

2015

# Translating Latin America: Harriet De Onís and the U.S. publishing market

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/14069>

*Boston University*

BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

**TRANSLATING LATIN AMERICA: HARRIET DE ONÍS AND THE U.S.  
PUBLISHING MARKET**

by

**VICTORIA LIVINGSTONE**

B.A., The College of New Jersey, 2003  
M.A., Boston College, 2009

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

2015



Approved by

First Reader

---

Adela Pineda Franco, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Spanish

Second Reader

---

Christopher Maurer, Ph.D.  
Professor of Spanish

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Margaret (1948-2006), whose curiosity, strength, and love inspired me, and whose energy continues to encourage me in ways she cannot know.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the intellectual and emotional support of many people. At Boston University, I felt extremely fortunate to receive guidance from Adela Pineda Franco and Christopher Maurer, both of whom have helped me develop as a researcher and as a writer in more ways than I can list here. My family has been patient and supportive during these years and I am grateful to my father Ian, and to my siblings Katie, Peter, and Elizabeth. I was fortunate to have access to multiple archives and a Fulbright grant, which allowed me to spend 9 months conducting research at the Universidade de São Paulo, where Sandra Vasconcelos, John Milton, and many other professors and friends guided me. Juan de Onís graciously took the time to meet with me to talk about his family, language, and literature. The collaborative spirit and enthusiasm of researchers including Kaitlin Sobieski and Rebecca Lippman impressed me. Finally, I am sure that I could not have completed this project without the suggestions and consistent encouragement I received from many people, especially Robert Del Frate, Leslie Harkema, Alexis Ortiz, Célia Bianconi, Tina Carvalho, Rodrigo Oliveira, Manuel De Iacavo, Maria Do Carmo Oliveira, Jacques Fux, Harrisa Pianka, Mindy Wolfrom, Kate Chappell, and Bryan Betancur, who was always by my side in the final months of completing this project.

**TRANSLATING LATIN AMERICA: HARRIET DE ONÍS AND THE U.S.**

**PUBLISHING MARKET**

**LIVINGSTONE, VICTORIA**

Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2015

Major Professor: Adela Pineda Franco, Associate Professor of Spanish

**ABSTRACT**

Responding to recent debates about the circulation of literary texts in the global market, this dissertation examines various literary and socio-political factors that shaped the translation and reception of Latin American literature in the U.S. between 1930-1969. This study seeks to fill a critical gap in the history of translated Latin American literature, focusing on the editorial project of Alfred A. Knopf, the most influential publisher of Latin American literature in the U.S. during these years, and Harriet de Onís, Knopf's principal translator from Spanish and Portuguese into English. Drawing on archival research, each chapter traces the publication history, and follows with a close reading, of a different text translated and sometimes edited, by de Onís. The three case studies from both Spanish and Portuguese source texts and from geographically diverse regions (Mexico, Brazil, and Cuba) examine specific problems of translation. Chapter One addresses the ways in which explicitly political texts are transformed in translation and are shaped by readers' cultural expectations. It analyzes de Onís's translation of Martín Luis Guzmán's semifictional memoir of the Mexican Revolution, *El águila y la serpiente* (1928), *The Eagle and the Serpent* (abridged version in English published in 1930 and complete version in 1965). Chapter Two studies the movement of scholarly texts from

peripheral to central markets through an analysis of Fernando Ortiz's *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940), translated in 1947 as *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Chapter Three studies the difficulties of reproducing experimental language in translation through close readings of de Onís's translations of João Guimarães Rosa's *Sagarana* (1946, title unchanged in the 1966 English translation) and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (1956, translated in collaboration with James L. Taylor in 1963 as *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*). These case studies suggest that current models of the global circulation of literature should acknowledge more fully the active editorial role of the translator and other agents in shaping source texts and in seeking out the cultural analogies that make those texts more readily understandable to foreign readers.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	x
INTRODUCTION: LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION: AN OVERVIEW .....	1
CHAPTER ONE: FROM INTELLECTUALS TO CAUDILLOS: <i>THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT</i> IN 1930 AND IN 1965 .....	23
CHAPTER TWO: TOBACCO, SUGAR AND TRANSLATION: <i>CONTRAPUNTEO CUBANO</i> IN THE UNITED STATES.....	65
CHAPTER THREE: TRANSLATING SUR-REGIONALISM: GUIMARÃES ROSA IN THE UNITED STATES .....	113
CONCLUSION: LITERATURE, TRANSLATION, AND GLOBALIZATION .....	167
APPENDIX A: TRANSLATIONS BY HARRIET DE ONÍS .....	180
APPENDIX B: PHOTO OF HARRIET WISHNIEFF (DE ONÍS).....	184
APPENDIX C: TABLE OF OMISSIONS IN THE 1930 TRANSLATION OF <i>EL ÁGUILA Y LA SERPIENTE</i> .....	185

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE IMAGES THAT APPEAR IN *CUBAN COUNTERPOINT*  
(KNOPF, 1947) AND NOT IN EDITIONS IN SPANISH .....187

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....189

CURRICULUM VITAE.....201

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AK .....	Alfred A. Knopf
BR.....	Brotherton and Company Business and Family Archive
HDO.....	Harriet de Onís
HRC .....	Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. archive, Harry Ransom Center
IEB.....	João Guimarães Rosa Archive, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros
JGR .....	João Guimarães Rosa
SO .....	Seminario de Estudios Hispanos Federico de Onís
SW .....	Sumner Welles Papers

## **INTRODUCTION: LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION: AN OVERVIEW**

Before the twentieth century, the U.S. showed little interest in the cultural production of the rest of the Americas. The Latin American texts published in English translation in the United States during the nineteenth century tended to be non-fiction or regionalist fiction framed in didactic or moral terms. These early translations included: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Civilización y barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (1845), translated by Mary Mann as *Facundo: Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants; or Civilization and Barbarism* (1868), Colombian writer Jorge Isaacs' 1867 novel, titled *María* in Spanish and *Maria: A South American Romance* in Rollo Ogden's 1890 translation, and *Ramón the Rover of Cuba: The Personal Narrative of that Celebrated Pirate* in English (1829, anonymous author and translator), a "free translation"<sup>1</sup> of a manuscript the translator claimed to have found in Cuba.<sup>2</sup> All of the English titles of these works include specific references to the region or to the language, which would imply that they were marketed as explicitly foreign rather than as universal texts.

Of these early translations, it is worth noting that Sarmiento was well connected in North America and therefore could advocate to have his work translated into English.

---

<sup>1</sup> In his preface to the book, the anonymous translator and editor writes, "My present purpose is to inform the public, how I became possessed of the original Spanish manuscript, of which the following is a free translation" (ix).

<sup>2</sup> Titles from Remigio Pane's 1943 bibliography of translated Latin American literature. He lists only six Latin American novels published in the U.S. before 1900 and some of the texts he lists, such as Sarmiento's *Facundo*, are not even works of fiction.

He counted Horace Mann among his friends, and it was Mann's wife Mary who translated the book.<sup>3</sup> In English translation, *Facundo* was presented as a serious political treatise, but the source culture was exoticized. In her translator's preface, Mann emphasizes the vision of Argentina as a savage land and makes a point of separating Sarmiento from most of his countrymen, whom, she argues, "the author has never flattered" (iv). She praises Sarmiento's preference for "the cultivated cities of the Argentine Republic, where Europeans find themselves at home in all that constitutes civilized societies, and where the high culture of the few is painfully contrasted with the utter want of it in the body of the people" (vii-viii). Nineteenth century texts such as *Facundo* were often linked to nation-building in Latin America, but in translation they were presented as cultural objects far removed from life in the U.S. This was true of fictional texts also. In his introduction to the translation of *María*, Thomas A. Janvier notes an "air of realism" in Isaac's work that would allow U.S. readers to know these "stranger neighbors of ours as they truly are" (ix, xi).

In the early twentieth century, translated Latin American literature continued to be exoticized, but, rather than being presented as curious artifacts from lands with little connection to the U.S., translated texts began to be framed as a way of improving intercultural relations. In his introduction to Isaac Goldberg's *Studies in Spanish-American Literature* (1920),<sup>4</sup> J.D.M. Ford writes, "a sermon might well be preached on

---

<sup>3</sup> Mann notes Sarmiento's friendship with her husband in her preface to the translation. She also points out that Sarmiento wrote the book in Chile and that the text then "found its way to France and was...favorably received in the 'Revue des deux Mondes'" before it was translated in the U.S (x).

<sup>4</sup> Goldberg was a translator, but this book is a compilation of essays. Despite its title, it included a number of Brazilian authors. In 1922, Knopf published another study by Goldberg, titled *Brazilian Literature*.

this subject, but instead of a sermon a book is now presented in the hope that it will help to break down barriers for the maintenance of which there is no just excuse of a racial, political, commercial, cultural or other nature” (viii). During this period, Goldberg was a significant figure in bringing Latin American literature to the U.S. In addition to publishing studies on Spanish-American and Brazilian literature, Goldberg edited anthologies such as *Brazilian Tales* (1921), which included his translations of work by Machado de Assis, Medeiros e Albuquerque, Henrique Coelho Netto, and Carmen Dolores (Emília Moncorvo Bandeira de Melo). Other influential translators during this period included writer Anita Brenner (Mexico/U.S.), who translated Mariano Azuela’s *Mala Yerba* (1909), published in English as *Marcela, A Mexican Love Story* (1932) and Mildred Adams, who translated Germán Arciniegas’ *The Knight of El Dorado: The Tale of Don Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada and His Conquest of New Granada, Now Called Colombia* (1942).<sup>5</sup> Like Brenner and Goldberg, Adams was a writer and critic as well as a translator.

In the 1920s, a number of intellectuals from the U.S.—motivated in part by disenchantment with capitalism—turned to Latin America in search of a romanticized alternative to the culture of materialism.<sup>6</sup> Among these figures was Waldo Frank,<sup>7</sup> a

---

<sup>5</sup> Adams had a hand in promoting Spanish and Latin American literature in the U.S, translating work by Ortega y Gasset, Arciniegas, and others.

<sup>6</sup> Many intellectuals and artists were drawn to Mexico, in large part because of interest generated by the Mexican Revolution. John A. Britton describes the role of intellectuals in cultural exchange between Mexico and the U.S. during this period, noting the influence of “journalists such as Gruening, Carleton Beals, Herbert Croly, and Anita Brenner, academics such as Frank Tannenbaum, social activists such as Hubert Herring, and political agitators (Communists) Bertram and Ella Wolfe” (8).

<sup>7</sup> See Ogorzaly *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*. Rostagno also notes Frank’s importance and devotes an entire chapter to his influence.

prolific writer whose interest in Latin America began in Spain. The author of books such as *Virgin Spain: Scenes from the Spiritual Drama of a Great People* (1926), *America Hispana* (1931), and *South American Journey* (1943), Frank had taken his first steps towards Latin America in 1924, when he met Alfonso Reyes in Spain and gave him a “mensaje a los escritores mexicanos.” According to Michael A. Ogorzaly, in the message Frank asked Reyes “to relay to all of Latin America’s intellectuals the desire of a comrade from the United States to be their friend. He cites their common ideal—to create in America a spiritual culture—and their common enemy: the materialism, imperialism, and sterile pragmatism of the modern world” (75). Frank strived to strengthen relations between the U.S. and Latin America, arguing that the regions should strive for “a deep mutual knowledge”<sup>8</sup> that could be built through literature. In 1930, in an article for *Publishers Weekly*, Frank describes criteria for introducing Latin American authors to the U.S. public. He argues for selecting writers who appeal to “broad general interest,”<sup>9</sup> but his tastes tended towards regional texts that he could use to promote a Pan-American ideal.

According to Suzanne Jill Levine, during the 1920s and 30s, English translations of Latin American texts generally tended to be limited to realist/regionalist *novelas de la tierra* (298). Rostagno argues that Frank’s preference for regional texts may have been detrimental to sales of Latin American texts in translation. She writes, “had [Frank] chosen to balance his heavily Americanist list with works of more universal appeal, the

---

<sup>8</sup> *Scribner’s Magazine* 87, Jun. 1930: 579-86. Cited in Ogorzaly 84.

<sup>9</sup> “Contemporary Spanish American Literature.” *Publishers Weekly* 118 (18 Oct. 1930): 1841-43. Cited in Ogorzaly 85.

story of Latin American literature in this country [the U.S.] might have been different” (20).<sup>10</sup> In addition to trying to build U.S.-Latin American relations by publishing anthologies such as *Tales from the Argentine* (1930), Frank worked as an editorial advisor for Doubleday, Doran and Company and for Farrar and Rinehart’s Latin American series; neither of these projects were commercially successful (Rostagno 15). While popular in Latin America, in the U.S. Frank achieved little success and his mission to promote Latin American literature was largely a failure.<sup>11</sup> Frank had gone to Latin America “at a time (1929) when a huge cultural gap existed between Anglo America and Hispanic America” (Ogorzaly 161). He and other intellectuals who were trying to introduce Latin American cultures to the U.S. were working against the tide. Before the 1930s, the U.S. government had little interest in formal programs of cultural exchange with their southern neighbors. The subsequent generation of translators, however, worked in an era in which the U.S. government was more interested in building ties with Latin America. Beginning in the 1930s, as the U.S. shifted its policies toward Latin America, cultural exchange became a greater priority and the number of texts translated from Spanish and Portuguese rose. These years—between 1930 and the late 1960s—saw such a significant increase in the translation of texts from Spanish and Portuguese into English

---

<sup>10</sup> Cohn also argues that this preference among publishers and translators for regional literature—even during later periods—hurt sales (132). Cohn cites Rostagno, who writes, “Part of the problem may have been that, lacking the necessary background, readers of South American works faced a particularly strenuous effort” (Rostagno 33).

<sup>11</sup> Rostagno notes that Frank was more successful in Latin America, where “he managed to arouse interest in U.S. culture” than he was in the U.S. (26). Ogorzaly also points out the Frank was better received in Latin America: “In the United States, where ignorance of the Spanish-speaking realm was the rule, his explanations were taken at face value. Besides, his U.S. readers were more interested in his castigation of his government’s policy, his chastisement of his fellow countrymen’s attitudes toward Spain and Latin America, and his championing of collectivism vis-à-vis capitalism, which they applauded. Meanwhile, in the Hispanic world...he ensured a warm reception for himself and an acceptance of his message” (163).



that they essentially mark the foundation of the canon of translated Latin American literature in the United States.

This period, which corresponds to the years between the Good Neighbor Policy and the publishing phenomenon known as the Latin American Boom, is the focus of this study. Specifically, this dissertation analyzes various political, historical and economic factors that influenced the publishing market for translations in the U.S. between 1930 and 1969, centering on the editorial project of Alfred A. Knopf, the most influential publisher of Latin American literature in the U.S. during these years, and Harriet de Onís, Knopf's principal translator of Latin American literature. This study seeks to address broad questions about the ways in which texts are transformed in translation by tracing publication histories of original texts and translations, comparing the reception of texts in their source cultures to critical reactions in the U.S., and by analyzing style. The works studied are: Martín Luis Guzmán's *El águila y la serpiente* (1928, translated in 1930), Fernando Ortiz's *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (1940, translated in 1947), and selections from João Guimarães Rosa's *Sagarana* (1946, translated in 1966) and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (1956, translated in 1963). These are texts from different regions (Mexico, Cuba, and Brazil, respectively), translated by de Onís during different decades (within the Good Neighbor-Boom time frame).

Harriet de Onís's career as a translator—from her translation of Guzmán's *El águila y la serpiente* in 1930 until her death in 1969—coincides with the period studied. This dissertation considers de Onís's work as representative of this period. The chapters that follow analyze her work as a translator, an editor, and an editorial advisor in order to

better understand the ways in which the publishing market, political contexts, and other factors determined which texts were selected for translation, which parts of each text were translated, and how they were translated. Although this dissertation does not explore de Onís's biography, it is important to note that she was a key figure in introducing Latin American literature to U.S. readers. De Onís, born Harriet Wishnieff in 1895, was the first truly prolific translator of texts from this region. Earlier translators such as Samuel Putnam, Isaac Goldberg, and others helped establish the canon of translated Latin American literature, but none translated as many works as she. She translated close to 40 books from Spanish and Portuguese into English,<sup>12</sup> advised publishers, and influenced the subsequent generation of translators. Deborah Cohn writes that de Onís was “in effect an extremely powerful gatekeeper: in José Donoso's words, ‘she controlled the sluices of the circulation of Latin American literature in the United States and by means of the United States throughout the whole world’” (12).<sup>13</sup>

De Onís was a pioneer in introducing Latin American literature to the U.S. public, but her career path and her choices were also a product of her era. The beginning of her career and her interest in Latin America coincided with a general surge of U.S. interest in Latin America. According to Helen Delpar, the increased interest in the region at the beginning of the twentieth century was the result of the Spanish-American War, World War I (which weakened Europe), and U.S. investment in Latin America (7-8). Partly as a result of these events, enrollment in Spanish language courses in secondary schools in the

---

<sup>12</sup> In addition to essays, poetry, and short stories. List of her translations in Appendix A.

<sup>13</sup> Rostagno also cites this. From Donoso's *Historia personal del Boom*.

U.S. rose from 5,000 in 1910 to 35,000 in 1915 to over 260,000 by 1922 (Delpar 8). This was the context in which de Onís began studying the language. According to Trudy Balch, when de Onís later described what motivated her to study Spanish, she said, “After the first world war, the importance of the Hispanic world became clear” (Balch 48). De Onís, who had grown up in Sheldon, Illinois, moved to New York to study foreign languages at Barnard College, graduating in 1916.<sup>14</sup> After working for a time as a secretary for dancer Isadora Duncan, she decided to get an M.A. in Spanish. At Columbia University, Harriet met Federico de Onís (1885-1966), an influential critic who had been invited “to invent, as it were, the field of Hispanic Studies” at that university.<sup>15</sup> In 1920, Federico de Onís founded the Instituto de las Españas, renamed the Hispanic Institute in 1930.<sup>16</sup> The Institute, which published a wide variety of critical books on Latin American authors, had a considerable role in the dissemination of literature from the region. After meeting Federico, whom she married in 1924,<sup>17</sup> Harriet “went on to make a book-buying trip to Spain, manage the Spanish department at Doubleday, Page & Co., and edit *World Fiction* magazine” (Balch 48). Through Federico and the Instituto he directed, Harriet met most of the leading Latin American authors of the time. The

---

<sup>14</sup> Barnard Archives, Barnard College, New York. Harriet Wishnieff’s yearbook photo appears in Appendix B.

<sup>15</sup> Velasco, Jesús R. “Letter from the Chair... ‘Which recounts what will be seen by whoever reads it, or heard by whoever listens to it being read.’” 11 April 2015. *Hispanic Institute Bulletin*. Columbia University, Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures. Web. 11 Jul. 2015.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Balch 48. Other than Balch’s article, there is little biographical information on Harriet de Onís. Harriet and Federico de Onís’s son Juan, a journalist based in Brazil, confirmed the information in Balch’s article. He added: “You can see that the girl who grew up in the great plains of the Midwest [Harriet Wishnieff] was instinctively a cosmopolitan intellectual. In her working days as a translator, she read very widely and maintained close personal relations with intellectuals, like Lionel Trilling, the literary critic, who taught at Columbia. But she was also very interested in politics and was an enthusiastic backer of FDR’s New Deal and a life-long Democrat.” De Onís, Juan. Personal interview. 21 Feb. 2014.

contacts she established through her husband certainly boosted her career, but Harriet de Onís was an influential figure in her own right. If translators are invisible, a female translator during this period was perhaps doubly so. Despite her achievements, Harriet de Onís was featured in a 1948 *New York Times* article that described her in a primarily domestic role. The article focused on her cooking for her husband and teaching a Venezuelan student to make apple pie. It quoted the dean of Columbia's School of Journalism, who said that de Onís's "'apple pie lesson' would do more to cement relations between North and South America than all her literature lectures."<sup>18</sup> Besides de Onís, a number of other women—Anita Brenner and Blanche Knopf, for example—wielded great influence in shaping the canon of translated literature and were forerunners of contemporary translators such as Edith Grossman and Suzanne Jill Levine. The Knopf archives do not reveal the full extent of the ways in which de Onís and other women shaped the canon, but their influence was substantial and merits further study.

De Onís translated for Farrar and Reinhart, Barron's Educational Series, Doubleday, and other publishers, but most of her works were published with Alfred A. Knopf.<sup>19</sup> The Knopfs relied heavily on de Onís as a reader as well as a translator. At a time when few editors could read Spanish and Portuguese, de Onís was important in this capacity as well. They sent her so much material to evaluate that she once told them, "You boys at Knopfs are going to have to get together, and decide whether you want me

---

<sup>18</sup> "News of Food: Mrs. de Onís Puts Latins' Lore in Book, but Their Cuisine Goes Into Her Kitchen." *New York Times*. 4 Dec 1948: 8.

<sup>19</sup> According to Juan de Onís, "The publishing house Alfred A. Knopf became interested in Latin American literature, particularly through Blanche Knopf, who knew my mother [Harriet]. This began her long relationship as a translator from Spanish, and later from Portuguese, for the house of Knopf." Personal interview. 21 Feb. 2014.

as a translator or a reader.”<sup>20</sup> Later, she complained again of being overburdened, saying, “It seems to me a great pity that you do not have on your editorial staff someone who knows Spanish well, and better still, Portuguese, too. In that way I could act as a sort of ‘corroborator’ without having to assume such a load of responsibility.”<sup>21</sup> In addition to being a prolific translator and playing an important role in selecting texts for publication in translation, de Onís also wielded influence as a critic and editor. She edited volumes and published articles in Spanish and in English. She selected and translated texts to include in anthologies she edited, such as *The Golden Land: An Anthology of Latin American Folklore in Literature*, published by Knopf in 1948. And in her book translations, she sometimes altered texts by omitting or condensing sections. This was the case, for example, in her translation of Guzmán’s *El águila y la serpiente*.

During the 1930s and ‘40s, Knopf’s editorial project was in line with government policies. In 1933, motivated by the fear that Latin American countries were vulnerable to the Axis threat and by the need to encourage trade after the Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Good Neighbor policy. Besides promising that the United States would not intervene in the affairs of Latin America (a promise that was revoked with the beginning of the Cold War), the policy had a strong component of cultural exchange, and government agencies were established to this effect. In 1938, the Division of Cultural Relations of the State Department was created. Two years later, the Office for the Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations Between the American

---

<sup>20</sup> HDO to Mr. Robbins. 23 Sept 1959. AK266.13. HRC.

<sup>21</sup> HDO to AK. 9 Apr. 1962. AK361.3. HRC.

Republics, an agency that later became the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) was formed, headed by Nelson Rockefeller (Cohn 30). It was one of the biggest agencies in the Roosevelt administration (Tota 119). The OCIAA sponsored cultural activities in all of the Americas, producing films, articles and radio shows that promoted a Pan-American ideal for both Latin American and U.S. audiences. In the southern hemisphere, the OCIAA distributed propaganda such as a free magazine in Spanish and in Portuguese modeled on *Life* (Cramer and Prutsch 798). Disney collaborated, acting as an unofficial ambassador and producing *Alô, Amigos*, a film released in Brazil in 1942 and in the U.S. the following year. It featured the samba-loving Brazilian parrot José Carioca (*Zé Carioca* in Portuguese), a character that conveyed a stereotyped image of Brazil (Tota 119). According to Cramer and Prutsch, by 1944, five million people a month in the U.S. “watched OCIAA-sponsored films on Latin American topics in schools, colleges, community centers, club houses, churches, and elsewhere” (795). The OCIAA also promoted the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese, funded art exhibits, and subsidized translations (Cramer and Prutsch 797). Because many of the cultural products used to teach the U.S. public about Latin America provided only a superficial or distorted understanding of other American countries, Antonio Pedro Tota argues that they promoted a sort of “lazy sociology” (133, my translation).

Knopf and de Onís saw translated literature as a deeper way of building understanding within the Americas, a vision that fit official government policies. The

publisher maintained relationships with political figures,<sup>22</sup> seeking the help, for example, of Sumner Welles, Roosevelt's Undersecretary and one of the president's foreign policy advisers. Welles had facilitated Blanche Knopf's visit to South America (as a sort of literary scout) in 1942.<sup>23</sup> Blanche later asked Welles to write a few paragraphs for a brochure promoting Knopf's newly released translations. He agreed, though he asked Blanche to make explicit that, although he had a hand in her scouting trip to South America, he did not choose the works to be published. The brochure Welles wrote for Knopf framed the literary works in political terms:

The works from the Latin American republics which will have the widest appeal in this country are recent volumes on inter-American or international affairs and novels. And it is perhaps in the field of novels that the greatest benefit will result from the standpoint of inter-American relations for the novel which deals with the character and the individual manner of being of each American people necessarily affords to its readers the easiest and, in many ways, the most effective method of getting the "feel," and understanding the life, the national customs, and the problems of Central and South America.<sup>24</sup>

Because of Knopf's commitment to publishing Latin American literature in a difficult market and because of his ties to Latin America, Gilberto Freyre called Knopf an "extra-official ambassador" and de Onís said that he was "a one-man alliance for progress" (Cohn 10).

Because World War II made travel to Europe difficult, Knopf was not the only publisher that began to look to Latin America in search of new authors during this period.

---

<sup>22</sup> This sort of political and cultural collaboration was common during this period. Cohn notes ties between cultural organizations such as the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations that provided incentives to publishers and the government. People working on cultural projects sometimes later went to work for the government and vice versa (29). These connections were sometimes direct and sometimes unofficial.

<sup>23</sup> Note from Blanche Knopf to Sumner Welles. 31 Sept. 1945. SW110.

<sup>24</sup> 9 Aug. 1945. SW110.

In 1941, with the assistance of the Division of Intellectual Cooperation and the Pan American Union, *Red Book* magazine and Farrar and Rinehart established a Latin American novel prize, which the Peruvian writer Ciro Alegría won with his *El mundo es ancho y ajeno* (1940) (Pane 117). De Onís later translated the novel as *Broad and Alien is the World* (Farrar and Rinehart, 1941). Suzanne Jill Levine argues that the publication of this novel in translation “reinforced the trend towards realism, regionalism and local color” in U.S. publishers’ choices of Latin American texts (300).<sup>25</sup> The political climate of the Good Neighbor policy may have contributed to this tendency to translate regional literature, as the texts were seen as a way of understanding Latin American customs. During this same period, critic Remigio U. Pane argued, “We must study our Good Neighbors” not just for edification (literary) but also for political reasons (117). Like Frank before her, de Onís tended to prefer regional texts,<sup>26</sup> though she also promoted more experimental works, translating texts by João Guimarães Rosa and Alejo Carpentier. Esther Allen has noted de Onís’s “documented effort, from the late 1940s through 1952” to convince Knopf to publish Borges and they refused, citing “uniformly bad sale of Latin American literature.”<sup>27</sup>

By the end of Roosevelt’s administration, Latin America was losing its strategic value for the U.S. (Tota 166). As the U.S. government shifted its focus to rebuilding Europe after the war, most publishers followed, turning away from Latin America and

---

<sup>25</sup> Levine notes that it was the winner of the second prize, Juan Carlos Onetti’s *Tierra de nadie* (1941), which has had a more lasting impact (299).

<sup>26</sup> She had a preference for regional writers in English as well. In 1955, she published an article on Faulkner (in Spanish): De Onís, Harriet. “William Faulkner.” *La Torre* 3 (Oct.-Dec. 1955): 11-26.

<sup>27</sup> Balch also notes this (47).



setting their sights once more on Europe. According to Rostagno, only Knopf and “to a lesser degree, James Laughlin at New Directions” remained committed to Latin America (xv). Cohn confirms this, writing, “the Knopfs were virtually the only publishers of Latin American literature in the United States throughout the 1950s, and de Onís was the Knopfs’ primary translator—and arbiter” of Latin American literature (12). By the 1950s, the U.S. had wholly abandoned the Good Neighbor Policy and its promise not to intervene in the affairs of Latin America. Reacting to perceived communist threats, the U.S. government helped establish military dictatorships in countries such as Guatemala.<sup>28</sup>

De Onís and Knopf claimed to have a “vow of silence on Latin American politics”<sup>29</sup> and their political beliefs did not directly influence their choices. However, the correspondence between editors and translators reveal that they were conscious of political tendencies in terms of how they would be able to market books, and what they were willing to promote. That is, Knopf and de Onís sought to foster intercultural understanding but they also thought in terms of marketing. Just two years after President Roosevelt called Brazil “a powerful new friend” and the OCIAA produced a propaganda film emphasizing this relationship,<sup>30</sup> Undersecretary Welles wrote to Blanche Knopf suggesting the publisher give “preference...in the timing to the Brazilian volumes.”<sup>31</sup>

Later, de Onís wrote to Bill Koshland noting that President Kennedy was fostering

---

<sup>28</sup> Greg Grandin calls the CIA-backed 1954 overthrow of democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala “perhaps the single most important event in twentieth-century U.S.-Latin American relations.” Grandin, Greg. Interview. University of Chicago Press, 2004. Web.

<sup>29</sup> Memo from AK to HDO. 2 Nov. 1962. AK361.2. HRC

<sup>30</sup> “Brazil at War.” *An Office of War Film*. Prod. Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. 1943. Brazil-United States Relations Wikipedia page. Accessed Aug. 2014. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil%E2%80%93United\\_States\\_relations#Second\\_World\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil%E2%80%93United_States_relations#Second_World_War)

<sup>31</sup> 17 Feb. 1945. SW110.

relations with Brazil and therefore Knopf should “should keep a weather eye out for Brazilian material in general.”<sup>32</sup>

Knopf avoided publishing texts that promoted Communist ideology. They did not want to publish, for example, any of Jorge Amado’s political works, but were excited about his *Gabriela, cravo e canela* (1958) which had “as much party line as the Uncle Wiggly stories.”<sup>33</sup> After Knopf published William Grossman and James L. Taylor’s English translation, titled *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* (1962), de Onís suggested that her son Juan,<sup>34</sup> then a correspondent for the *New York Times*, interview Amado and write a piece discussing the author’s political affiliation.<sup>35</sup> Juan complied and in a review published in 1962, he argued that the novel would function “as a striking portrait of Brazilian reality and change” that would help “bridge the gap of understanding between two culturally and psychologically distinct areas of the New World.” He also noted that Amado had distanced himself from his earlier political views: “*Gabriela* represents undoubtedly the artistic liberation of Senhor Amado from a long period of ideological commitment to Communist orthodoxy.” The journalist also argued that Amado’s “artistic integrity has prevailed over the intellectual ‘Party Line.’”<sup>36</sup> In English translation, *Gabriela* did in fact become a best-seller.<sup>37</sup> Harriet de Onís, who had recommended the

---

<sup>32</sup> 19 Nov. 1960. AK295.1. HRC. Cohn also mentions this (13). During the 1960s, Knopf and de Onís were particularly interested in Brazil. De Onís recalled, “[I]n 1961 Alfred [Knopf] visited Brazil, and like many other Americans, including myself, lost his heart to it. And he has translated this affection into making its literature known to the English-speaking public” (“Man in the Sulka Shirt” 203).

<sup>33</sup> HDO to Koshland. 9 Dec. 1961. AK339.1. HRC.

<sup>34</sup> Juan de Onís is the author of *The Green Cathedral* (1992) and *The Alliance That Lost Its Way* (1979). He also published a translation: *The America of José Martí: Selected writings of José Martí* (1953).

<sup>35</sup> HDO to “Bill” (probably Bill Koshland). 25 Nov. 1960. AK295.1. HRC.

<sup>36</sup> Onís, Juan de. “The Town’s Story is the Land’s.” Rev. of *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* by Jorge Amado. Transl. James L. Taylor and William L. Grossman. *New York Times* 16 Sept. 1962: 349.

<sup>37</sup> HDO to AK. 1 Jul. 1961. AK327.7. HRC.

book for translation and predicted its success, wrote to Knopf saying, “I purr with pride every time I see *Gabriela* move up a notch on the best-seller list. You were right about this one breaking the sound barrier.”<sup>38</sup>

With the exception of *Gabriela*, most of the Latin American texts that Knopf published did not sell well. Yet despite the continued financial losses translated Latin American literature represented, the Knopfs and de Onís remained motivated by their deep commitment to Latin America and the symbolic capital associated with publishing prestigious works (Cohn 111, Rostagno 33). De Onís told Knopf that she never needed the money, but that she was “intensely interested in helping to bring to the attention of the American public the work of Latin American authors.”<sup>39</sup> After Amado, the next time a work by a Latin American novelist appeared on *The New York Times* bestseller list was Rabassa’s 1970 translation of Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* (Cohn 1). By then, the publishing phenomenon known as the Latin American Boom was in full swing. The Cuban Revolution had generated interest in Latin America and helped grow the market for Latin American texts.

A number of excellent studies—particularly Deborah Cohn’s *The Latin American Literary Boom and U.S. Nationalism during the Cold War* and Jean Franco’s *Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*—analyze the relationship between political contexts and publishing markets during the Boom. The preceding period, however, remains largely unexplored. Cohn gives a general overview of translation during the years de Onís was

---

<sup>38</sup> Memo from HDO to AK. 7 Nov. 1962. AK361.2. HRC.

<sup>39</sup> HDO to AK. 4 Apr. 1962. AK361.3. HRC.

translating, reminding readers that, while the Boom was the first period during which Latin American literature achieved wide international recognition and commercial success, the “promotion of Latin American literature in the United States had its origins in the Good Neighbor era of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration” (4). Irene Rostagno’s *Searching for Recognition: The Promotion of Latin American Literature in the United States* (1997), includes a chapter on de Onís and Knopf, but her book, a very useful wide-ranging historical survey, does not focus on this specific period nor does it offer analysis of specific translations. In *Style and Ideology in Translation* (2007), Jeremy Munday devotes a chapter to de Onís and analyzes specific translations, but he leaves room for further study of their editorial and extra-literary circumstances.

This dissertation strives to fill a critical gap in the history of translated Latin American literature by tracing the translation history of *El águila y la serpiente*, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*, *Sagarana* and *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. In addition to functioning as examples of texts from different regions translated during different time periods, each case study presents a different problem of translation. The analysis of *El águila y la serpiente* (*The Eagle and the Serpent* in de Onís’s translation) in the first chapter addresses the difficulty of translating an explicitly political text, focusing on the ways in which Guzmán’s semi-fictional memoir of the Mexican Revolution was transformed when divorced from its original political context. This chapter begins by analyzing the 1930 abridged version, which reshapes Guzmán’s critique of Mexican politics, turning it into a more condensed and novelistic narrative focused on Francisco

“Pancho” Villa, an emphasis that reflected the fact that Villa had already captured the imagination of many U.S. readers. This section addresses de Onís’s role as an editor as well as a translator, since she decided which sections to omit in the abridged translation. This is followed by a study of the history of the 1965 complete translation, which was published at a time when a revolution in Latin America was once more at the forefront of readers’ minds. This chapter concludes with a comparison of the publication contexts for the two translations: 1930, the beginning of the period studied, and 1965, during the Boom.

The case study in the second chapter, de Onís’s translation of Fernando Ortiz’s 1940 *Contrapunteo cubano* (*Cuban Counterpoint*, 1947), allows for an analysis of the ways in which authors of scholarly texts may depend on translation in order to have their voices recognized within the international context of a field—in the case of Ortiz, anthropology. Specifically, this section studies what happened to Ortiz’s criticism of imperialism when *Contrapunteo* began to circulate within the borders of an imperial power—the U.S. This chapter also examines questions of style as linked to tradition of essay writing in anthropology in Spanish and in English. In all of the works she translated, de Onís tended to prefer fluent, idiomatic English. Lawrence Venuti has argued that, in general, translators working into English tend to smooth out foreign elements in texts, “domesticizing” them so that the work can be easily inserted into the hegemonic culture. Yet, despite the fact that de Onís’s approaches to translation could be described as domesticizing, reviewers in the U.S. read *Contrapunteo cubano*—even in translation—as particularly Latin American.

The third chapter, which includes a close reading of de Onís's translation of Joao Guimarães Rosa's story "Duelo" ("Duel"), deals with the problems of translating experimental language. This chapter considers the publication history of "Duelo," one of the stories in Guimarães Rosa's 1946 collection *Sagarana* (a title which remained unchanged in the 1966 translation) and his 1956 novel *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (translated by de Onís and James L. Taylor in 1963 as *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*). Rosa uses the language of the *sertão*, the region of Brazil where his narrative is set, as a base for invention, creating a style Brazilian critic Antonio Candido called "surregional" or "transregional." De Onís's translation reduces the inventive aspects of Rosa's language and his work in English seem more folkloric than modernist. This chapter examines the limits of recreating avant garde language in translation, focusing on market forces that may have shaped the translations of *Sagarana* and *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. This chapter also reflects on the larger problem of translating Brazilian literature.<sup>40</sup>

The translations of *El águila y la serpiente*, *Contrapunteo Cubano*, *Sagarana*, and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* were all mediated by political contexts. The significant transformations that these texts underwent when they crossed the border into the U.S. may reflect general patterns in the international publishing market, such as those

---

<sup>40</sup> There is a long history of scholars and translators of Latin American literature working with both Portuguese and Spanish. Isaac Goldberg published volumes on both Spanish American and Brazilian literature. Frank's *South American Journeys* (1943) had a heavy focus on Brazil and uses the term "Ibero-America" rather than "Hispanic America." Pane's 1943 bibliography of Latin American literature includes Brazilian works and most of the recent studies on translated Latin American literature (such as those by Cohn and Rostagno) include discussions of Brazilian literature. De Onís translated from both languages, as do a number of contemporary translators (Gregory Rabassa and Daniel Hahn, for example).

described by scholars such as Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova and David Damrosch. Like Moretti, who advocates for a strategy of “distant reading” in order to move beyond the (inherently unequal) canon, Casanova and Damrosch look for general patterns in the circulation of texts in the global market. These scholars have challenged notions of world literature as a utopian, politically neutral territory and have instead argued that the movement of texts across linguistic and cultural borders reflects political and economic inequalities. Casanova argues that when a work moves from a peripheral to a central market, it tends to adopt the values and aesthetic preferences of the target culture (154). Similarly, Damrosch maintains that “foreign works will rarely be translated at all in the United States, much less widely distributed, unless they reflect American concerns and fit comfortably with American images of the foreign culture in question” (18). These critics tend to describe the circulation of literature according to a dichotomy of “center” and “periphery.” These classifications are useful in that they emphasize the ways in which authors who write in languages considered marginal depend on translation into English (or into French, as Casanova would argue) in order for their work to be recognized internationally.

These categories of “center” and “periphery” function best when they refer to languages rather than to national publishing markets, as the links between literature and nation are not fixed and many authors move in transnational spaces. The authors studied in the following pages are from countries whose literary markets are considered peripheral, but all moved in privileged (academic, literary, diplomatic) international circles and could advocate for their work in translation. Martin Luis Guzmán wrote *El*

*águila y la serpiente* in Paris and published the book in Spain before returning to Mexico at the explicit invitation of President Cárdenas. Fernando Ortiz was born in Havana but raised in Spain (his father was Spanish). He had lived in the U.S. and worked as a diplomat in Europe before returning to Cuba and publishing *Contrapunteo cubano* (Santí 33). João Guimarães Rosa was a doctor who became a well-connected diplomat in Germany. However, because these authors wrote in Spanish and in Portuguese (and not English or French), they relied on translation into other languages in order to achieve international recognition and, in having their texts translated, saw their work transformed and adapted to fit the U.S. market.

Beyond simply being shaped by dynamics of center and periphery, then, the translation of a text may depend on a number of random factors—the personal interest of a particular editor or translator or the impact of a particular event, for example. Further, translations are not simply adapted to the target culture (even when domestication is the goal) nor are they always chosen for their marketability. The chapters that follow emphasize the importance of the multiple agents that shape translation, such as: publishers, editors, translators, authors, reviewers, cultural organizations, government entities, and critics (because of hoped/feared reaction). This study will consider to what extent it is possible to speak in terms of broad models when describing the movement of literary texts in the international market. The aims of this dissertation are therefore multiple. This study seeks: to contribute to a history of translated Latin American literature within the U.S.; to respond to debates about world literature; and to dialogue with translation theory through the study of several works by a translator who played an



important role in the transmission of Latin American literature. The object of study may seem broad, but these diverse theoretical frameworks overlap, as the following case studies will show. By attempting to account for a variety of factors that shape translation, this study strives for a more complete understanding of the mechanisms that determined the circulation of translated texts in the U.S. in the years before the Boom.

**CHAPTER ONE: FROM INTELLECTUALS TO CAUDILLOS: *THE EAGLE  
AND THE SERPENT* IN 1930 AND IN 1965**

The beginning of de Onís’s career as a translator coincided with a surge of U.S. interest in Mexico. By the time Knopf published de Onís’s first book translation, *The Eagle and the Serpent* (1930), an abridged version in English of a semi-fictional memoir of the Mexican Revolution, Martín Luis Guzmán’s *El águila y la serpiente* (1928), the U.S. was experiencing a trend one *New York Times* journalist called the “enormous vogue of things Mexican.” Helen Delpar, who adopted the journalist’s phrase as the title of her book on the history of this cultural exchange, explains that the taste for Mexican culture in the U.S. during this period was in part a product of the movement of artists and intellectuals between the countries. In the early 1920s, Mexico had begun to attract left-leaning intellectuals from the U.S., “political pilgrims” who sought to escape “the materialism, inequality, and conflict they associated with capitalism” (Delpar 15). By the late ‘20s, a variety of factors—including formal programs of exchange between Mexico and the U.S. such as Guggenheim fellowships for Latin America, privately funded programs, and the efforts of Ambassador Dwight Morrow—had also contributed to fostering interest in Mexican culture within the U.S. (Delpar 195). The resulting cultural imports from Mexico to the U.S. took the form of art exhibitions, theater, film, books, and music (Delpar 165). In this context of improved cultural relations, publishers in the U.S. began to show interest in translations of Mexican fiction.

Irene Rostagno begins her study of the history of translated Latin American literature with the Mexican Revolution, “the first event in Latin America to elicit

widespread interest among American intellectuals” and therefore “the obvious starting point of a study concerned with the American preoccupation with Latin American writing in this century” (xiii). Before this period, very little Latin American literature had been published in the U.S. in English translation.<sup>41</sup> In 1929, Brentano’s published Enrique Munguía’s translation of Mariano Azuela’s *Los de abajo* (1915), titled *The Underdogs* in English.<sup>42</sup> The following year, Knopf published *The Eagle and the Serpent*. In Mexico these books were read as part of the political conversations of the 1920s—a time during which the Mexican state sought legitimacy in part by reinterpreting narratives about the Revolution in a nationalistic vein. In translation, however, these works lost this political context.

