . . . a word-for-word technique can often render the translation pallid and ineffective" (Rabassa, 1989, p. 11).

Newmark states that the approaches he terms semantic and communicative translations represent the ideal compromise. These are both centered near the middle of the continuum with semantic translation leaning toward the "literal" end and communicative translation leaning toward the "free" end. According to Newmark, communicative translation attempts "to achieve the kind of style which the reader of the text-category would expect to meet if the text were written in his [sic] own language, with certain benefit of naturalness, neatness and even elegance, provided the thought-content of the original is retained" (Newmark, 1986, p. 19), while "semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (Newmark, 1981, p. 39). Furthermore, the final authority for communicative translation is the TL readership, while that of semantic translation is the original author (Newmark, 1988). Newmark himself tends to support a semantic translation over a communicative one, particularly in the case of literary translation, stating that the more important the use of language is in the creation of a text, the more closely it should be translated (Newmark, 1991), while Viaggio (1991a) argues that a communicative approach is preferable. Lefevere also suggests that the translator lean toward the pole of TL bias. He comments that: "translators should remember that their first task is to make the original accessible to the audience for whom they are translating, to mediate between their audience and their text. . . When in doubt, translators are well advised to tilt to the target audience and its expectations, not to the source text" (Lefevere, 1992, p. 19).

Which is the "correct" approach? I would submit that there is no one correct answer, but rather that the choice a translator makes is based on a number of factors which include the socio-cultural context of the process and the aim of the translator in doing the translation. Different approaches to the question of how to translate a text will result in different types of final translations, each with its own value, and the translator must consider the context and purpose of the translation in order to decide which approach to use (Holmes, 1970; Shen, 1985; Hatim and Mason, 1990). In other words, the answer the translator chooses hinges on "who is translating what, for whom, where, why and in what circumstances?" (Hatim and Mason, 1990, p. 6).

Equivalence

In discussing translation it is almost impossible to avoid the term "equivalence," a term which is central to most definitions of what translation is. For example, Hartmann and Stork (1972, p. 713) state that: "Translation is the replacement of a representation of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language," and the famous Bible translator Eugene Nida defines translation as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style" (Nida and Taber, 1969, p. 12), while J.C. Catford states that: "translation may be defined as follows: The replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (1965, p. 20).

But just what does one mean by "equivalence"? Obviously the ideal of complete equivalence between two languages does not exist. This is perhaps the central problem around which translation turns. Languages are not equivalent

codes in which a word, sentence, structure, or idiom has a corresponding and equal equivalent expression in a TL. Different cultures and different languages may indeed see much the same world, but the world itself does not come neatly divided into categories and ideas. The process of organizing the phenomena we encounter in the world is a human activity, and "each language articulates or organizes the world differently. Languages do not simply name existing categories, they articulate their own" (Culler, 1976, pp. 21-2, quoted in Baker, 1992, p. 10). And how they divide that world into categories in order to speak about it varies considerably from language to language.

Thus, when we speak of equivalence, what do we mean? Words which have similar meaning? Words which have similar meaning within a specific context? Sentences which convey similar ideas? Expressions which are used in similar situations between the two cultures? Texts which serve similar purposes in the two cultures? As this list suggests, there are many different types and many different levels of equivalence, which various theorists have described differently.

Nida, who has been very influential in shaping ideas on translation, differentiates between what he calls *formal correspondence* and *dynamic equivalence*. In formal correspondence "the features of the form of the source text have been mechanically reproduced in the receptor language" (Nida and Taber, 1969, p. 203), which he claims typically leads to distortion of the natural patterns of the TL, and thus often distortion of the message as well. Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is based on the concept of *equivalent effect*. That is, the translator seeks to recreate with the translation the same effect on the target audience in the TL that the original had on the original readers in the SL. In a similar vein, J. C. Catford (1965) distinguishes between *formal correspondence*, which he defines as "any TL category

(unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the 'same' place in the 'economy' of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL," and *textual equivalence*, which is "any TL form (text or portion of text) which is observed to be the equivalent of a given SL form (text or portion of text)" (p. 27).

Anton Popovic (1976) describes four types of equivalence arranged in a hierarchy: 1) *linguistic equivalence*, by which he means lexical equivalence in which there is very close similarity in meaning between words; 2) *paradigmatic equivalence*, in which grammatical structures are deemed to be parallel; 3) *stylistic equivalence*, where expressive elements of the two texts are considered parallel; and 4) *textual (syntagmatic) equivalence*, in which the form and shape of the two texts is deemed to be equal. Similarly, Neubert (1967, cited in Bassnett-McGuire, p. 27) postulates three hierarchical levels of equivalence: (from bottom to top) syntactic equivalence, semantic equivalence, and pragmatic equivalence. He suggests that each level in the hierarchy takes priority over and conditions and influences lower levels. He states that there is always interaction between all three levels, and that overall equivalence results from the relationships between and amongst levels. Baker (1992) builds her recent book around five different levels of equivalence: equivalence at the word level, equivalence above word level (at the level of collocation and idioms), grammatical equivalence, textual equivalence, and pragmatic equivalence.

The use of the term equivalence presents obvious problems. First and foremost, the meaning of "equivalence" itself is difficult to define. What does it mean to say that two words or two texts are equivalent? For most theorists it is a foregone conclusion that complete equality, or *identity*, cannot exist between similar elements of two different languages, so at what point are two entities sufficiently

equivalent to merit the term? Furthermore, as we have seen, different theorists define the domain of equivalence differently. Should the translator strive for "dynamic equivalence" or "textual equivalence" or what?

Also, as Rayor (1987) and Shen (1985) indicate, while the notions of dynamic equivalence and equivalent effect have been popular concepts, they are fraught with problems. First of all, each reader of a text brings his or her own individual background and experience to the reading, and each reader interprets the text in his or her own way depending on this individual context. Since there is no simple, monolithic, original audience, one must ask "whose response to the source text should determine the equivalence?" (Rayor, 1987, p. 30). Furthermore, the concept of equivalent effect leads one to the obvious question, how do we know what the original effect of the source text was? This is well nigh impossible to answer for an ancient text from a lost civilization, and not much easier to answer for a modern, present day work. Does the translator read SL reviews of the text? Or perhaps he or she should interview SL readers of the work, but if so, how many and of what background?

While the term "equivalence" is perhaps difficult to define clearly, I believe it is a useful concept to maintain in discussing translation. As Baker (1992) points out, it is a convenient term with which most translators are familiar, although it is important to remember that it is a relative term. I also subscribe to the ideas of Baker, Popovic and Neubert, who view equivalence as a phenomenon which occurs on many interconnected levels. One can talk then of lexical equivalence when examining a particular term, of grammatical equivalence when analyzing syntactical structures, and of functional equivalence or pragmatic equivalence when looking at how an element of the text or the text itself functions within a culture. Like Neubert,

I believe that it is most useful to think of overall equivalence as a product of equivalence at all levels, and that the translator must always keep this overarching equivalence in mind as she or he makes decisions at lower levels of equivalence. Finally, I believe that Rayor's answer to the dilemma of dealing with equivalent effect is the most satisfactory. She states that the translator should "aim for a response similar to the translator's own response to the source text. The translator's goal should be to affect readers as the source text affected the translator" (p. 31). This approach directly acknowledges the omnipresent influence of the translator and the fact that "the text is not transmitted directly from language to language, that the translator is the medium--and the voice--of the new text" (p. 31).

CHAPTER 3.   THE LEVEL OF PRAGMATICS AND TEXT LINGUISTICS

Hervey and Higgins (1992) usefully (if somewhat artificially) divide the decisions one must make as a translator into two sets: what they refer to as **strategic decisions** and what they call **decisions of detail**. Strategic decisions are decisions the translator needs to consider before actually starting to translate, which include issues of the purpose and audience of the original and target texts, linguistic and stylistic characteristics of the text, and most importantly, which textual features are the most important to maintain or reproduce in the translation. Decisions of detail, on the other hand, are concerned with specific problems of grammar, lexis, etc., encountered in the process of translating. Hervey and Higgins go on to point out that strategic decisions must be considered first because they will necessarily affect the choices one makes in decisions of detail. Similarly, Holmes (1973) and Levy´ (1967) discuss the process of translation as a hierarchical process in which the translator's initial decisions predetermine how she or he will have to approach later decisions. Therefore, strategic decisions help guide the translator in deciding what choices to make at the level of decisions of detail, and failure to examine these strategic issues can lead the translator to make poor choices at the level of detail which do not fit well together or meet the goals of the translation.

The strategic decisions Hervey and Higgins refer to are decisions at the level of *pragmatics* and *text linguistics*. Pragmatics is the study of how language functions in context, and the contextual conditions which shape language, including social relations, beliefs, and intentions of speakers and hearers (Traugott and Pratt, 1980). Text linguistics analyzes the text beyond the clause and sentence level, examining

the relationships between elements of a text and the way they function together to form a coherent and cohesive whole (Enkvist, 1978). In this chapter I will look at how concepts from the areas of pragmatics and text linguistics, in particular situationality and textuality, can help inform the strategic decisions the translator faces.

Situationality

Pragmatics, we have said, has to do with how language is actually used in the context in which it occurs. The meaning of utterances is determined not only by semantic rules and linguistic signs, but also by the context which surrounds them (Hatim and Mason, 1990; Gentzler, 1993). Thus, as I mentioned above, translators make decisions about what approaches to use in translating a text based on the socio-cultural context in which the translation takes place, and the goals and motivations of the translators themselves. This is what Neubert and Shreve (1992) refer to as *situationality*. Situationality, they state, "is the location of a text in a discrete sociocultural context in a real time and place," and go on to say that "recognizing and accounting for situationality is one of the translator's primary responsibilities" (p. 85). Thus the translator needs to analyze the context and forces shaping both the original text and the final translation, for these will determine the translation strategies she or he chooses to employ.

One of the first issues the translator needs to consider is the intention of the original text. According to Newmark (1988) the intention of the source text represents the original author's attitude toward the subject. Obviously, the translator must recognize and understand this attitude if she or he is to represent it in the target text. The translator must also consider the place of the source text as a

social product in the source culture, and the context and circumstances in which it was produced (Hatim and Mason, 1990), as well as the social forces and expectations of the target culture which shape the decisions of the translator and the form the translation is likely to take (Gentzler, 1993). Furthermore, translators must consider their own motivations in translating texts, taking into account what particular reasons they have for translating the works, and what particular things they want to communicate to the intended audience. They must think about their personal views and prejudices and how these influence their translations, as well as social and cultural factors such as national origin, political affiliation, ethnic background, religious beliefs, social class, and gender, which can shape the assumptions translators make.

The translator also needs to analyze the original audience the source text was designed for. She or he needs to assess as much as possible, using the setting of the text, the text itself, and his or her knowledge of the source culture, how familiar the source audience is with the topic and culture presented, how comfortable they may be with the language used, whether the vocabulary presented is common or challenging, etc.

The translator then must turn attention to the target audience. She or he must first decide how much attention to pay to this audience and how many concessions to make to the target reader. Then the translator needs to analyze the situation and intentions of the target audience and assess their education level, class, age, sex, etc., as well as determining their textual expectations, their estimated knowledge of the topic, cultural differences between the source and target audiences, and the level and style of language the target reader would best respond to (Neubert and Shreve, 1992; Newmark, 1988). The consideration of all these issues

and questions, regarding both the source and target audiences, will help the translator decide in what ways the original may need to be changed in order to make it intelligible to the target audience.

Texture

In analyzing the structure of the text, the area of text linguistics can be very useful for the translator. Text linguistics looks at the text "not as a chain of separate sentences, these themselves a string of grammatical and lexical items, . . . but as a complex, multi-dimensional structure consisting of more than the mere sum of its parts--a gestalt, . . . whereby an analysis of its parts cannot provide an understanding of the whole" (Snell-Hornby, 1988, p. 69). Text linguistics examines the issue of **texture** or **textuality,** the property of a text that ensures it holds together and makes sense as a unit, and defines a work as an integrated *text,* rather than a grouping of unrelated sentences. This textuality of a text is created by its **coherence** and **cohesion** (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Lang, 1991).

Coherence

Coherence is the underlying logical structure of a text which allows the reader to make sense of the information contained therein. It is the way information is connected in order to create larger meaning structures, and in the process it imparts to words and expressions more meaning, and more specific meaning, than they would have in isolation (Neubert and Shreve, 1992). Coherence "consists of the configuration and sequencing of the concepts and relations of the textual world which underlie and are realized by the surface text" (Bell, 1991, p. 165) and is formed from those aspects of a text that create connectivity between ideas

and conceptions. These include logical relations, organization of events, objects and situations, and continuity in human experience (Hatim and Mason, 1990). Furthermore, since one's ability to understand language is of course dependent on one's experiences and assumptions of the world, the coherence of a text is dependent on the interaction between information presented in the text and the reader's experience and world view, which in turn are influenced by the reader's culture, education, sex, etc. (Baker, 1992).

The translator, then, needs to reproduce or recreate coherence in the target text. Coherence will not simply occur as a result of choosing lexical synonyms in the TL of SL words or expressions, nor can coherence necessarily be transferred by the same strategies as used in the original. It must often be reconstructed anew in the target text, although the closer the two languages and cultures are, the easier this will usually be (Neubert and Shreve, 1992). Translators, therefore, must be familiar with the factors which produce coherence in the SL and those which are commonly used in the TL, and they must be able to analyze the coherence relations in the target text and devise strategies for recreating this coherence in the translation.

One aspect of coherence is the concept of **implicature**. Grice (1975) uses this term to indicate what a speaker or writer means or implies but does not say directly. How is it that we are able to understand more than is actually said? According to Grice, we are in part able to do this because of the "Cooperative Principle"; that is, as users of a language, we share a basic, underlying assumption that people use language *purposefully* to effectively communicate with each other. The listener or reader will therefore work hard to make sense of information received, and will bring all his or her background knowledge, experiences and assumptions into play to interpret the text as meaningful (Grice, 1975; Traugott and Pratt, 1980).

We can see then that for readers to interpret a given text coherently and work out intended implicatures, they must have access to all the cultural and background knowledge and context necessary to share the assumptions of the text. The translator, therefore, needs to assess what necessary information is or is not available to the target audience and how this will affect the coherence of the text. Then the translator must decide how best to recreate this knowledge when she or he judges that it is not shared by the target audience so that the translation is clear and coherent for the reader. The translator may choose one of several strategies, including giving explicit explanations, either in the body of the text or in footnotes, providing more indirect explanations worked into the text, using paraphrases of SL expressions which include the missing information, or adapting the context, setting, etc. of the target text to a situation more familiar to the target culture (Baker, 1992). However, in deciding how much to add or intervene in the process of translation, translators must again consider what they see as the purpose of the translation, and what they hope to communicate to the target audience. If part of the translator's purpose is to communicate an understanding of the target culture and world view, she or he may choose to adapt less and explain more. If the translator's purpose is to provide a delightful story in which the reader can easily lose him or herself, then the translator is more likely to adapt the translation to the norms and expectations of the target culture.

Cohesion

The manner in which the underlying coherence of the concepts of a text is rendered clearly in surface structures is a function of cohesion (Lang, 1991). Cohesion, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), is the network of lexical,

grammatical, and semantic relations which link together various parts of a text in such a way that the reader is able to follow the text and make sense of it. Cohesion and coherence differ in that coherence deals with how ideas and concepts hold together in a text, and cohesion is concerned with how clauses are held together at the level of surface structures. The text "Mary is twenty-five. I met her yesterday," displays cohesion. The use of the pronoun "her" connects the subject of the first sentence to the object of the second sentence and makes the sequence cohesive. However, it lacks coherence. Without any further explanation, we have no idea what the conceptual connection is between the two sentences.

Halliday and Hasan distinguish between five main cohesive devices in English: reference (the use of pronouns, demonstratives, etc., which refer the reader to an element mentioned elsewhere or to an assumed element); substitution (the replacement of one item by another--for example the use of *do* , *do so* , *one* , etc. to substitute for a previously mentioned element or clause); ellipses (the omission of an item, often previously mentioned, which is understood by the reader); conjunction (the use of formal markers which express relationships between elements of the text); and lexical cohesion (cohesion created through the repetition of vocabulary items or reiteration of related items).

In analyzing a text, the translator needs to be aware of the cohesive devices used, and of the differences that may exist in the generally accepted patterns of cohesion in the SL and the TL. While these cohesive devices are common to most languages, every language has its own preferences and traditions in how these devices are used and how frequently they may be employed. Translators must be sensitive to this, and must realize that they cannot simply transfer cohesive strategies used in the source text directly into the target text. "Under normal

circumstances, what is required is a reworking of the methods of establishing links to suit the textual norms of the target language. The grammatical system of each language will itself encourage the use of certain devices in preference to others" (Baker, 1992, p. 188). This is particularly true in the case of conjunctions, where different languages vary widely in terms of the way they tend to use conjunctions, and their frequency of use. Furthermore, since conjunctions are used to show relationships between chunks of information, they are an important part of the way different languages "chunk" or organize pieces of information, and how these chunks of information are perceived to be related to each other (Baker, 1992).

Reference, as mentioned above, is the use of devices in a language to refer to other elements in or outside of the text. In both English and Spanish these devices include personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, comparatives, and the use of the definite article. Halliday and Hasan describe three types of reference. **Anaphoric reference** is that which refers the reader back to something mentioned previously in the text. For example, in the sequence "I met a woman on the train yesterday. She seemed nice," "she" refers us back to the item "a woman on the train." **Cataphoric reference**, on the other hand, refers the reader forward to something mentioned later in the text. For example, in a story which begins "She was late for work again that day," we do not yet know either who she is nor what day is being discussed. We must read further to determine this, and we make the assumption that the missing information will be supplied later in the text. **Exophoric reference.** is reference to a shared world outside of the text which is assumed to be understood by the reader. In the statement "The president gave a speech on television last night," the use of the definite article "the" indicates the process of

reference, but the reference is to something believed by the writer to be understood by the reader, i.e., which president is being discussed.

In translating, it is important to be aware of these types of reference and the way they work. Different types of reference can create different effects on the reader. For example, the use of cataphoric reference is a common device for engaging and holding a reader's attention, and is frequently used in literary writing to create interest and intrigue (McCarthy, 1991). If the translator changes the reference from one type to another, she or he may lose an important effect created in the original text. In analyzing exophoric reference, the translator must again ascertain that the "shared world" assumed by the reference is indeed shared by the target culture and target reader, and make necessary changes when such an assumption is not valid.

The concept of lexical cohesion is also particularly useful in the analysis of a text by the translator. Lexical cohesion stems from the repetition of lexical items, or the selection of closely related items. These items may or may not have the same referent, but the interpretation of later items will in some way recall earlier ones. Halliday and Hasan describe two main types of lexical cohesion: **reiteration** and **collocation.** They divide reiteration into four main categories: **repetition,** the reoccurrence of the same lexical item; **synonym** or **near synonym,** in which synonyms or near synonyms of an item appear later; **superordinate,** in which a more general term is used which includes a previously mentioned item; and **general words,** in which a general word is used which includes the meaning of a previously mentioned item. The difference between a superordinate term and a general word is one of degree, with the superordinate wording being less general, and often more

technical. For example, "dog" would be a superordinate of the hyponym "hound," while a general word for "hound" could be "creature."

Collocation is lexical cohesion which is developed through the use of lexical items which regularly co-occur, and therefore are generally associated with each other. In other words, in a particular language, a certain word will call into the mind of the reader certain other words which are regularly associated with it, and the appearance of these associated words, whether they actually refer to the original item or not, creates a kind of cohesion in the text. Collocation may be complementary, in which words such as *boy* and *girl* are related by a kind of oppositeness; they may be synonyms or near-synonyms, as discussed above; they may be antonyms such as *love* and *hate*; they may be members of a particular ordered series, such as *Sunday, Monday, Tuesday*, members of an unordered lexical set, such as colors, or members of any lexical set which have some recognizable relation to one another. Whatever the relation between the words, they will have a cohesive effect if they tend to share the same lexical environment. Furthermore, it is quite common, particularly in literary texts, for "long cohesive chains to be built up out of lexical relations of this kind, with word patterns . . . weaving in and out of successive sentences. Such patterns occur freely both within the same sentence and across sentence boundaries; they are largely independent of the grammatical structure" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p. 286).

Halliday and Hasan state that the effect of lexical cohesion is subtle and difficult to measure, but intimately tied to the interpretation of meaning of the text by the reader: "Without our being aware of it, each occurrence of a lexical item carries with it its own textual history, a particular collocational environment that has been built up in the course of the creation of the text and that will provide the

context within which the item will be incarnated on this particular occasion. This environment determines the 'instantial meaning,' or text meaning, of the item, a meaning which is unique to each specific instance" (Ibid., p. 289).

Thus the meaning of a specific lexical item is determined not simply by its dictionary definition, but is also dependent on the network of relationships developed between it and other items in the text. Translators must analyze this web of meaning as they attempt to render it into another language. Snell-Hornby (1988) suggests determining and analyzing the key lexical items of a text, tracing the web of lexical chains and analyzing the way they are produced and strung together. Obviously the translator needs to be knowledgeable of the cohesive devices employed in both the TL and the SL, and must try to avoid what Neubert and Shreve (1992) refer to as "cohesion interference": problems arising from transferring inappropriate SL cohesion patterns into the TL, or failing to recognize the presence of cohesion devices in the target text.

However, as Baker (1992) points out, the translation of such devices is often not simple. The meaning of particular lexical items may indeed be partly determined by their context and interrelationships with other items in the text, but their meaning is also partly determined by their simple semantic meaning and their interplay with the source culture. For the translator, this means that recreating the exact chain of lexical relations in the target language is usually impossible. The lack of an exact TL equivalent of a SL word may mean the translator must resort to strategies such as using a paraphrase, a superordinate, or a loan word, and these will necessarily change the lexical chains of collocation in the target text. However, the translator needs to remain sensitive to the cohesion and meaning relationships found in such lexical chains and be sure to reproduce this cohesion in some way in

the target text: "Whatever lexical and grammatical problems are encountered in translating a text and whatever strategies are used to resolve them, a good translator will make sure that, at the end of the day, the target text displays a sufficient level of lexical cohesion in its own right. . . [W]hat the translator must always avoid is the extreme case of producing what appears to be a random collection of items which do not add up to recognizable lexical chains that make sense in a given context" (Baker, 1992, p. 207).

CHAPTER 4.   THE GRAMMATICAL LEVEL

Grammatical Categories

The area of grammar is one of the places where we can see most clearly how various languages structure experience differently. In English, "I am," but in Spanish I can "be" in one of two different ways: *soy* or *estoy*. Spanish distinguishes two different aspects of what in English is considered one verb. Similarly, in English I can "make" or I can "do" something, but in Spanish, either way, *hago algo*. The experiences are perhaps the same, but the grammar of each language has structured that experience, and our way of describing it, differently. Baker (1992) points out that while one can generally express anything one needs to in any language, the grammatical system of a language determines how easily certain concepts can be communicated explicitly. Furthermore, while lexical choices are largely optional, choices at the grammatical level are usually obligatory, and what choices must be made are mandated by the grammatical system of the language. Thus in Spanish, I *must* make the distinction between two different ways of "being" every time I refer to this concept. In English, on the other hand, making this distinction remains optional, since it is not dictated by the grammatical system of the language. However, if I do indeed wish to express this difference in English, I must do so by the use of lexical choices, because the distinction does not exist in the language's grammatical system. Over and over we encounter the fact that each language has developed different ways of categorizing human experience.

This fact creates obvious problems for the translator. The differences in grammatical categories between the SL and TL mean that there will be some change

in information in the process of translation. If the source language contains a grammatical category that doesn't exist in the target language, some information may be lost, if the translator chooses to ignore it, or it will have to be explained or indicated by lexical means. And since lexical choices are generally optional and grammatical usages are obligatory, lexical use tends to carry more weight, so shifting from a grammatical to a lexical category will change the impact of the information. Furthermore, the fact that a particular category doesn't exist in a particular language suggests that the information carried by that category is not considered highly important, and its inclusion by lexical means may seem unnatural (Baker, 1992). On the other hand, if the source language lacks a grammatical category which exists in the target language, the translator is faced with a different problem. Since the existence of the grammatical category makes this distinction obligatory, he or she must in some way add this information which is not specified in the original. At times this can be quite problematic if the information is not easy to infer from the original text (Baker, 1992).

Below I will discuss some of the differences in grammatical categories which can cause difficulties in translating between Spanish and English. This is by no means an exhaustive exposition on the contrastive analysis of Spanish and English syntax (for detailed treatment of this topic see Hill and Bradford, 1991, and Whitley, 1986), but rather a brief presentation of examples from Spanish and English which illustrate how different grammatical categories are organized in the two languages and how this can create difficulties for the translator.

Gender

One area which illustrates this problem is the category of gender. In Spanish, all nouns and pronouns, animate or inanimate, are assigned a gender, either masculine, feminine, or neuter. English distinguishes gender only in the pronoun system (he, she, and it). In translating inanimate nouns, this difference seldom causes difficulties. However, it can be difficult when the third person plural pronouns are used, particularly when discussing people. While Spanish makes a distinction here between masculine and feminine third person plural (*ellos* versus *ellas*), English does not ("they" serves for both). Depending on the direction of the translation, the translator will need to either omit this information, or in some way infer it from the source.

Person

The grammatical category of person also presents similar problems between Spanish and English. First of all, Spanish makes a distinction between second person singular formal (*usted*) and second person singular informal (*tú*), while English makes no such distinction ("you" for both). This is not particularly difficult when translating from Spanish to English, since the translator has no choice about what pronoun to use. However, he or she will need to consider how to relay the information about personal relationships and familiarity or deference which in Spanish is conveyed by the use of the different pronouns. When translating from English to Spanish, the translator must have a solid knowledge of the target culture and be able to determine when "you" should be translated as *usted*, and when it should be *tú*.

<u>Voice</u>

The grammatical category of voice is another area where the translator needs to be aware of differences in usage and what they might indicate to the reader. While Spanish and English exhibit similar categories in this area, there are some important points of contrast. In terms of voice, both Spanish and English have passive and active forms. However, the passive is used much less frequently in Spanish than it is in English, and there are more restrictions on its use (Hill and Bradford, 1991; Child, 1992). When translating from English to Spanish, the translator must be particularly careful about rendering all English passive constructions into passive constructions in Spanish. Doing so will often make the translation seem unnatural. In addition, both Spanish and English have several forms of passive constructions. In English, for example, besides the formal passive formed by BE plus the past participle ("These books are read often"), we also use the more informal GET passive ("Mary got hurt at school yesterday") or the HAVE passive ("John had his wallet stolen last week") (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1983). In Spanish, besides the passive formed from the verb *ser* (one form of "be"), another passive is formed from the reflexive pronoun *se* (often called the *se* passive). However, the uses of these different passive forms do not always coincide between the two languages. While GET and HAVE passive forms in English are fairly informal, the *se* passive in Spanish is often used in formal settings. And while the use of the Spanish passive formed from the verb *ser* probably seems most comfortable to a native English speaker, the *se* passive is generally more common (Whitley, 1986; Child, 1992).

Furthermore, the use of a particular grammatical category in one language may be associated with a particular attitude toward what is happening (Baker, 1992).

For example, the *se* passive construction in Spanish is frequently used to express unexpected and often unpleasant events. It is common in Spanish to say such things as *Se me perdió el libro*--literally, "The book lost itself on me," or *Se me murió mi hermano*--literally, "I was died on by my brother." When translating these constructions into grammatical, idiomatic English, we would usually render them as "I lost the book" and "My brother died." To do so, however, necessarily involves some loss in meaning, particularly in terms of the speaker's attitude toward the event.

Tense

Examining the category of tense we find other examples of contrastive structures between English and Spanish. One of the most problematic is that of the past tense. While English has only one simple past tense (the preterite form), Spanish has two--the preterite form for actions considered by the speaker as finite and definite, and the imperfect form for actions seen by the speaker in an ongoing or continuing manner. It may seem that translating from Spanish to English, at least, would be easy here, and that the translator would have no choice but to translate both forms as the English simple past tense. However, this is not necessarily the case. The preterite and imperfect forms can be used to suggest a view of the action which speakers in English may indicate by using a variety forms. The imperfect may indeed best be translated by a simple past tense: a story beginning with *El viejo vivía en el pueblo toda su vida* would probably be translated as "The old man lived in the village all his life." However, the imperfect is often used in Spanish to express an ongoing past action at the time of a simultaneous event, which in English is expressed with the past progressive form: *Andaba por la calle esa noche*

becomes "I <u>was walking</u> along the street that evening," not "I <u>walked</u> along the street. . ."

Furthermore, either the preterite or the imperfect form can often be used in the same sentence and situation, depending on what nuances of meaning or attitude the speaker wishes to impart. A speaker might say *Vivía en esa casa por diez años* (imperfect), or she might say *Viví en esa casa por diez años* (preterite), both translated into English as "I lived in that house for ten years." In the former case the speaker uses the imperfect to suggest that she has put herself back into that time, is reliving the experience, and is back in the *middle* of the event. The listener can expect that the speaker will go on to say more about that experience. In the latter example the speaker has used the preterite to signal that she considers the experience over and completed, and she is probably referring to it in passing (Hill and Bradford, 1991; Whitley, 1986). This does not, perhaps, cause as many difficulties in translating from Spanish to English since both versions would probably be translated by the English simple past tense, but the translator must then decide if the information lost by this change in tense is important enough to try to impart in some other way. The difficulties encountered in translating from English to Spanish are evident, and the translator must be able to determine the attitude of the speaker or writer of the original text in order to decide which tense to use to most accurately convey the sense of the original.

Mood

Another area of grammatical contrast between languages which arises in comparing Spanish and English is that of mood. One area of particular difficulty between these two languages is that of the subjunctive. While English does have a

subjunctive construction, it is used very little, and in fact seems to be slowly dying out. In Spanish, however, the subjunctive is very much alive and is used quite frequently to express certain nuances of meaning difficult to render in English. It can express unreality or contrary-to-fact statements, similar to English ("If I were you . . ."), but it is also used to suggest doubt, an unexperienced entity, an attempt to influence behavior, or the speaker's or writer's attitude toward or opinion of the subject (Whitley, 1986). While many uses of the subjunctive are obligatory in numerous constructions in Spanish, as with the use of the preterite versus imperfect past forms, there are times when use of the subjunctive may be optional, depending on the nuances of meaning or the attitude the speaker/writer wishes to convey. Thus, in translating from English to Spanish, while it will often be clear when the subjunctive *must* be used, there will be other times when the translator must *choose* whether to render a phrase in the subjunctive in order to express a particular mood and make the text more natural in the TL, or leave it in the indicative mood of the original. In translating from Spanish to English, the translator must again decide if the attitude expressed by the use of the subjunctive is important enough to convey by other means.

Syntax and Word Order

In most languages, word order is used at least to some extent to affect what information is being focused on and how the speaker/writer wishes the information to be processed by the receiver. However, languages vary tremendously in how flexible they are in the ordering of clausal elements, and in the number of restrictions on this order. For languages with extensive systems of case inflections, word order is not necessary to signal relationships between elements, and is usually

quite flexible, while languages with extremely limited case inflections generally have much more rigid rules for ordering the elements of a sentence, since word order then becomes the means for signaling the way different elements are related to each other. English, with its lack of grammatical case markings and limited conjugations, tends to be quite rigid in its word order, while in Spanish, with its much more extensive system of conjugations, word order is much more flexible. Thus, changes in word order are used more often in Spanish for changes in emphasis, while English will tend to depend much more on intonation and stress (in spoken language) or graphic devices (in written language) to mark emphasis. The translator, then, needs to be sensitive to the way word order is used to create meaning and emphasis, and how this use may differ between languages.

Theme and rheme

In order to discuss how word order affects emphasis, we need to examine several related concepts. First of all, a sentence can be divided into two parts, the **theme** and the **rheme**. The theme is the topic of the sentence--the element about which the speaker has something to say. The rheme, on the other hand, is that "something to say," or the comment the speaker makes about the topic. It's the information the speaker wishes to convey in the discourse. In terms of sentence structure, the theme is the first element mentioned in the sentence, while the rheme is what follows (Baker, 1992; Halliday, 1976; Whitley, 1986). The theme thus forms a framework within which the rheme is placed and interpreted (McCarthy, 1991). The speaker/writer chooses what to place in thematic position, in other words, what clausal element to place first, and by doing so affects how this information is received by the listener (Baker, 1992; Halliday, 1976). Generally in clause structure

the final elements of a sentence stand out to the reader/hearer, so locating a constituent in final position in the rheme places special focus on this element as well (Whitley, 1986).

In each language, a certain word order or orders are considered normal and unmarked, while deviations from the normal order are considered marked. Likewise, certain thematic choices are considered normal, while others would be marked. The more marked a structure is, the more it indicates intention on the part of the speaker/writer (the more motivated it is), and therefore the more meaningful it is. Thus deviations from the normal, unmarked order give special emphasis (Halliday, 1976). In normal sentence structure, at least in English, the theme generally tends to be the grammatical subject of a sentence, while the rheme is generally the predicate. Normal word order in English, then, is subject-verb-object (SVO). However, the speaker/writer can choose what element she or he wishes to place in thematic position, depending of course on the limitations imposed by the rules of the language, in order to emphasize certain elements. Although English is rather rigid in its SVO word order, certain constructions can be used to front other elements, such as adverbial fronting ("Yesterday Mary ate the pie"), cleft construction ("It was the pie that Mary ate yesterday"), pseudo-cleft construction ("What Mary ate yesterday was the pie"), and either a right- or left-displaced subject ("She ate the pie yesterday, Mary did", "Mary, she ate the pie yesterday") (McCarthy, 1991).

In a Spanish declarative sentence, unmarked sentence order, as in English, is also SVO, but this order is often changed to highlight different information. For example, an unmarked SVO sentence in Spanish would be *Ese caballo corrió muy rápido* (That horse ran fast). However, the VOS sentence *Corrió muy rápido ese caballo*

(*Ran fast that horse) is quite acceptable. By changing this word order, the sentence emphasizes the fact that the horse ran fast. In English, on the other hand, this word order is not acceptable, and a speaker would be likely to say "That horse ran *fast!*," emphasizing the rapidity of the horse by stress and intonation in spoken language, while in written discourse writers often use italics or underlining to suggest stress, as well as using exclamation marks to signal emphasis.

Given and new information

The theme and rheme of the sentence also interact with the information structure of the sentence in determining word order. **Given** information is that which the speaker/writer believes to be already known by the receiver, while **new** information is that information which the speaker/writer wishes to convey to the receiver, and which the speaker/writer assumes to be previously unknown by the receiver (Halliday, 1976; Baker, 1992). In general, given information is presented first, followed by new information. Since we seem to focus more on what comes at the end of a clause, new information, the meaning of the communication and the most important part, is placed in this position of prime focus. Given information, then, usually equals theme, and new information usually equals rheme. Thus thematic structure is also highly influenced by the *context* of previous discussion which surrounds it (Halliday, 1976; Whitley, 1986).

Whitley illustrates this with the following example: in Spanish, if one were to ask *¿Qué hicieron Margarita y Susana?* (What did Margarita and Susana do?), the hearer, who knows only that Susana washed the dishes, would probably reply *Pues, Susana lavó los platos* (Well, Susana washed the dishes), in typical SVO word order. Here Margarita and Susana are the given information, the topic under discussion,

and what they did is the new information to be provided. Thus we see Susana located in thematic position as the given element in the declarative answer. However, if the question were instead *¿Quién lavó los platos?* (Who washed the dishes?), the dishes would be the given information, and who did the washing would be the new information to be relayed. The likely answer in Spanish would be *Pues, los platos los lavó Susana* (Well, the plates, Susana washed them), or even more likely, *Pues, los lavó Susana* (Well, they were washed by Susana) with the word order OVS. In English, this particular word order would be possible with the addition of the pronoun or with the use of a passive construction as shown above, but again, it would be much more likely for the English speaker to highlight new information by the use of stress and intonation: "Well, SUSANA washed the dishes," or "Well, SUSANA did." This difference between the two languages is, however, a matter of degree. Spanish does sometimes use intonation and stress for emphasis, but more commonly uses word order. English can sometimes use changes in word order for emphasis, but more commonly uses intonation in spoken language or orthographic stress in written texts.

For translators, then, it is important to be keenly aware of how information is highlighted and presented, and how this differs between the two languages. When translating from Spanish to English, they must be careful to avoid translating the sentence structure and word order too closely, and thus creating an awkward and unnatural sounding translation. They must also analyze the kind of emphasis that has been provided by the more flexible word order of Spanish, and decide if and how to recreate this emphasis in English through other means. In translating from English to Spanish, translators must consider how the kinds of emphasis and attitude presented in the English original, in writing often indicated by orthographic

means, might be best rendered in Spanish by the use of that language's more flexible choices in word order.

Formation of clauses

Finally, if we examine the basic patterns of clause formation, we find that they are also very similar between Spanish and English, but again, the frequency of use is different. Spanish tends to use subordination more often than does English, while English generally uses more coordination than does Spanish (Cotton and Sharp, 1988). Here as elsewhere, translators need to keep in mind the basic preferences of each language. If translating from Spanish to English, they may want to render some of the subordinate clauses they encounter into coordinated clauses, or break them up into separate sentences, in order to make them more natural in the target language, and when translating from English to Spanish, they may wish to do the opposite. Again, they will have to decide here how much of the SL forms to preserve, and how much to adapt these forms to fit TL norms.

CHAPTER 5.   THE LEXICAL LEVEL: WORDS AND MEANING

Whatever definition one has of translation, ultimately one encounters the concept of meaning and the fact that one is trying to render the meaning of the SL text into a TL text. One can look at meaning from different levels: pragmatic meaning (what is this text trying to accomplish?), textual meaning (what textual elements are present and what sense do they give to the text?), grammatical meaning (what grammatical forms are present and what kind of message do these forms impart?), and lexical meaning--the meaning found at word level. Although I have stressed the importance of looking beyond the word level when translating, ultimately the translator must deal with words, and the meanings imparted by those words, for the grammatical forms, textual qualities and pragmatic patterns of any text are encoded in words.

The meaning of a word, however, is not a simple thing, for there are many different aspects of meaning. Hervey and Higgins (1992) divide lexical meaning into two different categories: **literal meaning** and **connotative meaning**, while Cruse (1986) delineates similar categories which he calls **propositional meaning** and **expressive meaning**.

Literal Meaning

The literal meaning of a word is its dictionary definition, the meaning "fully supported by ordinary semantic conventions" (Hervey and Higgins, 1992, p. 87). Cruse (1986) considers propositional meaning to be the referential meaning--that information the word imparts which refers specifically to something (concrete or

otherwise) in the environment and which can be used to determine the truth of the proposition. However, it is not so easy to delineate a clear, concise literal or propositional meaning for most words. While the dictionary definition of a word supposedly describes the full range of items that a particular word signifies, in reality this is almost never the case, because the meaning, even the supposedly clear literal meaning of a word, is quite fluid. In actual usage in language our understanding of what items are included in the meaning of a particular word is more flexible than the rigid categories provided by a dictionary. Furthermore, the literal meaning of a word is highly influenced by the context in which it appears, so that it becomes even more flexible in context. Obviously this creates complications for the translator who must understand the literal meaning of a source word *within its context* and then try to reproduce that same meaning in the target language, going beyond simple dictionary equivalents. Translators soon find that dictionaries do not provide all the answers!

Languages divide the world and human experience into categories, and then give those categories a name, that is, they make a word. To define the literal meaning of a word, then, "is to specify the 'range' covered by a word or phrase in such a way that one knows what items are included in that range or category and what items are excluded from it" (Hervey and Higgins, 1992, p. 88). Thus when looking at meaning and equivalence at the word level, we need to examine several different types of equivalence relationships between words, whether in the same or in different languages. The first is that of **synonymy**. In full synonymy between two words, their range of literal meanings are identical. In English, "the car" and "the automobile" cover exactly the same lexical range and are fully synonymous in terms of literal or propositional meaning.

Full synonymy, however, is rare, and usually words which we consider "synonyms" of each other describe somewhat different lexical ranges. Thus we can talk of partial synonymy and of degrees of semantic correspondence. Words or expressions which cover similar, but not identical ranges, may be related to each other in several different ways. One word may be a more general term which includes and subsumes entirely the meaning of a more specific word. The more general term is called a **superordinate** or a hyperonym, and the narrower one is referred to as a **hyponym** of the term with the broader semantic range. For example, "pine tree" would be a hyponym of the superordinate category "evergreen." In contrast to this hierarchical relationship in which the meaning of one word is entirely subsumed in the meaning of another, partial synonymy may also be represented between two terms which have some degree of semantic correspondence, but in which each term also covers areas not included in the meaning of the other. These are said to have **overlapping synonymy** (Baker, 1992; Child, 1992; Cruse, 1986; Hervey and Higgins, 1992; Tan, 1988). Examples between Spanish and English would include the terms *novia* and "girlfriend." *Novia* can mean the object of a man's romantic interest, as well as the woman he is about to marry (fiancée) or the woman he is in the process of marrying (bride), but it would not be used to indicate a platonic friend who happens to be female. In English, too, "girlfriend" can be the object of the man's romantic intent, but it can also signify a female friend (particularly of another woman) with whom there is no romantic involvement, and it does not include the meanings of "fiancée" or "bride" (example from Child, 1992).

Connotative Meaning

Finding equivalence between words and expressions is difficult enough when we are talking only about literal meaning, but the process becomes even more complicated when we take into account other layers of meaning. Two words may be full synonyms to the extent that they cover an identical semantic range, but they may still have very different semantic effects due to their **connotative** meanings— that is, the emotional, attitudinal or expressive aspects that particular words carry with them. For example, "my parents" and "the rents" have identical semantic correspondence, but still convey very different meanings. "My parents" is essentially neutral, while "the rents" carries an evaluative and sometimes derogatory sense. Hervey and Higgins delineate six types of connotative meaning. **Attitudinal meaning** is that which suggests a particular attitude or feeling on the part of the speaker/writer toward the referent, such as the above example of "my parents" versus "the rents." Such attitudinal meanings may be difficult to fully determine because they are often more suggestive than definite ("the rents" may be used in a derogatory sense, or it may be meant to carry a certain degree of fondness, for example), and because such meanings tend to change quickly.

Associative meaning, on the other hand, is that aspect of the meaning of a term which derives from stereotypical expectations we tend to associate with a word. Hervey and Higgins give the example of the term "nurse," a term most people almost immediately associate with "female." These associative meanings may well vary from language to language, and the translator must have excellent cultural knowledge of the source culture in order to be aware of them.

Affective meaning is similar to attitudinal meaning in that it involves emotive effect on the receiver of the text, but in particular it suggests an attitude on the part

of the speaker/writer *toward the receiver*. These include linguistic codes of politeness, flattery, insults, etc. Thus "could you be quiet please" carries a very different affective meaning than "shut up," even though the two may have the same literal meaning. In fictional texts, these forms are particularly common in dialogue, and a shift in affective meaning in the translation could have a powerful impact on the way the interaction of the fictitious characters is perceived by the reader. The translator must therefore be careful that a translated expression carries the same or similar affective meaning as that found in the target expression.