In its original form, *El águila y la serpiente* can be interpreted as a broad political critique. Guzmán is a protagonist in the text, part of a group of intellectuals who felt disenfranchised by a revolution that had strayed from its ideological roots and ended in battles between power-hungry strongmen, or *caudillos*. The author narrates his experience during the Revolution, beginning roughly after the assassination of Francisco I. Madero (1913) and ending with his voluntary exile to New York in 1915 after he deserted Villa.<sup>43</sup> In addition to recounting the experiences of a young intellectual during

---

<sup>41</sup> See introductory chapter for a more specific discussion of what had been published in the U.S. prior to this period. Regarding Mexican literature in particular, Delpar writes that until 1920, “[e]xcept for a few works of poetry, Mexican literature remained untranslated” in the U.S. (6).

<sup>42</sup> In Mexico, the first edition of *Los de abajo* had been largely ignored, but when the novel was republished in 1920, it was reinterpreted in the context of nationalistic current that sought to legitimize the Mexican state post-Revolution, in part by appropriating texts of the revolution. With the 1920 edition, Azuela rose to prominence. See Martínez Torres and Espinosa Gordillo on political context and the success of the second edition of *Los de abajo*. See also Aguilar Mora’s *Una muerte sencilla* (48).

<sup>43</sup> In her dissertation on Guzmán, Tanya Huntington writes that after Gutiérrez broke with Villa in 1915, Guzmán, finding himself “entre la espada y la pared,” decided to go into exile (54). For more on the historical context of *El águila y la serpiente*, see Susana Quintanilla’s *A salto de mata* and Max Parra’s

this period, the text functions as a justification of Guzmán's desertion of Villa, and as a critique of Mexican politics of the '20s. When the book was published in English translation in 1930, the abridgement and the changes in style deemphasized these themes, turning a memoir about an intellectual journey into a narrative about Villa. This chapter will analyze these changes in the 1930 translation and conclude by discussing the ways in which the U.S. market's receptivity to texts about revolution had changed by 1965, when *The Eagle and the Serpent* was published in complete translation in English.

To some extent, all translations alter the meaning of the original, but this ideological shift may be greater with an explicitly political text because of the intimate connections to particular historical circumstances. The context of the original publication of *El águila y la serpiente* suggests that Guzmán's goals for the text in Spanish were different than what was possible in translation. Critics such as Max Parra and Adela Pineda Franco have suggested that Guzmán wrote *El águila* partly as a way of influencing or criticizing Mexican politics of the '20s and as a way of defending the role of intellectuals, who had felt disenfranchised by the Revolution. This first interpretation would be difficult to recreate in translation because the target audience would not have the same points of reference. Guzmán published *El águila y la serpiente* in 1928, during his second exile in Spain,<sup>44</sup> having left Mexico after the failed *delahuertista* rebellion

---

*Writing Pancho Villa's Revolution* (especially 80-81, which gives an overview of the years/events covered by the book). Also, Peña Iguarán gives a concise summary of the events of these years (94).

<sup>44</sup> Guzmán's first exile was in 1915, when he deserted Villa and went to New York. Parra, citing Juan Bruce-Novoa, says the book was mostly written in Paris between August 1926 and October 1927 (78). It was published, however, in Spain.

against Álvaro Obregón and presidential candidate Plutarco Elías Calles.<sup>45</sup> During this period of exile Guzmán was openly critical of President Calles,” (Cifuentes-Goodbody “Heme aquí” 469). Parra points out that Guzmán did not have access to power in Mexico during this period and maintains that writing *El águila* was one way for the author to retain influence (77). The critic argues that Guzmán wrote partly in response to Calles: “At the height of the 1923-1924 electoral dispute, General Calles declared that the de la Huerta revolt had had the social benefit of separating ‘the false and the genuine revolutionaries.’” Guzmán attacks his political enemies in *El águila*, referring to Obregón, for example, as a comedian (Parra 79). Between 1926-27, at the beginning of Guzmán’s second exile, sections of the text were published in *La Prensa* and *La Opinión*, newspapers for the Mexican diaspora in the U.S. published in San Antonio and Los Angeles, respectively (Quintanilla “En la hora” 79).<sup>46</sup> Pineda notes that Guzmán’s position as an exile<sup>47</sup> allowed him to criticize Mexican society and that the author’s criticisms of the Obregón and Calles governments fit well into *La Prensa*, a newspaper critical of the Mexican government at the time (35). Given this publication context, Pineda argues that Guzmán’s description of the Revolution was influenced by his experience of the 1922-23 elections.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Guzmán, who owned and directed the newspaper *El Mundo*, had supported Gen. Adolfo de la Huerta against Gen. Plutarco Elías Calles. De la Huerta rebelled, and Guzmán was forced into exile in Spain (Parra 78)

<sup>46</sup> See Adela Pineda Franco’s article “Entre el exilio y el fuego revolucionario” for a table with publication information for the sections of *El águila y la serpiente* that were published in *La Prensa*.

<sup>47</sup> Pineda calls Guzmán a metaphorical exile: “Insisto en el sentido ‘metafórico’ para el caso de Guzmán porque su re-ingreso en México en 1936 inaugura su etapa muy positiva de intelectual hegemónico en el Estado posrevolucionario” (47).

<sup>48</sup> “[N]o es atrevido especular que el autor haya evaluado su aventura de 1914 con la experiencia política electoral de 1922 y 1923” (41).

Parra suggests that, in addition to these political motivations, Guzmán was driven to write *El águila* partly for economic reasons, knowing that firsthand accounts of war were selling well during this period (79). In addition to publishing sections of *El águila* in U.S. newspapers, Guzmán published episodes from the text in the Spanish newspaper *El debate* (Madrid).<sup>49</sup> Ernest Richard Moore, the editor of the W.W. Norton edition of *El águila*, published in 1943 for use by students, argues that the book's "success was already assured" before its first publication in Spain, as Guzmán had also been sending sections of the text to Mexico for publication in *El Universal*, where the chapters were well received (21).<sup>50</sup> The book was published by Manuel Aguilar in Madrid in June of 1928<sup>51</sup> and was in fact a "literary success, enthusiastically received first in intellectual circles in Spain, where the first edition sold out in one month, and later in Mexico city" (Parra 78).<sup>52</sup> After the Aguilar edition sold out, Guzmán took his manuscript to a larger publisher with international ambitions, the Compañía Iberoamericana de Publicaciones (C.I.A.P.).<sup>53</sup> C.I.A.P. published the second edition in December, just six months after the

---

<sup>49</sup> In 1928, months before the book was published and a year after he had been publishing in *La Prensa* and *La Opinión* (Quintanilla 79)

<sup>50</sup> According to Quintanilla, the success of the book in Spain "se debió en parte a la intensa labor de difusión realizada por la prensa y las revistas españolas. Enrique Díez-Canedo inauguró la 'moda mexicana' con una reseña en *El Sol*, de Madrid; le seguirían Juan Chabás en *La Gaceta Literaria* y otros comentarios en *El Debate* y *La Voz Nueva*. La novedad se extendería rápidamente a otros países de habla hispana, mientras que en México la recepción fue más lenta y escasa ("En la hora" 80).

<sup>51</sup> Quintanilla "En la hora" 79. For more on M. Aguilar, see Blas Ruiz, María José. *Aguilar: historia de una editorial y de sus colecciones literarias en papel biblia, 1923-1986*. Madrid: Librería del Prado, 2012.

<sup>52</sup> By April 11, 1929, Guzmán said that between the first two Spanish editions, 8,000 copies had been sold. Letter from Guzmán to F. de Onís. 11 April 1929. O-MS/C-76.7. SO.

<sup>53</sup> For more on C.I.A.P., see López-Morell, M.A. and A. Molina Abril, "La Compañía Iberoamericana de Publicaciones, primera gran corporación editorial en castellano," available online at <http://www.um.es/mlmorell/Seminario%20CIAP%20Complutense.pdf> (consulted 12 June 2015).

M. Aguilar edition. Because, according to Guzmán, the Aguilar edition contained errors,<sup>54</sup> the author asked that de Onís use the C.I.A.P. edition for her translation.<sup>55</sup>

Although Guzmán defended his work as “rigurosamente histórico”<sup>56</sup> and the first edition of the book was labeled “memoria,”<sup>57</sup> Guzmán later maintained that *El águila* is a novel. In an interview with Emmanuel Carballo in 1958, the author said: “yo la considero una novela, la novela de un joven que pasa de las aulas universitarias a pleno movimiento armado. Cuenta lo que vio en la Revolución tal cual lo vio, con los ojos de un joven universitario. No es una obra histórica como algunos afirman; es, repito, una novela” (73). Guzmán’s description of the text emphasizes his own role as a protagonist in the story, a young intellectual trying to interpret the Revolution. He does not present the novel as a history of Villa.

The literary aspects of *El águila y la serpiente* are intimately tied to its political function. Guzmán himself noted that literature is a way of evaluating historical events.

He told Carballo,

Ningún valor, ningún hecho, adquiere todas sus proporciones hasta que se las da, exaltándolo, la forma literaria. Es entonces cuando es verdad, y no cuando lo mira con sus sentidos vulgares un historiador cualquiera, que ve pero no sabe entender—expresar—lo que sus ojos han mirado. Las

---

<sup>54</sup> The errors in the first edition may have been due to the pressure the editor and writer felt to publish the text quickly. Quintanilla writes, “La proximidad temporal entre la aparición de las últimas entregas periodísticas y el libro obliga a suponer que Guzmán improvisó a toda prisa” (79).

<sup>55</sup> On Nov. 12, 1928, Guzmán wrote to F. de Onís, sending him the C.I.A.P. edition, commenting that this second edition “está bastante menos incorrecta que la anterior y aún tiene algunos retoques ligerísimos. ¿Quiere usted suplicarle de mi parte a su esposa que se sirva de esta edición y no de la primitiva?” O-MS/C-76.3, SO.

<sup>56</sup> In a letter published in *La Prensa* after one of the episodes from the book was published in a plagiarized version. Guzmán writes, “No es un ‘cuento mexicano,’ como pretende el falso autor, sino un episodio tan rigurosamente histórico como los demás que he incluido en mi pintura de la revolución de 1913 a 1914” (*La Prensa*, 5 Nov. 1928: 3).

<sup>57</sup> “Heme aquí...” Cifuentes-Goodbody 478.

verdades mexicanas están allí por la fuerza literaria con que están vistas, recreadas. (Carballo 73).

In the same interview, Guzmán added, “mi propósito no es describirme, sino interpretar la vida de mi país” (98). According to Aguilar Mora, Guzmán uses sensorial language and metaphor to reveal the truth of the Revolution (4). Rather than establishing relationships of cause and effect, the author employs what Mora calls a reverse process in which he sees his ideology reflected in the events he describes.<sup>58</sup>

One example of Guzmán’s highly descriptive language appears in the second chapter, which was omitted in the 1930 translation. In this passage, Guzmán describes a breakfast in Texas with José Vasconcelos and other intellectuals. The description appeals to all the senses:

Poco después, sentados a la mesa, los perfumes, antes un tanto vagos, se concretaban en la materialidad de un desayuno a la vez sobrio, succulento y—quiero atreverme a llamarlo así—de fina calidad estética. En él predominaban lo blanco y lo claro, o, en todo caso, lo crema. Se derretía la mantequilla en los *butter-cakes*, calientes y humeantes, de masa tierna y esponjosa como algodón de harina; la negrura del café se perdía en la blancura de la leche; brillaban los vasos de agua clara, y en la gran dulcera de cristal nadaba en almíbar la cuajada de los chongos morelianos (37).<sup>59</sup>

The descriptions have a symbolic function that is sometimes made explicit. In this section, the narrator reflects on “el sentido oculto que pudiera haber en la irrupción de aquellos olores” (37).

---

<sup>58</sup> “En la Revolución, él encontró experiencias que le dieron sentido a su pensamiento; y, en un proceso inverso, sus ideas se pudieron reconocer en hechos y en personas cuya materia estaba tejida con lo cotidiano y con lo histórico.”

<sup>59</sup> All citations from the second (1928) edition of *El águila y la serpiente*, published by C.I.A.P., which would have been the edition de Onís used to translate. Max Parra also cites part of this passage, in English translation (82).



Guzmán's descriptive and heavily symbolic language is partly what set *El águila y la serpiente* apart from other novels of the Revolution. Carballo writes that although it was not the first text to deal with the Mexican Revolution, *El águila y la serpiente* was a *sui generis* work because of its structure, style, and characteristics (94). And in "El fantasma de Martín Luis Guzmán," Aguilar Mora writes,

Si cualquier objeto tiene tanta vida como un personaje histórico, si un acto específico puede convertirse en la imagen total de un destino, si la naturaleza—la luz, sobre todo la luz, y especialmente la luz del valle de México—puede participar en la historia con la misma complejidad que una batalla, estamos lejos, muy lejos, de la novela tradicional donde los mecanismos enjuiciadores usados tradicionalmente por un sentido común no eran y no son sino la máscara mal puesta de una moral cristiana, burda, servil y temerosa de los poderes establecidos.

It was in part Guzmán's highly descriptive language that served as an impetus for the work being translated into English. Decades after the first publication of *The Eagle and the Serpent*, when considering a complete translation of the book, Knopf told de Onís,

I have now had a reply to my inquiry regarding *The Eagle and the Serpent* from Harry Block. Of course after all these years his memory isn't completely clear. However, he says he did not read the book, as at that time he did not read Spanish. He thinks you were the reader as well as translator and has no idea why parts of the book should have been omitted. He thinks the publication was recommended to us either by Fito Best Maugard<sup>60</sup> or Carleton Beals.<sup>61</sup>

De Onís later recalled,

I had read the book in Spanish, thought it was very good, and was considering submitting it to some American publisher. But, oddly enough, before I could get around to carrying out my plan, one of the members of the editorial staff at Knopf, a fellow alumna of Barnard, who probably knew about my interest in Hispanic literature from my work as editor of the magazine *World Fiction*, called me to ask if I would be interested in

---

<sup>60</sup> Adolfo Best Maugard, nicknamed Fito.

<sup>61</sup> 15 August 1960. AK284.9. HRC.

translating this book, to which Knopf had acquired the rights (“The Man in the Sulka Shirt” 201-2).

Best Maugard or Beals, who had written the preface to *The Underdogs*, may have convinced Knopf to publish the translation, but correspondence between Federico de Onís and Guzmán suggests that Harriet’s husband also advocated for an English translation of the work.<sup>62</sup> On July 31, 1928, Federico de Onís wrote to Guzmán praising *El águila y la serpiente* and offering to help him find a translator and publisher:

A pesar del carácter episódico de sus memorias, a través de ellas la revolución de Méjico se me hace inteligible. Muchas veces había yo pensado como era posible que la literatura de Méjico flotase exquisita sobre la trágica realidad del país y ajena de ella...Su manera de dar las sensaciones de paisajes y personas delatan en Ud. un gran artista de la narración...Ha pensando Ud. en la traducción de la obra al inglés? Si no ha hecho Ud nada, quizá puedo yo ayudarle a encontrar una buena casa editorial y un buen traductor.<sup>63</sup>

It seems that the Spanish critic was drawn by Guzmán’s descriptive skill, which functions as a way of interpreting events. Parra argues,

Guzmán’s composition technique relies heavily on the careful recreation of human perception and sensations...he follows the artistic sensibility of the modernista writers, particularly Juan Ramon Jimenez, a Spanish poet of whom [Guzmán] admiringly writes: ‘Sensoriality seems to be at the base of his intelligence of things. His spiritual yearning is translated into relations or contrast of color, sound, smell.’ (82)

---

<sup>62</sup> Work by both Federico de Onís and Guzmán appear in a 1917 issue of *El gráfico* (Huntington 66-67). And, according to a 1929 interview published in the *Heraldo de Madrid*, Guzmán met Federico when he arrived in Spain (Salado, José Luis. “Conversación de un escritor de Méjico.” *Heraldo de Madrid* 28 Nov. 1929: 1.). F. de Onís, therefore, likely would have been familiar with Guzmán’s work prior to the publication of *El águila y la serpiente*.

<sup>63</sup> 31 July 1928. O-MS/C-76.18. SO.

If Guzmán's language recalls some of the *modernista* writers, it is not surprising that his work would have interested Federico de Onís—one of the most influential critics writing about modernism at the time.

Yet while much of the sensory detail in the text may have appealed to Federico de Onís, the omissions in the 1930 translation disconnect the descriptive language from its ideological function, reshaping the text as a portrait of Villa rather than the journey of an intellectual trying to understand a revolution that had degenerated into warring caudillos. *The Eagle and the Serpent* was published during a period in which Villa was a highly visible figure in U.S. culture, in part because the image of the revolutionary leader was built through films and photographs as well as texts. Gregorio Rocha observes that “during his own lifetime the real Pancho Villa served as raw material assimilated into the American imagination via the entertainment industry” (142).<sup>64</sup> Villa's shifting, complex relationship with the U.S. made him an elusive figure with great public appeal. He first won the support of diverse groups in the U.S. after his victory in Torreón in 1913.<sup>65</sup> According to Friedrich Katz, after Torreón, “The Wilson administration, important segments of big business, leaders of the military, and liberal and radical intellectuals, as well as some radical organizations, all sympathized with Villa, and many of them

---

<sup>64</sup> Rocha also notes that “if you enter ‘Pancho Villa’ into any Internet search engine, more than 300,000 entries pop up, most of U.S. origin” (142). A Google search performed on May 4, 2015 resulted in 9,540,000 links.

<sup>65</sup> In *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*, Friedrich Katz notes that Torreón was “one of the most important and wealthiest cities in Mexico. Since Torreón was also the hub of railway communications in the north, taking it would provide the revolutionaries with supplies and money for their troops” (215). Its capture “provided Villa with national and international prestige” (222).

considered him the potential salvation of Mexico” (309).<sup>66</sup> Shortly after the victory, in 1914, Villa signed a contract with Hollywood Mutual Film to film his battles, which helped fund his expeditions and bolster his image in the U.S. (Katz 324). These were years of the peak of Villa’s popularity in the US. (Katz 325-26). After Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico in 1916,<sup>67</sup> public sentiment turned against him (Katz 655).

Although it turned him into a criminal in the eyes of the U.S. public, the Columbus raid ensured that Villa continued to be a familiar figure. According to Colin MacLachlan,

Part of [Villa’s] continuing appeal undoubtedly stemmed from his role as an underdog who avoided capture by a relentless foe. While Mexicans celebrated the exploits of the wily fugitive, President Woodrow Wilson’s reaction brought the two countries close to war. Thus, Pancho Villa the destructive bandit is foremost in our historical and collective memory (739).

Films produced in the U.S. the year of the Columbus raid—*Villa Dead or Alive* (1916) and *Following the Flag in Mexico* (1916)—portrayed Villa in a negative light (Katz 326). Yet years later, opinions of Villa in the U.S. were surprisingly mixed and representations of him in text and film reflected this ambiguity. Later Hollywood productions such as *Viva Villa!* (1934) presented him once again as a sympathetic character (Katz 792). Other media contributed to shaping Villa’s complex image in the U.S. For example, Katz cites a number of newspaper articles that portray Villa in positive terms, including a *New York Times* article<sup>68</sup> published after the revolutionary’s death:

---

<sup>66</sup> Business interests—particularly oil companies—had hoped to use Villa to overthrow Carranza because they didn’t like Carranza’s nationalistic policies regarding oil (Katz 666). In fact, they had hoped for intervention in Mexico, which did not happen because Wilson was trying to avoid war, in part because of impending war with Germany (669).

<sup>67</sup> On January 18, 1916, Villa raided Columbus for unclear reasons (Katz 560).

<sup>68</sup> 24 July 1923.

John Reed brought out the humanity and humor of the man, his sympathy with the peons, his simplicity, the struggles of his clouded intellect with economic and state problems...He fed starving populations with an auxiliary supply train that kept pace with his army...After the worst has been said of Francisco Villa... the reflection is provoked that in a progressive and enlightened Mexico he might have been a useful servant of the state (768).

Given the complexity and high visibility of Villa's image during these years, it is not surprising that he was a figure that fascinated the U.S. public. At least two books on Villa were published in the U.S. in 1930: Louis Stevens' *Here Comes Pancho Villa: The Anecdotal History of a Genial Killer* (1930) and *The Eagle and the Serpent*. Guzmán's text was received as the best portrayal of Villa. In a review of the former, one critic wrote, "Nowhere does Mr. Stevens manage to make Villa come alive as successfully as Martin Luis Guzmán has recently done in '*The Eagle and the Serpent*.'"<sup>69</sup>

Villa is a central figure in Guzmán's text in Spanish, which the author had originally called *A la hora de Pancho Villa*, a title editor Manuel Aguilar rejected, considering it potentially problematic in political terms and less marketable than Guzmán's other suggestions.<sup>70</sup> Of the other titles Guzmán suggested, Aguilar preferred *El águila y la serpiente*, a reference to Mexico's coat of arms, and, according to Quintanilla, a metaphor for the brutal coexistence of two opposing forces. The title was also a reference to the work of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, who had referred to Mexico as "el país del águila y la serpiente" and whose work had helped establish the canon of war literature

---

<sup>69</sup> This reviewer also emphasizes Villa's fame: "Sixteen or seventeen years ago Pancho Villa was the most conspicuous bandit in the world. American gunmen offered practically no competition in celebrity. Carloads of American newspaper correspondents and magazine writers went down to Mexico to observe Villa's part in the revolution" ("Life of Pancho Villa. Rev. of *Here Comes Pancho Villa* by Louis Stevens. *The New York Times* 16 Nov. 1930: BR16.)

<sup>70</sup> Guzmán mentions this in his interview with Carballo (73). Also cited in Quintanilla (79) and Parra (80).

(“En la hora” Quintanilla 79). However, the Spanish editions of the text include many sections that focus on other figures from the Revolution, and many of these are omitted in the 1930 translation, which was abridged in order to fit Knopf’s specifications.<sup>71</sup>

Although the text was cut to satisfy the publishers, as happened with the translation of many works of nonfiction,<sup>72</sup> it was primarily de Onís who made specific choices as to which sections to omit.<sup>73</sup> The omitted chapters tended to be those that focused on characters other than Villa. Of the U.S. editions of the text, it was not only Knopf that suppressed sections of the text that described other historical figures. Juan Bruce-Novoa notes that, as with de Onís’s 1930 translation, the editors of the 1943 scholastic version later published by W.W. Norton (in Spanish) cut everything except those parts of the text that dealt with the most recognizable historical figures (18). A 1944 review of the Norton edition claimed that the abridged version in Spanish—published in the U.S.—reduced “a very long discussion of the first three years of the Mexican Revolution to less than two hundred pages of text without omitting any essential material” (Swain 218). Knopf and de Onís, like the editors at Norton, must have determined that much of *El águila y la serpiente* was not “essential.” De Onís edits out, for example, a chapter focusing on Ramón Iturbe, Commander of the forces in Sinaloa.

---

<sup>71</sup> Letter from MLG to HDO. 12 Sept. 1929. O-MS/C-76.11. SO.

<sup>72</sup> It is interesting to observe that historical texts have often appeared first in abridged versions in translation. This is true of Fernando Ortiz’s *Contrapunteo Cubano* (1940) and Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa grande e senzala* (1933). Both texts were translated by de Onís and published by Knopf with the translated titles *Cuban Counterpoint* (1947) and *The Mansions and the Shanties: The Making of Modern Brazil* (1963). Another notable example is the first translation of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento’s *Facundo* (1845), published in English translation in 1868.

<sup>73</sup> De Onís and Guzmán corresponded regarding the abridgment in the English version, cuts that would conform to the dimensions Knopf specified (O-MS/C-76.13. SO.). I have included a table in Appendix C summarizing the chapter omissions.

For Juan Bruce-Novoa, the omission of chapters such as “Ramón F. Iturbe” erases a point of contrast. The critic writes, of all the “figuras menores, que de algún modo formaban la corte alrededor de los más destacados protagonistas revolucionarios....Ramón F. Iturbe es el más significativo porque Guzmán le atribuye cualidades superiores a todos, convirtiéndolo en un modelo que nos sirve de punto de contraste para evaluar a los demás” (18-19). Indeed, according to Guzmán, Iturbe was different from most of the other revolutionaries described in *El águila y la serpiente*: “Iturbe era uno de los poquísimos revolucionarios que habían pensado por su cuenta el problema moral de la Revolución y que habían venido a ésta con la conciencia limpia” (101).

The 1930 translation does include references to other historical figures, but these are overshadowed by the story of Villa. In addition, nothing in this 1930 edition—neither the title page nor the prologue—marks the translated edition as abridged, so the text in English was read and reviewed without acknowledgment that sections had been cut. One reviewer of the 1930 translation wrote, “Guzmán writes penetratingly about Carranza, and Felipe Ángeles, and Obregón and Zapata and many others, but the liveliest portrait in the book is that of Villa.”<sup>74</sup> The reviewer does not mention that the translation is an abridged version, obscuring the fact that the translated edition emphasizes Villa’s role in the narrative more than the original. One of the reasons for the abridgement may have been that a reader in the U.S. would lack some of the political context required to understand certain references. This is true even for an edition in Spanish published

---

<sup>74</sup> “The Mexican Revolution”, review of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. *The New York Times* 9 Nov 1930: BR4.

outside of Mexico. A reviewer of an edition of *El águila* published in Spain in 2000 complains “se echa de menos en esta edición una introducción que ponga en antecedentes al lector y unas notas que iluminen algunos hechos que no son nada significativos para el público que no provenga de México” (Matas 176). However, it is important to recognize the ways in which these omissions reshaped the text.

Guzmán’s text—both in its original version and in the English translation—presents a somewhat conflicted but generally sympathetic portrait of Villa. However, the 1930 abridged translation omits sections that present Villa as irrational, violent, and impulsive, shifting the portrayal of the revolutionary to slightly more positive terms. The complex, ambivalent terms in which Guzmán portrays Villa in the original text is an essential part of the author’s justification for having deserted Villa. The translation omits, for example, a chapter on David Berlanga, a revolutionary who was executed by Villa’s forces. Peña Iguarán argues that the chapter on Berlanga portrays a certain savagery associated with Villa (100). Based on the correspondence between de Onís and Guzmán, the translator had also planned to edit out “Un juicio sumarísimo,”<sup>75</sup> a chapter in which Villa has men who have printed counterfeit money assassinated—against the wishes of Guzmán and despite the pleas of desperate family members, some of whom are part of “la ‘buena sociedad’” (331). Guzmán feels powerless to stop the crime of assassination, a crime to which he feels he is an accomplice: “Se apoderó de mí, durante unos instantes, la

---

<sup>75</sup> As evidenced by a letter from Guzmán to de Onís. 28 Oct. 1929. O-MS/C-76.13. SO. This long letter includes a list of chapter titles, with notes from Guzmán in response to a letter from de Onís (the letter in which de Onís proposes these omissions is not in the archives, but her proposals are clear from Guzmán’s response).



noción estúpida de que yo era un encubridor, un cómplice, un coautor del crimen que iba a perpetrarse....por un momento se personificaba en mí la conciencia de la Revolución, con todas sus incoherencias y sus excesos” (332). Guzmán must have convinced de Onís to include this chapter because it appears in the translation as “Military Justice,” a title which removes the idea of rushed judgement from the original chapter title.

De Onís had also originally planned to omit “González Garza, presidente” and “El telegrama de Irapuato,”<sup>76</sup> chapters which also provide necessary context for understanding Guzmán’s eventual desertion of Villa. In the first of these chapters, González Garza—who has just assumed the presidency—offers Guzmán a high level position as “Secretary of War and the Navy” in order to “keep the government going” (336). Guzmán pretends to accept the offer, despite the fact that he is more loyal to Gutiérrez than to Villa, an allegiance which helps explain why he deserts Villa at the end of the book. In addition to giving Guzmán a more active role, the chapter also contributes to expressing the degree of political instability during these years, uncertainty which contributes to explaining Guzmán’s voluntary exile and desertion of Villa. In less than two years, there had been five governments in Mexico City (Huntington 54). In “El telegrama de Irapuato,” González Garza sends Villa orders to have Guzmán shot. In response to de Onís’s suggestion that these chapters be omitted, Guzmán argued that they should appear in the translation because “‘González Garza, presidente’ y ‘El telegrama de Irapuato,’ son antecedentes obligados de ‘A merced de Pancho Villa,’ pues éste, sin ellos,

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

perdería casi toda su fuerza.”<sup>77</sup> These chapters did appear in the translation, with the titles “González Garza, President” and “From Frying-pan to Fire”—a title which emphasizes the element of suspense far more than the original title ““El telegrama de Irapuato.”” Guzmán also asked de Onís not to cut “Pos ‘malgré tout’, licenciado,” a chapter focusing on Eulalio Gutiérrez, “primeramente, porque de allí arranca el final del libro, y más aún... porque la presidencia de Gutiérrez es el fondo sobre el cual la figura de Villa se redondea en toda su integridad.”<sup>78</sup> De Onís agreed and translated the chapter as “The President Shows his French,” a title that suggests an ironic tone not present in “Pos ‘malgré tout’, licenciado.” Although these chapters were included in the translation, de Onís’s initial inclination to omit them suggests that she was less interested in conveying political nuance than in translating a narrative about Villa.

In addition, one of the most heavily symbolic chapters—and one which builds the light/dark contrast that runs throughout the book—was cut in the first English translation against the author’s wishes. On October 28, 1929, Guzmán asked de Onís not to omit “La carrera en las sombras,”<sup>79</sup> saying that this chapter “tiene para mí un valor especial, me parece lo más original de la obra.”<sup>80</sup> In this chapter, Guzmán travels through the Mexican countryside in a motorized handcar over train tracks in almost complete darkness. The journey – blindly speeding through darkness—is a reflection on the Revolution. The narrator, “surrounded by darkness” (138),<sup>81</sup> describes a “wild flight, without purpose or

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> In the 1965 translation, de Onís translated this chapter as “Night Flight.”

<sup>80</sup> O-MS/C-76.13. SO

<sup>81</sup> “cercados por las tinieblas” (141). Translations from this chapter from de Onís’s 1965 translation.

objective” (138)<sup>82</sup> and a motor that “grew by what it fed on” (138).<sup>83</sup> The “mad journey” (138)<sup>84</sup>—like the Revolution—seems “so absurd, so unpredictable and inexplicable in its curves and rise and fall that at times it seemed like a journey in infinity, without beginning or end” (139).<sup>85</sup> Of the men accompanying him, Guzmán writes, “But there we were, flirting with death, some out of obedience, others out of an unwillingness to confess that the game was not worth playing because it was dangerous” (138).<sup>86</sup> The symbolism of light and dark that appears throughout the book is made explicit.

Describing campfires of federal troops, Guzmán writes,

The ruddy glow of those lights, blazing at intervals on the peaks of an invisible horizon, had a deep and stirring significance for us. They were more than the symbolic reminder of the struggle; they were, under the blanket of stars, the expression of a contrast: the minimal gleam of the national impotence, the sign of the pettiness for which the aspiration to greatness had settled. ‘Federals! Revolutionaries! Not the tiniest glimmer of light of the smallest of all the stars!’ (136).<sup>87</sup>

Parra links Guzmán’s highly descriptive language—in particular his use of light/dark and his description of rural/urban spaces—to Arielismo<sup>88</sup>—which sought to connect ethics and aesthetics (85). The critic points to Guzmán’s involvement in El

---

<sup>82</sup> “huir desenfrenado, sin propósito ni objeto” (145)

<sup>83</sup> “se enardeció con su propio impulso” (145)

<sup>84</sup> “Extraña carrera loca” (145)

<sup>85</sup> “tan absurda, tan imprevisible e inexplicable en sus curvas y altibajos que tenían momentos de viaje infinito, sin origen ni término” (146).

<sup>86</sup> “Pero, eso no obstante, allí estábamos los seis, jugando a cuál más con la muerte: unos por obedecer, otros por no confesar que el juego, siendo peligroso, merecía no jugarse” (167).

<sup>87</sup> “Aquellas luminarias, encendidas de trecho en trecho sobre las alturas de un horizonte invisible, irradiaban con su fulgor rojizo una significación para nosotros viva y honda. Eran más que la presencia simbólica de la lucha: eran, bajo el manto de estrellas sin límite, la expresión de un contraste, el resplandor parpadeante y minúsculo de la impotencia nacional, el trazo de la pequeñez con que se conforma la aspiración a lo grande. ¡Federales! ¡Revolucionarios! ¡Ni un átomo del menor rayo de luz de la menor de todas las estrellas!” (143)

<sup>88</sup> A reference to Jose Enrique Rodó’s *Ariel*. Parra notes that Guzmán’s ideas were influenced by Rodó (83).

Ateneo de la Juventud<sup>89</sup>—a group of young intellectuals who met to discuss humanism and philosophy—as evidence of the importance of aesthetic values in the author’s work (84). *El águila y la serpiente* is, in part, a story of these intellectuals, whose humanist training did not prepare them to interpret the events of the Revolution once it became clear that the battles centered on power and personalities rather than ideas. The certainty associated with the positivism of an earlier period had been lost and the intellectuals of Guzmán’s generation struggled to define their roles, just as the narrator in “La carrera en sombras” is shuttled blindly, with no light to guide him, through the Mexican countryside. By eliminating this chapter, a clear metaphor for the intellectual’s journey, the English translation erases a key element of Guzmán’s exploration of the Revolution.

In addition to eliminating and condensing sections, the abridged translation also erases the section titles that group the chapters in the editions in Spanish—titles which include “Hacia la revolución,” “Andanzas de un rebelde,” and “Iniciación de un villista.” The omission of these section titles also reduces the context that allows the reader to understand the text as the memoir of an intellectual. The division of the work into two parts, “Esperanzas revolucionarias” and “En la hora del triunfo” are also eliminated. The omissions also destroy the cohesion of the editions in Spanish. Although many of the episodes of the text in Spanish were originally published separately, Shaw notes that “it would be...unwise to conclude that *El águila y la serpiente* consists of no more than an arbitrarily arranged jumble of episodes” (4). Both Bruce-Novoa and Pineda note that the

---

<sup>89</sup> For a study on Guzmán’s participation in el Ateneo, see Horacio Legrás. Legrás traces Guzmán’s revolutionary journey beginning with the author’s participation in El ateneo de la juventud.

order of the chapters basically corresponds to the order of publication of the episodes in newspapers. Bruce-Nova writes that this fact “no deja lugar para dudar de la estructura cuidadosamente pensada que él le impuso: Todo tiene su función y lugar” (18).<sup>90</sup>

In the C.I.A.P. edition, *El águila y la serpiente* begins with Guzmán’s voyage out of Mexico into Texas. The first sentence of the Spanish original is:

Al apearme del tren en Veracruz, recordé que la casa de Isidro Fabela—o más exactamente: la casa de sus padres—había sido ya momentáneo refugio de revolucionarios que pasaban por el puerto en fuga hacia los campos de batalla del Norte. Aquéllos eran luchadores experimentados; combatientes hechos en la revolución maderista, cuyo ejemplo podían y aun debían seguir los rebeldes primerizos. Quise, pues, acogerme yo también a la casa que tan bondadosamente se me brindaba, y me oculté en ella, durante todo el día, rodeado de una hospitalidad solícita y amable (7).

In these opening lines, Guzmán positions himself as an intellectual reflecting on the ideological roots of the revolution and moving in spaces of exile and diplomacy, in connection to influential political figures such as Isidro Fabela.

The opening is also deliberately urban. Parra notes that Guzmán tends to divide national space into rural zones, which he associates with barbarism, and urban spaces, marked by modernity that the author connects to morality and his Arielista values (85). In his review of *El águila*, Matas also notes the importance of rural and urban spaces for Guzmán: “la atmósfera del conjunto, que viene marcada por el tono y por la presencia del narrador que piensa que el cambio provendrá de la cultura y de la instrucción, pero que a la vez se siente fascinado por lo más contrario, la bárbara hombría de los soldados” (177-

---

<sup>90</sup> “Es curioso que...el orden de publicación de los episodios coincida ya con la cronología novelística” (Pineda 41).

8). The third paragraph of the original text in Spanish places the narrator Guzmán in an urban setting, where he admires the busy space of transit in Veracruz:

En las calles próximas a la Aduana me envolvió el olor de fardos, de cajas, de mercancías recién desembarcadas: lo aspiré con deleite. Más lejos, el espacio precursor de los malecones me trajo la atmósfera del mar: se vislumbraban en el fondo vagas formas de navíos, perforadas algunas por puntos luminosos; corrían hacia mí brillos de agua; descansaban, abiertas de brazos, las grandes máquinas del trajín porteño (7-8).

This opening scene in Spanish also situates the narrator in movement between the countryside, city, and sea. The space in which he moves is transnational, as he is traveling from Mexico to the U.S. via Cuba, an important base for spies and exiles during the Revolution. In these beginning chapters, Guzmán and his comrades board the ship the *Morro Castle*, where they deduce that one of the other passengers—a beautiful young woman from the U.S.—is a spy working for the Mexican police. Upon discovering that she is working against them, Guzmán and a character named Dr. Dussart manage to outwit her. Dussart, pretending to be rich, tells her that he will marry and stay in Cuba with her rather than continuing on to New York. He plans to sneak back to the ship before it leaves, abandoning her in Havana. The spy discovers the plot, but Guzmán intervenes. In a seemingly casual conversation with the spy, he insinuates that Dussart is a dangerous character who has murdered those who have crossed his path. The spy gets off at the following port, not to be seen again. Cifuentes-Goodbody argues that the role Guzmán the narrator plays in this opening section establishes his function in the rest of the story, positioning himself intellectually above the other characters (“Los tres Guzmán” 14).

This initial section was omitted in the 1930 translation, despite the author's protests. On Oct 28, 1929, Guzmán wrote de Onís, saying:

El libro primero inicia el relato en una forma suave, en una forma que, a mi modo de ver, invita a seguir leyendo; tiene intriga; tiene un personaje ameno e interesante, el doctor Dussart, y creo que estas circunstancias son muy atendibles cuando se trata de conquistar lectores.<sup>91</sup>

Bruce-Novoa argues that cutting the first chapters takes something away from the “transfondo y escenario estético” that orients the reader and that the omission of this first section “comprueba una falta total de sensibilidad literaria” (18). The original version begins and ends with a journey and the omission of this first section, along with the elimination of section titles that divide the book into two parts —“Esperanzas Revolucionarias” and “En la hora del triunfo”—destroys this symmetry. In addition, the opening of the book in Spanish positions Guzmán—not Villa—as the protagonist. This movement between Mexico, Cuba, and the U.S. and the interaction with diplomats is the trajectory of an intellectual during the Revolution, not a soldier.

Whereas the opening chapters of the original establish transnational connections between diplomats and intellectuals, the translation shifts the opening scene of the novel to the Mexican-U.S. border:

To go from El Paso, Texas, to Ciudad Juárez in Chihuahua was, to quote Neftalí Amador, one of the greatest sacrifices, not to say humiliations, that human geography had imposed on the sons of Mexico on that part of the border.... Ciudad Juárez is a sad sight; sad in itself, and still sadder when compared with the bright orderliness of that opposite river-bank, close but foreign. Yet if our faces burned with shame to look at it, nevertheless, or perhaps for that very reason, it made our hearts dance as we felt the roots of our being sink into something we had known, possessed, and loved for centuries, in all its brutishness, in all the filth of body and soul that

---

<sup>91</sup> O-MS/C-76.13. SO.

pervades its stresses. Not for nothing were we Mexicans. Even the sinister gleam of the occasional street-lights seemed to wrap us round in a pulsation of comforting warmth (3-4).

The reference to this humiliation, which de Onís translates as a declaration, appears as a question in the original text: “¿Por qué no también una de las mayores humillaciones?” (40). In his analysis of the second paragraph of the 1930 translation,<sup>92</sup> Munday writes that de Onís’s stylistic choices “subtly, yet consistently, denigrate” Mexico (68). He notes, for example, the shift in tenses, changes from active to passive verbs, and “the omission of the exclamation marks of the Free Indirect Discourse which act as an affirmative marker of proud identity in the last two sentences of the ST extract” (68).<sup>93</sup> The translation shifts the opening of the book from a modern setting the narrator admires to the underdeveloped Ciudad Juárez. More significantly, the opening of the translation establishes the Mexican U.S. border—which Villa crossed—as a limit rather than emphasizing the transnational space of the Revolution.

In addition to the omission of “La Bella Espía,” the translation omits the two chapters that follow this narrative: “La segunda salida,” and “En San Antonio Texas.” These chapters, like other omitted sections, emphasize Guzmán’s role as an intellectual

---

<sup>92</sup> “Ciudad Juárez...warmth” in the English translation cited above. The ST that Munday cites is, “El espectáculo de Ciudad Juárez era triste; triste en sí; más triste aún si se le comparaba con el aliño luminoso de la otra orilla del río, extranjera e inmediata. Pero si frente a él nos ardía la cara de vergüenza, eso no obstante, o por eso tal vez, el corazón iba bailándonos de gozo conforme las raíces de nuestra alma escapaban, como en algo conocido, tratado y amado durante siglos, en toda la mugre de cuerpo y espíritu que invadía allí las calles. ¡Por algo éramos mexicanos! ¡Por algo el resplandor siniestro de las escasas lámparas callejeras nos envolvía como pulsación de atmósfera que nutre!” (Munday 67).

<sup>93</sup> ST=Source Text. Munday analyzes just this one paragraph in detail. He notes the abridgment, but does not analyze how the omissions specifically altered the text. He writes that “the editing of non-fiction does not always follow the same pattern [of abridgement]. For instance, there are no such obvious cuts in Onís’s translation of a crucial book on the sociology and history of Cuba, Fernando Ortiz’s *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*” (71). This is not true, as *Contrapunteo* was abridged in translation.



and place the Revolution in a history of ideological battles, beginning with his connection to supporters of Madero. In “La segunda salida,” Guzmán refers to Madero supporters before explaining how he and Alberto Pani—“sin armas, se entiende, mas no sin pluma”—distribute subversive propaganda (29). And “En San Antonio Texas” begins with a description of the intellectual life of Guzmán’s fellow *ateneista* José Vasconcelos:

José Vasconcelos empapaba ya su espíritu en las concepciones neoplatónica y budista del Universo y tenía jurada guerra sin cuartel— aunque no sin debilidades— a la mala bestia en cuyo cuerpo nuestras pobres almas sufren el castigo de existir y encarnarse. Era, sin embargo, demasiado generoso para detenerse en una mera aspiración interior, así fuese honda. Y como riqueza y generosidad producen incongruencia, vivía con tanto ardor el torbellino de lo aparentemente sensible, como ponía fe en su íntima doctrina, purificadora y liberadora. Tardó más en llegar al campo revolucionario que en tomar allí posiciones ostensible y ruidosamente precisas, según su hábito (35).