Reflected meaning is that meaning which derives from the connection a reader/hearer makes between the expression and a homonym or near homonym, for example, the connection between the word "holy" meaning sacred, "holey" meaning full of holes, and "wholly" meaning completely. Such reflected meanings are the basis of puns and double entendres, and a writer may also use them more subtly to evoke certain connotations. The translator needs to be aware of how reflected meanings may be used in the original, but of course, a TL "equivalent" of a source language word will seldom carry similar homonyms, so that the translator must decide what strategy to use, if possible, to produce a similar effect in the translation. On the other hand, the translator must also be careful that in translating expressions into the TL, she or he does not inadvertently create reflected meanings that are not in the original, and which may distract the reader of the translation.

Collocative meaning is meaning conferred on a word by virtue of its common co-occurrence with another word or words. Words which occur together frequently in a language, especially in clichéd phrases, will quickly evoke each other in the mind of the reader/hearer. Furthermore, certain lexical combinations tend to become fixed in a language, and if a different word is used where a particular

collocation is expected, it can sound very strange to the hearer/reader. For example, in English we ask people to "pay" attention, but in Spanish it is *poner atención* ("put" attention). If one were to say in English "Please put attention to what I am going to say," it would create what is called a **collocational clash** (Larson, 1984). The translator then must be sensitive to expected co-occurrences and be alert to the potential for such collocational clashes.

Allusive meaning is similar to collocative meaning, but refers to the situation where an expression alludes to a particular saying or quotation commonly known in the source culture, so that, for example, one might say "The lid was off the cookie jar" in an allusion to the saying "He got caught with his hand in the cookie jar." For the translator, the difficulty here is first to recognize the allusion, which requires a solid knowledge of the SL and source culture, and then to find a way to impart the force of this allusion in the target text.

Translation and Lexical Non-equivalence

While true *full* synonymy across languages is certainly possible in principle, in reality it is extremely rare, since the range of meanings covered by a word is often delineated slightly (or more than slightly!) differently in different languages. Usually each of the words considered as "equivalents" or synonyms in a bilingual dictionary share some degree of semantic correspondence, but this shared correspondence is partial. The translator may also find that the TL does not have an equivalent word of the same form as that of the SL term. English, for example, has the tendency to create compound nouns or to use nouns as adjectives, while in Spanish this is not acceptable. Thus in English we can have "labor intensive industry," but in Spanish this would require a different and longer form: *industria*

que emplea gran densidad de mano de obra ("industry which employs a great density of labor") (Child, 1992). Or one may find that there are differences in the frequency or manner in which an otherwise equivalent form is used. For example, English has many Latinate words which have very similar equivalents in Spanish, but these terms tend to be used much more rarely in English, where they often are considered to be of a rather formal register, while in Spanish they are more common and informal: *belicoso* carries the same meaning as "bellicose", but *belicoso* appears much more frequently in Spanish than "bellicose" does in English. In addition, it is inevitable that eventually the translator will encounter **lexical gaps** (Baker, 1992) or **semantic exclusion** (Tan, 1988)--situations in which the TL lacks a term found in the SL. In English, we simply do not have a word which imparts similar meaning as the Spanish term *caudillo* (a type of charismatic leader who wields a great deal of power and enjoys strong popular loyalty).

When one looks at connotative or expressive meaning, the issue becomes even more difficult for the translator, for while two terms from different languages may share an almost identical literal meaning, they may differ considerably in their emotional content or connotative sense. In English, to call someone a "shrimp" is to say the individual is small or short, but in Ecuadorian Spanish, to call someone *camarón* (literally "shrimp") is to imply she or he is a bad driver. Furthermore, even terms which have both similar semantic content and connotative meanings may have very different collocative patterns to which the translator must be sensitive. These issues tend to be particularly problematic in literary texts where the connotative and expressive meanings of words and their collocative patterns are often an integral part of the meaning of the text (Njozi, 1991).

It should be clear by now that translation is not a simple mathematical formula such that A in language X equals B in language Z. As we have seen, there is almost never an exact equivalent, either textual, grammatical, or lexical, in the TL for a SL utterance. The act of translation necessarily involves some change or loss of meaning, referred to as **translation loss** (Hervey and Higgins, 1992; Child, 1992; Vasquez-Ayora, 1978). It is important to note that this term covers not only the case where the translation loses features present in the original text, but also situations in which the translation gains features not actually present in the source text. In the process of translating, one needs to keep in mind the fact that some translation loss is inevitable. The translator, then, instead of trying to find the perfect equivalent, needs to focus on reducing translation loss as much as possible, while analyzing which aspects of the original are most important to preserve and which can be forfeited without losing the essential essence of the original.

In dealing with lexical non-equivalence, the type of strategy translators choose to use will depend on the answers to the strategic questions we began with: what their reasons are for translating particular texts, what they want to communicate with the texts and what kind of effects they hope their translations will have on the target audience, what aspects of the source texts they most hope to preserve, what the intended audiences can be presumed to understand, what kind of concessions or explanations must be made for that audience, etc.

One of the most common difficulties the translator encounters is finding that two words have different levels of semantic detail, that is, that a SL word is either wider or narrower than the corresponding TL word. When faced with this situation, translators often find themselves resorting to the use of two or more TL words to best render the sense of the original. In doing so, one must decide how precise to be

in trying to transmit the original meaning. KuBmaul (1985) suggests that the translator's goal should not be "to preserve the features of the meaning of a word at all costs," but rather to determine "what are the relevant features of the meaning of a word in a given context with regard to the function of the translation" (p. 12). Too often, he claims, translators focus on reproducing the greatest number of semantic features of a word, without considering which features are most important in the context of this particular translation. In the process, the translator, while conveying a great number of features of a term as defined in a dictionary, may actually miss the most important, relevant features for that context.

The process of using a more general, or superordinate, TL term to translate a SL word, is referred to as **generalizing translation**. When making such a generalization, the translator needs to make sure that the detail which is lost in the process either is not important to the sense of the translation, or is recoverable from the context. If the TL term does not provide important details which are also not recoverable from the surrounding context, the translator will need to resort to using additional terms or paraphrase to provide the necessary elements. Likewise, the process of using a more specific, or hyponym, TL term to translate a SL word is referred to as **particularizing translation**. In particularization, the translator must be sure that the added detail is implied in the original term. Use of a hyponym will not work well if the detail added is not part of the meaning of the original, and therefore creates a discrepancy or misrepresents the meaning of the source text (Hervey and Higgins, 1992).

When dealing with lexical gaps, the translator must usually resort to the use of paraphrase or circumlocution. This may be done by modifying a superordinate, or by "unpacking the meaning" of the SL term by giving a definition or description

of the item. Such a strategy allows the translator to be quite precise, but its major drawback is that expressive or connotative meaning is almost always lost, since such meaning is generally associated with a singular lexical item (Baker, 1992). Furthermore, the use of a several-word paraphrase means that a text loses some of its conciseness, its rhythm and its poetic diction, and in particular this can be a problem in translating literary works in which the translator is trying to preserve the "feel" of the language. Thus, KuBmaul (1985) emphasizes again here, that the translator should not focus too strongly on reproducing *all* of the details of a SL expression. Rather, one should use what he calls "the maxim of the functionally necessary degree of precision," attempting to reproduce only those features which are relevant, and in as succinct a manner as possible.

One of the areas where lexical gaps occur most commonly is that of what Newmark (1988) refers to as "cultural words." These are words which refer to an entity unique to the particular source culture. This may be any manifestation of the culture and its way of life, whether a physical entity, a concept, or a point of view, but the difficulty for the translator is that there is no equivalent item, and therefore no equivalent word, in the TL. One strategy for dealing with such culture words which privileges the source culture is to transfer the source language word directly to the TL text. This is referred to as **transference** (Newmark, 1988), **borrowing** (Ivir, 1987) or as the use of a **loan word** (Baker, 1992; Larson, 1984). In order for this strategy to be successful, however, the translator must make sure that the entity being described will be clearly understood by the target audience (Ivir, 1987). Often the use of such a loan word, particularly the first time it appears, is followed by an explanation. This may be an explicit explanation either in the text or in a footnote, or it may involve working a subtle explanation into the text which allows the reader

to deduce the meaning of the loan word from the context (Lomholt, 1991).

Conversely, if the translator chooses to privilege the target culture, she or he may decide to use **cultural substitution** (Baker, Ivir) or a **cultural equivalent** (Newmark). This entails replacing the culture-specific SL item or expression with a culture word from the TL which has a different semantic meaning but similar cultural significance. The advantage of this strategy is the ease with which the target audience can grasp the term being used and identify the concepts associated with it. The disadvantage of this choice is that it allows readers to assume that cultures and concepts are identical, when in fact they are not, and thus it reduces the ability of the translation to educate the target audience about the source culture (Ivir, 1987).

A final strategy open to the translator when faced with an "untranslatable" word is that of omission. It is sometimes possible to omit a word in the process of translating without any significant loss of meaning. Here, too, however, translators need to consider how the omission of this term will affect the meaning and sense of the TL text in relation to whatever aspects they hope to preserve.

The connotative meaning of words often causes even more problems for the translator, yet in translating literary works, this expressive meaning is particularly important. As we have seen, a TL word which is semantically equivalent to a SL term frequently carries quite different connotative meaning, yet sometimes, what is most important to impart to the translation is the connotative meaning of the word, rather than the literal meaning. Thus, the translator needs to determine what effect the connotative meanings might have and how important they are to the sense of the text before deciding how best to render them in the TL. He or she may choose to use a term which is semantically different than that of the original, but carries the same expressive sense. KuBmaul uses an example from Oscar Wilde's play *The*

Importance of Being Earnest in order to illustrate this. In trying to ascertain the financial status of a young man, one character in the play, upon discovering that the young man in question has a country house, asks him how many bedrooms the house has. For most English speakers, the number of bedrooms is used to identify the size of the house, and thus carries a special connotative meaning which most of us would recognize immediately. In German, however, one refers to the number of total rooms when describing the size of a house, and asking the number of bedrooms seems strange or even perhaps suggestive. A more successful translation of the play into German would therefore translate the question such that the woman asks for the number of *rooms*, rather than the more semantically equivalent term *bedrooms* (KuBmaul, 1992, p. 15).

Often in dealing with connotative meaning, the translator must use a less expressive term in the target text. This is particularly likely to happen when the semantic meaning of a term is at least as important as its connotative meaning. In such situations it is often possible to retain expressive meaning, at least to some degree, by the use of modifiers (Baker, 1992).

CHAPTER 6. ISSUES ACROSS LEVELS

Idioms and Fixed Expressions

The difficulty idioms represent for translating is underscored by the fact that frequently idioms are defined as complex utterances or sayings which when translated into another language make no sense. The first problem the translator faces, however, is to recognize that an utterance in the source text is indeed an idiom. If the translator knows the SL well, this is often clear, and many idioms are easily recognizable by the fact that they make no sense if taken literally, are ambiguous, violate grammatical or other norms of the language, and/or are very rigid in form (Fernando and Flavell, 1981). However, not all idioms are so obvious. Sometimes idioms or fixed expressions may make semantic sense if taken literally, although they actually carry a very different idiomatic meaning. For example, in English to say "he kicked the bucket" has a simple literal meaning, but its idiomatic use means something else entirely. Translators must read carefully in order to recognize when they are dealing with an idiom rather than a simple propositional utterance.

In translating an idiom, the translator may choose from several options. Generally, the most satisfying strategy is to replace the SL expression with a TL idiom which carries a similar idiomatic meaning, and preferably, similar structure and lexical constituents. For example, the English expression "kill two birds with one stone" is nicely rendered by the Spanish idiom *matar dos pájaros de un tiro* (to kill two birds with one shot). However, such similarity of sense, structure, and lexis is often not possible, and the translator may opt to use a TL expression which carries similar

idiomatic sense, but different structure and constituents. The Spanish idiom *cada muerte de obispo* (once every death of a bishop) can be replaced by the English idiom "once in a blue moon," which uses very different images but carries the same sense. In rendering a SL idiom with a TL expression of some semantic equivalence, however, the translator needs to be careful to look at pragmatic equivalence as well. She or he must be sensitive to the relative frequency of use of the two different expressions, and to questions of dialect, register, and style. Fernando and Flavell (1981) warn against the "strong unconscious urge in most translators to search hard for an idiom in the receptor-language, however inappropriate it may be" (p. 82).

Eventually, the translator is sure to encounter a SL idiomatic expression which has no counterpart in the TL. One strategy for dealing with this is to render the idiom to sense, that is, paraphrasing it by explaining what the meaning of the idiom is (Fernando and Flavell, 1981). For example, the Spanish idiom *donde menos piensa salta la liebre* (where you least expect it hops the hare) could be transposed to its non-idiomatic meaning: "the unexpected always happens." This technique obviously means some loss of feel and idiomaticity in the translation, but is generally considered preferable to a literal word-for-word translation of the SL idiom. Such literal translation generally makes the target text sound foreign and awkward, and the idiomatic meaning of the expression may be completely lost. However, here again the translator needs to decide to what extent this aspect of the source culture should be transposed into the target culture, and a literal translation of an idiom or saying into the TL, called a **calque**, is an option which may indeed make sense for a particular translation. Translators may deliberately choose to translate an idiom literally in order to create a certain effect, particularly if they want the TL audience to be aware of the fact that they are reading a translation, or want

to provide the TL audience with a feel for how the source culture views the world around them. Newmark (1991) suggests that such use of a calque, what he refers to as a type of "cultural interference," can actually enrich a translation when used judiciously. When using a calque of a SL expression, the translator may choose to make this explicit to the reader by the use of statements such as "As the saying goes. . ." or "You know the saying. . ."

Style and Diction

Style is a word used frequently when discussing literary works, but with a range of different meanings. It can be used to mean a particular *type* of text, (see Newmark, 1988, for example), but more frequently the term "style" is used to mean "the way an author writes"--the particular recognizable ways that a certain text "sounds" or reads. In other words, a writer chooses certain structures, certain forms, certain words, which give the text a noticeable expressive feel--or style. Style can therefore be seen as the *patterned choice* of the writer on a number of levels; that is: "style results from a tendency of a speaker or writer to consistently choose certain structures over others available in the language" (Traugott and Pratt, 1980, p. 29). Translators need to be able to analyze this style and to become familiar with the individual style or idiolect of the original author. Then they must decide whether to try to preserve this style or to "normalize" it, and if preserving it, to what degree and using which aspects of the TL (Newmark, 1988).

In literary texts syntax is often manipulated or selected in order to create certain literary effects, and losses of aesthetic quality are likely to occur if the translator fails to take the literary functions of syntax into account. The point of view of the writer or narrator is particularly important in a literary text, and this is

often signaled by prominence, emphasis, foregrounding, backgrounding, given versus new information structure, etc., accomplished through syntactic choices. Thus the translator needs to analyze the communicative emphasis and logical relationships of the source text conveyed by syntax, and try to impart this emphasis as naturally as possible by appropriate syntactic choices in the TL (Shen, 1992). In addition, individual writers often choose particular syntactical patterns in which they express themselves, and for which they become well-known. Hemingway is famous for his "directness" and deceptively simple sentence patterns, while Henry James is famous for the complexity of his sentences which frequently involve embeddings inside embeddings (Traugott and Pratt, 1980). Furthermore, writers, particularly good writers, frequently use deviant or uncommon grammatical forms to produce specific literary effects. Such deviant forms may include artifacts such as long breathless constructions or short, choppy syntax, or rambling sentences, etc., each producing a particular, purposeful effect. In general, such deviation should be reflected in the target text if possible by the reproduction of the same kind of deviation, or a different deviant construction which imparts a similar effect (Shen, 1992; Newmark, 1991).

Diction is a term often used to mean the lexical aspects of style, or the "patterns of lexical choice" (Traugott and Pratt, 1980, p. 116). In a particular language, a group of synonyms may have a similar semantic sense, but a different expressive force in terms of degree of formality, degree of technicality, attitude conveyed, etc. Many lexical items are associated with particular contexts, and it is important for the translator when analyzing the diction or lexical choices to be aware of how the choices made compare to the choices one would expect to find, both in the SL and the TL (Traugott and Pratt, 1980).

Metaphor

Metaphor represents another area of the figurative use of language which can create difficulties in translation. Metaphor can be defined as a literary technique whereby semantic transfer is created through anomaly (Traugott and Pratt, 1980); that is, items which are not normally related are linked together in unexpected ways to create a new way of looking at something, based on the suggestion of some resemblance between them. Newmark (1980) asserts that metaphor can actually communicate more clearly than a direct literal description, and that the purpose of metaphor is "to describe an entity, event or quality more comprehensively and concisely and in a more complex way, than is possible by using literal language" (p. 93). One of the difficulties involved in translating metaphor is that anomalies and semantic deviance which may be acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in another culture for logical, emotional, or even moral reasons (Lefevere, 1992). In addition, the particular image used in a metaphor may not be familiar to the target audience, or it may have a very different connotation in the SL than that which it carries in the TL, or the connotation it carries may be difficult to translate directly into the TL (Child, 1992; Larson, 1984; Mason, 1982).

Metaphors can be divided into several different types (Newmark, 1980, for example, proposes five types), but for the purposes of translation I believe it is most useful to distinguish two different categories: stock or dead metaphors and original metaphors. Dead metaphors are anomalous expressions which have become so commonly used in a language that they have lost their sense of deviance and the reader no longer is aware of their metaphoric impact, that is, they no longer create an image in the mind of the reader. They have become "frozen" in their use, and

indeed the line between such dead metaphors and idioms is quite blurry (Levin, 1977). Original metaphors, on the other hand, still retain their sense of anomaly, their "shock value," and their ability to make the reader see a particular phenomena in a new way.

In translating metaphor, it can be helpful to analyze the structure of the expression. Metaphors can be divided into three parts:

1) **topic** (Larson, 1984) or **object** (Newmark, 1980) - the item or topic being described by the metaphor .

2) **image** - the item to which the topic/object is being compared, i.e., the item being used to describe the topic.

3) **point of similarity** (Larson) or **sense** (Newmark) - the aspect or aspects in which the topic/object and the image are similar; the shared characteristic which is being used as the basis for comparison.

This kind of analysis can be particularly helpful when the impact or idea of the metaphor is not immediately obvious. By breaking the metaphor into its components, the translator may better be able to determine what comparison is being made, what description or idea the author is trying to convey through the image presented, and how this image might best be reflected in the target text.

There are several strategies one can use in translating metaphor. First, the source text image can be translated directly into the TL in a literal translation, particularly if it is likely to be transparent to the target audience and the image is likely to carry the same connotations. If a direct literal translation may not be clear to the reader, the translator may choose to retain the image but make the comparison more explicit by use of a simile. This can often soften a metaphor which

may clash too strongly with the credulity of the target audience, and similes are often more easily understood than metaphors, particularly if the topic, image, and point of similarity are all included (i.e., "she is as graceful as a deer" versus "she's like a deer" or "she's a deer"). In a more extreme case where it is determined that the metaphor will not be transparent, clear, or acceptable to the target audience, the translator may choose to convert the metaphor to sense, that is, to try to describe in non-metaphoric language the attribute or phenomenon the metaphor alludes to, or she or he may choose to replace it with a different metaphor which uses a different image to suggest the same point of similarity or connotation in the TL. Finally the translator may choose to use a combination of these strategies, for example, reproducing the metaphoric image directly, but then combining the metaphor with an additional statement that renders the sense of it, thus making sure that the comparison is not lost on the reader. As a last resort, the translator may choose to simply delete the metaphor all together if is judged to be unimportant to the text (Newmark, 1980; Larson, 1984).

In translating stock metaphors, one can use any of the above strategies, but the generally preferred method, as in the case of translating idioms, is to replace the SL image with a similar stock metaphor in use in the TL which carries a similar pragmatic sense. This strategy generally preserves more of the impact of the original metaphor, but the translator must be sensitive to issues of frequency and register in both languages.

When translating original metaphor, on the other hand, many translation theorists agree that it is important to try to conserve the original image and to translate it as literally as the translator deems possible (see for example Lefevere, 1992; Mason, 1982; Newmark, 1980). Newmark argues that while dead metaphors

are usually best translated by a TL cultural equivalent, original metaphor should generally be translated literally. The more the metaphoric image deviates from SL linguistic or semantic norms, he suggests, the stronger the case for transmitting the image directly into the TL, so that it carries a similar sense of anomaly. However, he goes on to point out some factors the translator should consider in determining the best strategy for translating a metaphor, such as the importance of the metaphor in the context of the source text, cultural factors in the metaphor which may interfere with the ability of the target audience's apprehension of the sense of the image, the extent of the target audience's commitment to struggle with a deviant structure, and the target audience's knowledge.

Furthermore, Mason (1982) again points out that the translator makes these choices in part based on the original strategic decisions she or he made concerning the purpose of the translation and the degree to which she or he wants a sense of the source culture or the target culture to be dominant. Kruger (1991) emphasizes the fact that in literary texts in particular, metaphors often function on a global, textual level, as well as the local level, interacting with other metaphors and aspects of the text, and the translator must be sensitive to how a specific metaphor functions in the text as a whole and ways it may form part of larger, textual metaphors. In deciding how to translate a metaphor, the translator must also consider the fact that metaphor is used to create cohesion in a text (by making sameness out of difference) and foregrounds specific information and phenomena by the very fact of its deviance (Traugott and Pratt, 1980). Thus, choosing to omit a metaphor or to change it in some way will have an impact on the overall cohesion and effect of the text.

Prosody and Sound Texture

One area often ignored in discussions of translation is that of prosody--the sound, the rhythms and melody, found in a text. When prosody is discussed, it is almost always in regards to poetry, but it plays an important part in much literary prose as well. Some authors are particularly sensitive to the sounds and rhythms of language, and part of their individual style involves exploiting the phonological properties of their language to create a particularly pleasing and often poetic prose.

The prosody or rhythm and intonation of a language is due in part to the fact that in a particular language, syllables are given differing degrees of prominence due to accent, stress and emphasis, varying melodic features, and varying characteristics of rhythm, length, and tempo. In translating, these prosodic elements are usually extremely difficult to convey from SL to TL due to the fact that most languages function differently on the prosodic level (Hervey and Higgins, 1992). There are numerous difficulties in trying to render the rhythms of Spanish into English, for example. To begin with, the rhythms of Spanish and English are timed very differently. Spanish is a **syllable-timed** language, with each syllable receiving equal prominence. That is, each syllable is held for the same length of time, creating the characteristic even, staccato rhythm of Spanish. English, on the other hand, is **stress-timed**; that is, only the stressed syllable of content words are given prominence, while other syllables remain weak. In stress-timing, syllables are divided into stress groups or **feet**, each foot containing one strongly stressed syllable among other unstressed or lesser stressed ones. In English, therefore, the timing and rhythm of an utterance is determined by the number of feet or *stressed* syllables present, while in Spanish this is determined by the number of total syllables (Kreidler, 1989; Whitley, 1986).

Furthermore, vowels in English are affected more strongly by stress. In Spanish, vowels tend to be pure and open, whether stressed or unstressed, while in English, unstressed vowels are often reduced to a schwa. While it is true that Spanish vowels are at times affected to some extent by stress and surrounding consonant sounds (see Whitley, 1986, p. 47), this effect is far less noticeable than in English. Thus Spanish tends to retain a certain musical quality difficult to reproduce in English.

These patterns of rhythm and timing can play an important part in creating the effect a text has on its reader. The translator needs to be able to identify what prosodic effects have been used in the source text and analyze how important they are to the text as a whole. Then she or he must decide what kind of prosodic effects to create in the target text. While it is often impossible to reproduce exactly the characteristics of rhythm and timing of the original, the translator may be able to exploit aspects of prosody of the TL to create similar effects. In a text in which the rhythm of the language plays an important part in the text as a whole, the translator can try to create a rhythmic pattern in the TL, which, while different from the rhythms of the SL, carries some of the feel of the original.

While the rhythm and timing of a language at the level of syllable stress can be particularly troublesome in the process of translation, other aspects of prosody are somewhat more amenable to reproduction in another language. As with lexical cohesion, the sounds in a text also create a kind of texture known as **sound texture,** and can act as a source of **phonological cohesion.** The repetition of same or similar sounds through alliteration, assonance, and rhyme creates a kind of textual patterning (Traugott and Pratt, 1980). The use of these devices gives emphasis to certain words, and creates a rhythm and melody in the sentence. The difficulty the

translator faces here is obvious: equivalent TL expressions which carry much the same semantic meaning as the SL expressions will not have the same sounds. If the translator chooses to try to reproduce the sounds found in the original, the semantic meaning is bound to change. Here again one must decide how important these prosodic devices are to the source text as a whole, and to the target text in light of the decisions already made about the purpose of the translation and the aspects the translator most wants to preserve (Lefevere, 1992). For some forms of poetry, the prosodic elements may be the most important sense of the text to retain, but for prose literature, one usually does not sacrifice sense for sound.

However, there are strategies one can use to try to recreate some of the prosodic effects of the original. Sometimes compromises can be made, which, while changing the meaning of a particular word or words, do not severely affect the meaning of the utterance or text. One well-known example is the translation of the title of Guillermo Cabrera Infante's novel *Tres Tristes Tigres* (1968). Much of the power of the title is to be found in the alliteration and assonance of the three words. In English, "three sad tigers" simply doesn't have the same effect. The solution for Donald Gardner and Suzanne Jill Levine, the translators of Cabrera Infante's novel, was to render the title as *Three Trapped Tigers*. While the literal meanings of "trapped" and *triste* are not the same by any means, the semantic sense of the title as a whole is not radically altered, and much of the impact of the original title is retained.

Another strategy to which the translator may resort is the use of **compensation**, that is, making up for the loss of a particular feature from the source text by reproducing a similar feature in the target text, but in a different place or a different manner. In the case of alliteration, for example, the translator may be able

to create an alliterative pattern in the target text by the alliteration of different sounds in different words than those found in the source text, and/or by creating a similar effect in a different part of the text.

The sound texture of a text, its rhythm and musicality, is also developed by the deliberate arrangement of larger units of language, such as words and expressions. Sound patterns are created by the repetition of words or phrases and the use of contrastive, symmetric, and parallel constructions in the text. Chukovsky (1984) uses the well-known introduction to Dicken's *A Tale of Two Cities* to illustrate the use of such patterns:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair . . .

The sound symmetry created here by the repetition of words, contrasts, and patterns creates a musical cadence which is an integral part of the text and of the particular style of the writer. Fyodorov (On Artistic Translation, quoted in Chukovsky, 1984, p. 145) suggests that this type of rhythm created on the word level is often more important in developing the prosody of prose, than is the rhythm created at the phonemic or syllabic level. Luckily, this "lexical" prosody is also often easier for the translator to preserve in the target text. Word repetition and contrastive structures are often fairly easy to retain. Specific grammatical structures will, of course, generally have to be changed to fit the patterns of the TL, but the techniques of repetition, contrast and parallelism can usually be reproduced, either directly or by compensation

CHAPTER 7.   DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS IN ACTION

In the preceding pages I have presented some insights from the area of linguistics which can help inform the decisions a translator makes in the process of producing a translated text. In this chapter I move from a review of the literature in this area to an exploration of this process in action. Here I discuss some of the difficulties I faced and decisions I made, in light of the issues presented above, as I translated three short works from Spanish to English.

Before I begin discussing this process of translation, let me describe my motivations for translating these texts, as these motivations had a great deal of influence on the approaches I chose. The three works I am translating were not chosen randomly, but rather were selected from among a number of possibilities for specific reasons. First of all, I was particularly interested in translating works by Latin American women writers. Historically, women writers from Latin America have been largely ignored, and while this is now beginning to change at a rapid rate, works by women from the Andean countries of Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru remain severely underrepresented. Since I have lived in Ecuador, I have access to writings by Ecuadorian women and a knowledge and understanding of that country and region which should help my translations to be more successful.

Furthermore, I believe that the dissemination of works by women writers can add a great deal to our understanding of the world and the realities of those with whom we share it. Therefore I was particularly interested in translating stories which had something to say about the situation of women in Latin American culture

and their responses to that situation. The stories presented here all depict women struggling against a culture of machismo and patriarchy. In addition, the third story in particular deals with issues of class, race, and the position of indigenous peoples in Latin American culture. In each story an individual female protagonist defiantly faces a particular aspect of that patriarchal culture and finds her own way of overcoming or escaping it. In "The Ring" and "The Mayor's Wife," the protagonists' responses are ultimately triumphant, while in "La Machorra," the protagonist finds her only escape through insanity and ultimately death.

The target audience I am translating for is an English-speaking audience located in the United States. As I intend for these stories to later become part of an anthology of translated Latin American women's writings, I assume my audience is interested in learning something about Latin America, and about the situation of women in that region. I also assume its members are fairly well-educated with some background knowledge of Latin America, although they probably speak little or no Spanish. This audience may include students and scholars in the areas of women's studies or comparative literature, as well as a broader population which shares these interests and enjoys reading literature from around the world. I hope through these translations to be able to present to the target audience a deeper understanding of the situation of women in Latin America written from the perspective of those very women themselves. To this end I hope to translate these works in such a way that they are easily accessible to an American-English speaking audience, but still retain a sense of the realities and perspectives which exist in Latin America.

Translation Process of "The Ring"

I will begin by discussing the analysis and translation of "The Ring." The text is located within a culture of machismo and in a country which suffers extremes of poverty and wealth, and these concepts are important for the audience to understand. I am assuming that the target audience will be aware of these facts to some extent, and that the context of the text itself will make these issues even clearer. Therefore I have chosen to give few explanations of this situation, but have made some concessions. For example, in the first paragraph, the original refers to *los bañistas de la ciudad* (the bathers from the city). Someone acquainted with the reality of Ecuador would be familiar with the wealthy families who travel to the beach on weekends (as opposed to, for example, Coney Island or the Jersey Shore where bathers on the beach come from all walks of life), but for an audience which may not be as aware of this assumption, I've added the adjective "wealthy" to "bathers" in order to make this concept clearer.

On examining the coherence relationships of the text we find certain repeating patterns. In particular, the story frequently exhibits a pattern of coherence relationships which moves from a description of a situation to the reason for that situation or the forces behind that situation or action. For example, on the first page, the third paragraph begins with Teresa wandering the beach, followed by her reason for doing so. Similarly, in the same paragraph she states unequivocally that Luis is not going to change, then gives the reason this will not happen, and at the end of the second page she declares that she won't give the ring to Luis, followed by her reason for refusing to do so. This kind of logical sequencing has been called a *phenomenon-reason* relationship (McCarthy, 1991) and creates a particular effect of engaging the reader's curiosity and leading the reader forward to

a deeper understanding of the processes at work in the world of the text. Furthermore, we find larger repeating patterns that slowly build the reader's understanding of situations within the story. As the reader moves through the text, she or he develops a building sense of the poverty suffered by Teresa and Luis, and of Luis's abusive tendencies, as well as a developing sense of Teresa's homeliness and humiliation at the hands of Luis and the world in general. These types of coherence relationships are quite easy to retain in an English translation since this pattern of logical sequencing is quite common to both languages, but I did try to remain conscious of preserving these patterns as I translated.

An examination of the cohesive relationships within the work, particularly in terms of lexical cohesion, provides us with a much deeper understanding of the processes going on in the development of the text. An analysis of the key lexical items reveals various lexical chains throughout the text which create important images. Beginning with the first paragraph we see the reiteration created by *días* (days), *domingos* (Sundays), and *la tarde* (afternoon) in a relationship of superordinates and hyponyms, and these items are repeated throughout the text (*diariamente*-daily, *domingo*-Sunday, *día*-day, *la tarde*-afternoon, etc.). We also find the image of the beach: *la playa* (beach), *olas* (waves), and *la arena* or *la arena húmeda* (the sand, the damp sand), which reappears throughout the piece, and a metaphorical image of the hunt and the hunted: *la caza de un par*. . . (the hunt for a pair. . .), *su presa* (her prey). This image helps create the sense of Teresa as the helpless prey of Luis's rages, and I considered it important to maintain in the translation. This image is reinforced by the repetition of the word *ojos* (eyes) with various modifiers: *ojos vivarachos* (lively or quick eyes), *ojos tristes* (sad eyes), *activos ojos* (busy eyes). These references bring to mind the eyes of an animal, particularly a caged animal, and in

translating I had some difficulty deciding how to render such phrases. I was tempted to translate *los activos ojos* as "her flitting gaze," which sounded more natural to me in English, but does not repeat the term "eyes," and perhaps does not carry the same image of the eyes of a caged animal. I finally settled on changing the form of the sentence to "her eyes darting about," which still retains the repetition of the word "eyes" and something of the animal image, and also sounds more idiomatic in English. I had more difficulty with the final sentence of the first paragraph: *Si las olas vencían, sentábase en la arena húmeda y clavaba sus ojos tristes en el mar* (literally "If the waves won, she would sit in the wet sand and fix her sad eyes on the sea"). The literal translation presented here retains the repetition of the item "eyes," but it sounds awkward in English. Even changing it to "she would stare with sad eyes out to sea" sounded unnatural; nothing I could find was as idiomatic as "she would sit in the damp sand staring sadly out to sea." This compromise sounds much more natural and creates an alliterative pattern that helps compensate for alliteration lost elsewhere, although it does not preserve the pattern of lexical repetition of the original.

The image of Teresa as a wild animal is also reinforced by the simile on the second page in which Teresa is likened to a wounded bird hopping about in the sand. Also connected to this image we find in the first paragraph the reiteration of the idea of liberation: the name of the beach is *La Libertad* (liberty), and the use later in the paragraph of the verb *librar* (which can be translated as "to liberate," but also can mean to engage in or wage a battle, which is how it is used here) reinforces this idea. I suspect that the name of the beach was chosen deliberately to highlight the sense of Teresa as a hunted animal, and her eventual liberation. The use of the verb *librar* was probably subconscious, but adds to the effect. Unfortunately, this effect is

lost in the translation, because in English we do not use the verb "to liberate" with this second meaning, and I was forced to use a verb which cannot carry this connotation.

In addition, throughout the story we find the reiteration of lexical items which suggest violence. Various forms of the verb *pegar* (to hit or beat) are repeated, and words such as *relámpago* (lightening), *bofetones* (slaps) *puños* (fists), and *golpes* (blows) create a heightened sense of violence. It is interesting to note that here the author has used many synonyms rather than repeating the same word often, and in translating I have tried to maintain this pattern. In contrast, the word *manos* (hands) itself is repeated numerous times throughout. Upon finding the ring Teresa rolls it about in her hands. Later she discusses the beautiful hands of the ring's previous owner, and how her own hands will appear similar when adorned with the ring. Then, several paragraphs later we find an interesting contrast in which the image of Teresa's hand embellished with the ring is set against the appearance of Luis's hand, prepared to hit her, but which he stops suddenly. Here again I decided that it was important to repeat the word "hand" in the translation, and to state that Luis stopped with his *hand* in mid air, rather than to say, for example, that he suddenly stopped himself or stopped short.

Also in the first paragraph we see the beginning of another important chain of lexical items which is carried out throughout the text. These collocations include the general term *objeto* (object), and numerous other words which define what these objects are: *un par de gafas* (a pair of sunglasses), *una horquilla* (a barrette), *una peineta* (a comb), *baratijas* (trinkets), etc. The word *objeto* is repeated numerous times, often with the modification *objeto olvidado* (forgotten object). The repetition of this word and reiteration of collocated terms underlines an important metaphor of the story:

Teresa is in a sense an object, a forgotten object, an object of Luis's scorn and an object to be used by him. Therefore, in translating this text, I decided that the use of the word "object" and the repetition of this word were very important to maintain.

Starting with the moment Teresa first finds the ring, another important lexical chain develops. This chain is composed of terms which suggest brilliance, sparkle, light, etc. This begins with the *destello* (flash of light or sparkle) like a *relámpago* (lightening bolt) which Teresa sees when she spies the ring, and continues with descriptions of the ring and its stones: *piedras brillantes* (brilliant stones), *alas luminosas* (shining wings), etc. The brilliance and light of the stones is also reflected in Teresa's face after she finds the ring. We find *su rostro resplandeciente de un fulgor que venía también de las piedras sagradas del anillo* (her face shining with a brilliance that also came from the sacred stones of the ring), and later *el fulgor de su rostro* (the brilliance of her face), as well as *ese rostro, sereno como un lago* (that face, as serene as a lake). The ring itself then becomes both the source of the changes that take place in Teresa, and a symbol or metaphor for Teresa herself. In the mirror created by the central stone of the ring, Teresa sees herself reflected in a new way, and through the ring she begins to see herself differently, to value herself. On the third page of the story she turns the ring around in her hands, discovering new facets as she does so. Likewise, as the ring begins to change her life, she discovers new facets of herself, and like the ring, she begins to shine, to give off a new brilliance, as she discovers her own worth and power. Both Teresa and the ring are mere forgotten objects lost in the sand as the story begins, but both become powerful, brilliant, shining and multifaceted as the story progresses. Thus in translating this work I have tried to recreate the lexical chains and collocations which help create these images and this important global metaphor.

The use of immediate repetition as a technique for emphasis appears as well. For example, on the third page we find *Habíase peinado ella en homenaje al anillo, a ese anillo sagrado que . . .,* and just below this *Y él lo había observado y había observado su rostro . . .* Finally in the last page appears *Pero a él, a él sí que lo mataré. . .* This technique lends a special emphasis to these words, as well as creating a rhythm to the sentences in which they appear, which I felt important to preserve, and which luckily could be done easily while keeping an idiomatic flavor to the translation.

Examining other aspects of rhythm and prosody, I found that in general this is not an important aspect of the work, although some prosodic devices do appear. The first paragraph is particularly resonant, both in terms of rhythm and sound. Much of the first and second sentences have a particularly poetic rhythm, and can be neatly divided into stanzas: *Teresa deambulaba/ por la amplia playa/ de La Libertad/. Sus ojos vivarachos/ escudriñaban a la distancia/ y de pronto se precipitaban/ a la caza de un par de gafas/ una horquilla/ una peineta:/ de cualquier objeto olvidado/ por las bañistas de la ciudad.* This reads nicely in rhythm, including the fact that *La Libertad* rhymes with *la ciudad* as does *escudriñaban* with *precipitaban.* We find a similar pattern of clauses in the second paragraph of the story: *Caminaba lentamente/ la cabeza inclinada/ los activos ojos/ revolviendo la arena./ Su figura esmirriada/ no tenía muchos encantos/ y sus paseos a nadie/ llamaban la atención.* However, this effect was extremely difficult to try to reproduce in the translation, and given that such sound effects are not a major part of the impact of the story, I sadly gave up the attempt.

Alliteration and repetition of sounds also appear at times in the story, and while I found it generally impossible to reproduce the same sounds in the translation, I was sometimes able to successfully use compensation techniques. For example, the last paragraph exhibits the repetition of the Spanish double L, "ll":

Teresa acarició dulcemente su cabello hirsuto con la mano ensortijada. Y las piedras del anillo brillaron como estrellas en una noche de ébano. In many Andean parts of Ecuador, the double L still retains the sound /H/, a sound which does not exist in the repertoire of English, so repeating this sound in the translation proved to be not only difficult, but impossible. However, I found that I could easily create alliteration with the sound /s/: "Teresa sweetly stroked his shaggy head with her ringed hand. And the stones of the ring sparkled like stars in an ebony night."

In analyzing the grammatical aspects of this text, I found in general that the grammatical structure was straightforward and easy to translate. The differences in tense options between the two languages, however, does create some inevitable translation loss. The original text, as is common in narrative, makes extensive use of the Spanish imperfect past tense in creating the scene and setting of the story. The first four paragraphs of the story are written almost entirely in the imperfect form, as they sketch the background and setting for what is to come. This is contrasted by the sudden shift to preterite tense in the fifth paragraph where the action of the story begins. This shift in tense is particularly effective because the action in this paragraph begins with a sudden flash of light, and the abrupt switch in verb tense accentuates the sense of "flash" and suddenness of this event. This change in tense is further emphasized by the word order in the first sentence of the paragraph: *Llegó el destello a sus ojos como un relámpago fugaz* (*Arrived the flash of light to her eyes like a fleeting streak of lightening). Instead of the normal SVO order of a declarative sentence, we find VSO with fronting of the verb. This change from the neutral order highlights the verb and its form, so that the reader is impacted more strongly by the change in tense.

Unfortunately, this effect is impossible to duplicate in the translation since English has no imperfect past tense. The VSO word order of the first sentence of the paragraph is also difficult to reproduce, since this order is not acceptable in English. I could front the idea of the verb *llegar* (arrive) by fronting an adverbial phrase such as "arriving suddenly to her gaze," but this sounds awkward and unnatural. Furthermore, the reason for the markedness of word order here no longer exists in the target text; the placement of the verb at the beginning of the sentence and paragraph in the original draws attention to the abrupt change in tense, but this change doesn't take place in the English translation. Therefore, I chose to address this issue by changing the form of the sentence and emphasizing the sudden shift occurring here by fronting an adverbial phrase containing--what else--the word "suddenly": "Suddenly a flash of light caught her eye like a fleeting streak of lightening." The abrupt use of the word "suddenly" alerts the reader to the fact that the story is moving from background to action, and helps underscore the instantaneous and unexpected sense of the flash of light.

In examining further the issue of word order in the text, we find a recurring pattern of adverbial fronting. The story begins with the fronted adverbial *Todos los días--pero especialmente los domingos al caer la tarde--* (Every day, but especially Sundays in the afternoon . . .), and this pattern appears often throughout the work: *A veces libraba verdaderas batallas . . .* (Sometimes she waged real battles . . .), *Hasta ahora sólo había encontrado . . .* (Until now, she had only been able to find . . .), *Y la tarde siguiente, él volvió . . .* (And the next afternoon he returned . . .), etc. By placing the adverb in theme position, the writer has framed the sense of the clause within that adverb. In this text most of the fronted adverbials are adverbials of time, and the fronting occurring here frames the following clause within a particular sense of

time, which among other things, adds to the coherence structure of the work. Thus in translating the piece, I have tried to maintain this pattern of adverbial fronting.

Marked word order appears in several other places in the text as well. In the middle of the third page of the original we find the sentence *Algo debió notarle Luis* (*Something must have noted about her Luis) with OVS word order. Here the fronting of the object "something" emphasizes this word, while the placement of the subject "Luis" in rheme position also focuses the reader's attention on Luis as new information. This word order however is impossible to reproduce in English, and I settled for "Luis must have noticed something different about her . . ." By modifying "something" with "different," I hope to add some of the emphasis that the marked word order in Spanish imparts to the word *algo*.

On the fourth page of the original we find several other examples of marked word order. Halfway down the page the text states: *Pero Luis no la golpeó: lo detenía ese desconocido fulgor de su rostro* (But Luis didn't hit her: *him detained this unfamiliar brilliance in her face, i.e., this unfamiliar brilliance in her face detained him), and below this: *Me lo dió un hombre* (*Me it gave a man, i.e., A man gave it to me). In both of these sentences the marked word order can be attributed to information structure. In the first example "Luis" is given information ("But Luis didn't hit her" being the immediate predecessor of the marked clause), and thus is placed first in the clause. Similarly, in the second example, both "Teresa" (which becomes "me") and the ring (which becomes "it") are mentioned in the previous clause (Teresa being indicated indirectly by the verb ending of *sacaste*, the second person singular familiar form): *¿De dónde sacaste ese anillo?* (Where did you get that ring?). Thus they are placed in the position of given information at the beginning of the sentence in OVS word order, which also serves to place the subject *un hombre* (a

man) in rheme position and focus attention on this aspect. In translating these I chose to try to retain the word order of the first example by switching to a passive construction: "Luis was stopped, confused by the unfamiliar brilliance in her face." In the second case I settled for changing the word order to the more natural "A man gave it to me." I could have again used a passive construction here, but it sounded unnatural to me for someone to answer the question with "It was given to me by a man."