It is in this conflict between ideology and the reality of the Revolution, therefore, that Vasconcelos decides to support Villa. Guzmán, too, defends his support of the Revolution, maintaining that he approached the political scene motivated by ideas, without prejudice regarding personalities: “Ilegaba a la Revolución libre de prejuicios en cuanto a personas” (35). In addition, like the preceding chapters, “En San Antonio Texas,” emphasizes the transnational space in which intellectuals moved during the Revolution; “el personaje revolucionario por antonomasia entre todos los sanantonenses lo era en aquellos días Samuel Belden,” who meets with an international group of clients in an office that was half-Mexican, half North American, and speaks in Spanish with “sintaxis anglicizante” (38). Eliminating these initial chapters, therefore, deemphasizes

the international context of the Revolution and the connections of intellectuals such as Vasconcelos y Guzmán with ateneismo and the legacy of Madero.

The 1930 translation begins with the narrator's first encounter with Villa. The chapter is titled, "My First Glimpse of Pancho Villa." Whereas the original text contextualizes events of the Revolution in intellectual history, the abridged translation begins with a portrait of Villa without this context. The translation begins with a foreword that positions Villa as a protagonist and sets up the text to be read as a suspenseful novel. The final paragraph of the foreword reads,

By the beginning of 1915 the revolution had degenerated into a veritable state of anarchy, into a simple struggle between rivals for power. This went on until 1916, when Obregón and Carranza, in great part with the help of the United States, managed to reduce Villa to a position in which he could do nothing, without ever conquering him. As a guerrilla leader Villa was invincible. In May 1920 he was still lording it in the stronghold of the sierras. His energy and his daring were unrivalled. Even General Pershing's famous expedition—the ten thousand men that Wilson sent to Mexico, with Carranza and Obregón's approval, "to get Villa dead or alive" —had to relinquish this undertaking (ix).

Because it makes no mention of Villa's death in 1923, orchestrated by Calles and Obregón,<sup>94</sup> this introduction- which appears only in the translation- creates suspense and is a direct appeal to the image of Villa as cunning outlaw rather than as a savage enemy of the U.S. The author sets up the text to be read with sympathy for Villa and with bias against figures like Carranza. Rather than being an objective summary of the events of the Revolution, the forward reinforces the ideas Guzmán expresses throughout the text. For example, he writes "Carranza...was devoid of ideals and eager only for power" (viii).

---

<sup>94</sup> Although some studies contradict these findings, Katz notes that "other evidence that Mexican researchers gathered...strongly implicates both Obregon and Calles in Villa's assassination" (774).

The prologue also obscures the fact that Guzmán later deserted Villa, once again erasing Guzmán's role as protagonist. Instead, the prologue presents the text as a suspenseful novel about Villa.

The prologue, which is the same in both translations, is signed "M.L.G." in the 1965 translation and is anonymous in the 1930 translation. Because it is anonymous,<sup>95</sup> this opening essay is also not marked as a translation, making the translator's intervention invisible. Venuti describes the danger of "invisibility" in translation, noting that fluency gives "the appearance that [the translation] reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation but the 'original'" (1). In the prologue of *The Eagle and the Serpent*, this invisibility is double; readers of the translation see neither Guzmán's nor de Onís's interventions in the English language version of the text. As a result, the target language audience is unlikely to reflect on ways in which the text may be reshaped in translation and may assume the original, like the abridged translation, is a portrait of Villa and not the journey of an intellectual.

As with the prologue, many of de Onís's stylistic choices in the translation function to position Villa as a protagonist, in part by reducing the reflective tone of the original. For example, de Onís occasionally eliminates ellipses, as she does in the following example: Guzmán describes a mass of people as "el alma de un reptil monstruoso, con cientos de cabezas, con millares de pies, que se arrastra, alcohólico y

---

<sup>95</sup> Anonymous in 1930, but because it is signed "M.L.G." in the 1965 translation, it is clearly by Guzmán and presumably translated by de Onís.

torpe, entre las paredes de una calle lóbrega en una ciudad sin habitantes...” (114). De Onís cuts out the ellipses at the end of the passage, translating it as “the soul of a huge reptile with hundreds of heads, thousands of feet, which crawled, drunk and sluggish, along the walls of a cavernous, dark street in a deserted city” (60). In this case and in others,<sup>96</sup> these types of changes deemphasize the fact that the narrator is constantly questioning events and his own interpretations of them. In his analysis of Guzmán’s work, Mark Millington writes, “it is a crucial feature of the intellectual mind at this more advanced level that it is capable of self-reflexivity and self-questioning.” (36).

Generally, readers of the translation should be able to note the contrast Guzmán establishes between himself and other characters. One reviewer of the 1930 translation wrote, “We see Guzmán, the scholar rather than the man of action sharing the bivouac lives of the revolutionists and yet keeping about himself an air of the classical library.”<sup>97</sup> However, although Guzmán’s role as an intellectual comes through in the translation, the distance he creates between himself and other revolutionary figures is significantly reduced in the English. Cifuentes-Goodbody notes that in sections of the original text Guzmán the narrator interacts with other characters in a way that reveals his intellectual superiority (“Los tres Guzmán” 14). The differences between the narrator—and the intellectual class to which he belongs—and other revolutionaries are marked in the dialogue in the text and reduced in the translation, which eliminates regionalisms and

---

<sup>96</sup> De Onís often eliminates ellipses. Another example is her translation of “Claro que nos quedan, por lo menos, las armas....Tampoco, porque las destruimos, y, peor aún, nos destruimos con ellas....” (41), where all ellipses are removed: “Still, we have the arms. But we don’t have them either, for we destroy them. And, what’s worse, we destroy each other with them” (5).

<sup>97</sup> “The Mexican Revolution.” Rev. of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. *The New York Times* 9 Nov 1930: BR4.

accents that mark some characters as less educated. In “Mi primer vislumbre de Pancho Villa,” Guzmán walks into a room with Neftalí Amador and one of Villa’s men ask them “¿pá dónde jalan pues?” (43). De Onís translates this as “Say, where are you headed for?”

(9). In the original version, the following conversation ensues:

- Conque el licenciado Amador y dos menistros...
- Justamente. El subsecretario de Instrucción Pública en el gabinete del Presidente Madero y director general...
- ¡Onde le digo yo todo eso!
- Bueno, pues sólo lo otro: el licenciado Amador y un ministro del señor Madero.
- ¿Un ministro o dos menistros?
- Es igual: uno o dos... (43-44).

The English version eliminates the references to accents, normalizes the spelling of “minister” and omits the title “licenciado”:

- “Then it’s Mr. Amador and two ministers...?”
- “That’s right. The Under-secretary of Public Instruction in President Madero’s Cabinet and the director general...”
- “Say, how do you expect me to say all that?”
- “Well, then, just Mr. Amador and a minister of President Madero.”
- “One minister or two ministers?”
- “It doesn’t matter, one or two...” (9).

The translation, therefore, reduces the distance between Guzmán and Villa’s men.

In addition to using dialogue to set himself and other intellectuals apart from other revolutionaries, Guzmán relies on series of questions in order to show the ways in which the narrator attempts to interpret events of the Revolution. In some cases, de Onís rewrites these as statements. For example, “¿Cómo o por qué había de acabarse Carranza si no se iba? Eso no nos dijo” (280) becomes “How or why Carranza was done for if he did not retire was not explained” (234). After a description of Felipe Ángeles, the

narrator asks himself, “¿No abundaron por ventura los que se apasionaban en su contra—movidos sólo por la envidia—y aun lo calumniaban por escrito?” (56). In the translation, this becomes a statement: “Their name was legion who were furiously opposed to him—with envy as their only motive—and who publicly maligned him” (26). The shift in meaning is slight, but these questions form part of Guzmán’s positioning of himself in relation to other characters, and create the illusion that he questions aspects of the revolution in the moment of the events and not just retrospectively. Declarative sentences do not have the same effect. Guzmán’s constant questioning stands in contrast to *caudillos* such as Carranza, who is portrayed as motivated by personal interest rather than a particular political ideology: “Carranza sólo se preocupa y sólo sabe de acabar con quienes no acatan sumisos su dictadura... Con Carranza, el país y la Revolución van a un despeñadero, van a la lucha personalista tras el disfraz de los postulados revolucionarios” (239). In another case, regarding his participation in the Revolution, Guzmán asks himself, “Yo... ¿hice bien yo? ¿Hice mal?” (58). In English, these questions become “I do not know whether I did right or not,” which repositions the moment of doubt to the time of the narration, making it seem that the narrator is reflecting years after the Revolution rather than questioning the events—and his own role—during the war.

Despite her tendency to normalize language, de Onís was often very careful when it came to the literal translation of certain terms. As she later did with other authors whose work she translated, de Onís sent Guzmán lists of words with which she was unfamiliar. I have not been able to find her letters to Guzmán, but her questions are clear from Guzmán’s responses. He explains, for example, that “mitigüeson” is a “corrupción,

entre los soldados revolucionarios mexicanos, de Smith & Wesson, una marca de pistolas.”<sup>98</sup> In her article on de Onís, Trudy Balch points to these sorts of inquiries as evidence of de Onís’s accuracy. Suzanne Jill Levine, however, argues that “De Onís was characteristic of the early translators of Latin American literature: she was not terribly accurate and tended to normalize (with flowery language) both the regionalism of some novels, and the original experimental language of others” (301). De Onís was accurate with specific terms, but she generally did not try to recreate an author’s style in terms of syntax, regional language, and other aspects. Her stylistic choices in *The Eagle and the Serpent*—translating regional dialogue into neutral English, rewriting questions as statements, changing paragraph breaks, and breaking up sentences—streamline the narrative and focus it more on Villa.

According to David Damrosch, “when we read a work in translation, the book already comes to us shaped by the translator’s choices and the publisher’s framing of the new text for its new market.” He also notes that the reader of world literature reads with certain expectations of what a foreign work is... and “the new work will interact with these expectations, potentially destabilizing them even as it takes a new shape and significance from these relations” (“Frames for World Lit.” 513). Rather than challenging assumptions about the Mexican Revolution, the abridged 1930 translation seems to reshape the text according to the readers’ expectations, that is, it conforms to market forces by promoting the image of Villa.

---

<sup>98</sup> Letter from Guzmán to de Onís. 28 Oct. 1929. O-MS/C-76.13. SO.

Guzmán must have been unhappy with the abridgement in the 1930 translation because in later years he insisted that his work be published in complete form. He was open to having fragments of *El águila y la serpiente* included in an anthology edited by Germán Arciniegas, later translated by de Onís and published by Knopf as *The Green Continent: A Comprehensive View of Latin America by its Leading Writers* (1944), but only if the excerpts were unaltered. Guzmán wrote to Arciniegas saying, “puede usted incluir en la obra de que me habla los trazos de *El águila y la serpiente*. Sólo le ruego que los pasajes escogidos se transcriban íntegros, quiero decir, sin ninguna mutilación.”<sup>99</sup>

Later, thirty years after the abridged edition of *The Eagle and the Serpent*, Guzmán sought a complete English translation of the book. To this end, he contacted Knopf on July 11, 1960, blaming the limited sales of the first edition<sup>100</sup> on the abridgment and insisting that the new translation be complete: “la edición no tuvo mucho éxito, posiblemente porque no se tradujo completo el libro. Se le suprimieron partes; a las partes se les suprimieron capítulos, y a muchos capítulos se les suprimieron párrafos.”<sup>101</sup>

Alfred Knopf defended de Onís’s translation<sup>102</sup> and the translator wrote to Knopf saying, “I never, and I say this with complete modesty, did a better job than on this translation, and all the reviews praised it lavishly.”<sup>103</sup> When trying to recall why the cuts were made in the first edition, de Onís told Knopf, “*The Eagle and the Serpent* goes back to my almost prehistoric translating days. It is hard for me to reconstruct the reasons for the

---

<sup>99</sup> Guzmán to Arciniegas. 18 March 1944. AK16.11. HRC.

<sup>100</sup> According to Bruce-Novoa, Knopf had printed 2,520 copies of the 1930 translation, fewer than half of which were sold before Knopf started selling the translation at a discounted price (17).

<sup>101</sup> AK284.9. HRC.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from AK to Guzmán, 10 August 1960, AK284.9. HRC.

<sup>103</sup> HDO to AK, 22 July 1960, AK284.9. HRC.



cuts that were made—the decision came from your office—but I think it was said that many of the less important revolutionary episodes were gone into in too much detail, and tended to hold up the pace of the book....”<sup>104</sup> De Onís’s comment about the pace of the book reveals that the translator and her publisher were in fact more interested in presenting the book as an exciting novel following the trajectory of Villa rather than a more nuanced political commentary.

In addition to pushing for a translation in complete form, Guzmán insisted on retaining final editing control of the book in English in the 1960s. During this period, Guzmán exercised a high degree of editorial control over his work in Mexico, partly a result of his privileged political position. Guzmán had originally published *El águila y la serpiente* as an exile in Spain—a time during which he renounced his Mexican citizenship,<sup>105</sup> but by the time he republished the book in Mexico<sup>106</sup> and sought the complete translation into English, he had become a man supported by the state. When Guzmán returned from Spain in 1936, it was with the explicit support of President Lázaro Cárdenas. By then, Calles—whom Guzmán had vocally criticized during his exile—had left the country, and Cárdenas, “widely regarded as the president who saved the ideals of the revolution,”<sup>107</sup> had pardoned de la Huerta. President Cárdenas invited Guzmán to

---

<sup>104</sup> Letter from HDO to AK, Aug 6 1960, AK284.9. HRC.

<sup>105</sup> Cifuentes-Goodbody “Heme aquí” 479. Guzmán went into exile in Spain in 1925 and did not return to Mexico until 1936.

<sup>106</sup> There are a number of stylistic differences between the 1928 C.I.A.P. edition and the 1969 edition published in Mexico. Guzmán likely made these changes when he republished *El águila*.

<sup>107</sup> Franco 63.

return to Mexico. Later, the author could not return to Spain because of the Civil War and his friendship with Azaña.<sup>108</sup>

Cifuentes-Goodbody argues convincingly that Guzmán later began actively seeking “to cultivate a place for himself within the canon of modern Mexican letters” at that point in his career (469). To this end, the author had been republishing a number of his works in Mexico. Cifuentes-Goodbody writes,

[T]he 1950s and ‘60s were a period of intense editorial activity for the author. His Empresas Editoriales and Compañía General de Ediciones released nine titles by him as well as a biography, Ermilo Abreu Gómez’s *Martín Luis Guzmán*. Through the majority of these texts had been previously published in newspapers, magazines, or in other editions during the ‘20s and ‘30s, they now appeared within the context of a different life narrative (469).

In his analysis of Guzmán’s “Apunte sobre una personalidad,” an autobiographical sketch originally given as a speech to the Academia Mexicana de la Lengua in 1954, the critic argues that Guzmán “presents himself as a unique individual created at the intersection of personal experience and national historical events” whose autobiography draws “on a version of history that portrays Mexico’s current one-party state as rightful heir to the independence and Reforma movements of the previous century” (470). In the speech to the Academy, Guzmán avoids mentioning key works like *La sombra del caudillo*, perhaps because he did not want to remind his audience of a period in which he criticized the office of the president (Cifuentes-Goodbody 479). Citing a study by Gabriel Zaid,<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Huntington notes that there were a few possible reasons that Guzmán left Spain in 1936, but the most likely reason was the explicit invitation he received from Cárdenas. However, the outbreak of the Civil War was also a factor. According to Huntington, the *falangista* forces destroyed Guzmán’s belongings and the house in which he lived (80).

<sup>109</sup> Zaid, Gabriel. “¿Quién es el escritor más vendido de México?” In *Cómo leer en bicicleta*. Mexico City: Océano, 1996. 135-42.

Cifuentes-Goodbody points out that, in addition to the fact that Guzmán's own Empresas Editoriales published many of his books, a magazine of which he was editor-in-chief listed many of his books as best-sellers, and these favorable figures came from a chain of bookstores Guzmán ran (468-69). Guzmán, then, controlled production and influenced reception of his work. His success also helped put him in a privileged position in Mexico. The author won awards such as a National Science and Arts Prize in 1958 and the Manuel Ávila Camacho Prize in 1959 (Cifuentes-Goodbody "Heme aquí" 485). The author was trying to carefully shape the narrative of his life as a writer and surely the desire for a new translation into English was part of his vision. In addition to *El águila*, Guzmán sent Knopf copies of *La sombra del cuadillo*, *Memorias de Pancho Villa*, *Islas Marías* and *Filadelfia, paraíso de conspiradores*, all of which he hoped Knopf would publish in translation.<sup>110</sup>

Knopf was initially open to the idea of publishing a complete translation of *El águila*. However, after Guzmán's continual insistence that he make final editing decisions regarding the complete translation of the work, the publisher decided to "drop Guzmán once and for all. He sounds like 49 different kinds of nuisances. So unless Harriet explodes, get rid of him gracefully and let him have *The Eagle and the Serpent*

---

<sup>110</sup> Letter from Guzmán to Knopf, 16 August 1960, AK284.9. HRC. Of the other books, a memo to Knopf from "WAK" states, "two of [the books] had been considered by [Knopf] before. One, *La Sombra del Caudillo*, is the one Harry Block likes, and one for which Harriet has already completed translation. It was commissioned by Lippincott and then shelved. It also was turned down by Random at some later date. The long book on Pancho Villa is a favorite of Federico's, but if we should ever publish this it would undoubtedly have to be cut. Meanwhile, Harriet is in the process of reading the other two books." 29 Sept. 1960. AK284.9. HRC.

back.”<sup>111</sup> Knopf returned the rights to the translation to Guzmán, telling him that “Only *La Sombra del Caudillo* seems at all possible,”<sup>112</sup> though even that text was later rejected. Editor Herbert Weinstock turned down *La sombra* because “it showed Mexico in an unfavorable light.”<sup>113</sup> Doubleday eventually agreed to Guzmán’s terms regarding the translation of *El águila y la serpiente*, and de Onís translated the omitted sections. Bruce-Novoa writes that Doubleday then sold the 1965 translation to Peter Smith, who republished it at a high cost that limited the sales of the work (17).

For the 1965 translation, de Onís simply translated the sections that had been omitted in 1930 and did not revise the sections she had already translated.<sup>114</sup> Her style for the newly translated sections is consistent with the 1930 text. She divides long sentences, uses idiomatic English, changes paragraph breaks, and—despite the fact that the 1965 translation was advertised as “complete and unabridged”—occasionally omits descriptions. She does not translate, for example, two paragraphs describing a revolutionary named Octavio Campero as a “dios o semidiós, asimismo mitológico” (88 English, 91 Spanish).<sup>115</sup> As with the 1930 translation, the 1965 version begins with a prologue about the Mexican Revolution. Whereas in the 1930 translation this preface is anonymous, here it is signed “M.L.G.” The function is the same: beyond simply

---

<sup>111</sup> This comes from a handwritten and undated note (AK248.9. HRC.). It is not clear who wrote the note, but it is certain that Knopf himself wanted to get rid of Guzmán. On Nov. 9, 1960, he wrote to de Onís saying “I formed a most unfavorable impression of Martin Luis Guzmán, and I wrote to Bill Koshland from London to get rid of him” (AK 295.1. HRC).

<sup>112</sup> Letter from Alfred Knopf to Guzmán. 9 Nov 1960. AK284.9. HRC.

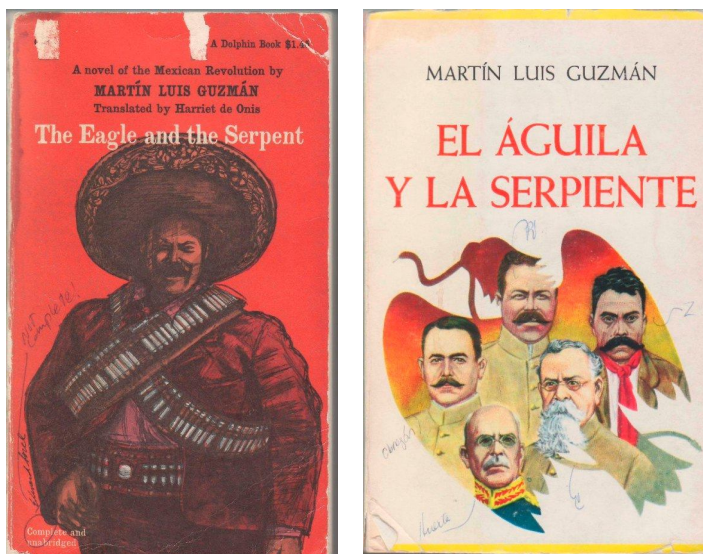
<sup>113</sup> Letter from HDO to AK, 17 Aug. 1960 AK284.9. HRC.

<sup>114</sup> Given the amount of work Knopf gave her as a translator and as a reader, de Onís’s schedule would not have allowed her to revise the sections she translated in 1930.

<sup>115</sup> She also omits other small sections, such as a line in the chapter “En el tren”: “Así ocurría, en efecto: cuando avanzábamos sin interrupción dos o tres kilómetros, se nos figuraba que habíamos corrido mucho” (154 Spanish, 127 English).

providing historical context, the (unaltered) prologue creates suspense and positions Villa as a protagonist.

The cover of the 1965 translation<sup>116</sup> features an image of Villa, in contrast to the 1969 edition in Spanish, which emphasizes a broader context, displaying a cover with Álvaro Obregón, Victoriano Huerta, Venustiano Carranza and Emiliano Zapata as well as Francisco Villa.



Although the cover, prologue, and stylistic choices in de Onís's 1965 translation present the text as a novel focused on Villa, the newly translated sections do provide a broader historical context. However, by 1965, the Mexican Revolution was no longer at the forefront of readers' minds—either in Mexico or in the U.S. In Mexico, Guzmán had

<sup>116</sup> In a letter to de Onís Guzmán discusses the possibility of using cover art by Maroto—probably artist Gabriel García Maroto. Guzmán wanted to avoid stereotypical images of Mexico. He tells de Onís, “nada detesto tanto como el tradicional convencionalismo con que pictóricamente se representa a México en los Estados Unidos. El hombre del fajín de seda, del sombrero con cascabeles, de la chaquetilla corta, la camisa bordada y el pantalón abierto es como para que lo fusilen” (Letter to HDO. 4 Jan 1930. O-MS/C-76.14. SO.). The cover of the 1928 Aguilar edition had a picture of a flower on it (Quintanilla “En la hora” 79).

become a privileged public figure and his work had become canonical, but the initial idealism of the Revolution, as well as the nationalist push to revive the myth of the Revolution in the '20s, had faded. In the U.S., the public was less interested in the history of the Mexican Revolution and more interested in revolution in Latin America in a broader sense.

Before returning the rights to the translation to Guzmán, the editors at Knopf had sought de Onís's opinion regarding the publication of a full translation of *El águila*. On August 17, 1960, de Onís wrote to Knopf arguing for republishing the book, saying "what I think really matters is getting the book back into print, adding the missing material, for, as I told you, it is the best thing that I have seen on the Mexican Revolution, and I think it would have an oblique timeliness in the light of what is happening in Cuba."<sup>117</sup> Just a year earlier, editors at Knopf had specifically looked for books on Cuba.<sup>118</sup> Knopf's interest in *El águila y la serpiente* in 1965, therefore, was less specifically tied to Mexico and more related to a desire to capitalize on the more general theme of revolution in Latin America. *El águila* describes the ways in which a revolution that began with ideological motivations degenerated into dangerous warring factions. Because it essentially tells the story of a failed revolution and because of Guzmán's position in Mexico, Knopf and de Onís may have considered Guzmán's text as an argument against revolution. De Onís and her publisher stood in opposition to the Cuban Revolution, so *The Eagle and the Serpent* may have appealed to their political

---

<sup>117</sup> AK284.9. HRC.

<sup>118</sup> In a letter dated Jan. 20, 1959, Herbert Weinstock asked Harriet and Federico for suggestions for a book on the Cuban Revolution (AK266.13. HRC).

leanings.<sup>119</sup> It is more likely, however, that the Cuban Revolution shaped the publisher's choices in less direct ways.

The Cuban Revolution was a key event in generating interest in Latin America and, as a result, in increasing the number of translated texts from the region.<sup>120</sup> Despite the political nature of these initial motivations, however, publishers tended to be interested primarily in texts with broad themes. Deborah Cohn writes,

The Cuban Revolution opened up an audience interested in Latin America, but the Knopfs and their fellow publishers discovered that politics and history could also be a double-edged sword. Most U.S. readers came to Latin American literature with relatively little knowledge of the region, and publishers were concerned that works with too much emphasis on the local would be too demanding and therefore less marketable. In this context, Boom novels had an advantage: although they were deeply imbued with contemporary history, their use of modern thematics and modernist techniques and their recourse to long-standing Western paradigms made them seem familiar to readers. As a result, invocations of modernism, comparisons to U.S. and European writers, and characterizations of works as 'universal' in their implications—suggesting greater accessibility and, therefore, marketability—became fairly commonplace in readers' reports and published reviews (10).

“Universality” was in fact a common criteria for evaluating foreign literature during this period. In 1960—the same year that Knopf was considering a complete translation of Guzmán's semi-fictional memoir—the publisher was reviewing another text for possible translation. In their assessment of Jorge Amado's *Gabriela, cravo e*

---

<sup>119</sup> The correspondence in Knopf's archives includes various comments that reveal the publisher's and de Onís's distrust of communism. Regarding one notable communist writer, de Onís once told editor Bill Koshland that “[Jorge Amado] interests me very much. ... I just can't believe he is a Communist, for he has such good manners.” 3 Feb. 1961. AK327.7. HRC.

<sup>120</sup> In *The Latin American Literary Boom and U.S. Nationalism During the Cold War* (2012), Deborah Cohn studies the links between the political context and the publishing market for Latin American fiction between 1940s to the 70s, with particular attention to the politics of the Cold War and the resources available to fund translations of Latin American literature during this period.

*canela*, Harriet raved that Amado's novel "could not be more Brazilian nor more universal."<sup>121</sup> Two years later, in another claim that *Gabriela* was universal, Arthur Meyerfeld compared Amado to Cervantes and Balzac because *Gabriela* had "everything: Entertainment supreme, violence, romance, happiness, sadness, wit and sensitivity, a cosmos entirely complete. And it almost could be Sacramento in the early days just as well as a town in Brazil...or, for that matter, any place."<sup>122</sup>

The combination of universality with hints of the local informed the selection and marketing of many translated texts.<sup>123</sup> The 1965 translated edition of *The Eagle and the Serpent* begins with a preface by Federico de Onís, who refers to the ways in which Guzmán's text relates to the rest of Latin America, and to Europe:

This revolution was the first of the many that took place in different parts of the world during the twentieth century, and came about independently of all of them. Its origins were Mexican, and although it employed certain terms of European political thought, its guiding principle was the affirmation of the Mexican people, of the national character at all social levels, symbolized in the eagle and serpent of its flag.

Federico de Onís also notes that *El águila* "had been through fourteen editions in Spanish" and had been translated into "English, French, German, Dutch, and Czech."

Translation into multiple languages is another gauge often used to convince readerships of a text's wide appeal.

---

<sup>121</sup> HDO to Koshland. 27 Sept. 1960. AK284.9. HRC.

<sup>122</sup> Arthur Meyerfeld to AK. 5 Nov. 1962. AK339.5. HRC.

<sup>123</sup> This is still true today. In a 2011 panel on translation, German literary agent Nicole Witt said that when considering translated works from Brazil, publishers look for universal themes with a specifically Brazilian element. These criteria surely apply for the translation of other national literatures into hegemonic languages.



The 1965 translation was favorably reviewed. Roberto Esquenazi-Mayo wrote, “Martín Luis Guzmán sigue vibrando en las páginas inglesas, merced a la maestría de Harriet de Onís, como vibró en lengua española” (897). Guzmán’s work, however, did not fit the criteria for universality, either at Knopf or elsewhere. Harriet de Onís pointed out that Lippincott had commissioned a translation of *La sombra del caudillo* and then didn’t publish it because it “lacked love interest.”<sup>124</sup> This evaluation suggests that, despite the fact that *La sombra del caudillo* and *El águila y el serpiente* were texts that criticized a revolution in Latin America, publishers were not motivated by a desire to publish literature that was explicitly politically engaged. Guzmán’s work never became canonical in English translation.

Despite the innovative literary devices Federico de Onís and other critics saw in Guzmán’s work, *El águila y la serpiente* was limited to serving a specific scholarly-historical function in translation. In the forward to *Viva Villa! A Recovery of the Real Pancho Villa, Peon...Bandit...Soldier...Patriot*, Edgumb Pinchon acknowledges “a special debt to that brilliant series of sketches, ‘The Eagle and the Serpent,’ by Martín Luis Guzmán.” A study on the working class and the Mexican Revolution also refers to the importance of Guzmán’s books for historical study: “The historiography of the revolution of 1910 has been profoundly shaped by novelists such as Mariano Azuela... and by Martin Luis Guzmán” (17).<sup>125</sup> More recently, Guzmán’s text has been a source for historians. Katz cites him a number of times, and includes a note describing Guzmán as a

---

<sup>124</sup> Letter from HDO to AK. 17 August 1960. AK 284.9. HRC.

<sup>125</sup> Anonymous. “Latin American Working Class History: The Case of the Mexican Revolution.” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 10 (Nov. 1976): 15-19.

“serious scholar” (831). One of Guzmán’s other books, *Memorias de Pancho Villa* (1938), was translated with funding from a subsidy program run by the Association of American University Presses (Cohn 113, 118). The translation by Virginia H. Taylor, titled *Memoirs of Pancho Villa*, was published by the University of Texas Press in 1965, the same year that Knopf published the complete translation of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. Despite benefiting from subsidies and a big advertising budget, *Memoirs of Pancho Villa* “posted the highest overall loss (\$6,270)” of all the translated texts published under the AAUP program (Cohn 118-9). Guzmán’s success in translation, then, was academic rather than commercial.

Beyond serving as an important historical source, Guzmán’s writing did not become a lasting part of the canon of translated Latin American literature. The author’s relative obscurity is in part the result of his support of the oppressive government policies in the wake of the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968, just three years after the publication of de Onís’s complete translation of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. His support of the government’s brutal reaction to a student protest turned him into a “literary pariah” and caused him to fall into oblivion (Cifuentes-Goodbody 485). However, even if Guzmán had not ended up on the wrong side of history, he probably would not have been successful in the global market. A later text about the Mexican Revolution achieved more lasting commercial and critical success: Carlos Fuentes’ *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), translated by Sam Hileman and published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1964. Fuentes’ more enduring success may be attributed in part to his narrative techniques, which better fit the new Boom generation of literature. The publication of his text came at

an opportune moment, when publishers were beginning to market Latin American literature in translation more aggressively. Fuentes' success may also be explained by the perceived universality of his themes. *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* could be more easily interpreted in contexts outside of Mexico's political history. Guzmán's semi-fictional memoir could perhaps not serve such broad functions when divorced from its original context, and this inseparable connection to national politics perhaps hindered Guzmán's ability to reach a global audience.

**CHAPTER TWO: TOBACCO, SUGAR AND TRANSLATION: *CONTRAPUNTEO*  
*CUBANO IN THE UNITED STATES***

In addition to *El águila y la serpiente*, de Onís translated a number of other important historical and cultural studies, which, like most of her translations, were published by Knopf. The scholarly works she translated and sometimes edited included—among others—*Sobrados e Mucambos* by Gilberto Freyre, a collection of essays by Alfonso Reyes, four books by Colombian Germán Arciniegas,<sup>126</sup> and *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar (Advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación)* by anthropologist Fernando Ortiz. Ortiz’s work has had significant impact within anthropology, postcolonial theory, and Latin American cultural studies. *Contrapunteo cubano* (1940), one of Ortiz’s most influential books, is a critique of the imperialist history of the sugar industry in Cuba and of the colonial roots of Ortiz’s own discipline, anthropology. With this text, Ortiz introduced his concept of transculturation, a term he hoped would replace “acculturation,” which, he argued, carried certain biases. The content and innovative structure of *Contrapunteo cubano* have been read as a challenge to more traditional academic discourse. Yet, in order for Ortiz’s ideas to have weight in the international context of his field, he needed to have *Contrapunteo cubano* translated into English. Casanova argues that “authors from the periphery are able to obtain recognition in the

---

<sup>126</sup> *The Caribbean, Sea of the New World* (published in translation in 1946), *The State of Latin America* (1952), *Amerigo and the New World: The Life and Times of Amerigo Vespucci* (1955), and a volume edited by Arciniegas: *The Green Continent: A Comprehensive View of Latin America by its Leading Writers* (1944). See Appendix A for a table of de Onís’s other translations.

leading capitals only at the cost of seeing their work appropriated by the literary establishment for its own purposes” (163). No less than literary works, scholarly texts are transformed and reinterpreted when they cross linguistic and cultural borders. In translation, Ortiz’s voice was mediated by political contexts as well as languages.

In the U.S., *Contrapunteo cubano* was marketed in line with the Good Neighbor Policy and read more as an informational text about Cuba than as a form of protest. De Onís’s translation, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, was published by Knopf in 1947. Although that year marks the beginning of the Cold War and the U.S. government had begun to abandon the Good Neighbor policy in favor of military intervention, Knopf continued to market its translations of Latin American texts in accordance with the earlier foreign policy. Reviewers of the translation generally ignored Ortiz’s criticism of imperialism and his concept of transculturation, but read Ortiz’s writing style—even in translation—as particularly Latin American. This chapter will discuss the reception of the book in Cuba and in the U.S., focusing on the aspects of the text that were considered a challenge to North American and European academic discourse, and will try to determine why Ortiz’s style was read as Latin American despite the fact that de Onís’s approach to *Contrapunteo cubano* was not markedly different than the domesticizing strategies she used when translating other texts. It will conclude with a discussion of the history of the term transculturation in English, particularly as it relates to translation studies.

*Contrapunteo cubano* was originally published in Cuba by Jesús Montero in 1940, the same year that the new Cuban constitution went into effect. According to Elvira Antón Carrillo, the period leading up to the writing of the 1940 constitution “witnessed

the emergence of a need to define Cuban national identity,” partly “in relation to the gradual North-Americanisation of culture” (334). The new constitution “proclaimed political democracy, the rights of urban and rural labour, limitations on the size of sugar plantations and the need for systematic state intervention in the economy” (Whitney 438). In his introduction to Cátedra’s 2002 edition of *Contrapunteo cubano*, Enrico Mario Santí notes that the timing of the first publication of the book was fitting, as Ortiz’s text shared the reformist spirit of the 1940 constitution (49). The publisher of the first edition also seemed to be interested in reform in Cuba. Jesús Montero, a small publishing house specializing in legal texts, had released a number of books on Cuban law and reform, including, in the years leading up to the publication of *Contrapunteo cubano*, texts such as *La reforma penal en Cuba* by Tancredi Gatti (1937) and *Fundamentos históricos del derecho mercantil* by Ramon Infiesta (1939). Despite the timeliness of its publication in Cuba, *Contrapunteo cubano* did not initially generate much critical reaction, a silence Santí hypothesizes may be linked to Ortiz’s criticism of the sugar industry. Given the wealth sugar generated for certain classes in Cuba, Santí explains, Ortiz’s argument that sugar is foreign—not Cuban—made the work particularly controversial.<sup>127</sup>

*Contrapunteo cubano* is structured as a two-part study of the role of tobacco and sugar in the Cuban economy. The long essay in the first part of the book establishes a comparison between the two commodities, both on a historical and symbolic level. Ortiz

---

<sup>127</sup> “[E]l *Contrapunteo* forma parte de un debate nacional que se remonta a los años 20 sobre la excesiva dependencia de la economía cubana en el monocultivo de la caña de azúcar. Por esa razón es un libro polémico, diríase hasta herético—su tesis más escandalosa es que el azúcar no es cubana—, en vista de la riqueza que tradicionalmente la industria azucarera le producía a ciertas clases, sobre todo a partir del Machadato, y la defensa que de ella montaban. El relativo silencio que rodeó la publicación de la primera edición del *Contrapunteo* bien podría ser una reacción en ese contexto” (Santí 49-50).

associates sugar, which “is born brown and whitens itself” (9) with slavery and imperialism and links tobacco, which is “born dark and dies the color of its race” (9) to indigenous cultures and “national sovereignty” (7).<sup>128</sup> In the second half of the text, which is divided into “supplementary chapters”<sup>129</sup> of varying length, Ortiz introduces the term transculturation, a cultural process exemplified by the history of tobacco. Tobacco, Ortiz argues, offers a useful model for transculturation because the crop was native to the Americas, and its use changed in social significance as it was exported (183). This second section includes chronicles on the history of tobacco, anthropological studies on indigenous rites that centered on tobacco, diagrams, short essays on the properties of tobacco, and reflections on the sugar industry, slavery, and capitalism.

The title of the book describes its structure. *Contrapunteo* has been said to be a Cuban word<sup>130</sup> for *contrapunto*, a musical term in which distinct voices form a harmony (Santí 27). *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* defines counterpoint as follows:

The term derives from the expression *punctus contra punctum*, i.e. ‘point against point’ or ‘note against note.’ A single ‘part’ or ‘voice’ added to another is called ‘a counterpoint’ to that other, but the more common use of the word is that of the combination of simultaneous parts or [verses], each of significance in itself and the whole resulting in a coherent texture.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Citations in English from the first edition of de Onís’s translation (Knopf 1947).

<sup>129</sup> De Onís’s translation of “capítulos complementarios.” When Ortiz revised the text in 1963, he added 200 pages to the edition and changed the name of the chapters in the second part from “complementarios” to “adicionales” (Santí 25-26).

<sup>130</sup> Although Santí claims that *contrapunteo* is a Cuban word, according to the Real Academia Española’s *Diccionario de la lengua española*, in Venezuela as well as in Cuba the term refers to the “acción y efecto de contrapuntear (cantar versos improvisados)” and in a number of other countries signifies “confrontación de pareceres.” “Contrapunteo.” *Diccionario de la lengua española. Real Academia Española*. Web. 1 Jul. 2015.

<sup>131</sup> “Counterpoint.” *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*. Oxford University Press, 1997-2015. Oxfordmusiconline.com. Web. 8 July 2015.

The musical analogy describes the structure of Ortiz's book, but the term also explicitly refers to a verbal dispute (Santí 27). Ortiz opens *Contrapunteo cubano* by linking his counterpoint between tobacco and sugar to a dialogue in a medieval Spanish text, Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor*:

Un arcipreste de buen humor, correntón y gran poeta, muy famoso en la Edad Media, dió personalidad al Carnaval y a la Cuaresma y los hizo hablar en buenos versos, poniendo sagazmente en los decires y contradecires del coloquio y en los episodios de la satírica contienda sus contrastes éticos y los males y los bienes que del uno y de la otra le venían a los mortales (1).<sup>132</sup>

Ortiz goes on to explain that the dialogue established in el *Libro de buen amor* lends itself to a discussion of tobacco and sugar, since the problem of those two commodities in the history of Cuba is so complex that an analysis of their role goes beyond what is possible in traditional social science: “[V]a más allá de las perspectivas meramente sociales para alcanzar los horizontes de la poesía” (2).<sup>133</sup> From the first pages of *Contrapunteo cubano*, therefore, Ortiz makes it clear that his goal is not to present a straightforward sociological study. Rather, he emphasizes the relationship between his work and other artistic forms. In addition to comparing his work to *Libro de buen amor*, Ortiz situates his counterpoint in relation to Cuban traditions, such as music and dance:

[S]iempre fue muy propio de las ingenuas musas del pueblo, en poesía, música, danza, canción y teatro, ese género dialogístico que lleva hasta el arte la dramática dialéctica de la vida. Recordemos en Cuba sus manifestaciones más floridas en las preces antifonarias de las liturgias, así de blancos como de negros, en la controversia erótica y danzaria de la

---

<sup>132</sup> Citations in Spanish are from the first edition (Jesús Montero, 1940) of *Contrapunteo cubano*, which is the edition de Onís used to translate. In 1963, Ortiz revised the text.

<sup>133</sup> In de Onís's translation: “goes beyond the limits of a merely social problem and touches upon the fringes of poetry” (3).



rumba y en los contrapunteos versificados de la guajirada montuna y de la currencia afrocubana” (2).<sup>134</sup>

Ortiz’s mention of “la dramática dialéctica de la vida”<sup>135</sup> reinforces the idea of contrasts, which also structures the text.<sup>136</sup> The contrapuntal structure and continual references to opposing forces acknowledges the complexity of the themes Ortiz examines, without attempting to present clear conclusions. Fernando Coronil argues that the “interplay” between tobacco and sugar encourages “continuing reinterpretation” (xiii) and that “Ortiz’s historical perspective sought not closure, but ruptures and openings” (xiv). In this way, the text challenges traditional anthropological approaches. María Constanza Guzmán also sees a form of protest in the work, arguing that Ortiz intentionally distanced himself from a more scientific approach in order to challenge “Eurocentric categories and modes of thinking” (248).

In contrast to a more traditional academic text, the links between sections in *Contrapunteo cubano* are not always explicit, though at the beginning of the “supplementary chapters,” Ortiz does explain the relationship between these chapters and

---

<sup>134</sup> *Guajiros* and *curros* are italicized in de Onís’s translation: “This type of dialogued composition which carries the dramatic dialectic of life into the realm of art has always been a favorite of the ingenuous folk muses in poetry, music, dance, song, and drama. The outstanding examples of this in Cuba are the antiphonal prayers of the liturgies of both whites and blacks, the erotic controversy in dance measures of the rumba, and in the versified counterpoint of the unlettered *guajiros* and the Afro-Cuban *curros*” (3-4). This is one of few instances where Ortiz uses vocabulary that presents particular difficulty to the translator. De Onís tends to leave these in Spanish. Other examples of words left in Spanish in the translation are the types of tobacco such as *claros*, *colorado-claros*, etc. (22); terms describing the work of harvesting tobacco such as *matules*, *mancuerdas*, etc. (34). In most cases, the context clarifies the meaning of the terms.

<sup>135</sup> Although he does not mention Marx, considering that *Contrapunteo cubano* is a study of economic history, Ortiz’s reference to “la dramática dialéctica de la vida” recalls Marxist dialects.