At the lexical level this story is not particularly complex, and equivalents were generally easy to find. The source text does not contain any untranslatable "culture words," and is written in simple, straightforward language. Most difficulties I encountered were due more to the attempt to retain particular effects in the translation while still creating an idiomatic and natural impression, as discussed above, rather than in finding lexical equivalents. However, even here I found various examples of the problems a translator faces on the lexical level.

To begin with, there were numerous words whose literal meanings covered broad ranges, and which required some analysis in determining the relevant semantic features of each term which were most important to reproduce. In the first paragraph we find the verb *precipitar*, a verb I usually equate with meaning to be hasty, to rush headlong into a situation, or to act hastily or recklessly. In its context here the verb could possibly carry these meanings, but it can also mean to throw, hurl or fling, and these meanings seemed to fit the context better, particularly since we have an idiom in English "to throw one's self into something" which works very nicely here. Similarly, on the third page of the original, the noun *aliento* appears (*acaso observara en ella un aliento extraño*). *Aliento* is normally translated as "breath," although it can also mean encouragement, as well as spirit,

vigor, or courage. The idea of "breath" seems to come the closest to the meaning inferred within the context here--"perhaps he noticed a strange breath about her," but of course in English we would not use the term "breath," but rather "air," imparting the same idea.

Other examples also occur in this text which illustrate how the translator must often go beyond dictionary definitions of a word to understand its use in a particular context. Towards the end of the second page of the original text we find the use of the verb *fingir* (*el espejo diminuto que fingiría la piedra central de la joya*--the tiny mirror which the central stone of the ring _____). *Fingir* according to <u>Simon and Schuster's International Dictionary, Spanish-English</u> means "to pretend, feign," yet how can the central stone of the ring "pretend" a mirror? One must be familiar with the more flexible uses of the term or be able to intuit from both its dictionary definition and the context surrounding it that here it is being used to mean "to imitate, simulate, or emulate."

However, this example also illustrates the importance of KuBmaul's (1985) admonition that the translator not attempt to preserve *all* of the features of a particular word, but rather focus on only those features which are relevant in the particular context. Having struggled to understand the meaning conveyed by the use of the verb *fingir*, I became too attached to the idea of recreating all nuances of meaning of this word, and I first translated it as "emulate": (". . . reflected in the tiny mirror the central stone of the jewelry emulated"). However, this sounds awkward in English and tends to clash with the connotations we hold for this verb (can an inanimate object emulate another inanimate object?). Thus, in the end I translated this phrase as ". . . reflected in the tiny mirror formed by the central stone of the

ring," which sounds much more natural and still carries the essential features of the original verb.

Various lexical items also occur in this text in which the connotative meaning of the term must be considered in the process of translating. For example, at the end of the second page the term *blancas* (white) occurs in reference to the hands of the ring's original owner: *¿Y sus manos, cómo serían sus manos? Blancas de estar bien protegidas* . . . (And her hands? What were her hands like? White from being well-protected . . .). In a country located on the equator where traditionally the upper classes protected themselves from the effects of the sun which the working classes must endure, white hands are equated with protection and a life of luxury. In a country such as the United States where a tan is often considered a symbol of luxury and health (skin cancer warnings not withstanding), this connotation is not perhaps as clear. Therefore I added to the translation the word "smooth" to describe the hands of the woman who owned the ring, since "smooth hands" are more often associated with the idea of well-protected hands in the U.S.

Another word which gave me some difficulty was the use of the word *majadera* on the fourth page. This word is used commonly in Ecuador to mean someone who is ill-behaved, mischievous or naughty. According to <u>Simon and Schuster's International Dictionary</u>, it means "nuisance, pest, annoying or irritating person." These terms seem quite tame for the context in which the word appears, both in the original and in translation. Luis is furious at the time he spits out this insult. His wife has just told him she has a lover, and he doesn't strike me as someone who would accept this calmly or mince words. Even in the original text the term *majadera* seems incongruous in the situation, and I suspect that this is due to the fact that the story was originally published in the 1950s, when stronger language

in a published work was often considered unacceptable. If written today, I imagine that a more forceful word such as *perra* (bitch) or *puta* (whore) would have been used. Certainly the target audience, generally immune to the use of such words in everyday language, would expect a stronger word, and "bitch" seems the most idiomatic and natural in the context presented.

Translation Process of "The Mayor's Wife"

In the second text I have translated here, which I have titled "The Mayor's Wife," the creative use of language is more important to the effect of the work. It exhibits a much more complex use of language with more emphasis on prosody, sound effects, and metaphor, and a denser, more deviant style which creates a lyrical piece rich in powerful images. The difference in style is probably in part due to the fact that this work is actually one chapter of a novel, and the space afforded to a writer in a novel generally allows, and even encourages, more focus on the creative use of language itself. However, this chapter reads well on its own as a powerful vignette.

Lexical analysis of this work reveals numerous powerful lexical chains winding throughout the text. Significant images are created by the frequent repetition of lexical items relating to storms and natural disasters (*huracán, tempestad, terremoto, epicentro, granizo,*--hurricane, storm, earthquake, epicenter, hail, etc.), as well as those related to fire and the color red (*encendida, llamaradas rojiazules, quemaduras, chispitas, manchas rojas, rojo vivo*--burning, red-blue flames, burns, sparks, red spots, red hot, etc.). These terms create potent metaphorical images of the fires and storms raging inside of the protagonist, and as such are, of course, important to preserve, a requirement which did not prove to be difficult.

An important lexical chain is also produced by the repetition of terms related to parts of the body: *cara, cuerpo, dedos, pecho, carne, piernas, piel, labios, uñas, nalgas, bocas, manos, torsos* (face, body, fingers, chest, flesh, legs, skin, lips, nails, buttocks, mouths, hands, torsos)--the list goes on and on. These again relate to an important theme of the story, the slow and inevitable decay of the human body. Yet another global metaphor created by lexical reiteration in the text is that of being devoured, as the various parts of the body are devoured by time. Thus we find terms such as *tragada, carne, mordiscos, se mordía, garganta, boca,* etc. (swallowed, flesh, bites, bite one's self, throat, mouth, etc.). This chain is somewhat less obvious, and thus important for the translator to note.

Simile and metaphor are central to the style and force of this piece. Starting with the second paragraph we find: "It was like opening a window and having the tail of a lost tornado break into the house, scattering all of the papers on one's desk-- similarly she saw her marriage drowning in a whirlpool. Like a storm which topples even the strongest trees, . . . It was an indifferent earthquake, and she was in the very epicenter trying to maintain an impossible equilibrium in order not to be swallowed alive . . .," and this pattern is repeated over and over. Most of the metaphorical images contained in the text translate literally into the TL without too much difficulty, although I did encounter a couple that seem rather jolting, perhaps because the images they create are quite ugly. These include *esa clase de secretos tenía la propiedad de irse hinchando y cuando reventaban, los que eran microbios o bacterias salían transformados en enormes elefantes* (that class of secrets had a tendency to grow rapidly beyond control, and when it blew up, what had been nothing but microbes or bacteria suddenly were transformed into enormous elephants) and later *Todo junto, revuelto y desenvuelto, mezclado y deformado en un maremagnun que se iba inflando*

como para producir un aborto abominable que se nutría con un hambre voraz de su propia
sangre (All together, turned about and unraveled, mixed together and deformed in a
tremendous confusion, swelling up so as to create some sort of abominable abortion
that fed itself with a ravenous hunger on its own blood). However, despite the fact
that these images seem rather jolting, I chose to translate them literally as well,
because they are as shocking in the original as in the translation, and because they
create very powerful images which are easy, if horrible, to grasp.

Prosodic elements are also more important and more frequent in this text.
Alliteration occurs repeatedly: *golpes de granizo; las paredes verticales, las puertas*
entreabiertas, las persianas bajas; las calles torcidas. . . las casas conocidas, eran camas en las
que había detalles de cuerpos; fuegos fatuos; la cara quemaba como si; las ardientes arenas;
etc. Most of these patterns of alliteration were obviously impossible to reproduce in
the target text, but I was able to use compensation techniques frequently to create
alliteration of other items in the work. For example, in the second paragraph,
instead of translating *una cola de huracán despistado* as "a tail of a lost hurricane," I
chose instead to translate it as "a tail of a lost tornado" to create an alliterative
pattern. Similarly, although I first translated *aborto abominable* as "horrible abortion"
because I thought "horrible" sounded more idiomatic, I later changed it to
"abominable abortion" in order to retain the alliterative pattern.

For the utterance *Caminaba con pasos vacilantes* (literally "She walked with
vacillating steps") I eventually settled on "She walked with slow, uncertain steps,"
which creates alliteration with the /s/, and I chose to render *doliéndole una punta de*
obsidiana que le estaba urgando las costillas (literally "hurting her an obsidian point
which was plowing into her ribs") as "an obsidian splinter stabbing her in the ribs."
The phrase *que caían como un rayo* I originally translated as "which fell like a

lightening bolt," but then changed to "which leapt like a lightening bolt," and while I first transposed *el mismo pantano abominable de los celos* as "the same abominable swamp of jealousy," I later substituted "the same sickening swamp of jealousy." Similarly *las aceras tortuosas de la ofensa gratuita* (literally "the torturous sidewalks of a gratuitous offense") became "the torturous trail of a gratuitous insult." Other alliterative patterns almost fell into place: "bit her lips until they bled," "butcher shop of bodies" (a word-for-word translation of *carnicería de cuerpos!*), "desolate desert," "torrent of tears," etc.

Another aspect of both the prosody and cohesion of this text is the abundant use of patterns of parallel and contrastive structures. On the second page of the original we find the parallel structures *Golpes de granizo y lengüetadas de llamaradas rojiazules. Quemaduras de un odio persistente y difusas chispitas de amor* (Blows of hail and licks of red-blue flames. Burns from persistent hate and diffuse sparks of love), and later the contrastive structures *La verdad maciza y la mentira omnipresente. La confusión y la esperanza* (The solid truth and the omnipresent lie. Confusion and hope). Here I added "Total confusion and pure hope," because it retains some of the rhythm of the original which is otherwise lost, since English does not normally use the definite article here. Similarly, on the next page we find *la certeza y la duda* ("Certainty and doubt," which I rendered as "Absolute certainty and terrible doubt") followed by *El sí y el no* ("Yes" and "no"), and later *La venganza ciega y el posible perdón* (Blind vengeance and possible pardon).

These kinds of patterns are repeated in various places, but perhaps the pattern with the most impact is found on the last page where the structure *tanto como para . . .* (so much so that . . .) is repeated over and over: *tanto como para sentir que la casa le venía chica, tanto como para mandar al diablo los pesares cotidianos, tanto como*

para recoger uno a uno los pedazos . . ., etc. This pattern is repeated five times, building
to a powerful crescendo at the end of the story, leading the reader to the
protagonist's discovery of her own strength. Such patterns of repeating structures
are integral to the style and force of the text, and to conflate them or change them
would mean losing much of the powerful effect the work has on the reader.
Therefore I carefully tried to reproduce these constructions, and this was usually not
difficult, although as I mentioned above, at times it was challenging to try to
recreate the same or similar rhythms in the translation.

This text also employs much more complex syntax than the previous one,
and illustrates the tendency of Spanish to use subordination more frequently than is
commonly done in English. The entire first paragraph of the work (all sixty-three
words) is one sentence with multiple embeddings, and other similar examples of
complex sentences with numerous subordinate clauses appear throughout the story.
For example, on the fifth page we find *Dio rienda suelta al raudal de las lágrimas que
venían pugnando por salirse en la distancia ilimitada que mediaba de la casa de Doña Carmen
Benavides a la suya y en la que no existía posibilidad de una oasis sino sólo el espejismo de
una mujer ofendida y suplantada.* (literally "She gave free rein to the torrent of tears
which came struggling to escape during the unlimited distance which existed
between the house of Doña Carmen Benavides and her own and in which the
possibility of an oasis didn't exist, but rather only the mirage of a woman offended
and supplanted."). Besides the frequent use of subordination, the work also
frequently employs coordination, and is characterized by long, complicated, and
often syntactically deviant sentences.

In translating these, I chose to retain this effect as much as possible. Although
such long and complicated syntactic structures are more common in Spanish, many

utterances in this work are somewhat deviant even for that language, and I believe
they are an important aspect of the impact and power of the text. In the process of
doing this, however, I tried to render such sentences as clearly in English as possible,
even if they were long and complicated. For example, the sentence I quoted above
eventually became "She . . . gave in to the torrent of tears she had been fighting
down the entire endless trip from Doña Carmen Benavides' house to her own, a
journey in which she could find no oasis, just the mirage of a woman offended and
displaced."

The translation of this particular sentence illustrates another difficulty I
encountered in translating the text. Since Spanish has different conjugational forms
for most categories of "person" (first person singular, second person singular, etc.),
the pronoun signaling the subject of the verb is often omitted since this information
can easily be recovered from the verb. Thus, instead of saying *Yo soy estudiante de
lingüística* (I'm a linguistics student), more often one says simply *Soy estudiante de
lingüística*, omitting the first person singular pronoun *yo*, since this information is
transmitted by the verb *soy*. In several places this text exhibits sentences which
begin with a verb, conjugated to indicate that the subject is "she," the mayor's wife,
but without having to repeat the pronoun "she" each time. However, I do not have
that luxury in English. In the final paragraph on the fifth page of the translation, I
found myself faced with "She finally reached her house . . . She fell face down on the
bed. . . She let loose the torrent of tears . . ." This constant repetition of "she, she,
she" sounds awkward and ugly, and grates against the reader since we are
accustomed to avoiding such repetition. Thus in several places I used conjunctions
or subordination to join sentences in such a way to break up the monotony of the
repeated pronoun (and in the process, I suppose, adding to the complexity of

sentence structure in the text!). To this end, the sentence discussed above became in its entirety: "She fell face down on the bed as if collapsing after dragging herself across the burning sands of some absurdly desolate desert, and gave in to the torrent of tears she had been fighting down the entire endless trip from Doña Carmen Benavides' house to her own, a journey in which she could find no oasis, just the mirage of a woman offended and displaced."

Finally, this text also presented various challenges at the lexical level. The verb *urgar* (*doliéndole una punta de obsidiana que le estaba urgando las costillas*) is particularly difficult to translate. It is usually used to signify the action of going through something, wildly throwing things aside as one searches for a specific object. I struggled briefly with trying to find an equivalent expression in English which would express this idea. However, we lack such a term, so again, following KuBmaul's (1985) advice, I attempted to determine which features of the word are relevant in this particular context. The verb carries something of the sense of "plowing through" something, and this was the feature I settled on at first. Then, in order to create an alliterative pattern, I changed this to "stabbing." This term still retains the most important feature of the original verb, but sounds more natural, as well as creating alliteration in the sentence.

The adjective *cosificada* proved to be particularly elusive. I searched numerous dictionaries but was never able to locate the term. I consulted various native informants to no avail. Finally one informant explained that the word is a type of neologism, as of yet unrecognized by the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, which means "to be turned from a person into a thing" (*cosa* meaning "thing" in Spanish). Thus I rendered this as "dehumanized," the closest equivalent I was able to find in English.

This text also illustrated how the translator needs to remain sensitive to the co-occurance rules of each language. On the second page of the original we find the sentence *Sentía el frío y el calor* (She felt the cold and the heat). I at first translated this as "She felt cold and hot at the same time," until another native English speaker pointed out that in English, the normal, unmarked order in which these two words co-occur is "hot and cold". Thus the sentence became "She felt hot and cold at the same time". This example emphasized to me how easily the translator can be influenced by the original text, and lose sight (or sound) of the natural forms of the TL.

Translation Process of "La Machorra"

The third text, "La Machorra," presented several special problems in the process of translation. This story deals specifically with issues of class and racial prejudice in Ecuador, as well as with issues of patriarchy and gender. Race relations in the Andes are complex, and the scorn and disdain heaped upon indigenous peoples by those who often carry indigenous blood in their own veins is difficult to explain. In debating how to translate this work, then, I was not sure how much background knowledge the target audience might need to be able to understand the story. I considered giving some kind of explanation as an introduction to the translation, but after rethinking this, I decided that the story itself probably depicts the situation more clearly than any explanation would. I therefore decided to let the story stand on its own with the hope that the interactions in the text help the reader better understand the complex relationships that exist in the region.

The other major issue raised by this work was how to deal with culture words for which a similar item does not exist in English, and how to translate terms

from a third language. The story is replete with terminology from Quichua, the indigenous language of the Ecuadorian Andes and the language of the Incas (the reader might note that the name of this language is often spelled "Quechua," but in Ecuador it is referred to as "Quichua", which in reality is probably closer to the original, since the language itself lacks the phoneme/e/). I had several options for how to deal with this dilemma. I could follow the example of the original source text which included a glossary of Quichua terms with their Spanish counterparts at the end of the story, and import the Quichua terms into my translation while adding my own Quichua-English glossary. I could also choose to translate the terms completely into English. This would entail a certain amount of translation loss, however, for the use of the indigenous language in the original depicts an important aspect of the reality of the region and helps create a sense of distance between the two cultures presented, as well as emphasizing the irony of the protagonist's use of such words, despite her insistence that she is "white" and better than the lowly Indians around her. A third option would be to introduce the Quichua terms into the translation as loan words, including some kind of explanation or definition for the words in the text. In the end I settled for a combination of the last two options.

One of the first difficulties I encountered in this regard was the mention in the first paragraph of the plant *sigsi*. This type of grass doesn't exist in North America, and the name for it used here is an indigenous Quichua term with no equivalent in English. The strategy I decided to use for this word was to describe the plant as "a clump of tundra grass," rather than importing the Quichua term, since the word is used to make a comparison, and this would be lost on the reader if an unfamiliar image is presented. Furthermore, the use of Quichua here was not part of the story narrated by the protagonist of the work, and I did not consider it important to

retain. Later terms, however, I felt were more important to render in the original Quichua, and I then tried to weave a definition of the term into the text itself. For example, on the second page of the original *Mama Dolores se casó con el huasicama de la hacienda* (Mama Dolores married the *huasicama* from the hacienda), became "Mama Dolores married the *huasicama* from the hacienda, that Indian who watched over the grounds." In the following two paragraphs numerous Quichua words are scattered throughout, and I reproduced most of them with an explanation or description. Thus I rendered *chaupi blanca* as "*chaupi* white, an Indian pretending to be white," and *hija del sacha runa* (daughter of the *sacha runa*) became "daughter of the *sacha runa*, the wild beast-man of the mountains, half beast, half Indian." Similarly *los huahuas indios de mi madre* (those Indian *huahuas* of my mother) became "those *huahuas*, my mother's Indian children." The term *longos* (Indian children or youth), which occurs in the same paragraph, I chose to use directly as a loan word without an explanation, since the meaning, or at least the connotation of the word, seems clear from the context, and I also felt that I was reaching the reader's saturation point for descriptions or definitions. A further Quichua term which appears in the same paragraph, *huagra manzana*, (*huagra* apple), refers to a particular type of fruit which again is unfamiliar to a North American audience. Thus, as before, I chose to render this word as a recognizable English term with similar meaning (small hard apples), and did not attempt to retain the use of Quichua. I continued to use these strategies throughout the text, using loan words with textual definitions for most terms pertaining to people or culture, and generally using an English equivalent for terms (usually referring to flora and fauna) which were used in providing images or comparisons, since these images would not be conveyed by items unfamiliar to the

reader. In this way I hope that the impact of the use of Quichua found in the original text is preserved in the translation, without becoming too cumbersome.

In this translation I also struggled with other culture words which were not of Quichua origin. In particular, I vacillated on the best strategy for translating *patrón*. We have no real equivalent in English. The term "master" perhaps comes the closest, but it does not carry the same historical and cultural connotations as the Spanish term. The word *patrón*, however, appears frequently in English these days as a loan word from Spanish, and I seriously considered importing it directly to the target text. Many people in North America have probably heard the term used in its Latin American sense, and as such it carries more of the connotative meaning associated with its use in Latin America. However, I was unsure as to whether the wider audience would truly be familiar enough with the word to use it without explanation, and finally decided on using the English equivalent "master" instead.

The title of this work also presented a special problem. The term *La Machorra* means literally "the barren woman," but this English rendition does not carry the same force as the Spanish version, in part because in English it would not be used as a name or a "title" for a person as it can be in Spanish (and as we might do in English with other terms, such as "the redhead," etc.). Thus in the text of the translation, I decided to use the Spanish term as a loan word with a definition worked in as part of the text the first time the word appeared ("People began to call me 'La Machorra', the barren woman"). Despite this, I originally translated the title as "Barren." I felt this gave the target audience a clearer idea of what the story was about, and highlighted one of the main images of the work: we find the theme of "barrenness" reflected not only in the protagonist's inability to conceive a child, but also in the barren, rocky landscape of the high Andean plateaus, as well as in the stone-cold

barren hearts of many people in the work. However, I eventually changed the title back to "La Machorra." The use of the Spanish term here hopefully will intrigue the audience to read further, and ties in well with the use of the term in the text of the story.