<sup>136</sup> One of the definitions the Real Academia Española provides for “dialéctica” is: “En la tradición hegeliana, proceso de transformación en el que dos opuestos, tesis y antítesis, se resuelven en una forma superior o síntesis.” (“Dialéctica.” *Diccionario de la lengua española*. Real Academia Española. lema.rae.es/drae/. Web. 8 July 2015.)

the counterpoint established in the essay in the first part of the book. The chapters in the second part of the book, he writes, “deal with a basic theme of their own, but bear upon certain fundamental aspects of ‘Cuban Counterpoint’ and will be of interest to readers who care to go deeper into the subject” (97).<sup>137</sup> Attentive readers should be able to draw connections between the counterpoint, the concept of transculturation, and the chapters that present themes as diverse as: a description of tobacco seeds; the relationship between tobacco and cancer; the discovery of tobacco by the Europeans; the manufacture of tobacco in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the use of tobacco in the Antilles; a discussion of the history of terms associated with sugar; the sugar industry in the Americas; sugar and capitalism; slavery; rebellion; and the first transatlantic shipments of sugar.

Roberto González Echevarría argues that the different sections of *Contrapunteo cubano* work like the chapters in Julio Cortázar’s *Rayuela*, inviting readers to draw their own conclusions (158).<sup>138</sup> Indeed, many of the chapters of *Contrapunteo cubano* can be read independently, or in varying order, but they inform each other. González Echevarría argues that *Contrapunteo cubano* is an avant-garde work (157), and the most strikingly literary, avant-garde aspect of the book is its structure (159). Like Coronil, Echevarría has noted that with *Contrapunteo cubano*, Ortiz moved away the positivist thinking of his earlier works.<sup>139</sup> *Contrapunteo cubano*, Echevarría writes, is

---

<sup>137</sup> “Son a modo de capítulos complementarios al mismo; con tema propio y sustantivo, pero relacionados con ciertos aspectos fundamentales del Contrapunteo y convenientes para el lector que quiera ahondar en ellos” (135).

<sup>138</sup> Celina Manzoni also compares *Contrapunteo cubano* to *Rayuela* (154).

<sup>139</sup> Referring to works such as *Los negros brujos*, González Echevarría writes, “el primer Ortiz era un determinista biológico y un darwinista social....sus primeros trabajos representan, por su tono y orientación filosófica, todo lo que la vanguardia rechazó: el positivismo, el racionalismo, el progreso según lo definían los ideales políticos y sociales de la República” (154-55).

[un] texto con que Ortiz, en vez de ciencia, hará literatura... Ortiz sabe, y los guiños al lector (que son muchos) lo hacen cómplice, que las cosas no pueden ser tan simétricas y mecánicas, que el contrapunteo es un juego conceptista—barroco, gracianesco si se quiere—del que se desprenden verdades que deben interpretarse a un nivel poético (156).

Gustavo Pérez Firmat points out that “[l]ooking upon Ortiz primarily as a scientist is somewhat like looking upon Dante primarily as a theologian—not a fruitless perspective, to be sure, but undoubtedly a limiting one....Without an appreciation for the role of fictional or literary artifice in his works, one cannot accurately gauge Ortiz’s achievement” (19). Although *Contrapunteo cubano* has often been evaluated as a literary work, the prologues in the book and Ortiz’s correspondence with Bronislaw Malinowski make clear that the author sought to dialogue with other anthropologists. His primary goal was not to produce literature. However, the structure of the book as a counterpoint allows Ortiz to examine the history of Cuba from multiple angles,<sup>140</sup> drawing on Cuban traditions in order to invite reflection rather than present a linear argument with clear conclusions, and this functions to reinforce Ortiz’s criticism of traditional anthropology.

Ortiz did not write *Contrapunteo cubano* with only the Cuban market in mind. Santí argues convincingly that, given Ortiz’s interest in influencing U.S. policy towards Cuba and because one of the themes of *Contrapunteo cubano* is Cuba’s economic dependence, it is reasonable to believe that Ortiz was thinking about the U.S. reception of the book when he wrote the text (52). Ortiz’s history of writing on Cuban-U.S. relations

---

<sup>140</sup> In addition, for González Echevarría and Pérez Firmat, *Contrapunteo cubano* performs Cuban identity rather than simply examining national identity from outside- a task which would be impossible anyway. “El *Contrapunteo* es... performance....se hace cubano al ser él mismo contrapuntístico” (González Echevarría 161-2). “In Ortiz’s work in general...the distance between instance and explanation, or that between object and subject, collapses. When Mr. Cuba speaks about Cuba, the result is pasty tautology” (Pérez Firmat 19).

and the two years he spent as a voluntary exile in the U.S.<sup>141</sup> would support this argument. In 1919, Ortiz wrote “La crisis política cubana (sus causas y remedios),” in which he recommended strengthening diplomatic relations with the U.S. He dedicated the essay to Woodrow W. Wilson, which Santí sees as evidence that Ortiz wanted a voice in U.S./Cuban relations (39). In 1931, during his exile in the U.S., Ortiz gave a talk on U.S. responsibility in the Cuban economy at the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America. Among other topics he discussed, Ortiz reacted to protectionist U.S. economic policies that were damaging the Cuban economy. According to Carlos del Toro González, Ortiz gave the talk in English and the text was later published in Spanish as “Las responsabilidades de los Estados Unidos en los males de Cuba” (142). Around the same time, in a letter written in 1931, Ortiz referred to his need to “educate [the U.S. public] about the most subtle aspects of the Cuba problem.”<sup>142</sup> The following year, at an event in Washington, D.C. organized by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Ortiz argued for “una mutua inteligencia” between the U.S. and Cuba (del Toro González 144) and in 1934, he repeated his concern with U.S. responsibilities in Cuba, mentioning the Good Neighbor policy in an article titled “El entierro de la enmieda Platt” (del Toro González 146-47). In the late 1940s, the period during which the English translation of *Contrapunteo cubano* was published, Ortiz continued to write and speak about cooperation between the U.S. and Cuba. González argues that Ortiz was

---

<sup>141</sup> As a way of expressing his dissatisfaction with the government of Gerardo Machado Morales (Del Toro González 141).

<sup>142</sup> My translation of “‘educar’ a esta gente en los aspectos más sutiles del problema de Cuba.” Letter from Fernando Ortiz to José Ma. Chacón y Calvo. 12 March 1931. Cited in Suarez.

particularly interested in inter-American cooperation: “Destaca la realidad y perspectiva de la posible intervencionalidad muy estrecha entre todos los sistemas políticos y sociales de América, que podría cuajar en una verdadera interdependencia panamericana anti-oligárquica para la prosperidad recíproca del Norte y del Sur” (148).

Ortiz had long been a vocal critic of the sugar industry and U.S. economic interests in Cuba. In his contribution to *Geografía Universal* (1936), for example, Ortiz called Cuba “esclava del azúcar” (Santí 60). Yet just a year after the first edition of *Contrapunteo cubano* was published, Ortiz began thinking about revising the text for later editions in Spanish, omitting sections that dealt with sugar in order to focus on tobacco and the concept of transculturation. In 1941, Ortiz wrote to Malinowski, telling him, “pienso recomponer los materiales del libro, o mejor dicho, hacer uno nuevo con el título de ‘El tabaco habano,’ de manera que el tabaco sea el tema central y el azúcar solamente un tema de comparación en los dos o tres capítulos que tratan de la conducta social del tabaco en Cuba.”<sup>143</sup> In fact, a revised edition of *Contrapunteo cubano* was not published until 1963<sup>144</sup> and, while Ortiz eliminated some pages, the changes he made generally involved expanding the text. These edits did not exclusively emphasize the theme of tobacco nor did they significantly alter the structure of the counterpoint.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> Letter from Ortiz to Malinowski. 11 Feb. 1941. Santí 793.

<sup>144</sup> In 1963, two editions were published, by the Editora del Consejo Nacional de Cultura in Havana and the Universidad de las Villas (Santí 105).

<sup>145</sup> According to Santí, in the 1963 edition “Ortiz corrigió erratas y estilo, eliminó repeticiones, traspuso pasajes, y suprimió y añadió páginas enteras, tanto en el ensayo delantero como en nueve de los capítulos adicionales” (105).

De Onís's translation of *Contrapunteo cubano* generally corresponds to the 1940 version in Spanish, which was the only published edition available at that time.<sup>146</sup> In the translation published by Knopf and in later editions of the translation (including the edition published by Duke University Press in 1995), sections on sugar and the history of slavery in the Americas are omitted from the second half of the book. These omitted sections appear in the first and revised editions in Spanish.<sup>147</sup> In de Onís's translation, Part II is titled "The Ethnography and Transculturation of Havana Tobacco and the Beginnings of Sugar in America," dropping the reference to "la esclavitud de negros en America" that completes the title of the original Part II. It is unclear whether the decision to omit sections on sugar was Ortiz's or de Onís's choice, or whether the omissions were stipulated by Knopf.<sup>148</sup> However, given his comments to Malinowski about wanting to

---

<sup>146</sup> Santí maintains that de Onís used the 1940 edition for her translation (105). Some phrases in English, however, seem to correspond to later editions in Spanish. For example, de Onís's translation opens with "Centuries ago," despite the fact that Ortiz did not add "hace siglos" to the first sentence of the book until later editions (beginning in 1963). These types of inconsistencies between the 1940 Jesús Montero edition and de Onís's translation suggest that Ortiz may have sent his translator a slightly modified manuscript.

<sup>147</sup> The sections of the 1940 edition in Spanish that were omitted in the translation are: "De las noticias que dio un jesuita acerca del tabaco y sus virtudes," which included long citations from a text written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Father Bernabé Cobo; "Del tabaco y el cáncer"; "De la copla andaluza sobre el tabaco habano," a one sentence reference to a nineteenth-century Spanish poem about Cuban tobacco; "Del vocablo cañal y de otros del lenguaje azucarero," which discusses varied Spanish and Latin American vocabulary associated with "cañaveral"; "Del inicio de la trata de negros esclavos en América, en su relación con los ingenios de Azúcar y del vituperio que cayó sobre Bartolomé de las Casas," primarily comprised of citations from de las Casas' *Historia de las Indias*, in which he argues in favor of slavery and substantial excerpts from José Antonio Saco's *Historia de la Esclavitud de la Raza Africana en el Nuevo Mundo y en especial en los países Américo-Hispanos* on the history of slavery; "De las tres presencias del colonato en la escena azucarera de cuba"; "De la cañafistola o cañandongá" and "Del 'tabacano' y el fumador," two sections focusing on the etymology of words associated with sugar and tobacco; "De los 'tubanos' de tabaco," in which Ortiz cites Tirso de Molina on tobacco, "De la manufactura del Tabaco habano en 1850"; "De la primera rebelión de negros que hubo en América"; "De la remolacha enemiga"; "Del 'tabaco habano', que es el mejor del mundo, y del 'sello de garantía' de su legitimidad," the final chapter of the original. The translation ends with the section on "How Havana Tobacco Embarked upon Its Conquest of the World."

<sup>148</sup> It seems less likely that the publishing company had requested the omissions because Knopf editor Herbert Weinstock had approved a complete translation of *Contrapunteo cubano*. Reader's report by

revise the book in Spanish, it seems that Ortiz was most interested in placing greater emphasis on the concept of transculturation, through a discussion of the history of tobacco, and less on the sugar industry.

The coining of the term “transculturación” was, in part, a reaction to lingering colonialist attitudes in anthropology. Ortiz sought to replace “acculturation,” a term he felt did not sufficiently account for the complex and multi-directional movement of cultural transformations. He introduces the neologism transculturation in the second half of *Contrapunteo cubano*:

Entendemos que el vocablo **transculturación** expresa mejor las diferentes fases del proceso transitivo de una cultura a otra, porque éste no consiste solamente en adquirir una distinta cultura, que es lo que en rigor indica la voz inglesa **aculturación**, sino que el proceso implica también necesariamente la pérdida o desarraigo de una cultura precedente, lo que pudiera decirse una **desculturación**, y, además, significa la consiguiente creación de nuevos fenómenos culturales que pudieran denominarse de **neoculturación** (142).<sup>149</sup>

Aware that a group of anthropologists including Melville Herskovits<sup>150</sup> had promoted the term “acculturation,” Ortiz sent Herskovits a copy of *Contrapunteo cubano* when it was published in Spanish. On October 29, 1940, Herskovits responded, arguing that the

---

Herbert Weinstock and Arthur Preston Whitaker, 2 Feb. 1945. AK961.7. HRC. I have not found correspondence between de Onís and Ortiz.

<sup>149</sup> In de Onís’s translation: “I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring one culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a *deculturation*. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called *neoculturation*” (102-3).

<sup>150</sup> In addition to Ortiz’s objection to “acculturation,” Santí suggests that Ortiz may have been inclined to criticize Herskovits’ work because the latter did not even mention Ortiz in his studies about blacks in the New World, despite the fact that the topic was one on which Ortiz had done extensive work (87).

definition of acculturation did not differ from that of transculturation and that the established term should not be replaced:

I am particularly interested in your suggestion that the word “acculturation” should be replaced by “transculturation.” It is a thought-provoking proposal, though I wonder whether or not the term “acculturation” is not so firmly established, and its meaning well enough understood, that it will be somewhat difficult to substitute for it the new term which you have proposed...Certainly, it is necessary for me to enter a very strong demur to the implications of the term “acculturation” advanced on pages xvi-xvii by Malinowski. It is significant, I think, that he does not document this passage; certainly in our use of the term in this country there is no implication of handing down a superior civilization to a ‘savage’ folk... If anybody has been guilty of discussing cultural contact in terms of “inculcation”- to use Malinowski’s own word- it has been his own students writing of “cultural contact” rather than those of us in this country who are concerned with the scientific problem of acculturation.<sup>151</sup>

Although Herskovits emphasizes the “far-reaching importance” of Ortiz’s work, the fact that he directs his criticism at Malinowski and not at Ortiz undermines Ortiz’s agency. In terms of how the North American group of anthropologists had previously defined acculturation, however, Herskovits’ defense was valid. Santí cites a 1936 definition of the term by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits, which reveals that “acculturation” referred to changes in the culture of both groups when there was cultural contact (Santí 85). In practice, however, “acculturation” was primarily used to describe colonized people’s adoption of values and practices of the dominant culture. Silvia Spitta points this out: “Even if ‘acculturation’ initially was used to refer to the process of mutual interaction and change in cultures that come into contact with one another, it has nevertheless been used mostly to stress the one-way imposition of the dominant culture” (3).

---

<sup>151</sup> Letter from Herskovits to Ortiz. 29 Oct. 1940. Santí 786.



Ortiz's coining of transculturation sought to correct this inequality, and emphasize that cultural transformations affect imperial powers as well as colonized and enslaved peoples. Ortiz may also have sought to replace an English term with one that worked in his own language. Santí cites Diana Iznaga, who notes that the prefix "a-" in "aculturación" signifies a lack of something and that "trans-" is more accurate in Spanish (86). However, as Mark Millington argues, etymological justification is not enough to explain the coining of the term. Ortiz clearly wanted to distance himself from another tradition ("Transculturation: Taking Stock" 224). Catherine Davies writes that "Ortiz was fully aware of writing in an institutional void, which he attempted to remedy" (153). Davies notes that while social anthropology had institutional and financial support in the English-speaking world, this was not the case for scholars writing in Spanish (153). Ortiz's creation of a new term, and his work in general, was an attempt to begin to change this inequality, though, as we shall see, this aspect was largely ignored in translation.

According to Santí, Malinowski had his own motives for endorsing the term "transculturation." The Polish anthropologist, who primarily worked in Great Britain, was at odds with Herskovits' North American school of anthropology (Santí 87). By the time Ortiz met Malinowski in 1939, there were clear ideological differences between Malinowski's British school of anthropology and the North American camp that promoted the term "acculturation." Malinowski's endorsement of the term was significant. At the time of the publication of *Contrapunteo cubano*, he was perhaps the most celebrated living anthropologist (Santí 50). Ortiz enjoyed considerable prestige

within Cuba, but outside of Latin America he was not well-known (Coronil xxx). Ortiz emphasizes Malinowski's endorsement when he introduces "transculturation" in the second half of the book: "Sometido el propuesto neologismo, *transculturación*, a la autoridad irrecusable de Bronislaw Malinowski, el gran maestro contemporáneo de etnografía y sociología, ha merecido su inmediata aprobación. Con tan eminente padrino, no vacilamos en lanzar el neologismo susodicho" (142).<sup>152</sup>

In addition to mentioning Malinowski in the body of the text, Ortiz modified the structure of *Contrapunteo cubano* in response to comments Malinowski made regarding the ways in which an English-speaking audience would read the book. Malinowski had suggested that Ortiz divide the book into two parts rather than present the essays in the second section as appendices because "[t]he gringo reader is always likely to treat 'appendices' almost as appendages, as something, that is, which has no direct bearing on the main subject. This refers primarily to the American reading public, but I would give the same advice to anyone publishing a book in England."<sup>153</sup> As a result, Ortiz changed the classification of appendices to "capítulos complementarios," which de Onís translated as "supplementary chapters" (97). Because he made these changes before the first edition of *Contrapunteo cubano* was published in Cuba in 1940, it is clear that Ortiz had always planned to publish the book in English translation, though he had hoped to further revise

---

<sup>152</sup> After having received proofs of *Contrapunteo cubano* from the printer in Cuba, Ortiz sought Malinowski's endorsement, and probably incorporated his suggestions into the first edition. On Nov. 25, 1939, he had written to Malinowski saying that he was sending him "las primeras pruebas de página que acaba de entregarme la imprenta de mi ensayo sobre los contrastes del tabaco y el azúcar...En éstas explico mi preferencia por el neologismo [transculturación] y acudo a la autoridad de Ud. Para su 'bautizo,' página 5. Todo ello queda sometido a su competente y generoso juicio." (Santí 767).

<sup>153</sup> Letter from Malinowski to Ortiz. 5 March 1940. Santí 774.

the book for translation. On October 25, 1940, he wrote to Malinowski, telling him, “pienso que para la traducción del libro tendría yo que reordenarlo suprimiendo la forma de capítulos complementarios y componiendo con el Contrapunteo y dichos capítulos un tomo mejor organizado.”<sup>154</sup> It was seven years before the English translation was published by Knopf (in 1947) and Ortiz had not yet published another edition in Spanish. Rather than being the volume Ortiz had imagined in English, the translation basically corresponded to the 1940 Jesús Montero first edition.

Ortiz had Malinowski write a short essay for *Contrapunteo cubano*, which was important for giving the text weight in international academic circles and in the global publishing market. Coronil writes that “[i]n all likelihood [Ortiz] felt that the endorsement of a metropolitan authority of Malinowski’s stature would help gain him recognition” (Coronil xxx). Santí cites letters that suggest that Malinowski had written the essay as an appendix, which Ortiz moved to the introduction,<sup>155</sup> probably to make Malinowski’s endorsement more visible. In his essay, Malinowski categorizes Ortiz as “a ‘true’ functionalist,” a member of a school of anthropology closely linked to Malinowski’s work (xiii). Ortiz accepted the label despite the fact that according to Coronil, who cites Julio le Riverend, Ortiz “repeatedly asserted that he was not [a functionalist]” (xxxv).<sup>156</sup> Coronil argues that Ortiz was willing to be incorrectly

---

<sup>154</sup> Letter from Ortiz to Malinowski. 25 Oct. 1940. Santí 784.

<sup>155</sup> Letter from Malinowski to Ortiz. 9 June 1940. Santí 780. Malinowski wrote the text in English, and Ortiz translated it into Spanish (Santí 53). It is not clear whether de Onís translated Malinowski’s essay back into English, or whether she had access to the original essay (the latter is far more likely, since Ortiz had a copy of Malinowski’s essay in English, and de Onís would have been able to contact the author).

<sup>156</sup> Santí writes, “Ese interés de Malinowski por impugnar la escuela americana es lo que explica, además, su deseo de afiliar a Ortiz al funcionalismo británico, no obstante toda la evidencia en contra” (89). Catherine Davies, however, argues that Ortiz’s work has much in common with functionalism (147).

categorized as a functionalist “in return for the intellectual acknowledgment of a book that sought to counter metropolitan anthropology and the imperial imposition of labels in Cuba” (xxxv). In accepting Malinowski’s labelling him as a functionalist, Ortiz seemed to make certain concessions in exchange for the assurance that his book would receive serious consideration within his field. *Contrapunteo cubano* represents a critique of the colonial European roots of anthropology both through the coining of the term transculturation and through the structure of the book as counterpoint. In order for Ortiz to voice his dissent, he had to engage with those scholars and publishers with the greatest international influence. He also recognized that, in order to reach an international audience, he would have to have his text translated into English. According to Casanova, translation “constitutes the principal means of access to the literary world for all writers outside the center” (133).<sup>157</sup> For literary texts, translation into English functions as a gateway for translation into other languages and is often considered necessary for building a broad readership. Writers of scholarly texts may be less concerned with commercial markets, as their success does not depend on attracting a great number of readers. They do, however, seek validation from internationally recognized authorities and scholars who work in languages considered peripheral often depend on translation.

In 1940, shortly after the first edition of *Contrapunteo cubano* was published in Cuba,<sup>158</sup> Ortiz wrote to Malinowski asking him to recommend a publisher in New York

---

<sup>157</sup> Casanova argues that translation into French functions as an entry point into the global market. In more recent years, however, translation into English is more often considered to be a requirement for international recognition. And because Ortiz specifically wished to dialogue with anthropologists in the U.S., he certainly depended on translation into English.

<sup>158</sup> On April 30, 1940, Ortiz had told Malinowski, “el libro se sigue imprimiendo, ya con regularidad y espero, muy en breve, mandarle todo lo que a Ud. le falta.” Letter from Ortiz to Malinowski. Santi 779.

for the English translation.<sup>159</sup> Malinowski first suggested a number of publishers,<sup>160</sup> but they eventually settled on Knopf. The translation into English of Ortiz's book was marketed and interpreted differently than the original version in Spanish and Ortiz made decisions about the prologue and structure of the book with an English-speaking readership in mind. In the first Cuban edition, Malinowski's essay ("introducción") appears after a prologue ("a manera de prólogo") by Herminio Portell Vilá, an important Cuban historian, which emphasizes the anti-imperialist message in *Contrapunteo cubano*. Portell Vilá writes and de Onís translates,

[Ortiz] proves in detail and incontrovertibly that sugar cane, the industry that exploits it, the system that has developed around it, and so on, represent something foreign to our country, completely accidental, like a parasitic body, which although attached to us for centuries, still serves foreign rather than national interests, as though its loyalty to its other-world origin made it impossible for it ever to shed its characterizing traits of exploitation, unfair privilege, and protectionism (xviii).

Portell Vilá also argues that decisions made "by the secretary of agriculture of the United States.... [and] the president of that country" had hurt Cubans (xix). Unlike Portell Vilá, Malinowski largely ignores the problem of the sugar industry in his introduction. He acknowledges this aspect of the book then dismisses it with comments such as "with reference to the political implications inherent in the basic problem of this book, Dr. Ortiz has refrained from any unwarranted judgements" (xv). Instead, Malinowski discusses the benefits of close ties between Cuba and the U.S., appealing directly to the ideology of the

---

<sup>159</sup> In the same letter, Ortiz sent Malinowski a copy of *Contrapunteo cubano* and asks for a publisher in New York. Letter from Ortiz to Malinowski. 25 October 1940. Santí 784.

<sup>160</sup> Yale University Press, Chicago University Press, Harcourt Brace, W.W. Norton, and Viking Press. He does not mention Knopf. However, given that Knopf was the leading publisher of translated Latin American literature during this time, it is not surprising that Ortiz came into contact with that particular publisher. Letter from Malinowski to Ortiz. 1 Nov. 1940. Santí 790.

Good Neighbor policy: “Cuba, together with Mexico, is the closest of the Latin-American nations in which the ‘good neighbor policy’ should be set up with all the intelligence, foresight, and generosity of which statesmen and even the captains of finance of the United States are sometimes capable” (xv). In the English translation, Malinowski’s essay precedes Portell Vilá’s. When Ortiz revised *Contrapunteo Cubano* for the second edition (1963), he eliminated Portell Vilá’s prologue entirely, so this is not included in subsequent editions in Spanish (Santí 26). Both the prologue by Vilá and Malinowski’s essay were noted prominently on the cover of Knopf’s edition,<sup>161</sup> though later editions of the translation, such as Duke University’s 1995 edition, mention only Malinowski on the cover (both texts appear in the translation). The decision to open the book with Malinowski’s essay and move Vilá’s to second place were consistent with Ortiz’s desire to highlight his comments on transculturation, deemphasizing the criticism of the sugar industry.

Malinowski’s introductory essay would have appealed to Knopf, as the publishing company was then marketing Latin American texts as ways of teaching the U.S. public about Latin American traditions. Knopf published *Cuban Counterpoint* just two years after Roosevelt’s Undersecretary Sumner Welles had written a brochure couched in the rhetoric of the Good Neighbor Policy promoting the publisher’s new translations.<sup>162</sup>

Knopf generally avoided promoting ideas that could be considered controversial in the

---

<sup>161</sup> For the cover of the first edition of the translation, see Armando Chávez-Rivera. "Fellows Find: When Knopf Inc. published a master work by Fernando Ortiz: A strange hurricane." *Cultural Compass*. Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin, 27 Nov. 2012. Web. 6 July 2015. <<http://blog.hrc.utexas.edu/2012/11/27/fellows-find-fernando-ortiz/>>

<sup>162</sup> See introductory chapter.

U.S., so it is unlikely the publishing company was interested in Ortiz's work for its criticism of imperialism. Rather, they probably saw *Contrapunteo cubano* as a text that could be marketed in accordance with the Good Neighbor policy. In addition, the editors at Knopf were motivated by the cultural capital associated with publishing major works of nonfiction. Editor Herbert Weinstock wrote in his reader's report for *Contrapunteo cubano*,

[W]ith this book and [Gilberto] Freyre's *Casa-Grande e Senzala* [translated by Samuel Putnam and published by Knopf in 1946], we should have on our list two of the great works of highly readable Latin American scholarship. I am still after José Vasconcelos' gigantic autobiography—with which, as a third book, I should rest content that, fiction aside, no other publisher could better our representation of the best nonfiction that Portuguese and Spanish America have produced.<sup>163</sup>

The translation is structured slightly differently than the 1940 Cuban edition and includes paratexts that do not appear in editions in Spanish.<sup>164</sup> These are: an index, a glossary, an appendix with the “Prayer of the Righteous Judge,”<sup>165</sup> and a list of illustrations. Some of the images in the translated edition do not appear in the Cuban edition or in later editions in Spanish. These include pictures of sugar mills (40-41) and images of mid-nineteenth century cigarette package labels (135-6).<sup>166</sup> It is not clear whether Ortiz, de Onís, or her editors found these images.

---

<sup>163</sup> 2 Feb 1945. AK961.7. HRC.

<sup>164</sup> They appear in neither the 1940 Cuban edition nor in Cátedra's 2002 edition, based on a 1999 edition by Ortiz's daughter María Fernández Ortiz Herrera and published in Madrid by EditoCubaEspaña (Santi 106).

<sup>165</sup> The prayer does not appear in the Spanish. De Onís footnotes Ortiz's mention of it and includes the text of the prayer in an appendix, most likely because it had appeared in her translation of Ciro Alegría's *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, which she notes (310). This is the only footnote and only appendix in the text.

<sup>166</sup> See Appendix D for a sample of images included in the translation but not in the 1940 Cuban edition.

In general, *Cuban Counterpoint* was marketed and read in the U.S. as an informative text on Cuban customs and economic history. In a document in Knopf's archives labelled "blurb on *Cuban Counterpoint*," the historian Samuel Bemis wrote, "This exquisite and charming essay, so wittily balanced in imagery and analysis, defies classification. It reflects the complex variety of Cuba's churning culture and piquant place in the world; her anthropology, sociology, ecology, economy, politics, diplomacy, yes even landscape."<sup>167</sup> The cover advertised the book as a "fascinating story of how two of the world's most important crops have shaped Cuban society, economics, politics, and folklore—by Cuba's foremost humanitarian scholar." The description of Ortiz as a "humanitarian scholar" likely steered U.S. readers away from any idea of pure anthropological scholarship. Reviewers' evaluations of the translation corresponded to the description of the text as a historical text. In *World Affairs*, for example, in a list of brief descriptions of new books, the following summary appeared: "A translation of an interesting treatise on the influence of tobacco and sugar on Cuban folk-lore, life and history" (Wilgus 152). In a 1947 *New York Times* review, E. B. Garside noted that "thousands of tourists visit Havana annually" and that "Cuba, embarrassing as this may sound, is an economic dominion of the United States. Yet, by and large, Americans are supremely ignorant of Cuban folkways and history. This deplorable condition Senor Ortiz strives mightily to dispel." Yet, although he acknowledges U.S. economic interests in Cuba, the language Garside uses to describe *Cuban Counterpoint* seems to subtly dismiss the weight of Ortiz's argument. According to Garside, Ortiz "whimsically personalizes

---

<sup>167</sup> Letter from Bemis to Alfred Knopf. Blurb on *Cuban Counterpoint*. No date. AK961.7. HRC.



sugar,” and whereas the “existing studies of Cuba by foreigners...cover everything measurable,” Ortiz’s text expresses “the immeasurables that are so important in a Spanish-American milieu.” The review, therefore, while acknowledging the counterpoint, transculturation, and criticism of imperialism, does not portray *Cuban Counterpoint* as a text that presents a significant challenge to evaluations of economic history. The mention of the “immeasurables,” for example, is dismissive and suggests that Latin American scholars do not work with quantifiable terms and are thus alien to serious science.

Knopf sought the opinion of scholars in the U.S. when considering *Contrapunteo cubano* for publication in translation. Arthur P. Whitaker, a professor of Latin American history at the University of Pennsylvania, sent Knopf a reader’s report that included his opinion on a possible translation. In his evaluation, Whitaker noted the importance of Malinowski’s introduction. He writes:

On the credit side of the ledger are the encomiums lavished on the book by Portell Vilá and Malinowski in their introductions to it; and their opinions carry considerable weight, since the former is an outstanding Cuban historian and the latter is a distinguished anthropologist. On the same side of the ledger is the very favorable review of the book in the *Revista de Historia de America* (No. 10, December 1940, p. 152-154) by Silvio Zavala, a talented young Mexican historian. On the other hand, there is a devastating review of it in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (Vol. XXI, No. 3, August 1941, pp. 459-61) by Irene A. Wright, who is a leading authority on the history of Cuba in the colonial period, to which a large part of this book relates.

Wright’s review was indeed harsh. She charges Ortiz with a failure to do “real research,” “real development” and “real work,” is horrified by the complete lack of footnotes (“not a significant footnote—indeed, no footnotes at all!”) and the “table of contents misnamed ‘índice’” (459-60). She makes these charges despite the fact that

Ortiz explains why he does not include notes: “The ideas outlined in this work and the facts upon which they are based could be substantiated by full and systematic documentation in the form of notes; but in view of the nature of the work I have preferred to add some supplementary chapters” (97).<sup>168</sup> Wright does not consider the structure of the counterpoint, dismisses Ortiz’s work as poor research, and concludes her review by suggesting a student “take up the subject” (461). She also laments Ortiz’s inclusion of long citations: “there should be an end to the reprinting by presidents of academies of history<sup>169</sup> of whole chapters out of other people’s books” (459).

On this final point Whitaker concurs: “a very large part of Part II (p. 135-475), which pretends to give the historical data supporting the conclusions set forth in Part I, consists of many long quotations from familiar (and in many cases unreliable) books published many years ago and easily accessible in any good library.” However, Whitaker continues, the purpose of *Contrapunteo cubano* is to open discussion on the subjects of the book, and he notes that Malinowski says the book is “ideal” for this purpose in the introduction.<sup>170</sup> Whitaker, unlike Wright, believes that “Ortiz’s book is extremely interesting, stimulating, and valuable to specialists,” but ultimately advises against publishing an English translation of *Contrapunteo cubano*:

I doubt whether a straight translation of this book into English is advisable. The principal objections are: (1) Its style is so “tropical” and, to Anglo-Saxon ears, so artificial that I can not conceive of it’s being

---

<sup>168</sup> “Las ideas contenidas en este Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar y los hechos en que aquéllos se apoyan podrían ser acompañados de una amplísima y sistemática documentación distribuida en notas. La índole de este trabajo nos excusará si no la hemos aportado a estas páginas” (135). The second part of this paragraph, which further explains the supplementary chapters, is condensed in the translation.

<sup>169</sup> Ortiz was president of the Academia de la Historia de Cuba.

<sup>170</sup> Arthur Whitaker’s report on *Contrapunteo cubano* sent to Herbert Weinstock. 19 April 1945. AK961.7. HRC.

rendered into tolerable English without departing very widely from the original. The ‘counterpoint’....grows so wearisome by incessant repetition that I doubt whether more than a handful of readers in this country would be able to stomach it. We just don’t write that way- or read that way either.

Whitaker goes on to argue that *Contrapunteo cubano* could not be used as a textbook for history classes because of criticisms such as Wright’s. For Whitaker, then, the book would have no audience in English: historians could not use it, and people otherwise interested in the topic would be a select group who would likely already be able to read the original Spanish. He adds, “For all the noise we have been making about the Good Neighbors for years past, there are still only a handful of us who are willing to take the time to read serious books about them.” Given the failure of most translated Latin American texts to achieve commercial success in the U.S. during this period, Whitaker’s pessimistic evaluation was perhaps accurate. Whitaker suggests that instead of a translation, Knopf should publish an adapted, abridged version of the book in English. He advises the publisher,

[The text] should be highly condensed- for example, the first part could be cut from 131 pages to about 60 pages, and the second part from 340 pages to about 140 pages... Little if anything that is substantial would have to be omitted. In the first part you could get rid of a lot of tropical rhetoric and cloying figures of speech and tiresome antiphonies; and in the second part a lot of space could be saved by omitting the many long quotations from Oviedo and other chroniclers with which that section is padded.<sup>171</sup>

Weinstock, however, felt that the book was publishable in a complete translation.

In a report submitted a few months before Whitaker’s, the editor notes that although Ortiz

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

had “modestly suggested” that they translate only Part One,<sup>172</sup> Weinstock believes that Knopf should publish the second half, saying he read the book “without the slightest diminution of interest.”<sup>173</sup> Although some sections in the second half of the book are omitted in the English translation, Knopf’s edition includes enough of the text—all of the first half and most of the second half—to give the reader an idea of the general structure of the text, its variety of themes and literary references. After de Onís had submitted her translation, Weinstock reported on the version in English: “What we now have is one of Mrs. De Onís’s superior translations- of the entire first part of the Spanish book plus the most interesting and valuable sections of the second part.... I find it as readable, as informative, and as colorful in English and in Spanish, and have no editorial suggestions, large or small, to make.”<sup>174</sup>

Not surprisingly, given Knopf’s marketing of the book and Malinowski’s prominent introduction, reviewers in the U.S. generally avoided mentioning any way in which *Cuban Counterpoint* criticized the destructive power of the sugar industry or the role of the U.S. One of the few exceptions was a review by Eric Williams, a noted Caribbean historian who had published a book titled *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) and later became prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Williams’ extensive quotations from de Onís’s translation include passages such as, “Cuba will never really be independent until it can free itself from the coils of colonial economy that fattens on its

---

<sup>172</sup> This contradicts Ortiz’s comments to Malinowski that he wanted to focus on transculturation, as he introduces the concept in the second half of the book.

<sup>173</sup> Reader’s report by Herbert Weinstock and Arthur Preston Whitaker, 2 Feb. 1945. AK961.7. HRC.

<sup>174</sup> 1 May 1946. AK961.7. HRC.

soil but strangles its inhabitants and winds itself about the palm tree of our republican coat of arms, converting it into the sign of the Yankee dollar” (67). Williams’ personal history and his research, however, allowed him to look at the U.S. from the outside and his interpretation of the translation was not typical of reviews published in the U.S. Most do not focus on the criticism of the sugar industry or mention Portell Vilá’s incendiary prologue, though one indignant scholar complains about the “obsequious prologue by the notorious anti-American and anti-Catholic, Sr. Herminio Portell Vilá” (Thorning 401).

In addition to glossing over Ortiz’s critique of imperialism, the first reviewers of the translated edition of *Contrapunteo cubano* tended to either ignore the concept of transculturation or criticize the term. In a piece published in *The Geographical Journal*, one author<sup>175</sup> wrote, “The reviewer devoutly hopes that no osmosis of culture will allow this word to acculturate itself outside Yale University,<sup>176</sup> and that it will not transculturate to this country.” In the *L.A. Times*, Don Guzmán wrote that *Cuban Counterpoint* “expounds the theory of ‘transculturation’ which may prove a bit obscure to some readers but Ortiz does not belabor that too much and it will not obstruct reading pleasure.” The impression that this reviewer has that Ortiz does not emphasize—or “belabor”—the concept transculturation is surprising. Without transculturation as a unifying theme, the chapters on the various aspects of the history of tobacco, as well as the drawings and many of the literary references, would not seem coherent. Given the reactions of reviewers of the translation, it is perhaps not surprising that the term transculturation has

---

<sup>175</sup> A. G. H. A. See bibliography.

<sup>176</sup> Malinowski was a professor at Yale.

not circulated as widely in English as “transculturación” has in Spanish.<sup>177</sup> Even Malinowski, despite promising, in his introduction to *Cuban Counterpoint*, that he “would appropriate the new expression ... acknowledging its paternity, and use it constantly and loyally whenever [he] had occasion to do so” (ix), barely used “transculturation” in his own work.<sup>178</sup> In general, the term did not have great influence in later anthropological studies (Santí 91). Even anthropologists writing in Spanish, and those who have worked on related topics—such as Nestor Garcia Canclini, whose theory of hybridity has conceptual overlaps with transculturation—do not mention Ortiz (Coronil xxxvi). References to transculturation have largely been limited to those disciplines that specifically seek to question models that define the world according to simple dichotomies such as north/south and center/periphery. These fields—postcolonial studies, Latin American studies, and translation studies—will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Besides generally rejecting the term transculturation, most U.S. reviewers did not respond favorably to the structure of the counterpoint, which they interpreted as unfocused. They did not consider the relationship between the structure of the book and theme, despite the fact that Ortiz reminds readers that he was not seeking to present a straightforward scientific argument: “No debe olvidarse el carácter esquemático de este

---

<sup>177</sup> A country nonspecific Google search reveals that the term “transculturation” appears 169,000 times and “transculturación” 187,000 in Spanish. And because a greater percentage of the web is in English than in any other language, this difference is more significant than it appears. The term has never fared well in English. Searches performed in google.com/ncr on 29 January 2015.

<sup>178</sup> “[E]l propio Malinowski apenas usó el término de Ortiz en sus trabajos posteriores, aun cuando [Ralph] Beals también admite que la gran mayoría de los estudios de aculturación asumen que el proceso de contacto cultural no es recíproco sino uni-direccional” (Santí 91).

contrapunteo, que impide los prolongados análisis” (372). Thorning, for example, in a failure to see how the structure of counterpoint functions, complains of lack of development in certain chapters: “Some subjects are touched upon rather than elucidated. Readers would enjoy a fuller discussion of the low nicotine content of Cuban cigars” (401). Others, even when praising *Cuban Counterpoint*, remind readers that the book is not typical of scholarly texts. Paul Lewison, who understands that the book “is not (and was probably not intended to be), a systematic treatment of its subjects,” argues that *Cuban Counterpoint* will be valuable to other researchers “in spite of its lack of the merely formal and mechanical attributes of scholarship” (291).

*Contrapunteo cubano* was an innovative work within the tradition of the Latin American essay.<sup>179</sup> However, this does not discard the fact that Ortiz’s style is also tied to the tradition of writing in Spanish. In *Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education*, Robert B. Kaplan argued that “logic (in the popular, rather than the logician’s sense of the word) which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of a culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture” (12). English writing, according to Kaplan, is characterized by linearity: “The paragraph begins with a general statement of its content, and then carefully develops that statement by a long series of rather specific illustrations. While it is discursive, the paragraph is never digressive... The flow of ideas

---

<sup>179</sup> See González Echevarría and Pérez Firmat. González Echevarría writes, “Ortiz abandona el tono magisterial que marca los ensayos de Rodó, Martínez Estrada, Vasconcelos, y hasta el propio Mañach, que escribe sobre el choteo sin practicarlo” (157). Pérez Firmat agrees with this interpretation, citing another essay by González Echevarría: “The Case of the Speaking Statue: *Ariel* and the Magisterial Rhetoric of the Latin American Essay” (35).

occurs in a straight line from the opening sentence to the last sentence” (14).<sup>180</sup> In romance languages, on the other hand “much greater freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material is available” (18).<sup>181</sup> Comparing *Contrapunteo cubano* to other essays in Spanish (as opposed to Mead and Steward, for example), it becomes apparent that the tradition of essay writing in Spanish is more tolerant of hybrid structures and nonlinear arguments. Rodó’s *Ariel*, for example, begins, “Aquella tarde el viejo y venerado maestro, a quien solían llamar Próspero, por alusión al sabio mago de La tempestad shakespiriana, se despedía de sus jóvenes discípulos, pasado un año de tareas, congregándolos una vez más a su alrededor.” Martí’s “Nuestra América” also does not follow a linear structure.

In establishing a definition for the linear patterns of argumentation that characterize writing in English, Anna Duszak writes,

Linear patterns consist in showing only direct connections between immediately relevant meanings. The writer is expected to come to the point by moving in a straight line of logical thought through the subject to an explicitly stated conclusion. Departures from the main course of argumentation are strongly discouraged. Wordiness leading to unnecessary redundancy is banned on cognitive and aesthetic grounds (324).

Ortiz’s writing is highly non-linear. For example, in relating a myth that is meant to

---

<sup>180</sup> Rafael Monroy-Casas notes that Kaplan’s “view of the discursive reality [of Romance languages] has rightly been criticized as being ethnocentric, ill-defined and vague, lacking empirical support and portraying a stereotyped reality.” Monroy-Casas notes that Kaplan later acknowledged this bias, but although Kaplan “modified his initial position in the sense that he no longer holds the view that rhetorical patterns reflect a particular way of thinking, but they are rather the result of different writing conventions that are learned, he adds that this does not alter the essential empirical fact that ‘there are differences between languages in rhetorical preference.’” (175).

<sup>181</sup> Kaplan’s text addresses expository—not literary—writing. Parks reminds us that literature “usually assumes the right to deviate from more ordinary ways of saying things, to draw attention to itself as language” (4).



illustrate use of tobacco in the Antilles, he includes a number of parenthetical comments that do not seem to directly support the theme of tobacco use:

Yaya fué un hombre a quien quiso matar su hijo Yayael (¿el mito del Edipo freudiano?); pero el padre se le anticipó, matando al hijo y metiendo en una güira, o calabaza, con agua sus huesos, los cuales allí se convirtieron en peces. Un día, hallándose Yaya por sus conucos o sembradíos, entraron en su casa cuatro hermanos (¿los cuatro puntos cardinales?)....(163).