In examining the situationality of this text and the coherence relationships developed within it, I found that there were other places as well where the target audience needed more explanation in order for the story to be coherent. One example of this appears on the fifth page of the Spanish original (sixth page of the translation) in which the protagonist describes what happened during the Carnival celebration and mentions her neighbor's comments about cold water. The target audience lacks the knowledge that during these festivities, it is extremely common for people to throw water and water balloons at pasers by in the streets. Therefore, I chose to add an explanation of this into the text, rendering the sentence *Fue en los carnavales, cuando la gente se enfría y se enciende por gusto* (It was during Carnival when people cool themselves and burn themselves at the same time) as "It was during Carnival when everyone throws water on each other. It was during Carnival when people cool themselves and burn themselves at the same time."

Finally, an intriguing difficulty I encountered was the play on words on the term *aguardiente* found in the same paragraph: *agua fría por fuera, agua-ardiente por dentro* (cold water outside, burning hot water inside). The Spanish word *aguardiente* refers to a type of liquor which is extremely common in the Andean countries. Thus the neighbor's comment here about *agua-ardiente* is a pun on the sense of the word both as "hot water" to contrast with the cold water being thrown at people on the streets, and the word's reference to the consumption of alcohol, which is also very much a part of the Carnival celebration. Trying to reproduce this pun in English

was tricky since we obviously do not use the same terms, but I finally settled on "ice water on the outside, fire-water on the inside," since it preserves the original contrast very nicely, and "firewater" can also be used in English to refer to liquor.

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CHAPTER 8.   CONCLUSION

One of the central theses of this work is that translation is a process of making decisions. As I have demonstrated, the translator is constantly faced with a range of options and must choose between these various alternatives. If the translation is to be successful, I submit that these decisions need to motivated and integrated into an overall vision of the translation as a whole, rather than a series of random choices. Thus I have attempted here to explore how the study of linguistics can shed light on many of the decisions a translator faces, and can provide the translator with insights to help guide those decisions in a coordinated manner.

In doing so, I have emphasized that the process of translation occurs on many different levels, and that the translator must be sensitive to all of these. We often tend to think of translation at the word or phrase level--exchanging a word or a phrase in the SL for a word or a phrase in the TL. It should be obvious to the reader by now, however, that the process is far more complicated. I hope I have made a strong case for the need to consider the textual level also, and the interplay of all levels, word, phrase and text, as well as the context within which the text is found. In describing the process in which I engaged in translating the works presented here, I have tried to illustrate how an analysis of the text as an integrated whole helps inform decisions made at other levels. In addition, I have attempted to demonstrate how the translator must constantly move back and forth, interweaving, from one level to another. It is this ability to move back and forth, to weave these different levels together, and indeed to be able to work on different

levels at once which creates of a translation a coherent whole with a validity, a vitality, and a beauty of its own.

Linguistics itself is an area which has also traditionally tended to view language at the level of morphemes, words, or phrases. Traditional theoretical and Chompskian linguistics have furthermore purposefully attempted to divorce the language they study from context, finding it easier to analyze streams of language in a contextless vacuum. However, such a perspective is limited and limiting. Language without a context ceases in many ways to be language, for the very purpose of human language is to communicate something, and communication is impossible without a context within which the act of communication can be interpreted. Perhaps nothing illustrates this more clearly than the process of translation. As we have seen, the meaning of an utterance can only be interpreted and understood within its various contexts: linguistic, cultural, social, and stylistic. Thus, as I hope I have made abundantly clear, ignoring the context within which an item of language is embedded, whether that be a word, a phrase, or an entire text, leads to a poor and often incomprehensible translation.

Happily, present trends in linguistics are reversing this tendency. The areas of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and text analysis are some of the fastest growing fields of linguistic study today, and are exciting some of the most interest in linguistic circles. Translation studies stand to gain a great deal from these developments, and conversely, the study of the process of translation can provide many insights into the ways context creates, affects, and informs the meaning of language. Close examination of the difficulties translation presents can provide the linguist with greater insights into the way language functions within context and into pragmatic aspects of both the SL and TL (Barbe, 1992). These developments

bode well for the development of both our understanding of the phenomenon of human language, and of new insights to help guide translators in the decisions they must make.

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APPENDIX A: TRANSLATIONS

"The Ring"

By Eugenia Viteri

Every day of the week, but especially Sunday afternoons, Teresa wandered the broad beach near the town of La Libertad. Her bright, quick eyes moving constantly, she would scrutinize the distant shore, then throw herself into the hunt for a pair of sunglasses, a barrette, a comb: any object left lying forgotten on the beach by the wealthy bathers from the city. Sometimes she found herself waging a furious battle with the angry sea for her prey. If the waves won, she would sit in the damp sand staring sadly out to sea.

She would walk slowly, her head down, her eyes darting about searching the sand. Her emaciated figure reflected little charm and no one noticed her as she wandered by. But she was doing this for Luis...

She was doing this for him, because in her hunt for objects left forgotten in the sand, she hoped she could somehow contribute to their economic survival, to "help him a little," as she would think when she saw that his salary wasn't enough. She would never say it, even to herself, but she also hoped that her efforts would make him change. But no, he would never change. Because the abuse that he continuously inflicted on her seemed to provoke in him a kind of secret pleasure until she fell at his knees begging for forgiveness. Still, if she could just have better luck this time... Until now she had only been able to find worthless trinkets tossed in the sand. "Dear God, let me find something good today," she thought.

And at any rate, she was happy helping him, even if it only brought in a few pennies. When he hit her, and it happened almost daily, she suffered terribly, and waited for the compensation of at least some gentle if awkward touch. After all, he was her husband. . .

Suddenly a bright flash of light caught her eyes like a fleeting streak of lightening. Veteran connoisseur of forgotten objects, she knew when to take notice: there was something very interesting over on a far point of the beach, and she ran quickly toward it. She hurriedly dropped down in the sand next to it, afraid that someone might notice her. "Because this lovely thing, this they would take away from me," she thought.

It was a ring, covered with brilliant stones that seemed to open their shining wings to the sun. Teresa cradled it in her small hands, like a living thing, afraid that the waves or the wind might snatch it from her. Then, hopping about in the sand like a wounded bird, she headed off, murmuring: "It's a real ring, a real ring."

But suddenly her joy was cut short. Because this would be like all the other times: "Let me see. What did you find? Give it to me." And upon seeing the object: "Junk. . . This isn't worth a thing." And he would get up to give her two or three hard slaps across the face. But then, looking more closely at the ring: "Ah no. Now this, this might be worth something. This one yes, yes. . ." And then he'd go off to sell it for a few miserable pennies.

No, she wouldn't give it to him just for that. It was so beautiful! She rolled it around in her hands, discovering new facets of the ring each time, as if it were several rings and not just one. . .

She wouldn't give it to him. No. She would keep it for herself, to gladden her heart in secret. When she was alone, she would put it on her finger, and, she

was sure, she would appear wondrously beautiful reflected in the tiny mirror formed by the central stone of the ring.

She wondered about the owner of the ring. Was she beautiful? And her hands, what were they like? Smooth and white from being well-protected, lazy because she didn't have to hurry in her comfortable life, tranquil life. Ah, Teresa's hands were going to look like that now, adorned with these divine little stones.

Luis sat up sleepily when he saw her come in. "So, did you find anything?" Fearful, she was slow to reply:

"Nothing, nothing. . . This time, nothing."

"Hmm. That's strange, it being Sunday and all. . ." He didn't hit her. Perhaps he was too tired, perhaps he noticed a different air about her. He shrugged his shoulders and returned to his nap.

But the next day the violent scenes began again. Except this time it mattered to her less because now she had her triumphant moments when, alone, she flattered her woman's vanity, lighting up the feeble soul of the ugly girl she had been by embellishing her hand with the precious ring. Luis must have noticed something different about her, because after scorning the trinkets she'd gathered and spitting out insults, he stopped suddenly with his hand in mid air, ready to strike her face.

"The way you've fixed your hair," he mumbled. "It looks good on you. . ."

She had done her hair in homage to the ring, to this sacred ring which was transforming everything. And he had noticed, and had noticed her face shining with a new brilliance that also came from the sacred stones in the ring. And so he kissed her, and stroked her face, without the blows she was so accustomed to.

But the next afternoon he returned home unexpectedly and surprised her in the doorway with her hand held out in silent adoration of the ring.

"And that?" he demanded. "That looks valuable. Did you find it today?" She hid her hand behind her back.

"No. No, I didn't find it," she said hastily.

"Well then, what did you do, steal it?"

"No! No. . . Someone gave it to me. . ."

Luis let out a loud laugh . "They-gave-it-to-YOU!" he said mockingly. "Who in the world would be giving you rings?!"

Teresa raised her head. The words fell from her lips, a lie that was a protest of her insulted dignity: "A man. . . A man. . ."

Luis frowned. His fingers twitched as he formed a fist, and Teresa closed her eyes, waiting for the blow. But it never fell. Luis was stopped, confused by the unfamiliar brilliance in her face. He spun around and went into their hut, but returned after a few minutes.

"Listen, are you trying to make me mad? Where did you get that ring?"

"A man gave it to me."

"What man?" She could hear the fury rising in his voice.

"A dark man. . . Tall. . . With black hair. . . A man. A man who says he loves me." She no longer thought about what she was saying. The words fell unbidden, rising spontaneously from the dream she was living. "He wants to take me with him. . . He calls me 'my sweet', 'my dear'. . ."

"Bitch! You just wait. . ." He raised his fists again as if to strike her, but again he stopped in mid air, paralyzed by her face, as calm and serene as a quiet lake. But this other man. . . "I'll kill him!" he cried. "Oh yes, I'll kill him!" Teresa smiled softly.

"You can't. He's waiting for me far away. I'm going to meet him soon."

Luis changed suddenly, completely. All the anger drained away and he looked at her with agony in his eyes. This time it was he who fell to his knees, begging:

"No, Teresa, you can't leave me. I love you. Give him back his ring, I'll buy you a better one. Just today they raised my salary."

Teresa sweetly stroked his shaggy head with her ringed hand. And the stones of the ring sparkled like stars in an ebony night.

"The Mayor's wife"

(Chapter 13 from <u>La Casa del Sano Placer</u>)

By Alicia Yánez Cossío

When the mayor's wife left Doña Carmen Benavides' house, where Doña Carmen had made it perfectly clear that there was something very shady going on between the mayor and the so-called Redhead, that woman who had created such a bad impression among all the curious neighbors, then, in a fraction of a second the whole structure of her married life fell apart, shattering into a million pieces.

It was like opening a window and having the tail of a lost tornado break into the house, scattering all of the papers on one's desk--similarly she saw her marriage drowning in a whirlpool. Like a storm which topples even the strongest trees, mixing the dust, the dry leaves and the trash in the streets, so her passions and emotions whirled about inside of her when her earlier nagging suspicions became reality in the guarded conversation she had with Doña Carmen Benavides. It was an indifferent earthquake, and she was at the very epicenter trying to maintain an impossible equilibrium in order not to be swallowed alive, watching how everything she had once thought of as firm and secure was falling apart and turning to dust while she herself was being flung from one side to the other.

Nothing would have happened if he had only told the truth from the beginning and had had her to help him free himself from the Redhead's blackmail, because that class of secrets had a tendency to grow rapidly beyond control, and when it blew up, what had been nothing but microbes or bacteria suddenly were transformed into enormous elephants. But what might have been didn't matter

anymore. The reality was what she felt at that moment, even if she were acting on an assumption, a mirage.

If she had only noticed the Redhead's withered face and ungainly body.

But that would have been worse. She would have felt the insult more deeply, for she most definitely felt she had been suddenly tossed aside.

She felt hot and cold at the same time. The sting of hail and licks of red-blue flames. Burning persistent hatred and diffuse sparks of love. Humiliation of the kind you feel like the slap of a hand on your cheek, and which finds its way into your psyche. Uncontrollable fury that blurs the contours of things and makes you see red and yellow spots. The solid truth and the omnipresent lie. Total confusion and pure hope. All together, turned about and unraveled, jumbled and deformed in a tremendous confusion, swelling up so as to produce some kind of abominable abortion that fed itself with a ravenous hunger on its own blood.

She walked with slow, uncertain steps, feeling as if there were a red hot nail in the middle of her chest, as if she had an obsidian splinter stabbing her ribs or a large corkscrew screwed in and then removed, taking with it threads of her own worn and withered flesh. Unsteady on her feet and unable to control her mental equilibrium, drunk on the passions which assailed her, she felt an accumulation of uncontrollable sensations. She fled from the presence of others and answered their greetings without knowing who they were nor what they were saying.

"The mayor's wife was acting very strangely. She didn't answer the questions I asked her. I'd say she wasn't in her right mind."

"She didn't even say good-by, like she ought to. She left me with my hand in mid air waiting to shake hands."

The vertical walls, the half-opened doors, the closed venetian blinds, the twisting, cobblestone streets, the familiar houses, were all beds in which she saw details of entangled, nude bodies: buttocks, mouths, hands and torsos without their usual erotic connotation, but rather, immensely tragic. It wasn't possible, and yet it was. She felt as if she hated and forgave at the same time and with a violent intensity that could shatter anything, including one's life.

Absolute certainty and terrible doubt blended together in one mass, then scattered in different directions, separating and reuniting like the lights of the will o' the wisp. 'Yes' and 'no' jumbled together with the bewilderment that leapt like a lightening bolt, point down and vertical, like an unsheathed sword, and the inquisitions which twisted about in her and in her terrible and desolate situation, pursuing her with questions that didn't wait for answers. Blind vengeance and possible pardon splashed together in the same sickening swamp of jealousy. Rage spurred her on with an intensity so unknown to her that she felt the need to reach a level of physical violence, of blood and blows, of tearing skin and flayings, of strikes of a metal-tipped whip and the kind of bites that leave pieces of dripping flesh in your teeth.

At moments she was able to stand back and look at herself, and then she felt a pitiful compassion. She saw herself shrunken, dehumanized, broken, like some worthless old object you throw away when you can replace it with another, newer one for a reduced price. She walked quickly, almost running along the path of her own history and the torturous trail of a gratuitous insult, not to her vanity, but rather to her feelings.

"What's wrong with the Mayor's wife? She didn't even seem to be watching where she was going. She pushed me aside like she owned the street. If she's in such a hurry she should use her car instead of assaulting defenseless citizens."

The tornado continued inside of her, jumbling everything: good memories and bad ones, which appeared in illogical sequences, sweet words and bitter ones repeating themselves, leaving a crust of honey and bitter herbs, promises which were made and then, little by little broken, as if they were made to some other people who had died. Arguments which ended in endearments like the raging waters of a river returning to their banks, although they weren't the same. Long silences which devoured words, like a terrifying tunnel without escape, and other times when words were smooth as silk, confidences that one only says, only hears, once.

If it were possible to go back in time to retrieve something forgotten, she would have looked more closely at the woman they called "the Redhead," but that wasn't how it had been, and she only concentrated her attention on the signals of her husband's infidelity and the woman's long, claw-like nails. It was all so fast and so senseless, like those misfortunes that approach silently on tip toe and then suddenly explode with a certainty so real that it remains incomprehensible.

That a woman would destroy herself for a man, patience and more patience until suddenly she explodes, but that the cause should be another woman was outrageous and repulsive.

Feeling absurdly unbalanced and vulgar, she thought of going through his personal mail piled on the table in the front hall. She thought of checking his pockets and the lining of his coat and searching his office. Masochist, as if pain itself had turned against her, she bit her lips until they bled, breathing raggedly in order

to quiet the wail which struggled to escape her throat. She clenched her fists tightly, digging her nails into the sweaty palms of her hands, leaving marks like blue half-moons in a line. Her face burned as if shame itself had taken possession of all the pigment cells. It wasn't just that they had snatched away from her something that was more or less hers, it was above all else this pain of an irreparable affront, it was this representation of jealousy in its most feminine manifestation.

She at least had the good sense to take the long route home in order not to pass the house with the green shutters where the Redhead lived. Her heart pounded at a savage, unaccustomed rhythm as if death were fluttering nearby. She didn't want to die; before that she wanted to take some kind of horrified delight in the butcher shop of bodies which stubbornly appeared everywhere.

"The Mayor's wife passed by and didn't even bother to look at me. Her face was all red like she had sunstroke, and it even looked like she'd been crying."

She finally reached her house, but it didn't seem like the place from which she had left just a short while ago. She fell face down on the bed as if collapsing after dragging herself across the burning sands of some absurdly desolate desert, and gave in to the torrent of tears she had been fighting down the entire endless trip from Doña Carmen Benavides' house to her own, a journey in which she could find no oasis, just the mirage of a woman offended and displaced. There was nothing to be done nor anywhere to go nor anything to say, except perhaps to ask herself if it was his fault, as it had been so many times before; if it was the fault of the woman in the house with the green shutters, who was probably stunningly beautiful and the poor man succumbed to her charms; or if it was just that she herself was old and hideous. She didn't understand anything anymore.

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And she walked over to the mirror and looked at her face, and saw that the years were etching dreaded crow's feet there, but you could only see them if you got up close. And she saw two long lines extending up from the corners of her mouth, but they were still faint. And she touched her face and began to examine herself closely, inch by inch. She didn't look at all old for her age. And she noted her double chin, swearing softly, but her neck wasn't yet like that of an old lady. And with one stroke she tore off all of her clothes and stood naked in front of the mirror.

She was herself and no one else. She had put on a little weight, and it made her seem shorter, but that wasn't enough to make her ugly. Standing naked like that in front of the mirror she looked as if she were confessing and intended to absolve herself. Her breasts were no longer firm nor quite in the same position as before. But they had served their mission well with each of her children. If men only knew how to look beyond appearances they would discover that hidden beauty that you can't see, but that you experience all the same.

And she saw the four or five long stretch marks on her stomach which were neither ugly nor beautiful, but made her remember that a human being had grown inside of her, which was an amazing fact in itself, astounding enough to be sacred. And she examined her back and her sides and she saw that she looked older, but not repulsive. And she thought with a slight chill that if by virtue of fathering children men were to develop some kind of scars, she and all mothers would love those marks and would stroke them over and over again to remember those times and to feel young once more.

There were no two ways about it, she had been young and now she was aging, but even as she was, old and getting older, she was herself and she liked that.

Her body began to radiate a new light, and if others couldn't see that light, too bad for them. She knew that old age could never be ugly because being old was no one's fault. Poor, pitiful humanity with its wretched ego would still have to struggle forward on crutches for millennia and millennia before learning to love beyond those things that age.

She tired of standing in front of her own body and sat down in order to examine herself inside. She closed her eyes and began to see herself. She was a woman with an irrefutable capacity to love, but she was seeking the impossible if she expected others to react similarly, even just a reflection, an imitation.

She thought about the past that one always remembers in such moments. Together, shoulder to shoulder they formed their family. In the beginning they were poor and poverty united them. He worked as a clerk and she washed his shirts. They hoped they would inherit some day, but their relatives refused to die. As soon as they escaped from poverty, he began to visit the Bronze sisters. He said he was a lover of Chopin and Beethoven, but she knew it was of Clarisa. He tired of her in time and got involved with an entertainer from the first circus that came to town. He disappeared for several days. They said the circus company threw him out by the scruff of the neck because they didn't understand what he was talking about. When he came back she didn't make a scene as she had often done before because she didn't want the neighbors to talk, and because it broke her heart to see him come back like a beaten dog. And even more, she felt a petty, but very maternal indignation to think that some low-life singer had rebuffed him. And she continued to think of this and that and the other.

In the end there was herself, without resignation, because she saw herself above it all. It was as if she were the mother of all mortal beings, the begetter of life

itself and its customs, the one who picked up the pieces when others stumbled and made mistakes; even if she were a sacrificial vestal, with the energy of the slow-dying phoenix, she was who she was, the one who never betrayed herself.

She turned and dressed herself and felt as if she had grown. Her intimacy needed no clothing because none that she had would serve. She grew in size and volume, so much so that the house felt as if it had shrunk, so much so that she could tell all her everyday sorrows to go to hell, so much so that she could gather up all the pieces of herself, one by one, to fit them together again in a complicated puzzle, so much so that she felt as if she had died and then discovered the desire to live once more, so much so that she could stand on top of her own heart and feel that no one in the entire world could make her give in. She was consoling herself in her own way; what kept her together after such a terrible storm was pride.

Whatever happened, it was her pride in being a woman and nothing else.

"La Machorra"

By Nela Martínez

She stumbled slowly up the steep slope of the mountain. Among the brush and brambles, her wild, uncombed hair, the color of dry straw, was like a clump of tundra grass whipped by the wind.

"Go to sleep my son, go to sleep now . . .," she sang in her raspy voice. "I'll take care of you, I'll love you, I'll keep you warm and cozy, so go to sleep now."

She rocked her bundle of rags rhythmically, gently. A transient sun, distant and cold still lit up the highest peaks.

"We've got to keep going. Just wait--up there we'll wrap ourselves up warm and tight, go to sleep now."

She climbed slowly, so as not to wake the baby, protecting him with her frayed shawl from the wind gusting over them like angry ocean waves. Her bare feet were scraped and bloodied as she walked through rocks and thorns which she neither saw nor felt, aware only of the rhythm of her arms which formed a gently moving cradle to rock her child to sleep.

The profile of the mountain, which stretched westward, walling in the river that dropped towards the coast, stood out sharp and clear between the reds and golds flaming in the west. The children had named it "The Monster" because it looked so much like a giant. She climbed it steadily, following the last rays of the sun, but the illusive light rose higher by the minute.

"We can't go on, there's no road. Even the goats haven't been up this high."

And as the glow in the west turned ashen among the mists of the high plateau, she sought another warmth, that of the earth. Leaning against the

mountain crag as if it were human, warm and receptive, she allowed herself the illusion of being protected. She set down the weight from her back and the weight from her heart onto the gritty loneliness of the Andean plateau, and she began shouting, as if talking to an old friend, pouring out everything she had kept inside for so long.

"Now you're finally quiet. I'm going to tell you my whole story. But this damned wind won't let me talk. Can you hear me? Okay, louder, louder!"