In order to see why these types of non-linear constructions seemed particularly unusual to a reader of anthropological texts in English, it is worth examining the opening lines of famous anthropological texts written in English from roughly the same period as a point of comparison. Julian Steward's *The People of Puerto Rico* (1956), for example, begins by outlining research objectives. The book opens with the sentence, "The present volume reports a cultural historical study of the behavior patterns or lifeways of certain of the Puerto Rican people" (1). Steward then presents some background to contextualize his study, presents his methodology, and includes direct, short sentences that explain decisions made regarding research such as "The chapters in Part III explain the choice of communities in greater detail" (19). Like Steward, Margaret Mead opens her now canonical study *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) by contextualizing her study:

During the last hundred years parents and teachers have ceased taking adolescence for granted. They have attempted to fit education to the needs of the child, rather than to press the child into an inflexible educational mold. To this new task they have been spurred by new forces, the growth of the science of psychology, and the difficulties and maladjustments of youth (1).

She goes on to explain why she chose to study Samoa, why she chose to study girls, and orients the reader with phrases like "In the following chapters I have described" (11). At

the end of her introduction, she reiterates her goals and makes explicit the relevance of her study: “And from this contrast we may be able to turn, made newly and vividly self-conscious and critical, to judge anew and perhaps fashion differently the education we give our children” (13). The transitions between sections are almost always explicit, and the reader knows from the table of contents by what logic the work is structured. For a reader accustomed to reading studies with the logic of the work spelled out in this way, *Cuban Counterpoint* may seem to jump from one topic to another. Although the sections are unified by the comparison between tobacco and sugar, the links between the sections are not always made explicit. The English translation moves, for example, from a discussion of the low nicotine content of tobacco, to the Europeans’ discovery of tobacco, to the use of tobacco by indigenous people in the Antilles. The original Spanish includes sections between these,<sup>182</sup> but the omissions in de Onís’s translation of *Contrapunteo cubano* do not alter the fact that the work does not include the sorts of explicit transitions between sections present in studies such as those by Mead and Steward. Ortiz follows a different set of compositional principles, creating a more fragmented structure, which the reader must piece together, keeping in mind the structure of the counterpoint.

The fact that the structure of *Contrapunteo cubano* is more closely linked to a tradition of writing in Spanish than in English and the fact that U.S. reviewers generally evaluated the text as an anthropological study may explain why they found the counterpoint “wearisome” (Whitaker) or ignored the structure entirely (not seeing the

---

<sup>182</sup> “De las noticias que dio un jesuita acerca” and “Del tabaco y el cáncer” between “De la poca nicotina” and “De cómo el tabaco fue descubierto en Cuba por los europeos.”

links between the chapters), whereas Mexican historian Silvio Zavala found “ideas muy originales, inteligentes y americanas” and notes that the second half of the book “sigue el contrapunteo, ahora no solo del azúcar y del tabaco, sino de la gracia y la sabiduría, la erudición y el talento” (154). Even de Onís, who admired Ortiz, later wrote that the anthropologist “empties his knowledge and erudition, which are impressive, sort of hodge-podge into everything he writes. He seems to lack the faculty of selection.”<sup>183</sup> In his review of *Cuban Counterpoint*, Leland H. Jenks, a scholar who was familiar with both the original Spanish and the translation into English,<sup>184</sup> wrote, “In elaborating his counterpoint, Don Fernando resorts at times to metaphorical flourishes which American students do not associate with economic history and may regard as unduly fanciful” but he notes that it “deserves to be attentively read not only for the brilliance of its style and suggestiveness of content, but also as a primary source for some of the distinctive tensions in Hispanic-American ways of thought and action” (529). Just as Whitaker had predicted when he told Weinstock, “we just don’t write that way- or read that way either,” Jenks foresaw that U.S. readers would not react favorably to the structure of the counterpoint or to Ortiz’s writing style.

---

<sup>183</sup> In evaluating two other works by Ortiz, *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* and *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba*, de Onís maintains that these works are important because they describe “the contribution of the negroes to our culture—that of the Western world,” which she considers to be a “[topic] of great immediacy.” Letter from HDO to Henry Robbins. 23 Sept. 1959. AK266.13. HRC.

<sup>184</sup> Jenks was a professor of economics and sociology at Wellesley College who knew Ortiz. In a copy of the first Cuban edition of *Contrapunteo cubano*, Ortiz had written a brief dedication to Jenks in the inside cover. That particular copy at Wellesley College is marked with notes, presumably Jenks’, comparing the original and the translation, noting, for example, what was omitted in the translation. In preparing his review of *Cuban Counterpoint*, Jenks had therefore read the translation carefully, in dialogue with the original text in Spanish.

Jeremy Munday notes that style is “a very problematic concept”<sup>185</sup> that has generated many debates among linguists and literary scholars. For the purposes of this study, Tim Parks’ definition is useful: “Style, then, involves a meeting between arrangements inside the prose and expectations outside it. You can’t have a strong style without a community of readers able to recognize and appreciate its departures from the common usages they know.”<sup>186</sup> That is, individual writing style depends on deviations from readers’ expectations, and these vary depending on the language and culture. De Onís’s translations do not generally seem to strive to reproduce foreign elements—either individual or cultural—within the English. Regardless of whether she was translating folklore, academic texts, or experimental novels, she tended to translate into contemporary, idiomatic English. Occasionally in *Cuban Counterpoint*, de Onís’s syntax seems more Spanish than English, but for the most part her syntax and vocabulary in English is standard for the target language. She inverts the subject and verb in sentences such as: “After the Negroes began the influx of Jews, French, Anglo-Saxons, Chinese, and peoples from the four quarters of the globe” (102), an awkward translation of “Después de los negros fueron llegando judíos, franceses, anglosajones, chinos y gentes de todos los rumbos” (141). Although there are a number of examples of these sorts of

---

<sup>185</sup> Munday notes that style can be “individual (specific to the particular author, such as García Márquez) or collective (specific to a genre, such as the novel) or refer to a period (such as the Latin American Boom of the 1960s)” (20). In order to determine an author’s individual style, Munday suggests that “[a]nalysis ... has to take into account the markedness of the ST [source text] before determining the markedness and individuality of the TT [target text]” (20).

<sup>186</sup> “Literature Without Style.” *The New York Review of Books* 13 Nov. 2013. In his book *Translating Style: A Literary Approach to Translation - A Translation Approach to Literature*, Parks compares original texts and back-translations from other languages as an innovative and effective way of analyzing style. He explains that “[t]he idea that drives [his book] is that by looking at original and translation side by side and identifying those places where translation turned out to be especially difficult, we can arrive at a better appreciation of the original’s qualities” (14).

translations,<sup>187</sup> she does not consistently translate this way and these cases seem like errors or unintentional calques rather than experimentation.<sup>188</sup> In general, as she did with most of the texts she translated, de Onís translates *Contrapunteo cubano* into idiomatic language which sometimes slightly shifts the meaning of the original. For example, she translates Ortiz’s “El mero paso del mar ya les cambiaba su espíritu; salían rotos y perdidos y llegaban señores” (140) as “The mere fact of having crossed the sea had changed their outlook; they left their native lands ragged and penniless and arrived as lords and masters” (100). In another case, “forzados a dejar sus libres placideces tribales para aquí desesperarse en la esclavitud” (141)<sup>189</sup> becomes “forced to leave their free and easy tribal ways to eat the bitter bread of slavery” (102). In these examples, idiomatic phrases such as “ragged and penniless,” “lords and masters,” “free and easy,” and “eat the bitter bread” indicate that de Onís looked for common expressions in English. Yet, despite this tendency to domesticize texts, reviewers judged that de Onís had faithfully

---

<sup>187</sup> She does the same when she writes, “There arrived together, and in a mass, iron, gunpowder, the horse, the wheel, the sail, the compass, money, wages, writing, the printing-press, books, the master, the King, the Church, the banker...” (99). In other parts of the text too, her syntax is unusual in English, such as in the following example: “Even economic phenomena, the most basic factors of social existence, in Cuba are almost always conditioned by the different cultures” (99). A more common construction in English would place “in Cuba” at the beginning or end of the sentence. In another case, de Onís uses phrases with the word “beside” in English in a failed attempt to recreate a play with the word “fuera” in the Spanish. “Todos convivientes, arriba o abajo, en un mismo ambiente de terror y de fuerza; terror del oprimido por el castigo, terror del opresor por la revancha; todos fuera de justicia, fuera de ajuste, fuera de sí” (141) becomes “All, those above and those below, living together in the same atmosphere of terror and oppression, the oppressed in terror of punishment, the oppressor in terror of reprisals, all beside justice, beside adjustment, beside themselves” (102). “Beside justice” and “beside adjustment” are unclear in English.

<sup>188</sup> It is possible that de Onís’s English began absorbing influence of Spanish after years of translating the language, living in Puerto Rico, and speaking Spanish at home. Juan de Onís told me that the family spoke Spanish at home. It was “the language of the dinner table.” De Onís, Juan. Personal interview. 21 February 2014.

<sup>189</sup> In the Cátedra edition, this phrase appears as “forzados a dejar sus antecedentes costumbres tribales para aquí desesperarse en la esclavitud,” indicating that Ortiz had revised that sentence in 1963 (259).

reproduced Ortiz's style, at the cost of sacrificing fluent English. Garside's *New York*

*Times* review concludes with the following comments about style:

The translation by Harriet de Onís sticks very closely to the original. Close examination reveals that the thought processes of Señor Ortiz move according to a kind of logic alien to Americans, a logic making liberal allowance for emotion. Should the author's fancy dictate, away runs a qualifying clause with the main idea. If Señor Ortiz feels like casually introducing a little honorific salvo he does so. . . . And though the strange lack of focus might easily have been done away with in a free translation, it is perhaps just as well that it was preserved, if for no other reason than to emphasize the simple truth that Spanish-speaking peoples have their own mental habit, a habit which they prefer and do not intend to abandon. This habit, in the case of Senor Ortiz, inclines him to be interested in the magical and occult components of history, less in the material components, and he writes accordingly.

Garside, then, like other reviewers in the U.S., read Ortiz's non-linear writing style as particularly Latin American.

Munday argues that because "it is extremely unusual for a translator to alter the global narrative form (for example, by changing a third to a first person narration), evaluation in translation is more likely to be expressed in shifts to the lexicogrammatical realizations of modality or to some other feature of the text" (25). In all of her translations, de Onís's lexical and syntactic choices do not generally deviate from common usage in English. As a result, some of her other translations, most notably her translations of Guimarães Rosa, which erase the neologisms and regional language of the original, were said to be domesticizing. In the case of Ortiz, however, many aspects of the author's style were expressed in the structure of his argument, part of the "global narrative form" which she was not apt to change. Those elements of *Cuban Counterpoint* that U.S. reviewers read as typically Latin American were also those that defined the

counterpoint: parallelisms, extensive citations from other texts, and the mosaic-like structure of the text. These characteristics create a non-linear style, which is perhaps what Whitaker meant when he described Ortiz's writing as "tropical," arguing that it would not appeal to a reader whose native language is English. In the following passage, representative of the author's style in the first part of the book, Ortiz develops the contrast between tobacco and sugar:

La caña de azúcar y el tabaco son todo contraste. Diríase que una rivalidad los anima y separa desde su cuna. Una es planta gramínea y otro es planta solanácea. La una brota de retoño, el otro de simiente; aquélla de grandes trozos de tallo con nudos que se enraízan y éste de minúsculas semillas que germinan. La una tiene riqueza en el tallo y no en sus hojas, las cuales se arrojan; el otro vale por su follaje, no por su tallo, que se desprecia. La caña de azúcar vive en el campo largos años, la mata de tabaco sólo breves meses. Aquélla busca la luz, éste la sombra; día y noche, sol y luna. Aquélla ama la lluvia caída del cielo; éste el ardor nacido de la tierra. ...Blanca es la una, moreno es el otro. Dulce y sin olor es el azúcar; amargo y con aroma es el tabaco. ¡Contraste siempre! Alimento y veneno, despertar y adormecer, energía y ensueño, placer de la carne y deleite del espíritu, sensualidad e ideación, apetito que se satisface e ilusión que se esfuma, calorías de vida y humaredas de fantasía, indistinción vulgarota y anónima desde la cuna e individualidad aristocrática y de marca en todo el mundo, medicina y magia, realidad y engaño, virtud y vicio. El azúcar es ella, el tabaco es él... La caña fué obra de los dioses, el tabaco lo fué de los demonios; ella es hija de Apolo, él es engendro de Proserpina (5-6).

Ortiz's sentences tend to be long, but the phrases are broken up with commas and his syntax is relatively easy to decipher and recreate in English. In addition, the author uses many words with Latin or Greek roots that offer cognates in English. De Onís translates this passage as,

Sugar cane and tobacco are all contrast. It would seem that they were moved by a rivalry that separates them from their very origins. One is a gramineous plant, the other a solanaceous; one grows from cuttings of stalk rooted down, the other from tiny seeds that germinate. The value of one is in its stalk, not in its leaves, which are thrown away; that of the

other in its foliage, not its stalk, which is discarded. Sugar cane lives for years, the tobacco plant only a few months. The former seeks the light, the latter shade; day and night, sun and moon. The former loves the rain that falls from the heavens; the latter the heat that comes from the earth....The one is white, the other dark. Sugar is sweet and odorless; tobacco bitter and aromatic. Always in contrast! Food and poison, waking and drowsing, energy and dream, delight of the flesh and delight of the spirit, sensuality and thought, the satisfaction of an appetite and the contemplation of a moment's illusion, calories of nourishment and puffs of fantasy, undifferentiated and commonplace anonymity from the cradle and aristocratic individuality recognized wherever it goes, medicine and magic, reality and deception, virtue and vice. Sugar is *she*; tobacco is *he*. Sugar cane was the gift of the gods, tobacco of the devils; she is the daughter of Apollo, he is the offspring of Persephone (6).

We can begin by analyzing de Onís's lexical choices in order to show that the text was not read as Latin American because of its vocabulary. While cognates can be dangerous for a translator (as they may have different connotations and different registers), much of Ortiz's vocabulary offers reliable cognates. In the passage cited, the following terms in English are cognates of the terms Ortiz uses in Spanish, and many of these are repeated: *tobacco, contrast, rivalry, separates, gramineous, plant, solaneceous, germinate, energy, spirit, sensuality, satisfaction, appetite, illusion, calories, fantasy, anonymity, aristocratic, individuality, medicine, magic, reality, virtue, vice, Apollo, Persephone*. Many of the other terms used—day and night, sun and moon—are unproblematic, direct translations, as these words are not specific cultural references, nor do they carry connotations that make them difficult to recreate in English. Except when describing indigenous tobacco rites, in which case the terms are explained, Ortiz tends to avoid regional or experimental language.<sup>190</sup> The lexical choices in English, as in Spanish,

---

<sup>190</sup> With some exceptions, such as “sabrosura” (10) and a number of terms—often explained in the text—which de Onís chooses to leave in Spanish, such as *naborías, cibaos* and *caonaos*, which she italicizes in



are generally of a standard, academic register and would not call attention to themselves—either in the original or in the translation. Neither the original syntax nor the English translation departs from standard academic language, so it is unlikely that reviewers interpreted the vocabulary or syntax of *Cuban Counterpoint* as particularly Latin American.<sup>191</sup>

The sentence length, repetition, and parallel structures, however, may have marked the style as foreign for U.S. reviewers. In the above passage, she shortens one sentence, eliminating what she must have interpreted as redundancy (“la una brota.... germinan” becomes “one grows... germinate”). In general, however, she resists condensing phrases in the first part of the book, despite the fact that she likely would have been able to predict that for many English-speaking readers, the repetition of structures developing the same idea might seem long-winded. Forty-six pages into the opening essay, Ortiz continues to contrast tobacco and sugar, reinforcing the structure of the book as counterpoint: the antithetical comparison between tobacco and sugar. De Onís translates:

Sugar is to be found in the cradle, in the kitchen, and on the table; tobacco in the drawing-room, the bedroom, and the study. With tobacco one works and dreams; sugar is repose and satisfaction. Sugar is the capable matron, tobacco the dreaming youth. Sugar is an investment, tobacco an amusement; sugar enters the body as nourishment, tobacco enters the spirit

---

the translation: “The Ciboneys became serfs, *naborías*, or fled to the hills and jungles, to the *cibaos* and *caonaos*.” (99). Spanish original: “Los siboneyes pasan a siervos naborías o huyen a las serranías y selvas, a los **cibaos** y **caonaos**” (138). There are a number of examples in the chapter on tobacco use in the Antilles and de Onís tends to leave these terms in Spanish, often italicized. These terms are bolded in the original Cuban edition.

<sup>191</sup> Translator Tim Parks has argued that when a text is written for a global market, the language is often “kept simple” in order to be easily translatable. (“The Dull New Global Novel.” *The New York Review of Books*, 9 Feb. 2010. Web. 2 March 2015.) This was unlikely the case with Ortiz, especially since he had hoped to be able to revise and restructure the book for English translation.

as a cathartic. The former contributes to the good and the useful; the latter seeks beauty and personality (46).<sup>192</sup>

Despite the fact that the counterpoint depends on these parallelisms, U.S. reviewers were generally dismissive and found them repetitive. A reviewer for the *Geographical Journal* wrote,

Dr. Ortiz starts by contrasting sugar and tobacco, observing, for example, that ‘sugar is sweet and odourless; tobacco, bitter and aromatic.’ Fortunately, after a hundred pages of this sort of thing, the author leaves sugar and reaches the body of the work, which consists of a large collection of interesting scraps of information relevant to the history of tobacco and smoking generally.<sup>193</sup>

In general, reviewers in the U.S. tended to resist aspects of Ortiz’s language that were not typical of expository writing in English. These aspects included the “tropical rhetoric and cloying figures of speech” Whitaker describes and the “metaphorical flourishes” Jenks mentions when he warns that U.S. readers may not react favorably to Ortiz’s writing style. Whitaker and Jenks likely had in mind phrases such as “los efluvios del halago humano” (152), which de Onís translates as the “fumes of human flattery” (104) and passages such as the following:

No hay, pues, para los versadores de Cuba, como habría querido el arcipreste apicarado, una **Pelea de Don Tabaco y Doña Azúcar**, sino un mero discreteo que debería acabar, como los cuentos de hadas, en casorio y felicidad. En la boda del tabaco con el azúcar. Y en el nacimiento del alcohol, concebido por obra y gracia del espíritu satánico, que es el mismo padre del tabaco, en la dulce entraña de la impurísima azúcar. Trinidad cubana: tabaco, azúcar y alcohol (131).

---

<sup>192</sup> “El azúcar está en la cuna, en la concina y en la mesa de comer; el tabaco en la sala, en la alcoba y en la mesa de escribir. Con el tabaco se trabaja y se ansía; el azúcar es reposo y satisfacción. El azúcar es matrona utilitaria, el tabaco es galán de ensoñaciones. El azúcar es inversión, el tabaco es diversión; el azúcar va al cuerpo como ingestión, el tabaco va al espíritu como catarsis. Aquélla provoca bondad y provecho, éste quiere belleza y personalidad” (63).

<sup>193</sup> A. G. H. A. Rev. in *The Geographical Journal*. See bibliography.

De Onís translates this as:

Therefore it would be impossible for the rhymsters of Cuba to write a “Controversy between Don Tobacco and Doña Sugar,” as the roguish archpriest would have liked. Just a bit of friendly bickering, which should end, like the fairy tales, in marrying and living happy ever after. The marriage of tobacco and sugar, and the birth of alcohol, conceived of the Unholy Ghost, the devil, who is the father of tobacco, in the sweet womb of wanton sugar. *The Cuban Trinity: tobacco, sugar, and alcohol* (93).

The marriage of tobacco and sugar and the birth of alcohol is the image that closes the counterpoint in the first part of the book. Although these types of metaphors are central to the theme and structure of the book, U.S. reviewers tended to evaluate the book as traditional scholarly text and generally ignored these types of literary devices. In this passage, as in others, de Onís alters the structure of the sentences and translates into idiomatic English. Because she does not significantly alter the content of the passage, however, the images in *Contrapunteo cubano* are usually reproduced in translation. That is, they are unaffected by de Onís’s tendency to domesticize syntax and vocabulary.

In addition to disliking the fact that *Cuban Counterpoint* does not seem to follow the rules of scholarly writing in English, reviewers such as Wright complain about the lengthy citations of texts of other genres, from other authors, and from other centuries. Although de Onís condenses some chapters and omits some sections that heavily cite other texts, she translates enough that the hybrid nature of the text comes through in the translation. The chapter “On Tobacco Among the Indians of the Antilles,” for example, includes this excerpt from Fernando Colón’s *Historia del Almirante Don Cristóbal*

*Colón:*

Beginning with those dealing with matters of religion, I shall copy here the words of the Admiral, just as he set them down.; ‘I have not been able

to find evidence of idolatry or any other sect among them, although all their kings, who are many, in Hispaniola as well as in the other islands and on the mainland, have their own house, apart from the village, in which there are only some wooden images carved in relief which they call *cemíes*, with certain ceremonies and prayers that they perform there as we do in our churches.

In these houses there is a well-built table, round in form, like a platter, on which there are certain powders that they put on the heads of the aforesaid *cemíes* with certain ceremonies; then, through a two-forked reed they put into their nose, they snuff up these powders. None of our men understand the words they say. When they take these powders they go out of their head, raving like drunken men (116).<sup>194</sup>

This passage is followed by long quotations from texts by two sixteenth-century historians—Peter Martyr d’Anghiera and Francisco López de Gómara—and a full page excerpted from Bartolomé de las Casas’ *Apologética historia summaria de las gentes destas Indias*. The inclusion of long passages from other texts, which Ortiz generally does not explicate, give *Cuban Counterpoint* an uneven texture not typical of expository writing in English. When he quotes from Colón, Ortiz uses a twentieth-century edition,<sup>195</sup> but in other cases he includes passages from other works in archaic language, including Juan Ruiz’s *Libro de buen amor*: “Sabed que tod’açucar, ally anda baldonado: / Polvo, terrón e candy e mucho del rrosado, / Açucar de confites e mucho del violado /De muchas otras guisas, que ya he olvidado” (23). For the fragments of this medieval text de

---

<sup>194</sup> “Comenzando por las divinas, copiaré aquí las mismas palabras del Almirante como las dejó escritas: ‘Idolatría u otra secta no he podido averiguar de ellos, aunque todos sus reyes, que son muchos, tanto en la Española como en las demás islas y en la tierra firme, tienen una casa para cada uno, separada del pueblo, en la que no hay más que algunas imágenes de madera hechas en relieve a las que llaman **cemíes**, con cierta ceremonia y oración que ellos hacen allí como nosotros en las iglesias. En esta casa tienen una mesa bien labrada, de forma redonda, como un tajador, en la que hay algunos polvos que ellos ponen en la cabeza de dichos **cemíes** con cierta ceremonia; después, con una caña de dos ramos que se meten en la nariz, aspiran este polvo. Las palabras que dicen no las sabe ninguno de los nuestros. Con estos polvos se ponen fuera de tino, delirando como borrachos’” (169).

<sup>195</sup> The only bibliographic information Ortiz includes is “Ed. de Madrid, 1932, tomo II, pág. 28” (169). The edition is most likely: Colón, Fernando. *Historia del Almirante Don Cristóbal*. Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1932.

Onís uses E. K. Kane’s translation: “All kinds of sugar with these nuns are plentiful as dirt, The powdered, lump, and crystallized, and syrups for dessert;/ They’ve perfumed sweetmeats, heaps of candy- some with spice of wort, / With other kinds which I forget and cannot here insert” (17). When faced with translating other texts with archaic language, de Onís translates these herself, tending, as always, to translate into standard, twentieth-century English. For example, Ortiz cites entire pages excerpted from Don Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés’s *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, written in 1546: “Pues todos tovieron los ojos cerrados hasta que el bachiller Gonçalo de Velosa, á su propia costa de grandes y excesivos gastos, segund lo que él tenía, é con mucho trabajo de su persona, truxo los maestros de açucar á esta isla” (333). Ortiz was citing an original text, but de Onís translates into modern English: “Everyone was blind until Bachelor Gonzalo de Velosa, at his own cost and investing everything he had, and with great personal effort, brought workmen expert in sugar to the island” (254). Because he is quoting passages by other authors and de Onís does not significantly alter her style as a translator even when confronted with texts from different authors and different eras, the stylistic distance between Ortiz’s language and the quoted passages is greater in the original than the translation. However, despite the fact that de Onís translates into modern English, the inclusion of these long passages creates jumps in theme and perspective that are not typical of scholarly writing. In addition to the long passages he quotes, Ortiz includes a wide variety of references to other literary texts<sup>196</sup> and diverse illustrations.

---

<sup>196</sup> Primarily from Spanish and Latin American literary traditions. These include references to characters such as Doña Inés and Don Juan (21) and authors including Lope de Vega (25), Federico Milanés (25), and Martí (44). Ortiz also refers to European authors, such as Goethe (21). De Onís does not generally footnote

Santí points out that the variety of texts Ortiz includes are not simply a collection of documents, as historians such as Wright concluded. Rather, Ortiz's book should be considered neobaroque: "Todos los aspectos formales del libro que hemos ido señalando a lo largo de esta introducción- *parodia, meta-crónica, agudeza, fuga*- apuntan, por lo tanto hacia una nueva visión del *Contrapunteo* como libro barroco, o mejor dicho: *neo-barroco*." (100). Many of the neobaroque elements in *Contrapunteo cubano* are types of translation: Ortiz translates forms and summarizes other texts. Even the structure of the counterpoint, as Pérez Firmat argues, is a translation of Ruiz's medieval dialogue (9).<sup>197</sup> For Haroldo de Campos, the baroque is a strategy of resistance that is particularly Latin American,<sup>198</sup> a "differential practice" that subverts hierarchies and "is also, by definition, a translation practice," since it mixes genres and draws on other traditions (5). The neobaroque characteristics of the text, like the repetition, parallel structures, and extended metaphors that make up the counterpoint, are in the structure of the text and therefore were not affected by de Onís's tendency to domesticate. As a result, her translation of *Contrapunteo cubano* seems less dated than other works she translated. When Duke University published a new edition of *Cuban Counterpoint* in 1995, the editors used de Onís's translation<sup>199</sup> and, although Coronil is critical of Malinowski's "veiled desire to

---

or explain these references, although they would not necessarily be familiar to a reader of the English translation.

<sup>197</sup> Pérez Firmat calls Ortiz a quintessential Cuban writer and writes that "Cuban style is translation style" (4). Ortiz was also a translator. He translated two works from English- by James Wilford Garner and Mark Raymond Harrington (García-Carranza 52). He also wrote an essay on Benito Pérez Galdós's novel *El caballero encantado*, a piece Pérez Firmat calls an "intralingual translation" (36).

<sup>198</sup> De Campos begins his essay "The Ex-centric's Viewpoint: Tradition, Transcreation, Transculturation" by saying that "Brazilian literature- and this may also be true for other Latin-American literatures... was 'born' under the sign of the baroque" (3).

<sup>199</sup> Despite the fact that the translation does not correspond to editions of *Contrapunteo cubano* in Spanish published from 1963 on.

domesticate” Ortiz’s work,<sup>200</sup> the critic makes no similar charge against de Onís in his introduction to the new edition of the translation. De Onís, therefore, reproduces the non-linear structure of the text, which challenged European ways of thinking. Yet if reviewers saw elements of Latin American style in the text, they dismissed these elements as bad writing or poor scholarship rather than considering that these stylistic elements were a form of approaching complex Cuban history and challenging linear thought. They saw the counterpoint as unfocused without considering that the structure of the book develops the theme of transculturation. These interpretations may explain in part why the concept of transculturation did not have a lasting influence in anthropology or in general, in English. The concept did, however, have an impact within Latin American cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and more recently, translation studies.

Ortiz’s concept of transculturation—the theme he wished to emphasize both in the original version of *Contrapunteo cubano* and in the translation—has circulated primarily within the field of Latin American cultural studies, in large part due to the ways in which Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama develops the term in *Transculturación narrativa en América latina* (1982). Analyzing work by authors such as Juan Rulfo, José María Arguedas, and João Guimarães Rosa, Rama showed how transculturated language is a tool for resistance against modernization and colonialism. The term appeared in another influential work a decade later, in Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). For Pratt, transculturation is a phenomenon of the “contact

---

<sup>200</sup> In part because Malinowski classifies Ortiz as a functionalist rather than recognizing the originality of the Cuban scholar’s work (xliii).

zone...the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6).

“Transculturation” has often been used to stress the bidirectionality of cultural transformations and to break down models that classify the world according to simple dichotomies. In his introduction to *Cuban Counterpoint*, Coronil writes,

From my position as a Venezuelan anthropologist working in the United States, I wish to approach *Cuban Counterpoint* as a valuable book for these difficult times...[Ortiz’s] counterpoint of cultures makes evident that in a world forged by the violence of conquest and colonization, the boundaries defining the West and its Others, white and dark, man and woman, and high and low are always at risk. Formed and transformed through dynamic processes of transculturation, the landscape of the modern world must constantly be stabilized and represented, often violently, in ways that reflect the play of power in society (xiii-xiv).

Because of the ways in which transculturation recognizes the complexities of cultural transfer, the term has also gained traction in translation studies. In “Transculturation and the Colonial Difference. Double Translation,” Walter D. Mignolo and Freya Schiwy point out that *Cuban Counterpoint* “indirectly underscored how cultural transformations do not go only from East to West but also from West to East or North-South and South-North” (21). Mignolo and Schiwy find the concept useful for talking about translation studies, since translation does not always move from periphery to center, nor can translation “be understood as a simple question of moving from object language A to subject language B, with all the implications of the inequality of languages.” (31). Besides Pratt and Mignolo, a number of other scholars have linked transculturation to translation. María Constanza Guzmán proposes transculturation as a



model for translation studies. Noting that transculturation would be one way for theorists to move beyond the foreignization/domestication debate, Guzmán proposes “examining its conceptual potential to speak ‘beyond dichotomies’ and to articulate the space, or—using Pratt’s term—the ‘contact zone’ of translation.” (250). Guzmán describes translations not as copies of source texts but as new products shaped by power relations, texts which “inevitably participate either in reproducing the colonial structure or contesting it” (255). For Guzmán, transculturation provides a model that would be particularly useful for describing practices of translation in Latin America. She writes,

Thus, we can foresee a transcultural translation studies that would result from a creolization of discourses and paradigms, incorporating local, vernacular voices to current scholarly practice beyond Western theorizations, with larger texture and specificity than the “West” and the “rest”—a homogenized whole where all experiences are added up into one and the same discursive space. Translation as “transculturación” would signal a particular specificity to Latin American translation theory in the study of Latin American products, which engages cultural history and the resulting social theory of the place, without advocating provincialisms (255).

Like Guzmán, Edwin Gentzler uses transculturation as a way of moving beyond translation theories that divide the world into categories of center and periphery. Gentzler writes,

In my research, which I see as part of an international trend in the field of translation studies, I have found concepts generated by Latin American scholars particularly productive, including Fernando Ortiz’s and Ángel Rama’s concept of ‘transculturation’, Octavio Paz’s use of translation as ‘transformation’ and ‘recreation’, and, especially Haroldo de Campos’s various neologisms, including ‘transcreation’, ‘transtextualization’, ‘transparaization’, ‘transillumination’, and most provocatively, ‘transluciferation mefistofáustica’. There is a sense in these metaphors that the translators are not taking something from one culture and carefully bringing it across intact, but instead a transforming, reformulating, incorporating, devouring a text, making it one’s own, and reproducing it in

their own language and on their own terms. The metaphor that works best for me is one in which translation is not seen as a form of importing a text from the outside, but rather drawing upon reserves and experiences from within each individual and one's own multicultural heritage.<sup>201</sup>

It is not surprising that Gentzler associates Ortiz and Rama with Paz and de Campos, as these thinkers seem to be less inclined than European or North American translation theorists to describe translation according to hierarchical categories, borders and labels.<sup>202</sup> When de Campos describes Oswald de Andrade's "Manifiesto antropófago" ("Cannibal Manifiesto"), he uses the term "transculturation": "This process of anthropophagic swallowing up does not involve submission (catechizing) but a 'trans-culturation'" (Transcreation 6). For de Campos, then, as for Rama, transculturation is an active reclaiming and it is the creation of something new.

Just as colonized peoples do not simply adapt to imperial influence, translations—even when they have a tendency to be 'domesticized'—never entirely inscribe a text in the target culture. Every translation will have elements of both the source and target cultures, resisting and reinforcing dynamics of power. Translations always involve the creation of something new, just as transculturation never involves one culture simply copying the traditions of another. Ortiz makes this clear when he defines the term: "In the end, as the school of Malinowski's followers maintains, the result of every union of cultures is similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals: the offspring

---

<sup>201</sup> "Translation Without Borders."

<sup>202</sup> Paz, for example, rejects the idea of "nacionalismo artístico" and the term influence, arguing that "todos los estilos han sido translingüísticos" (no page number; see bibliography).

always has something of both parents but is always different from them” (103).<sup>203</sup> De Onís’s translation of *Contrapunteo cubano* is an example of this. It is not always possible to clarify whether a text “domesticizes” or “foreignizes” because, even when the translator strives for fluent English, there may be broader structural elements in the text that mark it as foreign, which is what happened with *Cuban Counterpoint*, and the reason reviewers in the U.S. read it as typically Latin American while at the same time ignoring the text’s major contributions—Ortiz’s challenge to traditional anthropological discourse.

---

<sup>203</sup> Rama argues that Ortiz does not sufficiently account for intentionality/selectivity in processes of transculturation: “Este diseño no atiende suficientemente a los criterios de selectividad y a los de invención” (49). The intentional, creative aspect applies also to translation.

## CHAPTER THREE: TRANSLATING SUR-REGIONALISM: GUIMARÃES

### ROSA IN THE UNITED STATES

*“Near Rattlesnake Creek, on the side of a little draw stood Canute’s shanty. North, east, south, stretched the level Nebraska plain of long rust-red grass that undulated constantly in the wind. To the west the ground was broken and rough, and a narrow strip of timber wound along the turbid, muddy little stream that had scarcely ambition enough to crawl over its black bottom.” –Willa Cather, “On the Divide”*

*“Thus they kept on, tracking swift lines on all sides within a radius of ten leagues in that Mesopotamia which extends from the valley of Rio das Velhas- an almost human river, slow, undecided, sad, always changing, now narrow, now wide, with its reddish waters, sad banks, wooded islands- to that of the Paraopeba- broad, symmetrical, serene, vigorous, with low-lying banks and sandy beaches glittering with scales of mica and waters too deep to be forded.”- Guimarães Rosa, “Duel,” translated by Harriet de Onís*

One of de Onís’s most critically discussed translations is *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, (1963), her English translation of João Guimarães Rosa’s masterpiece, *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (1956). Part of the motivation for the critiques of the translation stem from the disparity between the book’s limited circulation in English (Guimarães Rosa is virtually unknown in the English-speaking world)<sup>204</sup> and the lasting impact the text has had in Brazil. The bibliography on Guimarães Rosa’s work in Portuguese is vast and when *Granta* interviewed three of their “Best Young Brazilian Writers” in 2012, two of the authors interviewed, Vanessa Barbara and Daniel Galera, cited this novel as a text

---

<sup>204</sup> In recent years, there has been a push to retranslate Rosa’s work. David Treece published a translation of some of Rosa’s short stories in *The Jaguar and Other Stories* (2001). Felipe Martinez, has set up a website devoted to promoting the novel in the English-speaking world: <<http://amissingbook.com/>> and Australian translator Alison Entekin has begun a new translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*.

that had profoundly impacted their work. Rosa's work was so critically successful during the author's lifetime that de Onís later compared her first exposure to Rosa's work to "discovering the Mediterranean."<sup>205</sup>

In Portuguese, Guimarães Rosa is best known for his innovative language, which is rooted in the regional speech of the *sertão*, the semi-arid land in the north of the state of Minas Gerais. To this regional language, Rosa added neologisms, archaisms, and words from the eight other languages he read<sup>206</sup> in order to create his own particular idiolect. In a letter to Mary Lou Daniel, the author wrote,

The backlanders of Minas Gerais, isolated in the mountains, in the intimate setting of a centrally located state, conservative *par excellence*, kept a classical-archaic language almost intact, a language which was mine from childhood, and which seduced me. Taking it as a base, in a certain way, I instinctively tend to try to develop its evolutionary tendencies, still embryonic, as the paths I follow.<sup>207</sup>

Despite the neologisms and foreign words in Rosa's language, his prose sounds like it could have been spoken by someone from the rural north of Minas. Haroldo de Campos claimed to have met a *sertanejo* who spoke just like one of Rosa's characters.<sup>208</sup> Rosa's comments, however, reveal that he was not simply recreating existing language. He told Günter Lorenz, "In this spiritual Babel of values in which we live today, every author should create his own lexicon, and there is no other option; otherwise, he simply

---

<sup>205</sup> "Translators note" in *Sagarana* (xvi). Later, in her acceptance of the Pen Translation Award, which she won in 1967 for her translation of *Sagarana* de Onís again calls Rosa her "discovery" (AK1362.9. HRC).

<sup>206</sup> In an interview with Günter Lorenz, the author says he knows "eight languages, maybe a few more" (oito, talvez algumas mais").

<sup>207</sup> "Os sertanejos de Minas Gerais, isolados entre as montanhas, no imo de um Estado central, conservador por excelência, mantiveram quase intacto um idioma clássico-arcaico, que foi o meu, de infância, e que me seduz. Tomando-o por base, de certo modo, instintivamente tendo a desenvolver suas tendências evolutivas, ainda embrionárias, como caminhos que uso" (Letter to Mary Lou Daniel, cited in Martins ix).

<sup>208</sup> "Grande Sertão Veredas: Haroldo de Campos sobre Guimarães Rosa". *YouTube*. Web. 1 August 2014.

does not accomplish his mission.”<sup>209</sup> And in a letter to de Onís, Rosa called his language “bárbaro-precioso” and “português-brasileiro-mineiro-guimarãesroseano.”<sup>210</sup> In 2001, Nilce Sant'Anna Martins published *O Léxico de Guimarães Rosa*, a dictionary over five hundred pages long that attempts to define Rosa’s language.

Rather than simple reproducing local language, Rosa uses regionalism as a base for invention. Berthold Zilly, who is currently working on a new German translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas* and who also translated Euclides da Cunha’s *Os Sertões*, compared the regional elements in da Cunha’s work to those in Guimarães Rosa: “Euclides, poet and scientist, wanted to show an unknown reality, the countryside of Brazil, to Brazilian intellectuals... Guimarães Rosa does not have this investigative, revelatory, didactic bent, at least not in such direct and open terms.”<sup>211</sup> Because Rosa’s purpose is to invent rather than to represent the *sertão* realistically, Zilly adds that “in the case of *Grande Sertão: Veredas* erudition and research, although absolutely necessary, help [the translator] much less.”<sup>212</sup> According to Zilly, the biggest problem the translator faces is to “make the unfamiliarity of the language familiar.”<sup>213</sup> That is, the translator must produce a text that is understandable in the target language while at the same time reproducing some of the experimental aspects.

---

<sup>209</sup> “Nesta Babel espiritual de valores em que hoje vivemos, cada autor deve criar o seu próprio léxico, e não lhe sobra nenhuma alternativa: do contrário, simplesmente não pode cumprir sua missão” (also cited in Martins ix).

<sup>210</sup> Letter from JGR to HDO. 8 April 1959. JGR-CT-03,008. IEB.

<sup>211</sup> “Euclides, poeta e cientista, quis revelar uma realidade desconhecida, o interior do Brasil, aos intelectuais brasileiros... Guimarães Rosa não tem esse afã pesquisador, revelador, didático, pelo menos não em termos tão diretos e abertos” (314).

<sup>212</sup> “No caso de *Grande Sertão: Veredas* a erudição e a pesquisa, embora sejam absolutamente necessárias, ajudam bem menos” (313).

<sup>213</sup> “tornar familiar a não-familiaridade da linguagem do *Grande Sertão: Veredas*” (315).

In “Literatura e subdesenvolvimento,” Antonio Candido sketches a brief history of regionalism in Brazil. According to Candido, regionalism first appeared with Romanticism in Brazilian literature, but was a secondary tendency, overshadowed by more accomplished texts with urban themes. It was not until after 1930, when countries like Argentina and Uruguay were moving away from regionalism, that regionalism appeared in Brazil in a stronger form, in the context of social realism (160). Candido categorizes Guimarães Rosa’s language as part of a third phase that broke with these earlier forms: “[Rosa] wrote a book that overcame regionalism through regionalism. To my way of seeing it, from the point of view of literary composition, this is a supreme paradox. So much so that I felt obliged to create a new category, which is transregionalism or surregionalism.”<sup>214</sup> According to Candido, Rosa, like Juan Rulfo and Alejo Carpentier, transform the places they describe, refine literary devices, and move away from naturalism. In this way, themes become less picturesque and more universal (161-162).<sup>215</sup>

In Portuguese Rosa is read as a universal writer whose themes are more metaphysical than regional. Haroldo de Campos says that Rosa is always “universal, without losing the local dimensions.”<sup>216</sup> Rosa himself suggested that writers from non-urban areas have more access to the type of vivid language that best represents universal themes. He told Lorenz:

---

<sup>214</sup> “Ele fez o livro que supera o regionalismo através do regionalismo. Do ponto de vista da composição literária, a meu ver, isso é um paradoxo supremo. Tanto assim que eu me senti obrigado a criar uma nova categoria, que é trans-regionalismo, ou sur-regionalismo.” From a DVD titled *Nonada* (2006) cited in Hansen 122.

<sup>215</sup> In “Literatura e subdesenvolvimento.”

<sup>216</sup> “*Grande Sertão: Veredas*: Haroldo de Campos sobre Guimarães Rosa.” *YouTube*.