Caught by the wailing wind of the bleak mesa her shrieks were but an echo of the greater voice that rose from the sleeping valleys, growing in a wild dizziness of air to become a dense mass, finally breaking loudly against the immutable rocks.

"I'm the child of white parents, like you. Mama Dolores herded cows for the master when he came up to find her on the mountain. It would have been better if I'd never been born. Mama Dolores married the *huasicama* from the hacienda, that Indian who watched over the grounds. Aye, then there were two to beat me. . .

"They used to call me '*chaupi* white,' an Indian pretending to be white, with eyes like a cat, daughter of the *sacha runa*, the wild beast-man of the mountains, half beast, half Indian. Ha, ha, ha, I laughed when I had to care for those *huahuas*, my mother's Indian children. I was a lady, I should have been the mistress of those *longos*, and I had to carry them, care for them, feed them. But I was fond of them. They were warm and soft like baby birds. When they were hungry and cried, I put them to my chest to nurse, though my breasts were like small hard apples and gave no milk. But the *longuitos* would quiet down until their mother came back from work. Then Mama Dolores would take the children from me and push me out into the cold to see to the animals, to get water from the gorge, to help Papa Lino tend the fields. Once, when he was drunk, he tried to take advantage of me. But no, no,

no. I fought him, I bit him and I ran, I ran away down the mountain to the village. Because I'm white, you understand? And my child couldn't be some piggish Indian *longo*. He has to be a baby pigeon, white and gold like the Baby Jesus, so that he'll be beautiful and respected and loved, like this little child that I have, like you, my baby. I waited for you so long . . . If you only knew how hard it was to find work:

"Indian *huambra*, what did you say you can do?"

"Well, if you just had some kind of skill, but you're worthless!"

"No, I don't need any more servants. There are plenty of servants around."

"You've got a face that spells trouble."

"Ah, you're probably a *shua*, a thief."

That's what it was like, door to door, day by day, for weeks. You should see how your mama suffered. I slept on porches, on the steps of the church, wherever the darkness caught me. I was starving. How my stomach ached from eating wild berries and roots I scrounged from fence rows. Once they offered me work. They wanted me to take care of Domitila Toapanta's crippled son. But she was just an Indian, even if she was an Indian with servants, with her Indian son without legs. Oh sure, they had money. They had shining necklaces and earrings, but nothing could change their color. Indians, just Indians with money. And I don't work for Indians, not that, not for all the money in the world.

"Okay, well stay here and take care of the children, but I won't pay you anything until you learn to work. If you at least had a father or a mother who was selling you. I wouldn't pay much for a *huambra* Indian girl like you, but at least I'd feel more comfortable."

"Finally I got work with a white family. Rosita accepted me on one condition: if I ever complained about anything, she'd put me back out on the street. I learned

what they taught me, but even more I learned how to keep my crying inside, how to suffer in silence. They shaved my head to get rid of the lice, they made me wash in freezing cold water at five in the morning, they whipped me every day, because yes, because no, because I did something, because I didn't do something. I had to work with the children on my back. How heavy they were, those fat, over-stuffed kids! Almost as big as me!

"What's the matter? You're frowning. I pay you so the boy has his own mule, you know that. If you're not happy, then get out of here!"

"Where could I go? I ended up saying 'No, no, please Ma'm, I'll get stronger. Just wait, I'll work harder.'

"And that's how it went. Time went by and the children got bigger, they went to grade school, to high school, to the city. They'd come back during vacation. How I loved those vacations! We'd all go out to the hacienda. I was the white people's maid and I was white, so the Indians addressed me with respect. I ordered them around and they'd obey me. How nice it is to have someone obey you! The mestizos licked their lips when they saw me. They tried to pinch me when they got the chance. I'd spit in their faces--disgusting trash!

"Young Teodoro had hands as soft as silk. He used to call to me with his sweet voice . . . We'd meet in the barn and bury ourselves in the straw from the thresher, letting it be our bed, our blanket. I was happy, it's true, even if I didn't sleep a single minute all night. He was like water for the burning thirst inside of me. I wanted more, always more, and --men are like that when you love them-- he got tired of me. As happy as I was, even if he hurt me, even if he bit me, even if he kicked me. Nothing could satisfy me, nothing. A child, a son like Teodoro, that's what I wanted.

"They threw me out. He said I was trash and they left me with what little I had in the middle of the street. How I suffered! And I kept on looking for you. I worked in white people's houses and I didn't ask them for anything except that they'd give me a baby. They all kicked me out. People began to call me "La Machorra," the barren woman. They said I was like the mules that can't reproduce and the whole town started to insult me. Wives would curse me. I stopped working all together. I just looked for a man and I'd follow him as long as he was white. I started to pray all the time. I'd do penance. All the prayers I'd learned in Teodoro's house that I used to say before going to sleep came back to me. I'd repeat them over and over, I'd repeat them even if I was in the arms of some man. Some of them would get up and slap me and leave. But I kept praying, asking God for a baby, a baby to take away this thirst, a baby to bring me peace. I dreamed of walking past all those men who had scorned me, all those women who had insulted me, with my baby in my arms, and of shouting: 'Look at this beautiful baby La Machorra has now! Turns out she had the insides of a mare, not a mule!'

"Ay, how I prayed, how I begged, how many promises I made: God, if you'll give me a baby I'll never go with another man ever again! I went on pilgrimages, I walked on my knees and kissed the ground after the lepers passed by on their way to the hospital. And nothing. You didn't show up, you little rascal, you didn't show up. I looked for pilgrims to help me produce this miracle, as long as they were white. But none of them soothed this fire inside me, none of them left me pregnant, none of them gave me the one thing I asked for: a baby.

"But then one day, you know what happened? It was during Carnival, when everyone throws water on each other. It was during Carnival when people cool themselves and burn themselves at the same time. Ice water on the outside, fire-

water on the inside, like my neighbor used to say. Dead drunk, all the *chullos* from the village, all those snotty boys who thought themselves better than everyone else, they all attacked me in my room. It was a battalion of boys. I couldn't choose: mestizos and blue bloods, all gathered together to rape me. They crucified me on the floor and took turns for hours. They emptied themselves in me like the stallions of the hacienda on the mares in heat. And as each one got up he'd spit on me.

"Now I gave you that damned baby, you bitch."

"I thought I would die. It was like being beaten and having your guts yanked out so they could laugh at you. When I could finally loosen the rag they'd gagged me with I screamed and screamed. God himself could have heard me, or my father who's the master of the hacienda or my mama Dolores from the mountains. But nobody heard me, nobody came. I screamed so much I lost my voice, I couldn't move, I was left half-dead in the middle of the night. Ah, but when I woke up I thanked God. Because you were there at my side, you sweet little thing, newborn and shivering from the cold like the Baby Jesus. I wrapped you up in my only new dress, the one I'd never even worn. I wrapped you up warmly and started a huge fire. I burned the boards from my trunk, the Saint Anthony statue, the saint's shelf. I wanted to tear down the doors of my room to throw onto the blaze, as big as the fires on the eve of the feast of Saint Peter, but I didn't have the strength. And then the neighbors came, and the cops and the landlord.

"She's gone crazy! La Machorra's gone crazy!"

"They beat me with sticks like they do to the dogs that get rabies. But I got away. I saved you and now nobody can take you away from me, sweetheart, my love, light of my life, you beautiful baby like Baby Jesus. Sweet dreams, my son, now we can sleep."

She rolled up into a ball next to the rock wall, crouching beneath its shadow, still afraid.

"I'm not crazy, it's a lie. I'm your mother."

She pulled out her emaciated breast to feed the infant, whom she had placed very carefully on her knees. She opened her dull, glassy eyes wide, wide as she could, to scrutinize the coming night.

Suddenly she heard the sound of barking off in the distance. The dogs were tracking closer and closer by the minute. The sound of galloping horses resonated through the rocks, like a rising river, enveloping her, drowning her in fear. The rough dirt road lay only a few yards from her hiding place. She hadn't seen it as she had climbed aimlessly, destroying her feet.

"Who can it be? They're still after me. The things a poor woman has to suffer to save her baby. I know, all those people in the village are jealous, especially all those awful women who stoned me. They're jealous because my child is a miracle, so beautiful, so blond, so . . . "

Her words dropped to a hoarse whisper when suddenly one of the dogs racing nearby caught her scent and leaped for her just as the horsemen arrived. They had been hunting on the plateau, but stopped their horses when they saw her. Somebody called off the dog. Another yelled, "Look who it is, La Machorra. They told me she'd gone crazy."

"Raving lunatic. Be careful," someone else advised.

The woman, who had escaped to the very edge of the summit, turned her head as she heard that voice, that voice which jolted her heart, awakening her memories of vacation days long ago, warm and distant. A stout man wrapped in a wool poncho, he walked toward her, laughing, encouraging the pack of hounds:

"Go on, git her, git her . . ."

It was Teodoro, his riding whip in hand.

"Machorra, you whore. You've slept with the whole town. I hopethe dogs eat you!"

Rage rose inside of him, setting him on fire, making him drunk like too much liquor. What did he care about some no-count whore. Still, it hurt his male pride, seeing her up close. He remembered the agile, passionate young girl he had initiated.

"Git her, Sultan. Git her . . . "

His whip whistled through the air. La Machorra ran, enveloped by the cries of the men, the baying of the hounds, the howling of the wind across the plateau. She fled with her baby, fled from Teodoro's burning eyes, fled, downhill like the first time, when she was just a young girl as fast as the deer.

His laugh, pursuing her, pushing her toward the abyss, drowned out the sound of her falling body hitting the ground.

The next day when the villagers searched the banks of the river, the body they found was a formless, red mass, but they could still make out her arm, curved protectingly, firmly grasping the pillow wrapped in rags to which she had sung:

"Go to sleep, my son, go to sleep now . . ."

And the waves which washed up on the rocks of the riverbank seemed to chant in chorus:

"Go to sleep, my son, go to sleep now . . ."

APPENDIX B: ORIGINAL TEXTS

"El Anillo"

Por Eugenia Viteri

Todos los días --pero especialmente los domingos al caer la tarde--Teresa deambulaba por la amplia playa de La Libertad. Sus ojos vivarachos escudriñaban a la distancia y de pronto se precipitaban a la caza de un par de gafas una horquilla, una peineta: de cualquier objeto olvidado por los bañistas de la ciudad. A veces libraba verdaderas batallas con las embravecidas olas, por no dejarse arrebatar su presa. Si las olas vencían, sentábase en la arena húmeda y clavaba sus ojos tristes en el mar.

Caminaba lentamente, la cabeza inclinada, los activos ojos revolviendo la arena. Su figura esmirriada no tenía muchos encantos y sus paseos a nadie llamaban la atención. Pero ella sólo paseaba para Luis . . .

Paseaba para él, porque la caza de objetos perdidos era para contribuír [sic] a la subsistencia común, para "ayudarlo en algo", como ella dijera al ver que su salario era insuficiente. No se lo dijo, pero también esperaba que su esfuerzo lo hiciera cambiar. Pero, no. No cambiaría. Porque los maltratos que él le infería parecían provocarle un secreto placer que se prolongaba hasta que ella caía a sus pies, implorando perdón. No obstante, si tuviera mejor suerte . . . Hasta ahora sólo había encontrado baratijas de escaso valor. "Si me cayera algo bueno, Dios mío", pensaba.

De todos modos, era feliz ayudándolo, aunque sólo fuera con unos centavos. Cuando él la pegaba --casi diariamente --ella sufría y esperaba la recompensa de unas caricias rudas. Al fin y al cabo era su marido . . .

Llegó el destello a sus ojos como un relámpago fugaz. Ella--vieja conocedora de objetos perdidos-- no se engañaba: algo había en ese punto de la playa y hacia allá corrió. Se agachó apresuradamente, temerosa de que alguien la sorprendiera. "Porque esto tan lindo, sí me quitarían", se dijo.

Era un anillo cubierto de piedras brillantes que parecían abrir al sol sus alas luminosas. Con sus manos pequeñitas, Teresa lo acunaba, como a un ser vivo, temerosa de que las olas o el viento se lo arrebataran. Y dando saltitos como un pajarillo herido, se alejó murmurando: "Es un anillo de verdad, un anillo de verdad".

De repente se truncó su alegría. Porque ahora sería como las otras ocasiones: "A ver, ¿qué encontraste?, dame". Y al recibir el objeto: "Porquerías. . . Esto no vale". Y luego, incorporándose, dos o tres bofetones. Pero volvería a mirar el anillo: "Ah, no, esto sí está bueno. Esto sí, esto sí . . ." Y saldría a venderlo en unos poco centavos.

No, para eso no se lo entregaría. ¡Era tan hermoso! Le daba vueltas entre sus manos e iba descubriéndole nuevas facetas. Como si fueran varios anillos y no uno solo [sic] . . .

No lo entregaría. No. Lo guardaría para ella sola como el compañero de su corazón. A solas, lo pondría en su dedo y --estaba segura-- toda ella se vería hermosa en el espejo diminuto que fingiría la piedra central de la joya.

¿Sería hermosa su dueña? ¿Y sus manos, cómo serían sus manos? Blancas de estar bien protegidas, lentas de no tener prisa en medio de la vida feliz, de la vida

colmada. Ah, sus manos iban a lucir así ahora, exornadas por las divinas piedrecillas.

Se incorporó Luis al verla entrar.

--¿Y? ¿Hubo algo?

Ella, medrosa, demoró la respuesta:

--Nada, nada . . . Esta vez, nada.

--Humm. Qué raro, siendo domingo . . .

No la golpeó. Acaso estaba muy cansado, acaso observara en ella un aliento extraño. Se encogió de hombros y siguió adormitado.

Pero el siguiente día volvieron las escenas violentas. Sólo que a ella le importaron menos porque tenía sus minutos triunfales cuando, sola, halagaba su vanidad de mujer ignorada e iluminaba su endeble alma de muchachita fea, embelleciendo su mano con el anillo amado. Algo debió notarle Luis, porque después de despreciar sus baratijas, y de lanzarle improperios, detuvo la mano que iba a golpear su rostro.

--Te queda bien ese peinado, te queda bien . . .

Habíase peinado ella en homenaje al anillo, a ese anillo sagrado que estaba transfromándolo todo. Y él lo había observado y había observado su rostro resplandeciente de un fulgor que venía también de las piedras sagradas del anillo. Y entonces la besó y la acarició, sin los golpes previos de costumbre.

Y la tarde siguiente, él volvió de improviso y la sorprendió a la puerta, con la mano extendida en silenciosa adoración del anillo.

--¿Y eso? Está bueno. ¿Lo encontraste ahora?

Ella escondió la mano tras la espalda.

--No. No lo encontré --dijo precipitadamente.

--¿Entonces? ¿Lo robaste?

--¡No!, no . . . Me lo regalaron . . .

Luis lanzó una carcajada estridente.

--¡Re-ga-la-ron . . .! ¿Quién va a darte anillos a tí?

Se irguió Teresa. Las palabras salieron de sus labios, en una mentira que era una protesta de su dignidad ofendida:

--Un hombre . . . Un hombre . . .

Luis frunció el ceño. Se crisparon sus puños y Teresa cerró los ojos para esperar los golpes. Pero Luis no la golpeó: lo detenía ese desconocido fulgor de su rostro. Dió media vuelta y se fue al interior de la pieza. Volvió después de unos minutos.

--Oye, ¿es que quieres molestarme? ¿De dónde sacaste ese anillo?

--Me lo dió un hombre.

--¿Qué hombre? --la voz de él volvía a sonar furiosa.

--Un hombre moreno . . . Alto . . . de pelo . . . negro . . . Un hombre. . . Dice que me quiere . . . --Ahora ella ya no pensaba sus palabras; surgían espontáneas del ensueño que estaba viviendo. --Quiere llevarme . . . Me dice: "Mi pequeña, niña querida" . . .

--¡Majadera! Vas a ver . . .

Otra vez cerró los puños para descargarlos, y otra vez quedó paralizado ante ese rostro, sereno como un lago.

--Pero a él, a él sí que lo mataré . . .

Ella sonrió suavemente

--No podrás. El me espera lejos. Yo iré a buscarlo pronto.

Luis, demudado, la contemplaba con un rictus de angustia. Y de pronto fue él quien cayó a sus plantas, sollozante:

--No Teresa, no puedes dejarme. Te quiero. Devuélvele el anillo, te compraré otro mejor. Hoy precisamente me han aumentado el salario.

Teresa acarició dulcemente su cabello hirsuto con la mano ensortijada. Y las piedras del anillo brillaron como estrellas en una noche de ébano.

Capítulo trece de <u>La Casa del Sano Placer</u>

Por Alicia Yánez Cossío

Cuando la alcaldesa abandonó la casa de Doña Carmen Benavides y ésta le
dio a entender sin mayores reticencias que tenía que haber algo muy turbio entre el
alcalde y la llamada Colorada que tan mala impresión había causado entre las
curiosas vecinas, entonces, en una fracción de segundos, todo el andamiaje de su
vida se le vino abajo y se hizo añicos.

Igual que cuando se abre una ventana y una cola de huracán despistado se
mete en un cuarto y revuelve todos los papeles de una mesa de trabajo, así su vida
conyugal entró en un remolino. Como la tempestad que abate los árboles más
recios mezclando el polvo, la basura y las hojas secas, así se revolvieron las pasiones
y emociones dentro de ella, cuando la leve sospecha de la bata de seda con bordados
chinos--que le pareció más encendida y estridente que la primera vez que la vio--se
hizo realidad en la conversación que tuvo a medias con Doña Carmen Benavides.
Era un desaprensivo terremoto y ella estaba en el mismo epicentro tratando de
mantener un imposible equilibrio para no ser tragada viva y viendo cómo todo lo
que parecía firme se venía al suelo y se hacía polvo mientras era vapuleada de un
lado a otro.

Nada habría sucedido con la verdad dicha a tiempo y con la ayuda que acaso
habría podido dar al alcalde para librarse del chantaje, porque esa clase de secretos
tenía la propiedad de irse hinchando y cuando reventaban. los que eran microbios o
bacterias salían transformados en enormes elefantes. No importaba lo que pudo

ser. Lo real era lo que sentía en ese entonces, aunque se tratara de una suposición o de un espejismo.

--Que si por lo menos se hubiera fijado en la cara macilenta y en el cuerpo desgarbado de la Colorada.

--Que habría sido peor. Habría sentido más honda la ofensa porque en definitiva era el sentirse relegada de repente.

Sentía el frío y el calor. Golpes de granizo y lengüetadas de llamaradas rojiazules. Quemaduras de un odio persistente y difusas chispitas de amor. Humillación de esas que se sienten como dedos estampados en una mejilla y que se meten en la psique, furias incontrolables de las que borran el contorno de las cosas y hacen ver manchas rojas y amarillas. La verdad maciza y la mentira omnipresente. La confusión y la esperanza. Todo junto, revuelto y desenvuelto, mezclado y deformado en un maremagnun que se iba inflando como para producir un aborto abominable que se nutría con un hambre voraz de su propia sangre.

Caminaba con pasos vacilantes con la sensación de que tenía en la mitad del pecho un clavo al rojo vivo, doliéndole una punta de obsidiana que le estaba urgando las costillas, punzándole un largo tirabuzón que le entraba y le salía con hilachas de su propia carne madura y ajada para maldita sea. Casi sin el equilibrio de las piernas y sin poder controlar el equilibrio de la mente, con la borrachera de las pasiones salidas de madre, iba sintiendo un cúmulo de sensaciones incontrolables. Rehuía la presencia de las gentes y contestaba los saludos sin saber quiénes eran ni lo que decían.

--Que la alcaldesa estaba rara. Que no contestó la pregunta que se le hizo. Que diría que no estaba en sus cabales.

--Que ni siquera [sic] se despidió como era debido. Que le dejó con la mano extendida.

Las paredes verticales, las puertas entreabiertas, las persianas bajas, las calles torcidas y empedradas, las casas conocidas, eran camas en las que había detalles de cuerpos entrelazados y desnudos: nalgas, bocas, manos y torsos sin la debida connotación erótica, sino evidentemente trágica. No era posible, pero era. Sentía que odiaba y perdonaba al mismo tiempo y con una intensidad tan violenta como para hacer añicos cualquier cosa, hasta la vida.

La certeza y la duda se amalgamaban en un solo haz y luego se disparaban cada uno por su lado, repeliéndose y juntándose como las luces de los fuegos fatuos. El sí y el no se confundían entre las admiraciones que caían como un rayo, de punta, verticales como espadas sin vaina, y las interrogaciones que se enroscaban en toda ella y en toda su inmensa y desolada circunstancia acosándole a preguntas que no querían esperar respuestas. La vergüenza ciega y el posible perdón chapoteaban juntos en el mismo pantano abominable de los celos. La rabia le acicateaba con una intensidad tan desconocida que sentía la necesidad de llegar al daño físico de sangre y bofetadas, de desgarraduras de piel y desolladuras, de azotes con un látigo de puntas aceradas y de mordiscos de esos que dejan en los dientes pedazos de carne chorreante.

De cuando en cuando lograba contemplarse a sí misma y le venía una lastimera compasión. Se estaba viendo empequeñecida, cosificada, desgarrada como un objeto viejo y sin valor que se tira cuando se sustituye por otro recién comprado a precio de rebaja. Caminaba a prisa, casi corría por el sendero de la historia y de las aceras tortuosas de la ofensa gratuita, no a su vanidad, sino a su sentimiento.

--Que qué le pasaba a la alcaldesa, que parecía no ver por donde andaba. Que le había dado un empujón como si fuera la dueña de la calle. Que si tenía tanta prisa, debía ir en coche y no arremeter contra los ciudadanos indefensos.