Goethe was born in the sertão, like Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Flaubert, Balzac; he was, like others I admire, a moralist, a man who lived with language and thought of the infinite. I think that Goethe was, in summary, the only great poet of world literature who did not write for the day, but rather for the infinite. He was a *sertanejo*. Zola, to take randomly an opposite example, came merely from São Paulo. Of every one hundred writers, one is related to Goethe and ninety-nine to Zola. The tragedy of Zola was that his language was not in rhythm with consciousness. Today something similar is happening. The consciousness is alert, but the vigor of language is lacking.<sup>217</sup>

Rosa, then, drew parallels between deep, organic connections to language and life in non-urban areas. Despite the fact that he compared himself to Joyce in other moments, Rosa says that the Irish writer was “a cerebral man, not an alchemist. In order to be a sorcerer of words, in order to study the alchemy of the blood of the human heart, it is necessary to come from the *sertão*.”<sup>218</sup>

Some critics, however, argue that because Rosa’s themes find their expression in experimental and regional language, his work is perhaps less universal and cannot easily be inserted into the global market. João Adolfo Hansen writes that Rosa’s prose “negates the normativity of any universal aesthetic” (120). In his review of *Sagarana* (and this would apply to *Grande Sertão: Veredas* also), Hungarian-born critic/translator Paulo

---

<sup>217</sup> “Goethe nasceu no sertão, assim como Dostoievski, Tolstoi, Flaubert, Balzac; ele era, como os outros que eu admiro, um moralista, um homem que vivia com a língua e pensava no infinito. Acho que Goethe foi, em resumo, o único grande poeta da literatura mundial que não escrevia para o dia, mas para o infinito. Era um sertanejo. Zola, para tomar arbitrariamente um exemplo contrário, provinha apenas de São Paulo. De cada cem escritores, um está aparentado com Goethe e noventa e nove com Zola. A tragédia de Zola consistiu em que sua linguagem não podia caminhar no ritmo de sua consciência. Hoje em dia acontece algo semelhante. A consciência está desperta, mas falta o vigor da língua.”

<sup>218</sup> “era um homem cerebral, não um alquimista. Para poder ser feiticeiro da palavra, para estudar a alquimia do sangue do coração humano, é preciso provir do sertão” (Interview with Lorenz). However, like other critics and translators, Zilly compares Joyce and Rosa: “Os dois achavam que as línguas estavam gastas, empobrecidas, maltratadas, que era preciso devolver ao inglês e ao português, respectivamente, toda a riqueza expressiva, o potencial alusivo e o vigor sugestivo, a beleza, a musicalidade, a força quase mágica das palavras e das frases, qualidades que em geral só os poetas e os músicos percebem e aproveitam e criam e recriam nas línguas” (325).



Rónai argued that non-Brazilian readers simply cannot read the text in the same way as a native reader: “The reader from outside [Brazil], as integrated as he may feel in Brazil, cannot be familiar enough with the rich linguistic and ethnographic capital of the country in order to be able to analyze the regional aspect of this work: he must approach it from another angle in order to understand its literary importance.”<sup>219</sup> This interpretation would imply that the translation cannot focus on reproducing Rosa’s *surregional* language.

The aspect of the text on which de Onís chose to focus was the plot, which in *Grande Sertão: Veredas* and in many of the stories of *Sagarana* contains elements that recall the popular genre of the Western. The *sertão*, like the North American West, is a vast and arid stretch of land distant from urban areas. Rosa’s protagonists are often bandits who are motivated by revenge or who are trying to come to terms with their own lawless pasts. Questions of honor are decided in a final showdown, such as the battle at the end of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*<sup>220</sup> and the murders at the end of “A hora e vez de Augusto Matraga” and “Duelo.” Because of these parallels and because of the geographic correspondences between the U.S. and Brazil, Armstrong calls the Western analogy a “reasonable strategy” (Interview with Martinez). The genre may have even influenced Rosa’s work.<sup>221</sup>

---

<sup>219</sup> “O leitor vindo de fora, por mais integrado que se sinta no ambiente brasileiro, não pode estar suficientemente familiarizado com o rico cabedal linguístico e etnográfico do país para analisar o aspecto regionalista dessa obra: deve aproximar-se dela de um outro lado para penetrar-lhe a importância literária”. (“A arte de contar em ‘Sagarana’”).

<sup>220</sup> The novel ends with Riobaldo’s description of his life after retiring as a *jagunço*. However, the battle resolves a number of major conflicts in the book, including Diadorim’s quest for revenge. The edition in Portuguese ends with the symbol designating infinity, showing the *sertão* is endless.

<sup>221</sup> Poet Frederico Barbosa told me that Rosa apparently loved Westerns (Personal Interview. 15 July 2014).

It was not just de Onís who thought of Westerns when adapting Rosa's narrative. When Roberto Santos made a film out of "A Hora e Vez de Augusto Matraga," the final story in *Sagarana*, he also used the Western as a model. Luiz Carlos Oliveira Jr. writes, "Santos sculpted Rosa's narrative within a cinematographic genre (the Western) and a subgenre (the restoration film), that is, he reconciled the story's universe with a landscape and signs that would already be familiar to the spectator."<sup>222</sup> This need to situate a foreign narrative in a familiar context is natural, as equivalences are a way of understanding the foreign. According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, people fit the unknown into existing frames of reference as do translators. That is, we see by translating ("Thick Description" 15). Further, the text needs to circulate in the market. Santos in his film and de Onís in her text may have used the Western as a broad model that would have familiar points of reference for viewers and readers. De Onís and her editors were targeting a U.S. market and the translator recognized that the Western was a popular genre. She tells Rosa, for example, that Eisenhower's favorite reading was Westerns.<sup>223</sup>

André Lefevere argues that translators think on two grids: "conceptual"<sup>224</sup> and "textual" (76).<sup>225</sup> That is, they try to recreate a certain style in the target language and they also work in terms of broader concepts. For de Onís, however, the Western is more

---

<sup>222</sup> "Santos esculpiu a narrativa de Rosa dentro de um gênero (o western) e um subgênero (o filme de regeneração) cinematográficos, ou seja, conciliou o universo do conto a uma paisagem e a um conjunto de signos já familiares ao espectador de cinema."

<sup>223</sup> Letter from HDO to JGR. 24 June 1963. JGR-CT-03,052. IEB.

<sup>224</sup> As an example of a conceptual grids, Lefevere points out that Kellogg's only began to successfully market Cornflakes in India when they marketed them as Basmati flakes ("Composing the other" 77). A literary work is not entirely commercial, but it must still circulate in the market.

<sup>225</sup> In fact, the conceptual and textual levels Lefevere describes cannot be entirely separated, just as content cannot be divorced from form. The setting of Rosa's texts in the *sertão* complicates translation on a textual as well as a conceptual level conceptually because of the specificity of references, historical context, etc. and linguistically because of the regionalisms in the language.

than just a conceptual solution; it informs the language of the translation. Whereas Santos uses the Western to help situate viewers and then disorient them by adding more imaginative elements, de Onís opts for familiar language that reduces the more innovative aspects of Rosa’s work. This is an important point, because as Candido points out Rosa is not regional: he is *surregional*. His *sertão* is grounded in some familiar references, but some place names and other aspects invented (Candido “O Homem dos Avelhos” 113-14). And the strangeness and difficulty of the language disorient the reader. According to Candido, in Rosa’s work, Minas Gerais “is less a region of Brazil and more a region of art.”<sup>226</sup> Oliveira writes, “What Guimarães Rosa describes is a world so transparent and so given to its own (atmospheric, social) laws that it imposes a difficulty for whomever sees it for the first time. Turning this difficulty into the central point for the adapted work: here is the possibility of not dissipating the power of the work, of not losing the essential aspect of this writer.”<sup>227</sup> According to Viktor Shklovsky, poetic language functions to defamiliarize and in this way, “art removes objects from the automatism of perception” (779). The purpose of poetic language, therefore, is to allow for new perceptions rather than describe. Rosa’s language has been described as a poem in prose.<sup>228</sup>

Rather than trying to recreate Rosa’s disorienting language, de Onís seems to have decided that the most essential element was plot, and that the best way to recreate

---

<sup>226</sup> “no caso Minas é menos uma região do Brasil do que uma região da arte” Notas de crítica literária-*Sagarana*.’ *O Jornal* 21 de julho 1946.

<sup>227</sup> “O que Guimarães Rosa descreve é um mundo que, de tão transparente, de tão entregue a suas próprias leis (atmosféricas, sociais), impõe uma dificuldade a quem o vê pela primeira vez. Fazer dessa dificuldade o ponto de emanção central da obra adaptada: eis uma possibilidade de não dissipar a potência, não perder o que esse escritor tem de essencial.”

<sup>228</sup> Zilly, for example, calls *Grande Sertão: Veredas* “um poema em prosa” (314).

the events of the stories was through the language suggestive of the American West. In disagreeing with some of Rosa's suggestions regarding her translation of "Duelo," she told the author,

I wish I had time to go into the reasons why, in a number of instances, I have preferred to use my version rather than your suggestion. Without exaggerating, I have tried to give ["Duel"] a Western flavor, which is the milieu which would roughly correspond to that of the story. I have tried to give it that crisp, ironic, and compassionate tone of the original. On p.12 where I say '...Cassiano sucked in his belly', this is a typical army phrase for 'stand up straight'. It seemed to me fitting for an ex-soldier. What I always try to do in my translating is to evoke for the reader of English the emotion of the original, but in such a way as not to make it seem a translation.<sup>229</sup>

Her solutions for *Grande Sertão: Veredas* were similar. *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* includes language typical of the West such as: "loco" p.181; "Hee-Haw" p.215; "Well, I'll be" p.407; "Can a cowboy lasso the air?" p. 474; "'Howdy, chief!' and I responded: 'Howdy!'"<sup>230</sup> The reviews of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* and *Sagarana*, with titles like "Outlaw with a Problem," "Brazilian Western," "Cowboys and Gangsters in Brazil's Badlands" and "Man and Beast in the Backlands" reinforce the idea that the translation presented the novel and short story collection as more of a Western than a linguistically innovative text in English.

By translating Rosa's surrealism into a more familiar language that could be interpreted as a realistic representation of a place foreign to U.S. readers, de Onís refashions the text, making it seem like the work belongs to one of the earlier phases of regionalism Candido describes. In Europe, where there is no region comparable to the

---

<sup>229</sup> HDO to JGR. 22 April 1959. JGR-CT-03,014. IEB.

<sup>230</sup> Felipe Martinez noted these instances of language from the West (in an email to me, 18 Oct. 2013).

*sertão*, a number of readers assumed that the *sertão* was an entirely fictional place.<sup>231</sup> In the U.S., however, readers tended to interpret the narrative more as folkloric tales about a real landscape rather than modernist experimentation. That is, in English translation, Rosa's themes seem more specifically tied to Brazil in spite of (or because of) the fact that de Onís drew analogies between the *sertão* and the American West. Because the language and some of the references are familiar, readers believed that the descriptions were of a real and exotic place. The exotic elements seem to discourage English-speakers from reading the text as universal.

Because Rosa's language is unfamiliar in Portuguese, an English translation that tried to recreate the innovative aspects of the language would likely have to rely on equivalences, much as Suzanne Jill Levine did in her translation of Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres*.<sup>232</sup> The Western could function as a base to experiment with language English as Levine's New York language did for translating a Cuban text. That is, the Western could serve as a conceptual but not textual solution, but de Onís did use the analogy as a base for experimentation. Rather, she translated into idiomatic, standard English. In an interview in Spanish with Michael Haiat in 1963 (the year *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* was published in English translation), de Onís was direct about not having tried to reproduce Rosa's experimental language. She focuses more on images and themes, reproduced in standard English:

---

<sup>231</sup> Rosa tells Lorenz that a German critic congratulated him for having created a magnificent *Landschaft erfunden*. He mentions that he experienced similar reactions in Italy, France and even Spain.

<sup>232</sup> In *The Subversive Scribe*, she calls *Three Trapped Tigers* a "New York Translation." That is, she uses the language of New York City as a base for translating Cabrera Infante's Cubanisms.

I think that Guimarães Rosa is the most major Latin American writer. I recognize the impossibility of translating him as he deserves, but let's agree that this great writer is not only his marvelous use and creation of language. If this aspect of his work cannot be transmitted, we are still left with a world: the rhythm of his narrative, the treatment of the topic, the topic in itself.<sup>233</sup>

The translator's comments prompted Haiat to wonder, perhaps prophetically, "Will Guimarães Rosa ever be known outside of here? Or will he become the biggest literary misunderstanding of all time? Will his work be understood, or will it be condemned to circulate always like a false coin? Like the mask of itself?"<sup>234</sup>

In his letters to her, Rosa repeatedly told de Onís he wanted a language that disoriented the reader. In response to his translator's push for fluent English, he wrote to her lamenting "ah, what a shame not to prefer phrases in 'worse' English, but of expressive and suggestive power, like Joyce!"<sup>235</sup> Rosa's request for "worse" English, however, puts the translator in a difficult position. To begin with, a translation is already more difficult than an original text because of the amount of information readers must process.<sup>236</sup> Brazilian readers, for example, will recognize terms like *sertão* and they will have at least a general familiarity with the term *jagunço*. For a reader from the U.S., however, all of these terms are new, as they will generally not be familiar with Brazilian

---

<sup>233</sup> "Pienso yo que Guimarães Rosa es el mayor escritor latinoamericano. Reconozco la imposibilidad de traducirlo como se lo merece; pero convengamos en que ese gran escritor no es sólo su maravilloso manejo y creación del idioma. Si este aspecto de su obra no puede ser transmitido, en cambio todavía nos queda un mundo: el ritmo de su narrativa, su tratamiento del asunto, el asunto en sí mismo."

<sup>234</sup> "¿Será Guimarães Rosa alguna vez conocido fuera de aquí? ¿O se transformará en el mayor malentendido literario de todos los tiempos? ¿Será comprendida su obra, o estará condenada a circular para siempre como una falsa moneda? ¿Como la máscara de sí mismo?"

<sup>235</sup> "ah, que lástima não se poder preferir as frases em 'worse' English, mas a bem do poder expressivo e sugestivo, à maneira de Joyce!" JGR to HDO. 21 May 1959. JGR-CT 03, 21. IEB.

<sup>236</sup> Russian translator Victor Golyshev pointed this out (Lecture at Boston University 13 April 2012.)

geography or the historical context. In addition, proper names left in Portuguese present difficulty for the reader of English.

Brazilian readers may find Guimarães Rosa's language disorienting, but experienced readers will be able to pick out enough familiar references to fill in the gaps and immerse themselves in the author's world. Foreign readers, even those who read Portuguese, will not have the same experience. A reader of the original will likely recognize unusual syntax and strange words as the deliberate choices of the writer, whereas an experimental translation runs the risk of being read as simply awkward. Author David Mitchell recently commented, "as a writer I can be bad, but I can't be wrong. A translator can be good, but can never be right."<sup>237</sup>

In addition, as Lefevere argues, translators working from minor languages<sup>238</sup> have less freedom than those working from more visible (hegemonic, central) languages. ("The Gates of Analogy" 76). Casanova calls translation "a way of systematically imposing the categories of the center upon works from the periphery" (154).<sup>239</sup> As a result, the language of experimental texts from the periphery tends to be normalized for easy insertion into the Western canon. Other critics, however, reject these hierarchies of center and periphery. In "The Rule of Anthropophagy: Europe under the Sign of Devoration," Haroldo de Campos argues that Europe and America mutually influenced each other, and that the "Boom" was simply "a recent and skin-deep phenomenon" which

---

<sup>237</sup> In an interview. See bibliography.

<sup>238</sup> Despite the fact that Portuguese is widely spoken, it has generally been considered a minor language.

<sup>239</sup> Although her goals are to expose inequalities in the movement of world literature, Casanova sometimes seems forget that her own views have been shaped primarily by the center. She discusses, for example, the "emergence of an aesthetically coherent body of writing in Latin America," a view likely influenced by the successful marketing of texts in translation (234).

“served as a shouting warning- something between frightened and too late” (56). That is, Latin America already had a strong presence in world literature and the West only chose to recognize it when they could no longer ignore it. Noting the influence of Latin American literature, de Campos asks, “who could read Proust without admitting Lezama Lima?” (57). This sort of global influence recalls Octavio Paz’s argument against the idea of purely national canons. In “Traducción: Literatura y Literalidad,” Paz writes that every work “is born and lives in relation to works from different languages” and not in isolation.<sup>240</sup>

Despite the fact that the distinctions between center/periphery do not matter in terms of influence, in translation these hierarchies may matter. A translator of Joyce into Portuguese may have more freedom because Joyce is already established in the canon of world literature and recognized as an experimental writer. At the time de Onís translated *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, Rosa was not a well-known writer outside of Brazil. An experimental English version of an already dense and difficult text may not have been accepted in the U.S. market without the writer already having an established reputation. Translation into Portuguese is not an entry point into the global market as English is. That is, translation into English often serves to introduce writers to a wider audience whereas writers are more likely already established internationally when they are translated into Portuguese. De Onís was therefore limited by the restrictions of the market, which

---

<sup>240</sup> “nace y vive en relación con obras de lenguas distintas.” De Campos cites a different part of this same essay by Paz.



perhaps was not ready to accept an experimental translation of an author from the periphery in the 1960s.

De Onís faced more basic problems as well. Even if she had wanted to break with fluent, standard English typical of her translations, the limitations of her Portuguese would have made it difficult for her to experiment. She wrote to the author saying, “One of my difficulties in translating from the Portuguese is that, in addition to uncertainty as to the meaning of words, I do not know the ‘emotional charge’ they carry, and therefore do not know the liberties I may take with them.”<sup>241</sup> Beyond not being able to gauge the connotations of words well enough to give room to her creativity, de Onís was not able to distinguish easily between standard Portuguese, regionalisms, neologisms, etc. The fact that de Onís, who probably could not speak Portuguese,<sup>242</sup> translated one of the most difficult Brazilian writers also reflects a broader problem of the market: the lack of Portuguese-English translators. De Onís commented that Portuguese translators “seem to be scarce as hens’ teeth”<sup>243</sup> and Knopf wrote to Amado saying, “You have no idea how difficult it is to get really sound and dependable readers of the Portuguese, nor in what a leisurely way they deal with books when we ask them to read them.”<sup>244</sup> That is, in addition to not being able to find qualified people to translate the books, the publisher could not even find readers to evaluate new works for possible publication in translation. The lack of translators may in part explain why there were “scarcely twenty” Brazilian

---

<sup>241</sup> HDO to JGR. 15 March 1959. JGR-CT-03,006. IEB.

<sup>242</sup> Juan de Onís told me that he never heard her speak Portuguese. The fact that de Onís wrote all her letters to Rosa in English would also suggest that she could read the language, but not speak it. Cite also Rostagno.

<sup>243</sup> Memo from HDO to AK. 28 Nov. 1962. AK 361.2. HRC.

<sup>244</sup> AK to Amado. 5 Sept 1962. AK339.5. HRC.

novels available in English translation in the 1950s (Armstrong *Third World Literary Fortunes* 117).

De Onís opts for an idiomatic English, but leaves a number of terms in Portuguese, or translates them literally in jarring ways. Whereas Rosa’s Portuguese is difficult but consistent, the English translation forces readers to jump back and forth between idiomatic English and unfamiliar Brazilian references. Rosa’s language has a consistent tone that essentially allows readers to immerse themselves in Rosa’s world, much as a reader of Joyce would do. De Onís’s language contains distinct registers that clash and prevent full immersion in the narrative. It is neither entirely fluent English nor consistently inventive. Trudy Balch mentions that *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* was “faulted for mismatched tone.” This uneven register could be considered to be a “foreignizing” strategy (Venuti’s term), but does not create a convincing equivalent for Rosa’s language. In de Onís’s translation, the Brazilian author sounds something like Willa Cather, a writer whom de Onís greatly admired and with whom she identified,<sup>245</sup> lost in the *sertão*. The sentences are rhythmic and descriptive, but the language lacks modernist experimentation and is filled with disorienting references.

De Onís, who worked as a reader as well as a translator for Knopf, first learned of Rosa’s work when she read “La oportunidad de Augusto Matraga”, Juan Carlos Ghiano and Néstor Kraly’s Spanish translation of “A hora e vez de Augusto Matraga,” the final story in *Sagarana*. The translation had appeared in a 1958 edition of the Buenos Aires

---

<sup>245</sup> According to Juan de Onís, Harriet greatly admired Willa Cather, perhaps, Juan mused, because Cather’s writing resonated with de Onís’s own experience growing up in the Midwest.

literary journal *Ficciones*, and de Onís wrote to the author shortly after reading it. Despite the fact that de Onís later maintained that the Spanish translation of the story “left much to be desired,”<sup>246</sup> it was enough to spark her interest. Perhaps this is another indication that de Onís was drawn more by the story line than by the innovative language. She wrote to the author saying, “I was very much impressed by it. I immediately ordered *Sagarana*, which I have been reading with great difficulty but enjoyment. Yours is a great talent, for it comes through in spite of the fact that I read Portuguese with a certain amount of difficulty, which in the case of your work is complicated by the local dialect you use.”<sup>247</sup>

In the same letter, she asked for permission to translate either “Sarapalha” or “Duelo.” Her preference for publishing one of these stories was not based on the fact that those two were her personal favorites;<sup>248</sup> rather, she was restricted by the space constraints of *New World Writing*, the literary journal where she had planned to publish the story. Rosa, also conscious of what might appeal to an international audience, responded saying that she should translate “Duelo” because it had a “more lively and action-filled plot.”<sup>249</sup> Herbert Weinstock, an editor at Alfred A. Knopf, gave his approval to publish the translation, commenting that the story seemed “very Brazilian.”<sup>250</sup> Since *New World Writing* later “ceased publication,”<sup>251</sup> “Duel” was instead published in

---

<sup>246</sup> In her “Translator’s Note” in Knopf’s edition of *Sagarana*. In a letter to de Onís years before, Rosa had complained of the poor quality of that Spanish translation. Among other problems, he cited “words translated arbitrarily and absurdly” (“palavras traduzidas arbitrariamente e absurdamente”) (JGR to HDO. 22 Feb. 1959. JGR-CT-03,004. IEB).

<sup>247</sup> Nov. 1958. JGR-CT-03,00119. IEB.

<sup>248</sup> In a letter to the author on January 8, 1965, de Onís says that her favorite stories are “Corpo Fechado,” “O burrinho pedrês,” and “A hora e vez de Augusto Matraga” (JGR-CT-03,091. IEB).

<sup>249</sup> “De enredo mais vivo e movimentado” (JGR to HDO. 15 Jan. 1959. JGR-CT-03,002. IEB).

<sup>250</sup> Weinstock to HDO. 16 Jan 1959. AK266.13. HRC.

<sup>251</sup> HDO to JGR. 3 June 1959. JGR CT 03,22. IEB.

*Noonday* in 1960.<sup>252</sup> Shortly after she translated that story, de Onís began translating *Grande Sertão: Veredas*.<sup>253</sup>

*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, the English translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, had a troubled history. In a letter she sent to Weinstock before beginning the translation, de Onís expressed her hesitations, in part because of her limited Portuguese. However, encouraged by her literary critic husband and the feeling that Rosa was her “discovery,” she decided to take on the novel, feeling, she remarked, like one of the “bandeirantes.”<sup>254</sup> She also counted on receiving help from the author and recalled her work with another author whose writing presented linguistic challenges, Alejo Carpentier<sup>255</sup>: “I can’t think why people have said it [*Grande Sertão: Veredas*] would be impossible to translate. Like every fine piece of writing it presents problems, but none that are any more insoluble than would be the case in a comparable work. The translation would, I think, have to be done in collaboration with the author, but this was true in the case of Carpentier, Reyes, etc.”<sup>256</sup> Rosa’s language, however, presents problems beyond Carpentier’s complex neobaroque sentences and difficult lexicon. In addition, whereas de Onís understood Carpentier’s work well and could engage with him regarding questions of style, her correspondence with Rosa reveals that she often did not understand even

---

<sup>252</sup> *Noonday* 3 (1960): 24-52.

<sup>253</sup> In a letter dated Oct. 12, 1959, de Onís tells JGR that she has a copy of the novel and will begin translating (JGR CT 03,025. IEB).

<sup>254</sup> HDO to Weinstock. 8 April 1959. AK266.13. HRC. The *bandeirantes* were early explorers who ventured inland in Brazil seeking wealth. Although they became rich in part through dishonorable endeavors such as capturing runaway slaves, that aspect of their history seems to have been obscured and their image in contemporary Brazil is that of valiant explorers who helped settle Brazil.

<sup>255</sup> Munday considers that de Onís’s “translation technique...seems to have matured over the years, reaching its high point in her novels of the Cuban Alejo Carpentier” (80)

<sup>256</sup> HDO to Herbert Weinstock. 19 Jan 1959. AK 266.13. HRC.

basic, common terms in Portuguese. She asks the author, for example, for the meaning of “tomara,”<sup>257</sup> a common word that anyone who spoke conversational Portuguese would know.

Her plans to collaborate with Rosa were also problematic. When Rosa heard that she was relying on his help, he told her that his English was limited and he suffered from health problems that would prevent him from being fully available to assist his translator. Instead, he offered the help of Mary Oliver, a British woman living in Brazil, a friend of a friend of Rosa.<sup>258</sup> Rosa especially liked the idea of an American-British team because he hoped the collaborating would make the book marketable on both sides of the Atlantic. He reminded de Onís of her previous comment that British reviewers were generally harsher than critics in the U.S.<sup>259</sup>

Mrs. Oliver, however, did not work well with de Onís and the translator complained to her editors saying that Oliver has a “tendency ... to give me the literal meaning of a word or phrase, when what I want is the exact shade of meaning, the circumstances under which it would be used, etc.”<sup>260</sup> Later, however, trying to free herself of the obligation to translate the novel, de Onís suggested letting Oliver complete the translation. De Onís protested that otherwise “the work is going to drag on interminably” and she would not be able to work on anything else.<sup>261</sup> She also suffered

---

<sup>257</sup> HDO to JGR. 31 Jan 1964. JGR-CT-03,060. IEB.

<sup>258</sup> JGR to HDO. 23 April 1959. JGR-CT 3,15. IEB.

<sup>259</sup> JGR to HDO. 24 April 1959. JGR-CT 03,17. IEB.

<sup>260</sup> HDO to Bill Koshland. 1 Nov. 1959. AK295.1. HRC.

<sup>261</sup> *ibid.*

from health problems that prevented her from taking on the massive task.<sup>262</sup> Knopf called the idea of passing the translation on to Oliver a “foolhardy” and “a dangerous solution.”<sup>263</sup> The editors and de Onís then enlisted the help of James Taylor, a lexicographer and Stanford professor who had written a Portuguese-English dictionary. Taylor took on the translation, though with poor results. De Onís later complained to Bill Koshland about Taylor, saying that “one can be a good lexicographer without being a good writer.”<sup>264</sup> Knopf called Taylor a “dictionary man with little sense of style.”<sup>265</sup>

Taylor had a good knowledge of Portuguese, including the vocabulary of the *sertão*,<sup>266</sup> the region of Brazil where Rosa’s narrative is set, but he was not a seasoned literary translator. De Onís was an experienced translator from Spanish, but had a limited knowledge of Portuguese. Some scholars have argued that de Onís was not qualified to translate from Portuguese. In a recent interview with Felipe Martinez, David Treece, who translated some of Rosa’s short stories into English, criticized de Onís’s and Taylor’s translation and emphasized that “we need to insist on translations being undertaken and supported by people who are up to the task.” De Onís and Taylor may not have been the ideal translators, but the editors’ inability to pick and choose reflected a larger obstacle to the diffusion of Brazilian literature abroad: that is, the lack of Portuguese-English

---

<sup>262</sup> I have not seen evidence of de Onís’s health problems, but both Piers Armstrong (*Third World Literary Fortunes* 122) and James Remington Krause (231) cite illness as a reason she abandoned the translation.

<sup>263</sup> AK to HDO.6 Oct 1959. AK295.1. HRC.

<sup>264</sup> 3 June 1961. AK327.7. HRC.

<sup>265</sup> The comment was in reference to a translation Taylor was doing of one of Jorge Amado’s books, but it applies also to Taylor’s translation of Guimarães Rosa. AK339.5, AK to Jorge Amado, 19 April 1962, HRC.

<sup>266</sup> In an interview with Martinez, Piers Armstrong says that Taylor’s “dictionary has a good feel for the lexicon of Rosa, including popular expressions, as well as the names of animals and flora and fauna. I would say it’s a very Sertão-aware type of dictionary.”

translators. Because Rosa's language is particularly difficult, his work required a particularly experienced translator.

Given the circumstances—Taylor's knowledge of Portuguese and de Onís's influence and experience as a translator—Armstrong argues that Rosa had the perfect team. He also notes that Rosa was in many ways well positioned for successful entry into the international market. Rosa was supported by an influential publishing house in the U.S.; he was translated by the most influential translator of Latin American literature; and Jorge Amado, whose *Gabriela* became a best-seller in English translation, wrote the forward to *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. Armstrong adds that Rosa “not an obscure regionalist but a consummate diplomat” with connections (*Third World Literary Fortunes* 126).

Rosa saw an English translation of his work as an entry point into the global market. He later told de Onís, “the important thing—for which I will always be indebted to you—was that my name appear before the public of that country [the U.S.], or which is the same as saying: before the world.”<sup>267</sup> The translation, however, was problematic. Alfred Knopf lamented, as he did a number of times during this years, that he ever got involved in translations: “I am not the only publisher, I assure you, who feels distressed over the time-consuming, expensive and complicated problems finding really good translations involves us in.”<sup>268</sup> De Onís recognized—probably from the beginning of the translation—that Guimarães Rosa's work was difficult, and would not likely be a

---

<sup>267</sup> “O importante- e que lhe deverei sempre- era aparecer o meu nome ante o público desse país o que equivale dizer: perante o mundo” JGR to HDO. 24 June 1960. JGR-CT-03,036. IEB.

<sup>268</sup> AK to HDO. 29 May 1961. AK327.7. HRC.

commercial success.<sup>269</sup> Besides the fact that *Grande Sertão: Veredas* is a monologue more than 500 pages long, de Onís likely guessed that it wouldn't sell well in English translation because Rosa's *sertão* does not fit into the stereotyped, typically exported image of Brazil.

Because the *sertão* is an entirely unfamiliar space for most readers of English, de Onís and Taylor included a glossary of Brazilian terms at the end of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* that provides a basic context for some of the events in the novel. They explain for example, that a *jagunço* is “in this book, a member of a lawless band of armed ruffians in the hire of rival politicians, who warred against each other and against the military, at the turn of the century, in northeastern Brazil” (494). For Lefevere, glossaries and forwards are a way of moving beyond analogy in order to understand the other culture on its own terms (77). Vinay Dharwadker also notes that “culture can only ever be partially translated” and that introductions and notes are needed for fuller context (121). However, theory finds its limits in practice. Glossaries, forwards, and footnotes can be disruptive and translators can only use them sparingly without taking the reader out of the fictional world. Edith Grossman, one of the most prolific and best-known translators of Latin American literature working today, has said that she tries to avoid footnotes because the reader has access to many tools and can look up references. Even if the foreign culture is only partially conveyed, a translation can be a starting point for the

---

<sup>269</sup> In a letter from HDO to AK, the translator compares *GSV* to *Ulysses*, saying that like Joyce's work, Guimarães Rosa's novel would not appeal to a wide audience (13 June 1961. AK 327.7. HRC). This is in contrast to her feelings about Amado's *Gabriela*, which she and Knopf sensed would be a “commercial success” (HDO to AK. 1 July 1961. AK327.7. HRC).



reader to learn more. Citing A.K. Ramanujan, Dharwadker notes that “a translator hopes not only to translate a text, but hopes (against all odds) to translate a non-native reader into a native one” (121). Turning a non-native reader into a native one may have been more difficult in the 1960s, when de Onís published her translations of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* and *Sagarana*. Readers (and translators) did not have access to search engines like Google, online dictionaries, databases, etc...<sup>270</sup> The fact that there were fewer networks linking the world may have also meant a lower market tolerance for foreignized translations because markets were more isolated and readers could not research other cultures as quickly and as easily as they can today.

Knopf’s targeted market for Guimarães Rosa in English translation was “readers of serious fiction; those especially interested in Brazil.”<sup>271</sup> However, even that select group of readers were willing to do extensive research on *jagunços* and the *sertão*, they would still be reading a translation. It may be possible for translators to try to reduce the force of analogy in their work, but they may never get away from it entirely. It would be difficult for readers of fiction who are unfamiliar with Brazil to understand Guimarães Rosa without relying on equivalences. Even critics introduce the writer through analogy, often by comparing him to Joyce.

De Onís may have been willing to translate *Grande Sertão: Veredas* knowing it would not sell well, but her publisher was more worried about publishing the book at a

---

<sup>270</sup> Both de Onís and Rosa complained of poor resources, the difficulty finding good Portuguese-English dictionaries, etc. (JGR to HDO. 24 April 1959. JGR- CT 03,17. IEB and HDO to JGR. 15 March, 1959. JGR-CT-03,006. IEB).

<sup>271</sup> From an editorial “fact sheet” on *Sagarana*. The market would have been similar for GSV. (AK1362.9. HRC)

loss. Alfred Knopf complained that *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* was an “absolutely unconscionable amount of work...how we are going to come out on this particular job I wouldn’t attempt to foretell.” He added that they were publishing the Rosa “essentially for the glory of God.”<sup>272</sup> Knopf could not turn back because they already had a completed translation (though they knew it was not good quality and seem to have recognized it would not sell well) and they had an obligation with the author and translator to publish the book in English. They also felt they had an obligation to the Brazilian government, which had agreed to help promote the translation.<sup>273</sup> De Onís also pushed to publish the translation because it would give “the American reader an idea of Guimarães Rosa, the quality of the book, and his place in Brazilian letters...”<sup>274</sup> That is, the editors and de Onís recognized that *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* would only give readers a taste of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, but they hoped that would be enough to secure the author’s place in the canon of translated literature. To this end, de Onís reminded her editors that the translations of Camus published by Knopf were also bad.<sup>275</sup> The implication is, of course, that simply introducing a great author’s name to an English-speaking public should be enough for entry into the global market. Rosa also thought along these lines. De Campos says that Rosa told him that it was important to get a first version of the translation published in English that could later be revised.<sup>276</sup>

---

<sup>272</sup> AK to HDO. 2 April 1962. AK361.3. HRC.

<sup>273</sup> HDO to AK. 7 July 1961. AK27.7. HRC.

<sup>274</sup> HDO to Bill Koshland. 24 Sept 1961. AK327.7. HRC.

<sup>275</sup> HDO to AK. 6 July 1961. AK327.7. HRC.

<sup>276</sup> “Grande Sertão Veredas: Haroldo de Campos sobre Guimarães Rosa”. YouTube. Web. 1 August 2014.

A translation is a gateway into the global market, but the mere fact of having a book translated certainly does not guarantee success. Piers Armstrong cites the dismal sales of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*:

Knopf's correspondence with Guimarães Rosa includes six-monthly royalty statements, the first of which, for "30-9—63," lists sales in a run of 5,000 to 10,000, of 2,640 domestic and 122 international. The figure really refers to books distributed to retail sellers, who could then return them. From this time on, the royalty statements are incredible and almost comically low: 410 returns and no new sales for the period to 30-9-64; 69 returns for the next period; sales of 22, 74, 38, 57, and 86 for the periods up to the death of Guimarães Rosa. The sales of the English translation of *Sagarana*, from its publication in 1966 till Rosa's death late the following year, reveal a similar pattern: 2,147 for the first six-month period followed by no further sales and 24 returns in the next period. Neither work has since had a further edition. Excluding library acquisition the number of North American readers was and is negligible: given that Rosa's archives alone contain copies of 27 1963 reviews by American journals and newspapers the reality is that the reviewers and the small body of academics with a special interest in Brazilian literature must have constituted a substantial proportion of the initial readership (119).

A number of critics blame the poor quality of the English translation for Rosa's failure to become part of the canon of world literature. In his dissertation on "failed" translations, James Remington Krause cites William Grossman's review in the *New York Times*, who observes that the translators opted for "a conventional style, with the result that much of the color is drained from the book" (231).<sup>277</sup> Mirna Soares Andrade argues that de Onís's strategy of domesticizing the text made it impossible for readers of the English to appreciate Rosa's linguistic innovation, thus preventing Rosa's success based on that fundamental aspect of his work (11). Haroldo de Campos calls the English

---

<sup>277</sup> Armstrong notes that Rosa read reviews that criticized the English translation for draining the poetry from *GSV* and complained about it to his German translator Meyer-Clason ("Guimarães Rosa in Translation" 79).

translation “defective” and argues that it is representative of a type of “*over-altern*” readings which work “as a by-product of unconscious imperialism, by effacing the *subaltern* ‘minor’ languages and by underrating their creative verbal power” (12). In her reading of the correspondence between Guimarães Rosa and de Onís, Sandra Vasconcelos cites a letter<sup>278</sup> from Guimarães Rosa to his German translation, Curt Meyer-Clason, in which he says the American translators “disfigure what the author wanted to say, taking away its dialectic energy, its breath of *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>279</sup>

Noting the influence that Guimarães Rosa’s correspondence with Meyer-Clason had on critics, Armstrong maintains that the view that the English translation was responsible for Rosa’s failure to achieve success on the global market is “a problematic and impressionist view, and one initially based on Guimarães Rosa’s own subjective anticipations and subsequently maintained by various of his admirers, based on their estimation of the author’s genius rather than scrutiny of the texts” (“Guimarães Rosa in Translation” 76). Armstrong reinforces his argument by pointing out that, although critics hold up the German translation as a model, Meyer-Clason appears to have used the English translation to help him solve certain linguistic challenges (75-76). Other critics, such as Iná Valéria Verlangieri, whose Master’s thesis consisted of organizing and commenting on the correspondence between Rosa and de Onís, agree that it is too much of a simplification to blame the critical failure of the novel in English on the translation.

---

<sup>278</sup> 9 Feb. 1965.

<sup>279</sup> “chegam a desfigurar o que o autor quis dizer, tirando-lhe a energia dialética, o sopro de sua *Weltanschauung*” (79).

The criticism on Guimarães Rosa in English translation tends to focus on *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. However, *Sagarana* (first published in Brazil in 1946 by José Olympio) was the translation of which de Onís was most proud, and the only book by Rosa that she translated independently (since she did the novel in collaboration with Taylor). Many of the Portuguese language reviews of the first edition of *Sagarana* emphasized that Rosa uses regional language to express universal themes. Álvaro Lins writes, “In *Sagarana* we have a regionalism in the process of stylization and which therefore, as I see it, places itself in line with the ideal of regionalist Brazilian literature: national themes in universal expression.”<sup>280</sup> The reviews in Portuguese also tend to discuss Rosa as a renovating force in Brazilian literature. Renato Almeida praises Rosa for writing about Brazil instead of looking to European models: “Those who believed that it was possible to remain on the shore of civilization and maintain permanent contact with Europe, whose culture we transplant to this side of the Atlantic, while protecting it from contamination by native barbarity, were wrong and remained marginal.” Candido calls Rosa’s prose “revolutionary” for similar reasons (“Literatura e subdesenvolvimento” 162).

Reviews of the Spanish and Italian translations of Rosa’s work also emphasize the playful element of Rosa’s language (even in translation). Ramón de la Hoz writes, “Guimarães Rosa plays with language. He creates words like Joyce...as a result it is difficult to follow him, not because of baroque style but rather because of the enormous

---

<sup>280</sup> “Em *Sagarana* temos assim um regionalismo com o processo da estilização, e que se coloca portanto na linha do que, a meu ver, deveria ser o ideal da literatura brasileira na feição regionalista: a temática nacional numa expressão universal.”

amount of things he has to tell us.”<sup>281</sup> And an Italian journalist described Rosa as a “Joyce brasileiro.”<sup>282</sup>

Reviews of the English emphasize other aspects. Since the English translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas* was published earlier than the translation of *Sagarana*, the reception of the novel influenced the reviews of the short story collection in English (the opposite order of the publication of the books in Portuguese). This is obvious from reviews of *Sagarana*, such as Thomas Lask’s “Man and Beast in the Backlands,” a review title that is a clear reference to the translated title *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. Lask writes that Rosa’s prose is “concrete and earthy.”<sup>283</sup> In another reductive review typical of the English-language reception, Francis Smith writes, “Latins love and respect their burros, and little Seven of Diamonds is not excepted from this regard.” Like the other reviewers, he mentions nothing about the language.<sup>284</sup> In his review of *Sagarana*, Charles Dollen simply summarizes some of the stories with no discussion of the innovative or regional aspect of the language.<sup>285</sup> This focus on plot is also typical of the English language reviews of the book.

Since de Onís focused on translating the plot rather than recreating the innovation of Rosa’s language,<sup>286</sup> it is not surprising that the English language reviews tend to note regionalism only in terms of plot and central images. Knopf marketed *Sagarana* as a sort

---

<sup>281</sup> “Guimarães Rosa juega con el idioma. Crea palabras al estilo de Joyce.. resulta difícil seguirlo; no por barroquismo estilístico sino por la enorme cantidad de cosas que tiene que decirnos.”

<sup>282</sup> *L’Espresso* 13 Dec. 1964: 26.

<sup>283</sup> “Man and Beast in the Backlands.” 21 May 21. JGR-R15,02,62. IEB.

<sup>284</sup> *Library Journal* NY, Semi-Monthly. 1 April 1966. JGR-R15,02,58. IEB

<sup>285</sup> April 18 1966. JGR-R15,02,61. IEB.

<sup>286</sup> As she told Haiat. See note 233.

of exotic Western. In one of the publisher's advertisements for the English language version of *Sagarana*, the editors cite Mildred Adams: "In a curious tropic fashion [*Sagarana*] touches on our own love for almost any kind of Wild West and the combination of splendidly drawn character and savage country holds one to the page."<sup>287</sup> *Sagarana*, therefore, is marketed in accordance with stereotypes (Brazil as a wild and tropical country) and through equivalences with the West. Again, the focus is on the theme of lawlessness of the backlands and not the experimental language.

In addition to focusing on the plot rather than the language, most of the English language reviews<sup>288</sup> do not mention de Onís at all except in the bibliographic reference at the beginning of the review, and sometimes not even there. The failure of reviewers to mention the translator is significant, as Venuti points out, because it makes the translator "invisible" and readers forget that they are reading a translation (*The Translator's Invisibility*, 1-2). It obscures the ways in which the text may have been transformed in translation. Readers (even reviewers, who are supposed to be trained to read astutely) do not see how the text may have been transformed. As a result, rather than seeing Rosa as an innovative writer whose unusual language may have been transformed in translation, they read de Onís's interpretation as an original.

De Onís corresponded only briefly with Rosa before passing the translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas* on to Taylor, who does not appear to have consulted much with Rosa. When de Onís began to translate *Sagarana*, however, she and Rosa wrote to each

---

<sup>287</sup> 15 May 1963. JGR-R15,02,43. IEB.

<sup>288</sup> Such as those by Dollen, Lask and Smith, cited previously.

other regularly, debating questions of meaning, style, and the function of literature. One of the stories the translator and author discussed most extensively was “Duelo,” the fourth story in *Sagarana*. The correspondence regarding this story spans six years, since de Onís published the story twice: first in *Noonday* in 1960 and then in a revised version for inclusion in the complete translation of *Sagarana* in 1966. She revised the translation partly at the request of Rosa, who told her that during the first translation they had not achieved such a high level in their collaboration.<sup>289</sup> The language of “Duelo” is consistent with Rosa’s narrative and de Onís’s solutions are consistent with her translations of the other stories in *Sagarana* and with the tone of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. The following close reading of the translation of “Duelo” (“Duel” in English) therefore allows for closer examination of the general problems of translating Rosa’s language.