El huracán seguía dentro de sí revolviéndolo todo: recuerdos buenos y malos que se sucedían en secuencias ilógicas, palabras suaves y amargas que se repetían dejando una costra de miel y ajenjo, promesas que se hicieron y poco a poco dejaron de cumplirse como si hubieran sido hechas a otros seres que se hubieran muerto. Discordias que terminaron en ternuras como cuando las aguas revueltas vuelven a su cauce, aunque no son las mismas. Largos silencios que se comieron las palabras y que fueron como un túnel medroso, sin salida, y otras veces como pasos de seda a través de la garganta, confidencias que sólo una vez se escuchan y se dicen.

Si el tiempo volviera atrás a recoger algo olvidado, habría mirado bien a la que decían Colorada, pero fue así y sólo concentró su atención en la bata de bordados chinos y en las uñas largas como garras. Fue tan rápido y tan sin sentido como las desgracias que vienen de puntillas y de repente se revientan en una certidumbre tan real que sigue siendo incógnita.

--Que un ser femenino se destroce por causa de un masculino, paciencia y paciencia hasta el estallido, pero que la causa sea otra mujer es inaudito y repulsivo.

Absurdamente desequilibrada y vulgar iba a espiar la correspondencia ajena que se acumulaba en la mesilla de la entrada. Iba a revisar los bolsillos y los forros de la ropa y a registrar la alcaldía en todas sus dependencias. Mazoquista [sic], como si el dolor se volviera contra ella misma, se mordía los labios hasta herirlos, respirando entrecortada para acallar los aullidos que pugnaban por salir de la garganta. Se hincaba las uñas en las palmas sudorosas de las manos dejando las

señales de una hilera de medias lunas azuladas. La cara le quemaba como si la vergüenza se hubiera apoderado de todas las células pigmentarias. No era que le hubieran arrebatado algo más o menos propio, era por encima de todo, el dolor de una ofensa irreparable, era la tramoya de los celos en su manifestación más femenina.

Sólo tuvo el buen sentido de dar un largo rodeo para no pasar otra vez por la casa de aleros y ventanas verdes. El corazón le latía con un ritmo desacostumbrado y fiero como si la muerte estuviera cerca, no quería morirse, antes hubiera querido regodearse en la carnicería de cuerpos que obstinadamente veía en todas partes.

--Que la alcaldesa pasó por al lado y ni siquiera se dignó mirarle. Que tenía la cara colorada como si hubiera sufrido una insolación y hasta le pareció que iba haciendo pucheros.

Por fin llegó a su casa y le pareció que no era la misma de hace poco. Se tumbó boca abajo en la cama como si estuviera descansando de arrastrarse en las ardientes arenas de un desierto absurdamente desolado. Dio rienda suelta al raudal de las lágrimas que venían pugnando por salirse en la distancia ilimitada que mediaba de la casa se Doña Carmen Benavides a la suya y en la que no existía posibilidad de un oasis sino sólo el espejismo de una mujer ofendida y suplantada. No había nada qué hacer ni qué decir ni a dónde irse, acaso preguntarse si fue culpa de él como otras tantas veces, si fue culpa de la mujer de la casa de aleros y ventanas verdes que a lo mejor era hermosísima y el pobre hombre sucumbió a sus encantos, o fue ella que estaba vieja y horrorosa. No entendía nada.

Y se acercó al espejo y se miró la cara y vio que al final de los ojos el tiempo había estado escarbando las temidas patas de gallina, pero sólo se las veía acercándose mucho. Y vio que desde los bordes de los labios salían hacia arriba dos

líneas alargadas, pero aún eran tenues. Y se tocó la cara y se examinó milímetro a milímetro. No, no estaba tan vieja para la edad que realmente tenía. Y se vio el cuello y maldijo la papada, pero aún su cuello no era como el de las viejas verdaderas. Y de un tirón se arrancó toda la ropa y se quedó desnuda ante el espejo.

Era ella y no otra. Había engordado un poco, y al engordar parecía que se hubiera achicado, pero eso no era suficiente. Así desnuda ante el espejo parecía que estuviera confesándose y con intenciones de absolverse. Los senos ya no eran firmes ni estaban en el sitio de antes. Pero habían cumplido su misión con cada hijo. Si los hombres supieron ver un poco más allá de la evidencia descubrirían esa recóndita hermosura de lo que no se ve, pero se sabe.

Y se vio el vientre con cuatro o cinco estrías grandes que no le parecieron feas ni tampoco eran hermosas, pero hacían pensar que dentro estuvo creciendo un ser humano, que era un hecho de por sí tremendo, tan inaudito como para ser diosificado. Y se miró la espalda y por los lados y se vio madura, pero nunca repulsiva. Y pensó con un leve escalofrío que si la paternidad dejara en el cuerpo del hombre algunas huellas, ella y todas las mujeres madres amarían esas marcas y las tocarían una y otra vez como una reminiscencia para sentirse jóvenes.

No había vueltas que darle, fue joven y se volvió vieja, pero así vieja y revieja era ella y se gustaba. Su cuerpo empezó a irradiar una luz desconocida, y si otros no veían esa luz, peor para ellos. Supo que la vejez jamás puede ser fea porque nadie tiene la culpa de ser viejo. La miserable humanidad, la mísera egoísta, aún tenía que caminar con muletas milenios y milenios hasta que aprendiera una lección de amar por encima de las cosas que se acaban.

Se cansó de estar parada ante su propio cuerpo. Se sentó para poder mirarse hacia adentro. Cerró los ojos y empezó a verse. Era una mujer con una capacidad de amar irrebatible, pero estaba pretendiendo el imposible de que otros tuvieran al menos un cierto parecido, un reflejo, acaso una imitación.

Recordó el ayer que en esos casos recordaba. Juntos, codo a codo hicieron la familia. En un principio fueron pobres y la pobreza se alió a la lealtad. El trabajaba de amanuense y ella lavaba sus camisas. Pensaron en heredar algún día, pero los parientes se aferraron a la vida. Apenas dejaron la pobreza, él empezó a frecuentar a las Culo de Bronce. Decía que era amante de Chopin y de Beethoven, pero ella sabía que era de Clarisa. Se cansó a tiempo de Euterpe y se enredó con la animadora del primer circo que llegó al pueblo. Desapareció algunos días. Dijeron que la gente del circo le despachó con cajas destempladas porque la animadora no sabía lo que hablaba. Cuando regresó, no le hizo ninguna escena de las que solía hacerle porque le dio pena de los comentarios y se le partió el alma de verle entrar como perro apaleado, y más bien tuvo una ruin indignación muy maternal, por ese entonces, de que una cupletista le hubiera dado calabazas. Y volvió a acordarse de eso y de aquello y de lo otro.

En el fondo de todo estaba ella sin ninguna resignación porque se veía altive. Era como si fuera la madre de todos los mortales, como la generadora de la vida y las costumbres, como la responsable de los traspies que dan los otros aunque fuera una vestal sacrificada, con la energía del ave fénix de las muertes lentas, era ella, la que nunca se traicionó a sí misma.

Volvió a vestirse y se sintió crecida. Su intimidad no necesitaba ropa porque ninguna de la que tenía podía servirle. Aumentaba en tamaño y en volumen, tanto como para sentir que la casa le venía chica, tanto como para mandar al diablo los

pesares cotidianos, tanto como para recoger uno a uno los pedazos de sí misma y recomponerlos en un puzle complicado, tanto como para sentirse muerta y volver a tener ganas de la vida, tanto como para ponerse de pie encima de su propio corazón y sentir que en el mundo entero nadie era capaz de doblegarla. Se estaba consolando a su manera, lo que le mantenía serena después de semejante tempestad era el orgullo.

--Que sea lo que sea, era el orgullo de ser mujer y no otra cosa.

"La Machorra"

Por Nela Martínez

La encontré en el repecho de la montaña. Entre las breñas sus despeinados cabellos color de paja seca eran como una mata de sigsi, batida por el viento.

--Duérmete mi niño, duérmete no más . . .

La voz gimiente arrullaba.

--Yo te cuido, yo te quiero, yo te llevo bien acurrucadito, duérmete no más.

Mecía su bultito de trapos, cadenciosa, suavemente. Un sol de venados, lejano y frío iluminaba aún las cumbres más altas.

--Ya nos vamos, espera. Allá arriba nos abrigaremos.

Subía despacio, para que el niño no despertara, protegiéndolo con su pañolón raído, del viento que agitaba sus olas de mar embravecido. Los pies desnudos se rasgaban sobre espinas y piedras, pero ella no las miraba ni sentía, atenta tan sólo al ritmo de sus brazos que eran una cuna de suaves movimientos para adormecer al niño.

El perfil de la montaña, que se tendía hacia el occidente amurallando el río que descendía hacia la costa, se destacaba nítido entre los oros y rojos del poniente. Los chicos le llamaban El Muerto, por su apariencia de gigante. Ella llegó hasta allá siguiendo el brillo solar, pero la claridad huidiza subía cada vez más.

--Ya no podemos seguir, no hay camino, ni los chivos han venido hasta acá.

Y como el resplandor se tornaba ceniza entre las nieblas del páramo buscó otro calor, el de la tierra. Arrimada al peñón como a un ser humano cálido y sensible, se hacía la ilusión de estar protegida. Descargaba el peso de su espalda y

su corazón sobre la terrosa soledad del páramo andino. A gritos, igual que se hablara a un amigo lo que había callado tanto tiempo.

--Ya estás calladito. Ahora te voy a contar mi historia. Este viento malo no me deja hablar. Me oyes? Bueno, más alto, más alto.

Entre el resonar del ventarrón de la puna sus gritos eran apenas el eco de la gran voz que subía desde los valles en reposo, para crecer en alocado vértigo del aire y volverse masa densa que al fin terminaba rompiéndose crujiente contra las rocas inmutables.

--Yo soy hija del blanco, como vos. Mama Dolores era vaquera. El patrón subió al cerro. Mejor hubiera sido no nacer. Mama Dolores se casó con el huasicama de la hacienda. Ay, fueron dos para pegarme . . .

Decían: --Chaupi blanca, ojos de gato, hija del sacha runa.

--Ja, ja, ja, yo me reía cuando tenía que servir a los huahuas indios de mi madre. Era patrona, patrona de los longos y debía amarcarlos, cuidarlos, darles de comer. Pero los quería. Eran tibios y suaves como los pajaritos recién nacidos. Cuando lloraban por el hambre les ponía a mamar sobre mi pecho, aunque mis senos eran pequeñitos como huagra manzana y no tenían leche. Los longuitos se calmaban hasta que llegaba la madre del trabajo. Entonces mama Dolores me quitaba los niños, me empujaba hacia afuera, al frío, para que cuidara los animales, para que trajera agua de la quebrada, para que ayudara al taita Lino a cuidar las sementeras. Una vez, de borracho, él quiso abusar de mí. Pero nó, nó. Yo me defendí, le mordí, corrí, me huí cerro abajo, hasta el pueblo. Porque yo soy blanca, entiendes? Y mi hijo no debía ser longo cerdoso, sino un pichoncito blanco y dorado, como el niño Dios, para que fuera bonito, y respetado y querido, como este

hijito que yo tengo, como este niñito mío, esperado, esperado . . . Si supieras lo
duro que es buscar trabajo.

--Huambra, qué dizque sabes hacer?.

--Hubieras aprendido algo, manavali!

--No, no necesito, sirvientas hay lo que se quiera.

--Cara de pícaro tienes.

--Shúa has de ser.

Así; puerta a puerta, día a día, durante semanas. Verás cómo sufría tu
mamita. Dormía en los zaguanes, en las gradas de la Iglesia, donde me cogía la
noche. Y me moría de hambre. Lo que me dolía la barriga al comer shulalas de las
cercas o gullanes. Una vez me ofrecieron trabajo. Querían que cuidara un
postradito, hijo de la Domitila Toapanta. Pero ella era india con batas, su huahua
indio sin piernas. Claro que tenían plata. Brillaban sus collares, sus zarcillos, pero
nadie les quitaba el color. Indios, indios con plata, nada más. Y yo no serviría a
indios, eso sí que no, ni por castigo del cielo.

--Bueno pues, quédate a cuidar a los niñitos. Pero no te pago nada hasta que
no aprendas a trabajar. Si tuvieras padre o madre siquiera para que te vendan. No
pagaría mucho por una huambra así, pero, en fin, estaría siquiera más asegurada.

--Al fin conseguí que me recibieran en casa de blanco. La niña Rosita me
cogió con condición. Si me quejaba de algo iría a parar en la calle. Aprendía lo que
me enseñaban, pero más que nada a llorar por dentro, a sufrir calladita. Me rapó,
me quitó los piojos, me hizo bañar en agua helada a las cinco de la mañana, me dio
látigo todos los días, porque sí, porque nó, porque hacía, porque no hacía. Tenía
que trabajar con los niños a la espalda. Cuánto pesaban esos niños gordotes, bien
comidos, casi de mi tamaño!

.

--Qué es? Ya te veo frunciéndote. Te pago para que el niñito tenga burro propio, ya sabes. Si no estás contenta largo de aquí!

--Dónde podía ir? Me quedaba diciéndole: Dios le pague patronita, ya he de crecer. Verá. Ya he de trabajar más.

--Y así fue. Pasó el tiempo. Los niños crecieron, se fueron a las escuelas, a los colegios, a la ciudad. Regresaban en vacaciones. Qué lindas eran las vacaciones. Nos íbamos a la hacienda. Yo era criada de blancos y era blanca. Los indios me saludaban. Yo les mandaba, ellos me obedecían. Qué bueno tener alguien que le obedezca a una! Los cholos se lamían los labios al verme. Cuando podían me pellizcaban. Yo les escupía: atatay . . .

--El niño Teodorito tenía unas manos suaves como la seda. Me llamaba con una voz tan dulce . . . Nos encontrábamos en el tamero, nos hundíamos en la paja de las trillas que nos servían de colchón y cobija. Yo me sentía feliz, es la verdad, aunque no durmiera ni una hora en toda la noche. Tenía sed y él era como el agua. Yo quería más, siempre más y --los hombres son así cuando una les quiere-- él se cansó. Con lo feliz que yo era aunque me estropeara, aunque me mordiera, aunque me pateara. No me saciaba nunca. Un hijo, un hijito como el niño Teodoro, eso era lo que yo quería.

--Me botaron de la casa. El dijo que yo era una perdida y me dejaron con mi [sic] cuatro trapitos en media calle. Lo que sufrí! Y a seguir buscándote. Trabajaba en las casas de los blancos y no les pedía nada sino que me quisieran y me dieran un hijito. De todos los sitios me despedían. Comenzaron a llamarme LA MACHORRA. Decían que era como las mulas que nunca pueden tener crías. Todo el pueblo me insultaba. Las mujeres casadas me maldecían. Dejé de servir. Buscaba un hombre y lo seguía con tal de que fuera blanco. Llegué a rezar mucho. Hice

penitencia. Las oraciones que aprendí en la casa del niño Teodorito y que entonces me hacían dormir, volvieron a mi cabeza. Las repetía, las repetía aunque tuviera un hombre en mis brazos. Algunos se levantaron, me daban un chirlazo y se iban. Yo seguía rezando siempre, pidiéndole a Dios un hijo, para que me calmara la sed, para que viniera la paz. Soñaba con llevar mi hijito en mis brazos y pasear delante de todos esos hombres que me habían despreciado, de todas esas mujeres que me insultaban, decirles: Vean que lindo hijito de la machorra! No tenía entrañas de mula, sino de yegua, no?

--Ay, cuánto recé, cuanto pedí, cuántas promesas hice: Dios, si me das un hijo no me iré con ningún hombre, nunca más! Me fuí de romería, caminé de rodillas, besé el suelo después que pasaron los leprosos al hospital. Y nada. Tú sin llegar, picarito, sin llegar. Busqué a los romeriantes para ayudar al milagro, con tal de que fueran blancos. Ninguno me calmaba, ninguno me preñaba, ninguno me daba lo único que les pedía: un hijo.

--Pero un día, sabes lo que me pasó? Fue en los carnavales, cuando la gente se enfría y se enciende por gusto. Agua fría por fuera, agua-ardiente por dentro, como decía una vecina. Borrachos, me asaltaron en mi cuarto, todos los chullas del pueblo. Parecían un batallón. No pude escoger. Cholos y nobles, todos se juntaron para maltratarme. Me crucificaron sobre el suelo. Se turnaron durante horas. Se vaciaron en mí como los padrones de la hacienda sobre las yeguas en celo. El que se levantaba me escupía.

--Ya te dejo el hijo, perra

--Sentía morirme. Era como si te pegaran y sacaran tus tripas para reírse. Cuando pude zafarme del trapo con el que me taparon la boca, grité, grité. Pudo haberme oído Dios, o mi padre que es el patrón de la hacienda grande, o mi mama

Dolores de los cerros. Nadie me oyó, nadie vino. Grité tanto que me quedé sin acción, sin voz, muerta en medio de la noche. Ah, cuando desperté di gracias a Dios. Estabas allí, a mi lado, chiquito lindo, recién nacido, tiritando de frío como el niño Dios. Te envolví en mi vestido nuevo que nunca me puse, te abrigué, hice un fueguecito bien hullante, quemé las tablas de mi baúl, el cuerpito de San Antonio, la repisa del Santo. Quise arrancar las puertas de mi cuarto para echarlas a la hoguera, grande como las de las vísperas de San Pedro, pero me faltaron las fuerzas. Entonces vinieron las vecinas, los chapas, el dueño de casa.

--Está loca, loca, la Machorra!

--Me dieron con palos, como a los perros cuando tienen la rabia. Pero me escapé. Te salvé. Ahora ya nadie me puede quitar, amor mío, lucerito, luz de mis ojos, niñito lindo como el niño Dios. Arrorró, mi niño, vamos a dormir.

Se ovillaba junto al peñón, debajo de la sombra, temerosa aún.

--No estoy loca, mentira. Soy tu mamá.

Sacaba su seno escuálido para que lactara el niño al que había puesto muy despacio sobre sus rodillas. Sus ojos pardos, semejantes a bolas de vidrio, se abrían inmensos, escrutando la noche que avanzaba.

De repente se oyeron ladridos en la lejanía. Los perros rastreaban cada vez más cerca. Un galope sonoro, como de río crecido, la envolvía ahogándole del miedo. El camino de herraduras quedaba a pocos metros de su escondite. Ella no lo había visto y había subido sin rumbo, destrozándose los pies.

--Quen [sic] será? Todavía me persiguen. Lo que le pasa a una pobre mujer que tiene que salvar a su hijito. Sí, era envidia la que tuvieron en el pueblo, sobre todo esas mujeres malas que me apedrearon. Envidia porque mi niño es un milagro, tan hermoso, tan rubio, tan . . .

La palabra se volvió un susurro gimiente. Un perro que olfateaba cayó sobre ella. Llegaron los jinetes que habían estado de cacería en el páramo y detuvieron la marcha de sus cabalgaduras. Alguien llamó al perro calmándolo. Otro dijo:

--Miren quien es, la Machorra, que me contaron que se había vuelto loca.

--Loca furiosa, cuidado, aseguró alguien.

La mujer que había escapado hasta el filo del picacho volvió la cabeza al oír esa voz que sacudiéndole el corazón le recordaba unos días de vacaciones, cálidos y distantes. Un hombretón recio, envuelto en su poncho de lana, se le acercaba riéndose, azuzando a la jauría:

--Mushca, mushca, mushca . . .

Era el niño Teodorito, fusto en mano.

--Machorra puta, te has revolcado con todo el pueblo, que te coman los perros.

La rabia lo encendió como el alcohol emborrachándolo. Qué le importaba a él una cualquiera. Sin embargo, se sentía herido en su dignidad de hombre viéndola cerca. Recordó a la muchachita ágil y amorosa a la que él inició.

--Mushca, cómele Sultán, mushca . . .

El látigo se alzó silbante. La Machorra corría envuelta en los gritos de los hombres, los ladridos de los perros, el ulular siniestro del viento del páramo. Huir con su niño, huir lejos de los ojos con candela del niño Teodorito, huir, cerro abajo como otra vez, cuando era apenas una muchachita veloz como un venado.

La carcajada que la siguió, empujándola hacia el abismo, acalló el ruido de su cuerpo al caer.

Al día siguiente, cuando la gente llegaba a la orilla del río para verla, masa rojiza e informe, aún se podía mirar su brazo curvado, sujetando firmemente la almohadita envuelta en trapos, a la que había cantado:

--Arrorró mi niño, duérmete no más . . .

Las olas, al golpear en las piedras de las orillas parecían hacerle coro:

--Arrorró mi niño, duérmete no más. . .

Glosario de términos en Quichua

LA MACHORRA: nombre que se da a las hembras infecundas en la provincia de Cañar, situada al Sur de la República del Ecuador, en la Sierra Andina.

Sigsi: planta de la cordillera andina coronada por un penacho pajizo

Huasicama: peón concierto que tiene la obligación de cuidar la casa de la hacienda.

Chaupi: falso, que tiene la apariencia de algo sin ser verdadero.

Huahua: niño pequeño, hijo.

Huagra manzana: frutos silvestres, pequeños, como nísperos.

Taita: padre, mayor.

Longo: indio, hijos de indios, descendientes de los pueblos indígenas que habitaban las tierras americanas antes de la conquista y que aún viven en comunidades o como peones conciertos en los latifundios.

Huambra: muchacho, muchacha, joven indígena.

Manavali: que no sirve, inútil.

Shúa: ladrón, ladrona.

Shulalas, gullanes: frutos ácidos, silvestres.

Cholos: mestizos.

Chullas: jóvenes solos, sin pareja, presumidos

Sacha Runa: falso indio, habitante de la puna andina que tiene los pies al revés por cuyo motivo no se le encuentre nunca. Una leyenda semejante a la del abominable hombre de las nieves, que da características de ser mitológico, mitad animal, mitad ser humano, al personaje que habita en lo más alto de la cordillera y que desciende para llevarse las doncellas y procrear.