“Duelo” narrates the adventures of Turíbio Todo, “goitered, lazy, vengeful, and bad,” and his nemesis Cassiano Gomes, a former soldier. Turíbio comes home one day to find his wife in bed with Cassiano. The adulterous couple do not notice Turíbio, who leaves unseen and begins to plot his revenge. The following day, Turíbio goes to Cassiano’s house, but instead of restoring his honor, he mistakenly kills his enemy’s brother, “who was not a machine gunner, or an ex-soldier, or anything, and who very particularly detested fornication with neighbors’ wives” (121). Turíbio realizes his error and goes into hiding. The rest of the story narrates the adventures of Cassiano and Turíbio as they chase each other around the *sertão*. Cassiano, who suffers from a bad heart (physically as well as emotionally), eventually falls ill in a destitute town called

---

<sup>289</sup> JGR to HDO. 17 March 1965. JGR-CT-03,108. IEB.



Mosquito, “a spot where people hated to stop for fear of having to spend the rest of their lives there” (134). Cassiano meets a young man nicknamed Twenty-One because he was the last of twenty-one children. Cassiano gives money to Twenty-One, allowing the latter to call for a doctor and save his dying child. Meanwhile, Turíbio has traveled to São Paulo and earned a small fortune picking coffee beans (there’s a historical element here that Brazilians would recognize). Cassiano renounces revenge, gives all his money to Twenty-One and dies repentant and peaceful in Mosquito. Meanwhile, Turíbio, now far wealthier, begins his return to Minas to see his wife. He runs into Twenty-One, who begs for God’s forgiveness before killing Turíbio.

As with Martín Luis Guzmán’s *El águila y la serpiente*, in “Duelo” de Onís is faced with translating dialogue that represents regional differences. In “Duelo,” a character traveling from Bahia to São Paulo tells Turíbio, “baámo pro São Paulo, tchente!...Ganhá munto denheêro...Tchente! Lá tchove denhêro no tchão” (195) As she does with Guzmán’s text, de Onís translates into standard English rather than looking for equivalents for the accent: “We’re going to São Paulo, man...Make a lot of money. Money grows on trees there.” (133). In another case, the boatman’s son says, “Nhor não. Esse-um eu não vi não” (187). The line imitates speech, with “nhor” instead of “senhor” and “esse-um” for “esse.” In de Onís’s translation the words seem more clearly enunciated: “No, sir. That one I didn’t see, no” (127). Similarly, “Eles vem p’ra lá e p’ra cá” (192), a sentence which imitates colloquial speech by omitting vowels, becomes “they live here and there” in English (131). Whereas Guzmán’s prose, however,

realistically mimics regional language in dialogue, Rosa's language presents an additional layer of difficulty because it sounds regional but is often invented.

In his correspondence with de Onís, Rosa explains to his translator:

“In the original text of ‘Sagarana,’ it is like this: the reader understands, but the expressions, even the seemingly trivial ones, are my own, solutions of the author’s personal creation. No sleepy phrases, worn out from excessive use. For example, on page 42, 1.3. (bottom): “em ofensiva sagital.” “Like an arrow” is not good. Rather any new, or strong, thing, as “in an arrow lightening” (?) or “arrowlike”. Or “sagital” itself. Another example. Page 13, 1.4. (bottom), the expression. “por amos e anos” (“through masters and years”). And “desatual,” also did not exist. Nor “só mordendo o duro dele”; and “pelo que com os dedos”; “desarreganha,” “sai por embaixo”; “seu a seu”; “enqueixar”; etc. etc. So, I think that we should prefer, always when possible, the more unusual, original expression, and the most energetic, strongest, most cutting and most violent.<sup>290</sup>

The reader of the Portuguese will understand these expressions because of the proximity to existing idioms and because of the logic of the phrases. For example, “por amos e anos” is clear but playful; it is unfamiliar but sounds idiomatic. Many of the neologisms, such as “desatual” are understandable because of context and obvious roots (“des” and “atual”). Rosa’s language mimics the regional speech of characters from the backlands, but it is also erudite and inventive, just as Riobaldo, the narrator of *Grande Sertão*:

---

<sup>290</sup> “No texto original de “Sagarana”, é assim: o leitor compreende, mas as expressões, mesmo as aparentemente triviais, são próprias, soluções de criação pessoal, do autor. Nada de frases já gastas, já adormecidas é embotadas pelo excesso de uso. Por exemplo, a página 42, 1. 3 (bottom): “em ofensiva sagital”. Não ficaria bem por-se “like an arrow.” Mas, sim, qualquer coisa nova, ou forte, como in an arrow lightening (?), arrowlike. Ou sagittal, mesmo. Outro exemplo. Página 13, 1. 4 (bottom), a expressão; por amos e anos (through masters and years) não existe em português. Ninguém dissera isso, antes. Existe a expressão: por anos e anos (during years and years). E ‘desatual’, também não existia. Nem: só mordendo o duro dele; e pelo que com os dedos; ; desarreganha, sai por embaixo; seu a seu; enqueixar; etc. etc. Daí, acho que devemos preferir, sempre que possível, a expressão mais rara, original, e mais enérgica, forte, crispada e violenta.” JGR to HDO. 11 Feb. 1964. JGR-CT-03,061. IEB.

*Veredas*, is both an uneducated *jagunço* and a character capable of deep, developed reflection.

In some cases, the innovation in Rosa's language is more subtle and easier to translate, but de Onís also normalizes this. For example, in "Duelo," Rosa writes that the backlanders "gostam muito de relações de efeito e causa" (176) where the more common order would be "causa e efeito." De Onís translates as "cause and effect," which subverts a whole range of meanings that could be inferred from the inverted syntax of the original. The preference given to effect over cause in the original could refer to the fact that sometimes the reasons for something are obscured (like the unclear causes of Turíbio's goiter) or it could imply the characters are more interested in concrete effects than in analyzing motives.

Rosa told Lorenz, "I do not submit to the tyranny of grammar or to the dictionaries of others. Grammar and so-called philology, linguistic science, were invented by the enemies of poetry."<sup>291</sup> His unconventional use of language includes complex syntax. In "Duelo," for example, he writes "Altos são os montes da Transmantequeira, belos os seus rios" and later in the same paragraph "Garruchas há que sozinhas disparam" (178). De Onís maintains the poetic syntax in "High are the mountains of Transmantequeira, beautiful its rivers" but the more rigid syntax of English forces her to regularize the word order in "there are guns that go off by themselves" (121). In other cases, the Portuguese language gives Rosa the freedom to put the subject at the end, as he

---

<sup>291</sup> "não me submeto à tirania da gramática e dos dicionários dos outros. A gramática e a chamada filologia, ciência lingüística, foram inventadas pelos inimigos da poesia."

does in this fragment: "E pois, foi, um dia, quando ele estava pior e tinha mandado abrir a janela para que entrasse um sol fiscal, muito ardente, entrou-lhe também pelo quarto, de olhos vermelhos e nariz a escorrer, choramingante, o Timpim" (200). Here the slightly inverted syntax contributes to creating a rhythm that approximates a story being told orally, with Timpim's entrance at the end as a sort of climactic moment. In English this word order is difficult to reconstruct. De Onís translates as, "And it was on a day when he was worse and had ordered the window opened so the inquisitive and glowing sun could come in, that Timpim also entered the room, his eyes red, his nose running, weeping softly" (137). When speaking about the biggest obstacles for translating *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, Zilly told his interviewer,

If the difficulties of the Rosean vocabulary can be approximately clarified with much research and specialized dictionaries dedicated only to his work, the problems of syntax seem insoluble, since the author breaks the rules of the combinations of words, the morphosyntax, the rules for verbs and adjectives, the usual word order. These, in this way, achieve an autonomy, a force and suggestive power as in a poem. A rigid syntax limits the semantic richness of each word, whereas a looser, newer syntax frees it.<sup>292</sup>

Rosa's playful syntax emphasizes the poetic power of each word.

With the exception of the title "Sagarana," which she leaves unchanged, de Onís does not preserve the neologisms or try to recreate them in English. For example, she translates "O corpo pracheou, pronou, e ficou estatelado" (208) as "His body slid

---

<sup>292</sup> "Se as dificuldades do vocabulário rosiano, com muita pesquisa e uso de dicionários especializados, dedicados só à obra dele, podem ser esclarecidas aproximadamente, os problemas da sintaxe parecem insolúveis, pois o autor descompõe as regras de combinação das palavras, a morfossintaxe, a regência de verbos e adjetivos, a sequência usual das palavras. Estas, assim, ganham uma autonomia, uma força e um poder de sugestão como em um poema. Uma sintaxe rígida limita a riqueza semântica de cada palavra, enquanto uma sintaxe mais solta, nova, livre a libera" (313).

sideways, fell, and lay sprawled on the ground” (143). De Onís does manage to recreate some of the alliteration in “slid sideways,” but loses the neologism “pronou.” Like “desatual,” an astute reader can glean the meaning of “pronou” from the word’s association with related vocabulary. In her *Léxico de Guimaraes Rosa*, Martins explains that “pronou” recalls related words such as “pronação” (pronation) and “pronador” (pronator) (398). Another example of one of Rosa’s neologisms appears in “Era um cavalinho ou égua, magro, pampa e apeqirado, de tornozelos escandalosamente espessos e cabeludos, com uma camarada meio-quilo de gente em cima” (203). “Apeqirado” is parasynthetic word formed from the Tupi “pequeira,” meaning small (Martins 35). De Onís translates this as “It was a pony or a mare, thin, spotted, with monstrously thick hairy fetlocks and a half-pint rider on its back” (139). In another instance, Rosa uses the verb “carpir-se,” which, according to Martins is archaic, from Latin “carpere” (201). Rosa writes: “Mas o Timpim teimava agora em beijar-lhe os pés, e, sempre se carpindo, exclamou...” (201), which de Onís translates as “Timpim was now determined to kiss his feet, and still weeping, brought out...” (138).

Rosa often uses other languages to bring new words into Portuguese, but these also form part of the even tone of Rosa’s language. In “Duelo,” the English word “raid” appears in the Portuguese (195), which de Onís leaves in English (134). Onomatopoeic words also appear in Rosa’s texts. In “Duelo,” “Timpim abreu o bué” (201).<sup>293</sup> In English, he “began to sob” (137). Despite the varied roots of his vocabulary (Latin, French, English, Tupi) Rosa’s language sounds consistently regional, even if the words

---

<sup>293</sup> “Abreu o bué” also appears also in *Macunaima* (Martins 84.)

are invented. Turbido Todo, for example, is “meiramente ansioso” (190). In Portuguese the “meio” is often used as an adverb meaning “somewhat” and because the suffix “mente” is also a common suffix, a reader will easily understand “meiramente” despite the fact that it is a neologism. It sounds like something a person in the rural part of Minas might say, but it is in fact invented. De Onís standardizes the language and translates the neologism as “somewhat uneasy” (130).

*Sagarana* is a neologism with Germanic (“Saga”) and Tupi roots (“Rana”, meaning “like”). After Rosa rejected de Onís’s original suggestion for the title, “A Rustic Saga,” he wrote to her saying, “The word ‘Sagarana’ in itself has a lot of magical power. Here also in Brazil, it was unknown and strange, since it did not exist before I invented and used it, nor could it have been understood. However, it later circulated, alive and strong. It is a word with good fortune. Because it is mysterious and evocative, it will awaken curiosity and tempt the reader.”<sup>294</sup>

Rosa’s correspondence with de Onís reveals that he paid a lot of attention to the etymology of words, believing that a word’s history contributed to its poetry. Unhappy with de Onís’s original translation of “No mais, distante, o mato dormia, num quiriri sem alarmas” (which de Onís had translated as “in the distance the forest slumbered in quiet peace, in a silence that was almost audible”), he explains to his translator that “‘quiriri’ of the original text, is an Indian word, full of superstition, of ‘something cosmic’, of

---

<sup>294</sup> “A palavra ‘Sagarana’, por si, tem muita força mágica. Também aqui no Brasil, ela era desconhecida e estranha, pois não existia antes que eu a inventasse a usasse, nem podia ser compreendida. Entretanto, circulou logo, viva e forte. É uma palavra com sorte. Despertará a curiosidade e tentará o leitor, por misteriosa e evocativa.” JGR to HDO. 11 Feb 1964. JGR-CT-03,061. IEB.

primitive magic, of animism, or a sense of ‘panic.’”<sup>295</sup> Rosa and de Onís eventually agree on “In the distance the forest slumbered in massive peace, in an almost resonant silence” (128) because, although the etymology is lost, the author hears a certain poetry in “resonant silence.”<sup>296</sup> Other words, such as “gangento” and “mulungu” come from Tupi (Martins 245, 343). De Onís translates “gangento” as “bursting with pride” and “mulungu” as “coral bean trees” (137, 135).

It is clearly difficult to translate a text and keep the same etymologies. Brazilian Portuguese has Tupi influence; English does not. Perhaps for etymological reasons—as equivalents Tupi/Saxon, Rosa told de Onís that he preferred that she use “short, strong words of Saxon origin.”<sup>297</sup> De Onís responded saying,

I have always been guided by the principle of using an Anglo-Saxon word in preference to a Latinized one wherever possible. One cannot be inflexible about such a thing. I realize, too, that your objective is poetry and painting as well as exposition and description; but I have to be careful not to let the subject matter get out of hand. If it becomes too loose and vague, it is I, the translator, who will be blamed. So as you see I must do a complicated juggling act, bearing all these things in mind, or I will do us both a disfavor.<sup>298</sup>

De Onís, therefore, was cautious. In the same letter, she writes,

In the matter of tenses, I have to be careful, too. In English the continuous use of the present tense becomes very monotonous. The same thing- being careful- holds true of translating the names of persons and places literally. One can do this only up to a point; afterwards it becomes too mannered and far-fetched. It is by weighing all these imponderables that one arrives at a good translation.

<sup>295</sup> “‘quiriri’, do texto original, é palavra índia, cheia de superstição, de ‘coisa cósmica’, de magia primitiva, de animismo, de sentido ‘pânico.’” (JGR to HDO. 2 May 1959. JGR- CT 03,18. IEB.)

<sup>296</sup> JGR to HDO. 2 May 1959. JGR-CT-03,018. IEB

<sup>297</sup> “preferir, se pode, as curtas, fortes palavras de origem saxónica.” JGR-CT-03,061, JGR to HDO, 11 Feb. 1964. IEB.

<sup>298</sup> HDO to JGR. 14 Nov 1964. JGR-CT-03,083. IEB.

De Onís tends to translate proper names only when it is essential for understanding the events of the story. For example, Chico Barqueiro, which could be a nickname in Portuguese as well as designating his profession, becomes the more anonymous “boatman” in English. In other cases, she translates names at Rosa’s request. Elias Ruivo therefore becomes Elias the Red.<sup>299</sup>

In most cases, however, she leaves names in Portuguese. Because the names are often significant in the original, the translation loses some level of symbolic detail (perhaps this is inevitable in translation). Turíbio, whose name recalls his turbulent nature, is “born on the banks of the Borrachudo,” which is the name of a river but also designates a type of mosquito. Since insects are a possible cause of Turíbio’s goiter and Cassiano later dies in the malaria-ridden town of Mosquito, the association of Borrachudo with mosquito is most likely intentional. De Onís leaves these place names unchanged. “Mosquito” is significant in both languages and therefore presents no problem for translation, but Borrachudo loses a certain level of meaning when left in Portuguese. After Cassiano leaves the cemetery, he goes to find a character named Exaltino-de-trás-da-Igreja (Exaltino-from-behind-the-church), who sells Cassiano his horse. Cassiano later becomes religious and dies repentant, so the name of the man who helps him set off on his journey is also significant. The fact that de Onís generally leaves these names in Portuguese suggests that she does not entirely adapt the text to the model of the Western. That is, her version is not entirely domesticating, as some critics suggest.

---

<sup>299</sup> JGR to HDO. 10 April 1959. JGR-CT-03,009. IEB.



Rosa uses disorienting language to describe the town where Cassiano eventually dies: “no Mosquito era tudo gente miúda, amarelenta ou amaleitada, esmolambada, escabreada, que não conhecia o trem-de-ferro, mui pacata e sem ação. Não se alembravam de crimes sangrentos, não tinham mortes nas costas.” (197). A Brazilian reader may be unsure whether “amaleitado” (from “mal”- meaning “bad” and “leite”- meaning “milk”) and “amaralenta” (from “amarelo”- “yellow”) are neologisms or not, but they sound like they may be existing words used in some region of Minas and the meaning is easy to deduce from the related words and the context. The archaisms also appear regional. “Mui” is an archaic form of “muito”. “Alembrar” is an archaic form of “lembrar” in: “Não se alembravam de crimes sangrentos” (197). De Onís translates this all into modern English: “Everybody in Mosquito was wizened, sallow, malaria-ridden, ragged, suspicious, had never seen a train, and was nonaggressive and listless. They could recall no bloody crimes, they had no deaths on their conscience” (135).

Rosa’s unusual choices often function to create what he thought of as poetic language. He tells de Onís, “The words should also function by their graphic, suggestive form, and their sonority, contributing to create a type of ‘subjacent music.’ From there, the appeal to rhyme, assonance and principally alliteration. Short, quick, energetic forms. Principally, power.”<sup>300</sup> Since de Onís strived to recreate the meaning, however, much of the supposed poetry was lost. In “Duelo”, for example, Rosa writes,

---

<sup>300</sup> “As palavras devem funcionar também por sua forma gráfica, sugestiva, e sua sonoridade, contribuindo para criar uma espécie de ‘música subjacente.’ Daí, o recurso às rimas, às assonâncias, e, principalmente, às aliterações. Formas curtas, rápidas, enérgicas. Força, principalmente JGR to HDO. 11 Feb 1964. JGR-CT-03,061. IEB.

E os grotiros<sup>301</sup> também passavam—mulheres de saia arregaçada, de pote à cabeça, vindas da cacimba; meninos ventrudos, brincando de tanger pedradas nos bichos ou de comer terra; e capiaus, com a enxada ou com a foice, mas muito contentes de si e fagueiros, num passinho requebrado, arrastando alpercatas, ou gingando, faz que ajoelha mas não ajoelha, ou ainda na andadura anserina, - assim torto, pé-de-pato, tropeçante” (198).

Rosa uses the uncommon Latin-based “anserina” instead of a simpler “como um pato” (“like a duck”). The word serves alliterative purposes in the following paragraph. The text also has a definite rhythm which could mimic the slow, swaying walk described. De Onís translates as,

The natives of the valley passed, too—women with their skirts pinned up, a water jug on their head, coming from the spring; children with swollen bellies, amusing themselves by throwing stones at the animals or eating dirt; and the men, with pick or scythe, but happy and lighthearted; walking jauntily, dragging their sandals, or swaying, as though about to kneel but not kneeling, or with a duck walk—from side to side—flat-footed, lurching (135).

The English is clearer, but less innovative and—in Rosa’s terms, less poetic. If de Onís had tried to recreate a difficult, poetic English, however, the text may have been even more challenging for readers of the translation than it is for Brazilian readers, in part because the reader of the version in English would not have the image of Northeastern Brazil that would be familiar to most Brazilians. Even Brazilian readers from urban areas far from Minas would at least have seen images of the northeast of Brazil, women with their skirts hitched up, walking with jars on their heads. For an English-speaker, these images are all very foreign and so perhaps it would be more difficult to add neologisms to an already very challenging text in English.

---

<sup>301</sup> According to Martins, “groteiro” comes from grot(a) (meaning valley) and the suffix -eiro (256).

As with the names of characters and places, de Onís sometimes translates the names of plants and sometimes leaves them in Portuguese. She generally seems focused on understanding the literal meaning and translating as accurately as possible. As she he did with other authors whose work she translated, de Onís sent Rosa a list questions about the text. Her first queries were primarily about “flora and fauna which exist only in Brazil.”<sup>302</sup> Faced with this difficulty, the translator can look for an equivalent that a reader of the translation would recognize. This strategy would have been consistent with the idiomatic English typical of the Western that de Onís uses. Instead, however, she leaves a number of words in Portuguese and translates others. One section of the Portuguese reads,

-Olha a inácia! – ralhou de si Cassiano, apagando o cigarro, que o que dera alvo tinha sido a brasinha vermelha. Aí, porém, da banda da estrada, onde a copa do açoita-cavalos negrejava como uma anta encolhida, fizeram fogo também.

Eí, e Cassiano rastejou, recuando, e, dando três vezes o lanço, transpôs as abertas entre a criciúma e a guaxima, entre a guaxima e o rancho, e entre o rancho e o gordo coqueiro catolé. Acocorou-se, coberto pela palmeira, e espiou, buscando um sinal claro de qualquer vulto movente (187-8).

De Onís translates this as

“Mind the rules,” Cassiano scolded himself, putting out his cigarette, whose lighted end had been the target. Now, from over by the side of the road, where a spreading whiptree stood black, like a crouching tapir, shots were coming, too.

Cassiano, edging himself backward, in three consecutive bounds crossed the opening between the thickets of *crissiúma* and *guaxima*, between the *guaxima* and the shed, the shed and the thick coconut palm. There he squatted, hidden by the palm, and watched, waiting for some blurred bulk or moving object (128).

---

<sup>302</sup> HDO to JGR. 15 March 1959. JGR-CT-03,006. IEB.

Guimarães Rosa's language is disorienting in Portuguese. "Lanço" (literally, a throw/toss) and "acocorar-se" (to crouch down) are not common words, though careful readers will understand them through context. Whereas Rosa's language is difficult, but consistent in tone, de Onís's translation alternates between idiomatic English and foreign references. "Three consecutive bounds" simplifies "dando três vezes o lanço." "Whiptree" (her translation of "açóita-cavalos") is consistent with that familiar English, even if the reader does not recognize the plant. *Crissiúma* and *guaxima*, however, change the tone of the text and the italics may make the reader of the English wish for a glossary. Brazilian readers may also not be familiar with all the plants, but they will likely find enough clues (such as "palmeira") that will allow them to complete the image. The reader of the English may find it more difficult to do so because they are lacking a whole set of references that would allow them to imagine the scene. Even a seemingly simple word like "shed" in the translation is problematic. Rosa had corrected de Onís's original translation of "hut", explaining that "rancho" designated a more primitive structure out in the fields with no walls, a temporary shelter for cowboys or travelers."<sup>303</sup>

The translation reduces the specificity of some of the images, which become more general in the English. For example, the "estradas sertanejas" (204) become a more general "country road" (139). In another instance, a doctor tells Cassiano that he will likely die "lá p'ra o São João do ano que vem... Mas, já indo empiorando um pouco, aí por volta do Natal..." (196). In the English translation, "São João," the feast of St. John, motive for Brazil's June festivals, widely celebrated in the north of Brazil, becomes

---

<sup>303</sup> JGR to HDO. 2 May 1959. JGR-CT-03,018. IEB.

Midsummer Day: “Around Midsummer Day of next year...But if it keeps getting worse around Christmas” (134). In this case, besides suppressing a cultural element (the June festivals), the choice is confusing, since midsummer day in Brazil is in December, not in June. In another case, “caguinxo”, which according to Martins, is a vulgar word derived from “cagar” (vulgar, to shit) and meaning a weak person (92) appears in the final paragraph of the Portuguese (208) and is eliminated in the English. These sorts of problems inevitably present themselves in almost any translation. To avoid losing this level of detail, de Onís would have had to explain the images, likely creating a more clunky narrative. Since she opted for English that was generally easy for a North American reader to interpret, the words left in Portuguese are more noticeable. This approach is in line with Venuti’s strategy of foreignizing translation. The words mark the text as a translation, but the inconsistent tone makes it difficult for readers to immerse themselves in the language of the translation.

Towards the end of the story, just before the climax in which Twenty-One kills Turíbio, Rosa includes a paragraph that represents a “small, dynamic portrait of nature, which functions to delay the narrative, and for contrast”<sup>304</sup>. This paragraph was omitted from the first translation (published in *Noonday*) and reinstated in the complete translation of *Sagarana* at Rosa’s insistence. The original Portuguese reads:

Enquanto isso, o mico espiralava tronco abaixo e pulava para o vinhático, e do vinhático, para o sete-casacas, e do sete-casacas para o jequitibá; desceu na corda quinada do cipó-cruz, subiu pelo rastilho de flores solares do unha-de-gato, galgou as alturas de um anjelim; sumiu-se nas grimpas; e, dali, vaiou (205).

---

<sup>304</sup> “Um pequenino quadro, dinâmico, da natureza, e que funciona como ‘retardador’ da narrativa, e para contraste” JGR to HDO. 9 Oct 1964. JGR-CT-03,078. IEB.

The paragraph is difficult for a native speaker of Portuguese, but as in other cases, Brazilians would likely have enough clues that they would be able to visualize the scene. Many Brazilians, for example, would recognize *jequitibá*. Familiarity with even one of the plants mentioned provides information about the landscape that can allow a creative reader to fill in the missing details. A reader of the de Onís's translation, however, confronts a whole series of unfamiliar terms:

Whereupon the marmoset spiraled down the trunk and skipped to the *goldwood ape's-earring*, from the *ape's-earring* to the *myrtle*, from the *myrtle* to the *sapucaia nut* tree, which he descended by the rope of a *funnelvine*, then scampered up the sunny fuse of *cat's-claw mimosa* flowers to the top of an *angelywood* and from there he jeered at them (140).

Whereas Brazilian readers have points of reference that allow them to fill in the gaps, the English at times is like a puzzle with too many pieces missing.

Some of De Onís's solutions—"ape's-earring"; "myrtle", "sapucaia nut," "funnelvine," "catclaw-mimosa," and "angelywood"—were all suggestions Rosa had offered her,<sup>305</sup> quite likely because he had found those words in a botanical dictionary.<sup>306</sup> Dictionaries, of course, can be dangerous. An overreliance on dictionary definitions were precisely the problem Knopf had found with translator-lexicographer Taylor. For Rosa, however, literal translations often create a strangeness in the target language that shock the reader in just the way he wants. He wrote to de Onís saying,

---

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Rosa often referred to different dictionaries to help his translators. In other case, for example, he tells de Onís that he had looked up "guaxima" in a botanical dictionary and found it's called "Buenas tardes" in PR and "botón de oro" in Mexico and that "grao de galo" was "cockspur" in the U.S. (JGR to HDO. 10 April 1959. JGR-CT-03,009. IEB).

You will have noted that, in my books I permanently, constantly shock, or try to shock with Portuguese: create a strangeness for the reader, not let him rest on the crutch of the commonplace, domesticated and customary; I try to make him feel a more or less exotic phrase, a ‘newness’ in words, in the syntax. It may seem crazy [sic] on my part, but I want the reader to confront the text, like a mad live animal. What I would like is to speak as much to the unconscious as to the conscious mind of the reader.<sup>307</sup>

Literal translations sometimes brought the strangeness Rosa desired to the versions of his stories and novel in English. However, the strategy is problematic because texts in translation are already more difficult than those in the original language because the references tend to be less familiar. In addition, the aesthetic clashed with the market and with de Onís’s and with Knopf’s ideals. When Mrs. Oliver was still helping with the translations, Knopf wrote to Rosa saying,

Mrs. Oliver...is utterly hopeless as a translator. It would appear that all she has done is to produce a literal, word-for-word, comma-for-comma rendition of your original. And too often her English simply doesn’t make sense. For example, you simply can’t print, ‘But Nho Augusto, biting himself, purple and wild, had already dashed through half of the mass.’ I don’t have to tell you what a problem turning your prose into English presents, but nothing could do it more damage than a translator who works, as you put it yourself, ‘close and tight to the original text, without the slightest betrayal or deviation.’<sup>308</sup>

Rosa responded by arguing that the translated fragment Knopf had cited was just the type of translation he wanted.<sup>309</sup>

---

<sup>307</sup> “Deve ter notado que, em meus livros, eu faço, ou procuro fazer isso, permanentemente, constantemente, com o português: chocar, ‘estranhar’ o leitor, não deixar que ele repouse na bengala dos lugares-comuns, das expressões domesticadas e acostumadas; obriga-lo a sentir a frase meio exótica, uma “novidade” nas palavras, na sintaxe. Pode parecer crazy de minha parte, mas quero que o leitor tenha de enfrentar um pouco o texto, como a um animal bravo e vivo. O que eu gostaria era de falar tanto ao inconsciente quanto à mente consciente do leitor.” JGR to HDO. 2 May 1959. JGR-CT-03,018. IEB.

<sup>308</sup> AK to JGR. 12 Feb 1963. AK714.5. HRC

<sup>309</sup> JGR to AK. 27 Jan 1963. AK714.5. HRC.

In a way, Guimarães Rosa's push for literal translations in certain cases recalls certain elements of Walter Benjamin's "Task of the Translator." Benjamin writes, "no case for literalness can be based on a desire to retain the meaning. Meaning is served far better - and literature and language far worse - by the unrestrained license of bad translators" (79). Certainly Rosa, who spoke eight or more languages, also understood that a literal translation would not be the best method for reproducing meaning. He was not, however, looking for simple recreation of content, but for words to convey music and mystery. Benjamin cites Rudolf Pannwitz who writes, "The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue" (81). Rosa, too, wanted a sort of strangeness in the translation as well as in the original. His suggestions to de Onís and his argument in favor of Oliver's overly literal translation imply that he believed literal translation was one way of innovating in the target language. Literal translations may work if the translation complements the original, like the pieces of a fragmented vessel that Benjamin imagines,<sup>310</sup> but they are problematic if the translation is to stand on its own, as it must if it is to circulate in the global market.

In their correspondence, Rosa often gave de Onís suggestions for revision, and it was surely difficult for her to discern whether the strangeness came from mistakes in Rosa's English, or from the author's desire for "worse" English.<sup>311</sup> Despite the limitations in his English, he sometimes offered poetic and well-written solutions, such as "drifted

---

<sup>310</sup> For Benjamin a translation should complement the original, represent part of a greater whole, like "fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together." That is they complement each other.

<sup>311</sup> JGR to HDO. 21 May 1959. JGR- CT 03, 21. IEB.



gradually into unemployment and idleness” instead of de Onís’s “forced into the rank of the unemployed.” Other times he suggests awkward or incorrect translations like “without mugging” instead of “without screwing up his face” or “where to shatter himself” instead of “to fall sick.” He wants de Onís to translate “devia de... chegar sem suor, como último convidado” (189, literally, “should.. arrive without sweat, as the last guest”) as “would easily arrive as the cool last.”<sup>312</sup> De Onís had originally translated this as “as cool as a cucumber.” Recognizing the expression as common and idiomatic, Rosa expressed his displeasure directly, telling his translator, “I’m sorry, but I hate this.”<sup>313</sup> She eventually found a middle ground in “as cool as the last guest.” These strange solutions would have worked if de Onís had been able to create a consistently creative idiolect. Instead, her language alternates between idiomatic English and clunky sentences like “it is no small problem for people with their heads in the right place to satisfy the two of them when they are together” (119), with difficult names left in Portuguese.

Literal translation does not work also because it may create strangeness beyond what is intended by the original. Take, for example, Felipe Martinez’s “conceptual translation”<sup>314</sup> of part of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. The first lines of the novel in Portuguese are: “Nonada. Tiros que o senhor ouviu foram de briga de homem não, Deus esteja. Alvejei mira em árvore, no quintal, no baixo do córrego. Por meu acerto. Todo dia isso faço, gosto; desde mal em minha mocidade.” “Nonada” is a neologismo, a

---

<sup>312</sup> JGR to HDO. 2 May 2 1959. JGR-CT-03,018. IEB.

<sup>313</sup> JGR to HDO. 2 May 1959. JGR-CT-03,018. IEB.

<sup>314</sup> To better understand the idea of conceptual writing, see Goldsmith, Kenneth. “Paragraphs on Conceptual Writing.” University of Buffalo. Web. Accessed 3 Mar. 2014. <[http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith/conceptual\\_paragraphs.html](http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith/conceptual_paragraphs.html)>

combination of “no” and “nothing.” In a lecture on translating *Grande Sertão Veredas* into German,<sup>315</sup> Zilly noted that Rosa omits the article in the following sentence (and in many other parts of his narrative) and adds “homem” which seems strangely redundant, but is not, given the theme of the devil in the book. Martinez reproduces these two unusual elements, but the rest of the conceptual translation is confusing: “Nothing. Shots that the Sir heard were man brawling not, God be. Bleach white sights on the tree in the backyard, down in the river. By my right. I do this every day, I like; from the bad of boyhood.”

A literal translation certainly does create strangeness, but Martinez’s conceptual translation is more confusing than the original Portuguese. In the Portuguese, “alvejei mira em árvore” is a difficult construction, as *alvejar* (“I took aim”) and *mira* (“target”) are not normally used together in this way. However, the astute reader can deduce the meaning (“I aimed at a tree”) whereas “bleach white sights on the tree” is not a coherent construction in English. In the Portuguese, “por meu acerto” (Riobaldo is target shooting so that he can be a good shot) is also clear, despite the fact that the narrator Riobaldo confuses “por” and “para.”<sup>316</sup> Whereas the Portuguese is difficult but readable, Martinez’s English does not allow the reader to get beyond the strangeness of the language and into the narrative. In their translation, de Onís and Taylor clarify the language completely, suppressing the most difficult aspects and regularizing the grammar, adding for example “those” before “shots”: “It’s nothing. Those shots you

---

<sup>315</sup> Zilly, Berthold. A “Transgermanização de Grande Sertão Veredas.” Casa de Guilherme de Almeida, São Paulo, 7 Sept. 2014. Lecture.

<sup>316</sup> Zilly notes this. Ibid.

heard were not men fighting. God be praised. It was just me there in the back yard, target-shooting down by the creek, to keep in practice. I do it every day, because I enjoy it; have ever since I was a boy.” De Onís’s translation certainly normalizes the language, but in other parts of the text the words in Portuguese or the unfamiliar references remind readers that they are reading a translation.

When de Onís says she wants to leave certain names in Portuguese, Rosa agrees, telling her, “I also feel, intensely, the poetry that surrounds proper names like a halo in the translations of books from other languages”.<sup>317</sup> Rosa’s comment that foreign words have an almost sacred quality recall Walter Benjamin’s ideas about the revelatory power of each language. In “The Task of the Translator,” Benjamin writes,

[A]ll suprahistorical kinship of languages rests in the intention underlying each language as a whole—an intention, however, which no single language can attain by itself but which is realized only by the totality of their intentions supplementing each other: pure language. While all individual elements of foreign languages—words, sentences, structure—are mutually exclusive, these languages supplement one another in their intentions (75).

Paulo Rónai sees in Rosa’s work “nostalgia for a superlanguage, which would unite the virtues and expressive potential of all languages, a *sui generis* Esperanto... It matters little if we know if he really believed that such a perfect form of communication once existed, or if he just presented this hypothesis to support a fleeting and momentary intuition. What nevertheless seems indisputable is that he tried to infuse this superlanguage into his own

---

<sup>317</sup> “também sinto assim, intensamente, a poesia que rodeia os nomes próprios como um halo, nas traduções de livros de outras línguas” JGR to HDO. 24 April 1959. JGR-CT-03,017. IEB.

language.”<sup>318</sup> Rosa told Lorenz that he learned languages because “each language holds within it a truth that cannot be translated,” a comment that also explains his use of foreign words in his fiction.<sup>319</sup> This idea is in line with Rosa’s feeling that we live in a “spiritual Babel of values.”<sup>320</sup>

When de Onís translates literally into unfamiliar English, or when she leaves words in Portuguese, she seems to get closer to Rosa’s ideal—in theory, but not in practice. In reality, leaving words in Portuguese has roughly the same effect as words like “apes-earring.” They clash with the idiomatic English. De Onís has been accused of domesticating Guimarães Rosa’s narrative, but in her way she (perhaps unintentionally) adopts a foreignizing strategy. She marks the text as a translation, and these traces of the foreign are not consistent with the model of the American Western.

If it is impossible to completely understand a foreign culture, the way to more completely understand it is by making those processes of equivalences and adaptation visible. In “Found in Translation: On the Social History of the Moral Imagination,” when Geertz talks about understanding the other, he writes,

The truth of the doctrine of cultural (or historical- it is the same thing) relativism is that we can never apprehend another people’s or another period’s imagination neatly, as though it were our own. The falsity of it is that we can therefore never genuinely apprehend it at all. We can

---

<sup>318</sup> “Sentiria Guimarães Rosa saudades de uma superlíngua, que unisse as virtudes e as potencialidades expressivas de todas, um Esperanto sui generis... Pouco importa sabermos se realmente acreditava na existência, outrora, de um meio de comunicação tão perfeito, ou se apenas lançou essa hipótese para dar apoio a uma intuição momentânea e fugidia. O que porém parece indiscutível é que tentou infundir algo desse superidioma na sua própria linguagem” (30).

<sup>319</sup> “Hoje em dia, quando de repente o mundo é muito mais amplo, não pode ser suficiente um só idioma, que nem sequer é dominado com exatidão. Não tem sentido. E esta é a razão pela qual aprendi línguas. Cada língua guarda em si uma verdade que não pode ser traduzida.”

<sup>320</sup> See note 209.

apprehend it well enough... but we do so not by looking behind the interfering glosses which connect us to it but through them (799).

This, of course, is the strategy Venuti advocates (foreignizing translation). Phrases that mark the text as a translation, however, are not enough to recreate Rosa's consistently innovative language. Although Rosa's language is so difficult in Portuguese that some Brazilians jokingly told Knopf that they were waiting for the English translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas* in order to understand the novel,<sup>321</sup> it is possible for a Brazilian reader to learn the language in the same way that a reader of English learns to read Joyce—on his own terms. De Onís makes a decision to translate conceptually but not to look for equivalences for his innovative language.

A translator who feels bound by the original as de Onís did is not at liberty to spontaneously experiment in English. Also, it is difficult to market a text that does not read fluently. The editors pushed for readability. An editor at Knopf wrote to Taylor saying his translation of *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela* (Jorge Amado) is “unsatisfactory. It is clear to us at this point that you do not recognize that a good translator, particularly in fiction, must make a final effort to free himself of the strictures of the original language and to recreate in English a lively, smooth, readable style”.<sup>322</sup> Venuti also notes that

---

<sup>321</sup> In the publisher's bulletin, Alfred Knopf wrote, “One of the most difficult books we have ever undertaken is a Brazilian novel discovered some years ago by Harriet de Onís... As soon as we bought the English-language rights our troubles began, because in writing about the backland country of northern Brazil—the province of Minas Gerais, in which Senhor Rosa grew up—he gave new forms to the Portuguese language. Indeed, in Brazil early last year, many people, when I told them that we were publishing this novel (which I felt might in the end be known as “Knopf's folly”), remarked, ‘Well, when your edition is ready, we can read it, for we cannot read it in Portuguese.’”  
*The Borzoi Quarterly* 12. 2 (1963). JGR-Pa-05,01. IEB.

<sup>322</sup> Judith E. Jones to Taylor. 5 June 1961. AK339.5. HRC

translators have a tendency to opt for domesticizing strategies since they are selling to the market of the target language. Translations published in the U.S., where there is less government patronage for artistic projects, may be particularly tied to the market (Sapiro 32).

Like de Onís, Barbara Shelby Merello, who translated some of Rosa's stories for the collection *The Third Bank of the River and Other Stories* for Knopf in 1968, also seems to have focused on translating a simplified aspect of Rosa's regionalism rather than linguistic experimentation. "Folk wisdom is pretty much the same the world over," she said, speaking of her translations of Rosa's work (17). The resistance to translating the more experimental aspects of the language may therefore reflect broader tendencies in the U.S. market during the 1960s.

De Onís's letters to Rosa, in which she always almost asked for clarification of meanings and rarely about innovation or poetry, reflect her tendency to try to faithfully reproduce the basic narrative, but without looking for creative equivalents to the Brazilian's avant garde language. In one of his letters to de Onís, Rosa said that he and his translator would be "obligated to the touch of hands, eyes closed and mouths shut, as in the dialogue of two Helen Kellers."<sup>323</sup> He was referring to the limitations of her Portuguese, and the limitations of his English. However, the comment could also be interpreted in terms of their different perspectives: Rosa wanted a Joycean sort of English that shocked the reader, and de Onís pushed for fluent English with regular syntax.

---

<sup>323</sup> "obrigados a um tactoio de mãos, de olhas fechados e bocas mudas, como se no diálogo de duas Helen Keller". JGR to HDO. 8 April 1959. JGR-CT-03,008. IEB.

However, it is important to remember that despite alterations, translation is still bringing something new to the target culture. And despite the fact that she normalized the language and looked for equivalents in the U.S. Western, it is unfair to accuse de Onís of being imperialistic. Even if she had focused on translating linguistic playfulness, de Onís would have had to rely on equivalences (what Lefevere calls conceptual solutions). It is often not possible to translate experimental aspects of the language and recreate the literal meaning as accurately as possible. De Onís opted for the latter.

Had de Onís been looking for texts to adapt easily to the U.S. market, she never would have attempted to translate Rosa (which was also an enormous amount of work for small financial return). Guimarães Rosa was not a comfortable choice. De Onís took on the enormous task of translating his work partly because translating was in general a “labor of love”<sup>324</sup> and because she felt he deserved international attention. Her translation of his work was motivated by a sentiment absolutely opposed to imperialism. Accusing a woman who devoted her career to bringing international attention to Latin American writers is unfair and inaccurate.

In addition, de Onís pushed against the market and argued with her editors, essentially telling them that Rosa’s work should be allowed to maintain some of its foreignness. After complaining about Knopf’s “nitpicking” changes (to *Grande Sertão: Veredas*), she told her editor:

This is a book of great quality, but strange and difficult, as you were told when you were in Brazil. It will have to stand or fall by its own merits, not by the tidying up we try to do. The same holds true of Joyce and Faulkner, to cite only two examples. What would have happened if their

---

<sup>324</sup> HDO to AK. 1 June 1961. AK327.7. HRC

publishers had gone to work to straighten out and reorganize their thought and expression? They are all artists who are fully aware of what they are doing, and whose style is an integral part of their work. You were extremely, and, for the most part, undeservedly, harsh with Mr. Taylor. You are completely within your right not to like Guimarães Rosa's writing. But not to try to make him over in your own likeness.<sup>325</sup>

Perhaps now there is more tolerance for a foreignizing translation, but in the context in which de Onís worked, a foreignizing strategy may have been more difficult.

Armstrong argues that de Onís and Taylor's translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas* "fell to earth between two markets" in the U.S.: a no-man's-land between readers of popular Westerns and specialized academics with an interest in Brazil (*Third World Literary Fortunes* 121). The same may be true of *Sagarana*. By maintaining elements of each, it did not appeal to either readership. In addition, an important aspect of Rosa's work is lost: linguistic innovation. It is possible that despite the universality of Rosa's themes, his work simply did not lend itself to the global market. In his review of the first edition of *Sagarana*, critic Sérgio Millet mused that Guimarães Rosa would not be able to interest a non-Brazilian reader: "What I now feel in Guimarães Rosa is exactly an inability to interest the non-Brazilian reader."<sup>326</sup> It is not clear whether U.S. readers would have accepted Rosa more on his own terms or if the language of the Western—as so many critics maintain—destroyed his chance at success.

Zilly writes,

[How can a translator] reproduce, recreate, reconfigure that enormous distance between the Rosean style and other authors..? Of course the distance cannot be exactly the same, since readers of German would not

---

<sup>325</sup> HDO to AK. 3 June 1962. AK361.3. HRC.

<sup>326</sup> "Ora o que eu sinto em Guimarães Rosa é exatamente uma incapacidade de interessar o leitor não brasileiro" (Sérgio Milliet. "Leituras Avulsas" *Diário de Notícias* 21 julho 1946.)



buy the book, and if they bought it, they would stop reading after two or three pages. Therefore, the challenge is on one hand to give the German reader an idea of the singularity of the Rosean style, but, at the same time, diminish a little the degree of inaccessibility of the style.<sup>327</sup>

This is the great challenge for the translator of Rosa: making his *surregional* narrative accessible without making it too difficult for the reader of the target language. Balch also notes that the problem of translating Guimarães Rosa's language "goes to the heart of literature and translation: To what extent, if at all, should foreign works be reworked or adapted when targeted to audiences outside their original language? At what point does a work cease to become accessible to a new set of readers?" (49).

Critics have argued that Guimarães Rosa was not successful internationally because Taylor and de Onís's translations did not attempt to recreate the linguistic inventiveness of the original and because they relied on the equivalent of the Western. However, as Zilly points out, if a work is too experimental in translation or if the reader in the target language has no familiar points of reference, the translation will not circulate at all. The solution may require a balance, which is what, perhaps, de Onís was aiming for in her mismatched register of Brazilian terms and the language of the American West.

---

<sup>327</sup> "Como reproduzir, recriar, reconfigurar essa enorme distância entre o estilo rosiano e os estilos de outros autores...? Claro que a distância não pode ser exatamente a mesma, pois o leitor de língua alemã creio que então não compraria o livro, ou, se comprasse, deixaria de o ler depois de duas ou três páginas. Assim, o desafio é por um lado dar ao leitor alemão uma ideia da singularidade do estilo rosiano, mas, ao mesmo tempo, diminuir um pouco o grau de inacessibilidade do estilo." (323)

## CONCLUSION: LITERATURE, TRANSLATION, AND GLOBALIZATION

The past few years have seen a surge of books and articles on the relationship between translation, politics, and globalization. In *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?: Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (2011), David Bellos maintains that the prestige associated with certain languages and cultures determines the degree to which foreign elements are preserved in translation (169). The processes he describes of “translating up” and “translating down” recall Venuti’s theory of domestication and foreignization. While Bellos posits that everything is translatable, Emily Apter, in *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013), argues for the existence of “untranslatableables”<sup>328</sup> as a way of criticizing certain assumptions (such as universality) within the discipline of comparative literature and in an increasingly globalized world. In addition to these scholarly texts, articles on the subject have been appearing with regularity in literary journals<sup>329</sup> and in mainstream publications such as *The Guardian*<sup>330</sup> and *The New York Times*.<sup>331</sup> In a recent op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, Benjamin Moser discusses the homogenizing effects of globalization, which, he argues, extend to literature. Moser maintains that writers who work in English “[profit] from a situation that has developed over centuries,” and that those writers and critics who

---

<sup>328</sup> See also: Cassin, Barbara. *Dictionary of Untranslatableables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. Trans. edited by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra, and Michael Wood. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.

<sup>329</sup> Journals such as *Asymptote* and *The Buenos Aires Review* publish interviews and articles on translation as well as translations. BOMB Magazine recently published an interview with translator Tim Parks, which was devoted to “The international novel, mistranslation, and blogging in print.” Parks, Tim. Interview with Scott Esposito. 7 May 2015. *BOMB Magazine*. Web. 1 July 2015.

<sup>330</sup> Berger, John. “Writing is an Off-shoot of Something Deeper.” 12 Dec. 2014. *The Guardian*. Web. 1 July 2015.

<sup>331</sup> Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. “Is Translation an Art or a Math Problem?” 4 June 2015. *The New York Times*. Web. 5 June 2015.

are familiar with a foreign language have a responsibility to be literary activists. That is, they should use their advantage to diversify the literary market by translating, writing reviews of foreign literature, interviewing foreign authors, and writing biographical studies (Moser recently published a biography of Brazilian author Clarice Lispector). Moser, therefore, recognizes that the dissemination of foreign literature in the U.S. market depends on networks that include translators, publishers, reviewers, and other figures. Although the mechanisms of exchange have changed somewhat with the advent of the internet and shifts in the market—a topic that will be addressed at the end of this chapter—translation has always depended on multiple agents. This dissertation has emphasized the many figures, political contexts, and sometimes random forces that shaped the translation, marketing, and reception of Latin American texts in the U.S. from 1930 to 1969.

Models of world literature such as those proposed by Casanova and Damrosch, which analyze patterns in the global publishing market according to dynamics of economic and political power, are useful for analyzing the number of texts exported from peripheral to central markets and explaining why writers working in languages perceived as minor do not often see their work translated into English unless the texts fit the needs of the target culture. While they are effective in describing general tendencies, however, these theories are limited in their ability to describe the various factors that determine whether a text is translated and cannot sufficiently analyze the specificities of cultural exchange. The case studies in the previous chapters have highlighted the fact that the translation of texts often depends on a number of forces that do not always fit these

global models. These forces may be as diverse as: fashions established through other artistic forms, political events, personal interests of editors, readers, and translators, and their friendships with influential scholars and authors. Although these factors are often random, they do reflect dynamics of cultural relationships between regions. Translator and theorist Esther Allen has emphasized the connections between translation and cultural contexts:

[It is] clear that the translation of a given text often depends largely or perhaps wholly on contextual factors that have less to do with the work's intrinsic value (whatever that might be and however you might measure it) than with encounters between individuals and the shifting cultural and political context within which those encounters take place.

This dissertation has sought to explore many facets of the circulation of a text by focusing on the cases of three authors, which reveal the complexities of the exportation of texts. Guzmán's *El águila y la serpiente* essentially reached the U.S. market through Spain, where it was originally published. There, the author benefited from the fact that literature of war, particularly Mexican literature, was in vogue at the time in Spain. Guzmán achieved international recognition when the book became a best-seller there, which made his book more likely to reach publishers in the U.S. Federico de Onís's interest in the book may have been a factor in leading Guzmán to Harriet de Onís. Additionally, the interest of artists and intellectuals from the U.S. in Mexico may have contributed to the 1930 translation, *The Eagle and the Serpent*, as Knopf's archives show that the book may have been recommended for publication in English by Carleton Beals, an American socialist intellectual and expert on Mexican history, or Adolfo Best

Manguard, a Mexican artist and educator. The first (1930) translation, an abridged version, was shaped partly by images of Mexico familiar to U.S. readers, particularly narratives about Pancho Villa. The translation, therefore, was influenced not simply by dynamics of center/periphery, but by the history of cultural exchange between the U.S. and Mexico. The complete translation of *El águila* published in 1965 had much to do with Guzmán's agency, since the author had the means to seek out a publisher (Doubleday) who would give him final editing control of the version in English.

Like the 1965 translation of *El águila y la serpiente*, *Contrapunteo cubano* reached the U.S. market because the author was in a position to advocate for an English translation. The book was not translated into English because it conformed to U.S. perceptions of Cuba or because it somehow fit a U.S. agenda. Rather, it was translated in part because Ortiz sought a publisher through Bronislaw Malinowski, an internationally recognized scholar and then a professor at Yale. The translation, *Cuban Counterpoint* (1947) was published at a time when Knopf was particularly interested in non-fiction from Latin American scholars and when Good Neighbor Policy sentiment still lingered. The publishing company and translator may have been less amenable to publishing a text from Cuba that criticized aspects of capitalism had Ortiz contacted them a couple of decades later. On March 7, 1968, after the killing of Che Guevara, de Onís wrote to a friend in England saying, "I know I should not say this, but I have never liked

Cubans.”<sup>332</sup> Political contexts and personal connections were therefore major factors in the publication of *Cuban Counterpoint* in English.

The translation of Guimarães Rosa’s work into English also depended on factors that broad models of world literature cannot describe. Knopf agreed to publish *Sagarana* and *Grande Sertão: Veredas* in translation, and de Onís agreed to translate them, although the translator and her publisher sensed that these difficult, unusual books would not achieve great commercial success. They published the translations because of the prestige of publishing an important author whom de Onís felt she had discovered, and because de Onís, Alfred Knopf, and his wife Blanche had a strong personal interest in Brazil.<sup>333</sup> Despite their desire to introduce Guimarães Rosa to U.S. readers, the author’s work proved difficult to recreate in translation. The lack of Portuguese-English translators, the limits of analogy in translation, and restrictions in the market were among the factors that hindered the recreation of Guimarães Rosa’s “sur-regional” language. Although published during the Boom, the translations of Guimarães Rosa’s work did not achieve the sort of success enjoyed by other writers translated in the 1960s.

While theories of world literature are not able to determine whether a work will be translated, they may be effective in describing how translated works will be received in the target culture. For a translation to have lasting influence, authors and translators depend on criticism, new translations, the adoption of the text in classrooms, and other

---

<sup>332</sup> With the exception of Martí, she says. Letter from HDO to Sir Herbert Read. 7 March 1968. MS20C.6B. BR. In an earlier letter, however, de Onís had said that she had a “great admiration and fondness” for Ortiz. Letter from HDO to Henry Robbins. 23 Sept. 1959. AK266.13. HRC.

<sup>333</sup> Knopf, like de Onís, had “lost his heart” to Brazil. See Introduction, note 32.

literary activity. Because of the great number of agents involved in the reception and durability of a translated text, the critical reception may be a better indication of social and political trends than whether a text is published in English or not. The texts by Guzmán, Ortiz, and Guimarães Rosa studied in this dissertation did not easily fit into the canon of literature in English, and none of them achieved lasting success as literary texts. *Cuban Counterpoint* (de Onís's translation) is still in print and was republished by Duke University Press in 1995, but this may be partly the result of the legacy of the term "transculturation," which became an important concept in Latin American cultural studies. That is, Ortiz's work still circulates in English primarily because of the author's success in Spanish and within fields specifically tied to Latin America. Ortiz's theories, however, were never adopted by anthropologists whose work focuses on other regions and his influence outside of disciplines focused on Latin America is limited. *The Eagle and the Serpent* has been used mostly as a scholarly text and Guzmán is not a familiar name except perhaps to historians. And, while his work is canonical in Brazil, Guimarães Rosa is still virtually unknown in the English-speaking world.

In addition to not achieving lasting critical success in English, all of these texts were interpreted very differently in the U.S. than they were in Mexico, Cuba, and Brazil. This study has attempted to determine the ways in which these texts were transformed in translation, analyzing questions of style, structure, and thematic focus. These analyses have relied partially on particular interpretations (my subjective readings) of the texts, but these have been complemented by reviews of the texts in Spanish and Portuguese and of the translations. In all of the case studies, the elements of innovation, questioning, and

protest were reduced in the translation and in the editing of the text in English or, when the translation recreated these elements, were ignored by reviewers in English. The translation of *El águila y la serpiente* deemphasized Guzmán's reflections on the role of intellectuals during the Mexican Revolution in favor of highlighting active scenes involving Pancho Villa. Reviewers of *Cuban Counterpoint* glossed over Ortiz's criticisms of imperialism and his concept of transculturation and dismissed his writing—even in translation—as unfocused, poor scholarship. In *Sagarana* and *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* (the translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*), the experimental nature of Guimarães Rosa's language was lost and what remained was a narrative reminiscent of a Western. In all of these cases, the translations tended to simplify and streamline the text in favor of a clear communication of plot. In translation, parts of *Contrapunteo cubano* were condensed or eliminated, *El águila y la serpiente* was abridged in 1930 so as not hold up the pace of the book, and in *Sagarana* and *The Devil to Pay*, de Onís focused on recreating plot rather than stylistic aspects. Tim Parks has argued this tendency to opt for conventional language and to reshape texts so that they communicate plot in general terms is common, perhaps inevitable, in translation. Drawing on his experience as a translator, translated writer, and teacher of translation, Parks writes,

I have found over the years that the tendency to sacrifice semantic precision and above all stylistic provocation in translation is almost universal and probably inevitable. The phenomenon is bound to make us wonder if reading in translation does not alter the way we read, lowering our expectations of internal linguistic and even semantic cohesion, encouraging concentration on plot and reinforcing conventional usage of the national language regardless of unconventional elements that may remain in the content and structure of the book (*Translating Style* 237).



Scholars such as Venuti would describe this tendency as domestication. Although the case studies in this dissertation have shown that the foreignizing/domesticizing dichotomy is limiting, in general the translations of these texts reduce foreign elements in favor of fluency in English. If the tendency to domesticize texts is greater when a text moves from a peripheral to central market, it is partly because central markets tend to have less knowledge of the culture of the periphery. Therefore, readers in the U.S. may lean more heavily on stereotypes when faced with representations of foreign cultures because cultural imports are fewer from other countries to the U.S. Translators' experience confirms that publishers still tend to look for works that conform to stereotyped images. At the American Literary Translators Association conference in 2011, translator Sara Cooper claimed to have had difficulty publishing translations of Mirta Yáñez because the author's work does not conform to prevalent images of Cuba, such as representations of extreme poverty and portraits of the sensual mulatta.<sup>334</sup> The dynamics are different when texts move from the U.S. market to foreign countries in part because U.S. culture has already been heavily exported through other media. In *Where I'm Reading From: The Changing World of Books* (2015), Parks writes that German author Thomas Pletzinger "had to shed his German-ness as if he were an immigrant with an embarrassing accent" in order for his work to be successful in the U.S. market whereas Jonathan Franzen has been very successful in foreign markets despite being "loudly

---

<sup>334</sup> Cooper, Sara. "Translating Cuba," panel discussion, American Literary Translators Association, Kansas City, MO, 16-19 Nov. 2011.

American.” This would suggest that translation, to some extent, does reflect general trends in cultural exchange.

The ability of translated literature to generate change in the way one region perceives another may be incremental. The success of one foreign author in translation does not necessarily result in a surge of interest in that country’s culture. Edward Said notes that after the international success of Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz, there was no notable increase in attention to Arabic literature and cultures. Said writes, “‘Where, after all, did Mahfouz come from?’ did not seem to be a question on publisher’s minds” (98). However, the importation of multiple texts through translation may contribute to reshaping a country’s understanding of another region. It is for this reason that Alfred. A. Knopf and Harriet de Onís were so significant as agents of cultural exchange. The publisher and translator sustained their commitment to introducing Latin American authors to U.S. readers over decades, helping to familiarize the U.S. public with the cultures of other countries and laying the groundwork for Boom generation translators such as Levine and Rabassa. However, the desire of Knopf and de Onís to teach the U.S. public about Latin America, which had its origins in the Good Neighbor Policy, was complicated at the level of individual texts and representations of culture were only partially translated. However, even if the books by Guzmán, Ortiz, Guimarães Rosa, and the many other works translated by de Onís and published by Knopf were transformed in translation and read more according to readers’ expectations and existing stereotypes, they did contribute to altering somewhat these perceptions by introducing new knowledge of Latin American cultures. *The Eagle and the Serpent* provided another

perspective on the Mexican Revolution, *Cuban Counterpoint* offered insight into Cuban economic history, even if the critical aspects of the study were reduced, and *Sagarana* and *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* introduced to U.S. readers to a region of Brazil, the *sertão*, that does not fit commonly exported, stereotyped images of Brazil. The availability of these texts in translation may generate a reader's interest in a region years after publication. Felipe Martinez, the creator of the website *A Missing Book*, became interested in Brazil after a friend gave him a photocopy of the long out of print *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* and he has since been researching and writing about the region.

This dissertation has left open many other avenues for further research. The preceding chapters have analyzed de Onís's work primarily as a way of addressing broad questions regarding the politics and limits of translation during the mid-twentieth century. Future studies could build on this to more broadly explore her influence. Such a project would necessarily include an analysis of her role as an editor, her connection to Columbia's Hispanic Institute, founded by her husband Federico, and her work with other publishers. Each chapter also lends itself to a more detailed study tracing a national literature in translation. Brazilian literature in particular would be an interesting case. Translators and readers of Portuguese have been few and the Brazilian government recently began promoting their nation's literature abroad by subsidizing the publications of translated Brazilian literature.<sup>335</sup> Such a study would also address the role of Brazilian authors in the Boom. The sections in this dissertation on Mexico, Cuba, and Brazil could

---

<sup>335</sup> See "Programa de Apoio à Tradução e à Publicação de Autores Brasileiros no Exterior." Ministério da Cultura. Fundação Biblioteca Nacional. Web. 1 Jun. 2015.

also fit into larger studies on cultural and political relations between the U.S. and these countries. Additionally, the research presented in this dissertation could be incorporated into a larger scale, collaborative research project. At the University of Ottawa, researchers have set up a database called *Canada in Latin America* in order to study the circulation of Canadian literature in Latin America.<sup>336</sup> An analogous project studying the history of translated Latin American literature in the U.S. would provide useful information on the history of cultural exchange between the U.S. and Latin America. Further research may also address the ways in which the agency of translator has changed with shifting political and economic contexts.

Many aspects of the dynamics of exchange described in this study still apply. Translation into English is still an entry point into the global market and writers from peripheral regions still depend on foreign publishers and translators in order to achieve international recognition. It is often said that no writer can win a Nobel Prize unless his or her work has first been translated into English. However, since de Onís's day, technological advances and changes in market forces have altered the ways in which texts cross borders. To begin with, the translation of works by major authors is often a much faster process. In "Literature Without Style," Parks writes,

In the past, a work of literature would establish a reputation in its culture of origin, first among critics who were presumably equipped to appreciate it, then among the larger public; only later, sometimes many years later, would it perhaps be translated by those cosmopolitan literati who wished to make it known in another country. Now, on the contrary, everything is immediate; the work of a major established author is pronounced a masterpiece the day it is published; translations, even of less celebrated

---

<sup>336</sup> See "Canada in Latin America." University of Ottawa. Web. 10 July 2015.

authors like myself, are often prepared for simultaneous publication in a score of countries.

Further, the ways in which translators work has changed significantly. Whereas de Onís lugged around huge dictionaries and sent letters via airmail to authors, translators now have many more resources at their immediate disposal and contact between translators and authors is far easier. Readers also have more exposure to foreign cultures, and the ability to look up references they may not understand. Faced with the term “jagunço,” for example, which appears in de Onís and Taylor’s translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, readers of the translation can now do a quick Google search in order to learn the history of these hired bandits, see what they looked like, and better understand the relationship between these figures and land-owners. This was simply not possible in de Onís’s day, and she had to translate with this in mind.

De Onís worked in an era in which Latin American literature was largely unavailable in the U.S. and during a time in which U.S. readers generally had less exposure to Latin American cultures. Like the artists and intellectuals who traveled between the U.S. and Mexico in the 1920s, de Onís was a pioneer of cultural exchange. She was also important as a curator of the canon of Latin American literature, seeking new texts for translation. In the contemporary publishing market, the most prolific translators of Latin American fiction, such as Edith Grossman, now tend to translate by contract, translating texts publishers have already selected rather than scouting for new authors. Career literary translators do occasionally translate texts because of a personal desire to do so (their choices are not always market-driven). Grossman recently completed a new translation of a seventeenth century Spanish work, Luis de Góngora’s

*Las soledades* (*The Solitudes*, 2012), a translation she proposed, and Alison Entrekin, one of the most sought-after translators of Brazilian literature into English, is currently negotiating contracts for a re-translation of *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, an endeavor that is unlikely to be commercially very successful. In general, however, the market has become far more specialized and it would be difficult for a figure such as de Onís—highly active as a reader, editor, critic, editorial advisor, and prolific translator—to exist today.

Contemporary translators are still important agents of exchange, but their role has changed. It is important to note, however, that while major literary translators such as Grossman and Entrekin work primarily by contract, few literary translators in the U.S. are able to make a living primarily by translating. Many are involved in literary work in some other capacity and have the luxury of selecting which texts they translate. They may act as curators. Additionally, the advent of the internet, sites such as *Words Without Borders*, and small presses that specialize in translated literature have facilitated the movement of texts by creating opportunities for translators and allowing foreign writers to extend their networks at low cost. Moser notes the importance of the “amplifying effects of social media” for foreign writers seeking international recognition. Whether studies on translation focus on print or digital media, contemporary or historical trends, the analyses of translated texts offers a rich source for researchers interested in the mechanisms of cultural exchange and this is an important field of study in the globalized world.

## APPENDIX A: TRANSLATIONS BY HARRIET DE ONÍS

### Anthologies Translated and Edited by HDO:

Onís, Harriet de, ed. *The Golden Land: An Anthology of Latin American Folklore in Literature*. New York: Knopf, 1948.

(included 42 authors tr. from Spanish and 6 from Portuguese).

---. *Spanish Stories and tales*. Introd. Harriet de Onís, tr. Harriet de Onís and others. New York: Knopf, 1954.

### Translations by HDO from Spanish:

Alarcón, Pedro Antonio de. *The Three-Cornered Hat (El sombrero de tres picos)*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1958.

Alegría, Ciro. *Broad and Alien is the World (El mundo es ancho y ajeno)*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941.

---. *The Golden Serpent (La serpiente de oro)*. New York-Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, 1943.

Arciniegas, Gérman. *The Caribbean, Sea of the New World (Biografía del Caribe)*. New York: Knopf, 1946.

---, (ed). *The Green Continent: A Comprehensive View of Latin America by its Leading Writers*. Tr. HDO and others. New York: Knopf, 1944.

---. *The State of Latin America (Este pueblo de América)*. New York: Knopf, 1952.

---. *Amerigo and the New World: The Life and Times of Amerigo Vespucci*. New York: Knopf, 1955.

Benítez, Jaime. *Political Rights and University Professors (essay)*. San Juan, P.R.: Editorial Coquí, 1963.

Blanco, Tomás. *The Child's Gift: A Twelfth Night Tale (Los Aguinaldos del Infante, Glosa de Epifanía)*. San Juan, PR: Pan American Book Co., 1954.

Carpentier, Alejo. *The Lost Steps (Los pasos perdidos)*. New York: Knopf, 1956.

---. *The Kingdom of this World (El reino de este mundo)*. New York: Knopf, 1957.

---. "Manhunt" (*El acoso*). *Noonday* 2 (1959): 109-80.

- Cervantes, Saavedra, Miguel de. *Six Exemplary Novels*. Introd. and translation by Harriet de Onís. Great Neck, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1961.
- Cieza de León, Pedro de. *The Incas of Pedro Cieza de León (Crónica del Perú)*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959.
- Denevi, Marco. "The Secret Ceremony". In: *Prize Stories from Latin America: winners of the Life in Español Literary Contest (1<sup>st</sup> prize among 3149 entries)*. [Place of publication not identified]: Time Co., 1961.
- Descalzo, José Luis Martín. *God's Frontier (La frontera de Dios)*. New York: Knopf, 1959.
- Díaz Lozano, Argentina. *Enriqueta and I (Peregrinaje)*. New York, Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944.
- García Lorca, Federico. Selected poems. *The Writers of Our Years*. Ed. A. M. I. Fishkin. Denver: The University of Denver Press, 1950.
- Gironella, José María. *The Cypresses Believe in God (Los cipreses creen en Dios)*. New York: Knopf, 1955.
- Güiraldes, Ricardo. *Shadows on the Pampas (Don Segundo Sombra)*. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1935.
- Guzmán, Martín Luis. *The Eagle and the Serpent (El águila y la serpiente)*. Abridged version. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York: Knopf, 1930.
- . *The Eagle and the Serpent*. Trans. Harriet de Onís. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965.
- Loynaz, Dulce María. *Poems Without Name (Poemas sin nombre)*. Havana, Cuba: Editorial José Martí, 1993 (translated in 1958).
- Marichalar, Antonio. *The Perils and Fortune of the Duke of Osuna (Riesgo y ventura del Duque de Osuna)*. Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1932.
- Meneses, Guillermo. *Tale of Venezuela (Cuento de Venezuela)*. Caracas: Hotel Tamanaco, 1960.
- Moratín, Leonardo Fernández de. *The Maiden's Consent (El sí de las niñas)*. Great Neck, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1962.
- Ortíz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar (Contrapunto cubano del Tabaco y el azúcar)*. Introd. By Bronislaw Malinowski. Prologue by Hermidio Portell Vilá. New York: Knopf, 1947.



- Palacio Valdés, Armando. *José*. Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1961.
- Palma, Ricardo. *The Knight of the Cape and Thirty-seven other Selections from the Tradiciones Peruanas*. Selected, translated and with an introduction by Harriet de Onís. New York: Knopf, 1945.
- Parra Sanojo, Ana Teresa ("Teresa de la Parra"). *Mama Blanca's Souvenirs (Las memorias de Mamá Blanca)*. Washington, DC: Pan American Union, 1959.
- Peréz Galdós, Benito. *Doña Perfecta*. Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1960.
- Reyes, Alfonso. *The Position of America and Other Essays*. New York: Knopf, 1950.
- Sabato, Ernesto. *The Outsider (El Túnel)*. New York: Knopf, 1950.
- Samayoa Chinchilla, Carlos. *The Emerald Lizard: Tales and Legends of Guatemala*. Translation Joan C. MacLean and Harriet de Onís. Indian Hills, Colo.: Falcon's Wing Pr., 1957.
- The Life of Lazariilo de Tormes, His Fortunes and Adversities (Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes)*. Great Neck, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1959.
- Uslar-Pietri, Arturo. *The Red Lances (Las lanzas coloradas)*. New York: Knopf, 1963.
- Valera, Juan. *Pepita Ximenes*. Great Neck, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1964.

#### **Translations by HDO from Portuguese:**

- Amado, Jorge. *Home is the Sailor* ("A completa verdade sobre as discutidas aventuras do Comandante Vasco Moscoso de Aragoão, Capitão de Longo Curso" de *Os Velhos Marinheiros*). New York: Knopf, 1964.
- . *Shepherds of the Night (Os Pastores da Noite)*. New York: Knopf, 1966.
- . *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands: A Moral and Amorous Tale (Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos)*. New York: Knopf, 1969.
- Freyre, Gilberto de Mello. *The Mansions and the Shanties: The Making of Modern Brasil (Sobrados e Mucambos)*. New York: Knopf, 1963.
- Rosa, João Guimarães. "Duel" ("Duelo" de *Sagarana*). *Noonday* 3(1960): 24-52.
- . *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands (Grande Sertão: Veredas)*. Trans. James L. Taylor and Harriet de Onís. New York: Knopf, 1963.

---. *Sagarana- A Cycle of Stores (Sagarana)*. New York: Knopf, 1966.

**APPENDIX B: PHOTO OF HARRIET WISHNIEFF (DE ONÍS)**

*From the 1916 Barnard College Yearbook (from the Barnard College archives)*



**Harriet V. Wishnieff**  
"Too civil by half."

APPENDIX C: TABLE OF OMISSIONS IN THE 1930 TRANSLATION OF *EL**ÁGUILA Y LA SERPIENTE*

Section title (original) Section titles were eliminated in the translation	Chapter title (original)	Notes
<i>Hacia la Revolución</i>	La bella espía Un complot en el mar Los recursos del doctor	All omitted
<i>Camino de Sonora</i>	La segunda salida En San Antonio, Texas	Omitted. The translation begins with the third chapter in this section, “My First Glimpse of Pancho Villa”
<i>Umbrales revolucionarios</i>	Las cinco novias de Garmendia	Since this chapter, omitted in the translation, falls between “The Chief’s First Table” (La mesa del Primer Jefe) and “The Early Days of a Leader” (Orígenes de Caudillo) in the Spanish, de Onís adds a transitional phrase at the beginning of “The Early Days...”
<i>Andanzas de un rebelde</i>	De Hermosillo a Guaymas De Guaymas a Culiacán Ramón F. Iturbe	The first two chapters in this section are combined into a chapter called “From Hermosillo de Culiacán,” shortening Guzmán’s voyage. The eliminated details include a description of General Salvador Alvarado, a reference to the “impulso innegablemente puro” of the Revolution, and a questioning of certain political appointments.

		“Ramón F. Iturbe” is omitted entirely.
<i>Tierra Sinaloense</i>	Después de una batalla Un baile revolucionario En el hospital militar	These chapters are omitted, and changes are made to others (changes in paragraph breaks, ellipses, etc.)
<i>Viajes revolucionarios</i>	En el tren Sombras y bacanora La carrera en las sombras Los rebeldes en Yanquilandia En la raya fronteriza	These chapters are condensed into one: “A Revolutionary’s Journey,” which is primarily a translation of the first chapter of this section with a summary of the others.
<i>Iniciación de Villista</i>		No omitted sections
<i>[Segunda parte: En la hora del triunfo] Camino de México</i>	Una visión de Veracruz La vuelta de un rebelde	Omitted
<i>Justicia Revolucionaria</i>		No chapters are omitted in this section, though “Un inspector de policía” is translated as “Revolutionary Justice”
<i>Prisión de Políticos</i>		No omitted chapters
<i>La cuna del convencionismo</i>	El arte de la pistola La película de la Revolución	Omitted. She also omits paragraphs from other chapters in this section.
<i>Eulalio Gutiérrez</i>	Un ministro de Fomento	Omitted
<i>Villa en el poder</i>	La muerte de David Berlanga “¿Lo cree usted, señor Presidente?”	Omitted
<i>En la boca del lobo</i>		No omitted chapters, though the title names change. For example, “El telegrama de Irapuato” becomes “From Frying-pan to Fire”

**APPENDIX D: SAMPLE IMAGES THAT APPEAR IN *CUBAN COUNTERPOINT***

**(KNOPF, 1947) AND NOT IN EDITIONS IN SPANISH**

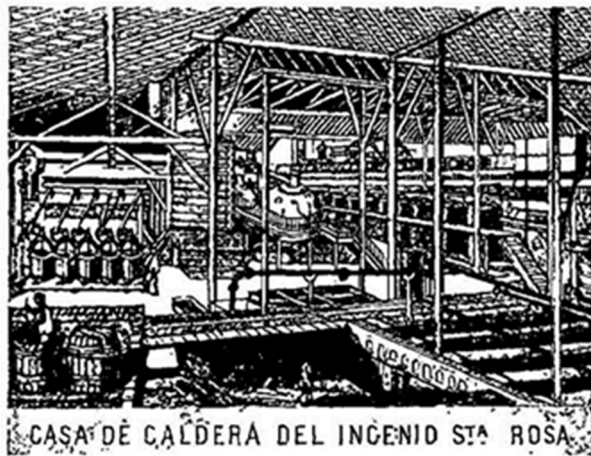
*Views of old Cuban sugar mills (from mid-nineteenth century cigarette-package labels):*

*“Boiling-room of the Asunción Sugar Mill” and “Boiling-room of the Santa Rosa Sugar Mill” (41)*



CASA DE CALDERAS DEL INGENIO ASUNCION.

*BOILING-ROOM OF THE ASUNCION SUGAR MILL*



CASA DE CALDERA DEL INGENIO STA ROSA

*BOILING-ROOM OF THE SANTA ROSA  
SUGAR MILL*

*Types and Scenes Among Tobacco-Users (from mid-nineteenth-century cigarette-package labels): "Of the pleasures that are no sin, smoking is the best" (137)*

OF THE PLEASURES  
THAT ARE NO SIN,  
SMOKING IS THE  
BEST



AFTER DINNER



DE GUSTIBUS NON  
DISPUTANDUM EST



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary/Archival Sources

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. archive, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX.

Brotherton and Company Business and Family Archive. Special Collections, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom.

João Guimarães Rosa Archive, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

Seminario de Estudios Hispanos Federico de Onís, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

Sumner Welles Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY.

### Secondary Sources

Adams, Mildred. Announcement for Knopf. 15 May 1963. JGR-R15,02,43. IEB.

Adler, Betty. "Brazilian 'Western.'" *The Baltimore Sun*. 14 Apr. 1963.

A.G.H.A. Rev. of *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* by Fernando Ortiz. *The Geographical Journal* 111.1-3 (Jan-Mar. 1948): 125.

Aguilar Mora, Jorge. "El fantasma de Martín Luis Guzmán." *Fractal*. 6.20 (2001). No pagination. Web. 2 March 2013.

---. *Una muerte sencilla, justa, eterna: cultura y guerra durante la Revolución mexicana*. Mexico, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1990.

Allen, Esther. "The Will to Translate: Four Episodes in a Local History of Global Cultural Exchange." *In Translation: Translators on Their Work and What it Means*. Ed. Esther Allen and Susan Bernofsky. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013. Kindle file.

Almeida, Renato. Rev. of *Sagarana*. 18 Apr. 1946. JGR-R01,028. IEB.

Andrade, Mirna Soares. "A Recepção de Guimarães Rosa nos EUA: Processo Tradutório e Contexto Cultural em Foco." *Actas del II Congreso Internacional 'Cuestiones críticas'*. 9 Jul. 2012. Web. 2 Mar. 2014.



- Antón-Carrillo, Elvira. "Cuba, Race and Nation in the 20th Century: A Discourse Analysis of Press Editorials." *International Journal of Cuban Studies* 3.4 (Winter 2011): 328-345.
- Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London, New York: Verso, 2013.
- Armstrong, Piers. "Guimarães Rosa in Translation: scrittore, editore, traduttore, traditore." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 38:1 (2001): 63–87.
- . *Third World Literary Fortunes*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999.
- Balch, Trudy. "Pioneer on the Bridge of Language." *Américas*. 50.6 (1998): 46-51.
- Barbara, Vanessa, Daniel Galera, and Chico Mattoso. "How to Read Brazil." 10 July 2012. *Granta*. Web. 15 Jul. 2012.
- Barbosa, Federico. Personal interview. 15 Jul. 2014.
- Bellos, David. *Is that a Fish in your Ear?: Translation and the Meaning of Everything*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2011.
- Bergin, Thomas G. "Cowboys and Gangsters in Brazil's Badlands." 19 May 1963. JGR-R15,02,45. IEB.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." Trans. Harry Zohn. *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. 71-82.
- Britton, John. "From Antagonism to Accord: The Controversy over the Mexican Revolution in the Political Culture of the United States." *Open Borders to a Revolution: Culture, Politics and Migration*. Ed. Jaime Marroquín Arredondo, Adela Pineda Franco, Magdalena Mieri. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013. 7-40.
- Bruce Novoa, Juan. "El águila y la serpiente en las versiones estadounidenses." *Plural*. 1.193 (1987): 16-21
- Campos, Haroldo de. "Da tradução como Criação e como Crítica." *Metalinguagem & Outras Metas: Ensaios de Teoria e Crítica Literária*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2010. 31-48.
- . "Grande Sertão: Veredas: Haroldo de Campos sobre Guimarães Rosa." 2 Mar. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.
- . "The Ex-Centric's Viewpoint: Tradition, Transcreation, Transculturation." Trans. Stella E. O. Tagnin and Haroldo de Campos. *Haroldo de Campos: A Dialogue*

- with the Brazilian Concrete Poet*. Ed. K. David Jackson. Oxford: University of Oxford, 2005. 3-13.
- . "The Rule of Anthropophagy: Europe Under the Sign of Devoration." Trans. Maria Tai Wolff. *Latin American Literary Review* 14.27 (Jan.-Jun. 1986): 42-60.
- Candido, Antonio. "Notas de crítica literária- *Sagarana*." 21 Jul. 1946. JGR-R01,034, IEB.
- . "Literatura e subdesenvolvimento." *A educação pela noite e outros ensaios*. São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1989. 140-162.
- . "O homem dos avessos." *Tese e antítese*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Ed. Nacional, 1978. 119-39.
- Carballo, Emmanuel. "Martín Luis Guzmán". *Diecinueve protagonistas de la literatura mexicana del siglo XX*. México, D.F.: Empresas editoriales, 1965. 62-99.
- Carpentier, Alejo. *The Lost Steps*. Trans. Harriet de Onís. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Trans. M. B. DeBevoise. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Cather, Willa. "On the Divide." *A Collection of Stories, Reviews and Essays*. Project Gutenberg. N.P. 2008. EBook 25586. Aug. 1 2014.
- Cifuentes-Goodbody, Nicholas. "Heme aquí: Martín Luis Guzmán's Autobiographical Acts Within and Beyond Apunte sobre una personalidad." *Hispanic Review* 81.4 (Autumn 2013): 467-489.
- . "Los tres Guzmán y el diálogo con Pancho Villa." *La palabra y el hombre* 129 (2004): 7-28.
- Cohn, Deborah. *The Latin American Literary Boom and U.S. Nationalism During the Cold War*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012.
- Cooper, Sara. "Translating Cuba," (Panel discussion), American Literary Translators Association, Kansas City, MO, 16-19 Nov. 2011.
- Cramer, Gisela and Ursula Prutsch. "Nelson A. Rockefeller's Office of Inter-American Affairs (1940-1946) and Record Group 229." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 86.4 (2006): 785-806.
- Damrosch, David. "Frames for World Literature." *Grenzen der Literatur: zu Begriff und Phänomen des Literarischen*. Ed. Simone Winko, Fotis Jannidis, Gerhard Lauer. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. 496-514.

- . *What is World Literature?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Davies, Catherine. "Fernando Ortiz's Transculturation: The Postcolonial Intellectual and the Politics of Cultural Representation." *Postcolonial perspectives on the cultures of Latin America and Lusophone Africa* Ed. Robin W Fiddian. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000. 141-168. Ebook.
- Delpar, Helen. *The Enormous Vogue of Things Mexican: Cultural Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1920-1935*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992.
- Dharwadker, Vinay. "A.K. Ramanujan's Theory and Practice of Translation." *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi. London: Routledge, 1999. 114-140.
- Dollen, Charles. Rev. of *Sagarana*. 18 Apr. 1966. JGR-R15,02,61, IEB.
- Donoso, José. *Historia personal del "boom."* Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1972.
- Duszak, Anna. "Analyzing digressiveness in Polish academic texts." *Culture and Styles of Academic Discourse*. Ed. Anna Duszak. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997. 323-342.
- Esquenazi-Mayo, Roberto. Rev. of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. New York: Doubleday, 1965. *Hispania* 49.4 (Dec. 1966): 896-897.
- Franco, Jean. *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- García-Carranza, Araceli, ed. *Bio-bibliografía de Don Fernando Ortiz*. La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, 1970.
- Garside, E.B. "Cuba- A Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar." Rev. of *Cuban Counterpoint* by Fernando Ortiz. *New York Times* 16 Feb 1947: BR10. Web.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Found in Translation: On the Social History of the Moral Imagination." *Georgia Review* 31 (1977): 788-810.
- . "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. 3-30.
- Gentzler, Edwin. "Translation without Borders" *Translation: A Transdisciplinary Journal* 4 (2014). Web.
- . *Translation and Identity in the Americas*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Goldberg, Isaac, ed. and trans. *Brazilian Tales*. Boston: Four Seas Co., 1921.

- . *Studies in Spanish-American Literature*. New York: Brentano's, 1920.
- Golyshev, Victor. "The Foundation Pit by Andrey Platonov: Two Translations into English." Boston University, 13 Apr. 2012. Lecture.
- González, Carlos del Toro. "Fernando Ortiz y las relaciones Cuba-Estados Unidos." *Santiago* 92 (2001): 139-149.
- González Echevarría, Roberto, "El Contrapunteo y la literatura." *Actual* 37 (Sept-Dec 1997): 151-162.
- Grandin, Greg. Interview. University of Chicago Press, 2004. Web. 1 May 2015.
- Grossman, Edith. Boston University. 21 April 2011. Lecture.
- Grossman, William L. "Outlaw with a Problem." *The New York Times*, 21 Apr. 1963, p. 4.
- Guzmán, Don. "Cuban Tobacco and Sugar Analyzed and Contrasted." Rev. of *Cuban Counterpoint*, by Fernando Ortiz. *Los Angeles Times* 9 Mar. 1947: B4. Web.
- Guzmán, María Constanza. "An Interview with Suzanne Jill Levine." *Words Without Borders*. 24 Oct. 2013.
- Guzmán, Martín Luis. *El águila y la serpiente*. Madrid: Aguilar, 1928.
- . *El águila y la serpiente*. México: Cia. General de Ediciones, 1975, c1956.
- . *El águila y la serpiente*. Ed. Ernest Richard Moore. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1943.
- . *The Eagle and the Serpent*. Abridged version. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York: Knopf, 1930.
- . *The Eagle and the Serpent*. Trans. Harriet de Onís. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965.
- Haiat, Michael. "Traductora de un escritor sin pasaporte." *O Cruziero Internacional*, 16 Mar. 1963. JGR-R15,01,04. IEB.
- Hansen, João Adolfo. "Forma literária e crítica da lógica racionalista em Guimarães Rosa." *Letras de Hoje* 47.2 (Apr./Jun. 2012): 120-130.
- Hoz, Ramón de la. "Carta de Brasil." May 1962. JGR-R15,01,03. IEB.
- Huntington, Tanya Lee. "El águila y la serpiente de Martín Luis Guzmán: Una mea culpa revolucionaria." Diss. University of Maryland, 2010.

- Isaacs, Jorge. *Maria: A South American Romance*. Trans. Rollo Ogden. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890.
- Jenks, Leland H. Rev. of *Cuban Counterpoint* by Fernando Ortiz. *The Hispanic American Review* 27.3 (Aug. 1947): 528-530.
- Kaplan, Robert B. "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education." *Language Learning* 16.1-2 (1996): 11-25.
- Katz, Friedrich. *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Knopf, Alfred A. *The Borzoi Quarterly*, 12.2. Alfred A. Knopf. 1963. JGR-PE-05,01. IEB.
- Krause, James Remington. "Translation and the Reception and Influence of Latin American Literature in the United States." Diss. Vanderbilt U., 2010.
- Lask, Thomas. "Man and Beast in the Backlands." *The New York Times*. 21 May 1966. JGR-R15,02,62, IEB.
- "Latin American Working Class History: The Case of the Mexican Revolution." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 10 (Nov. 1976): 15-19.
- Lefevere, André. "Composing the Other." *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi. London: Routledge, 1999. 75-94.
- . "Gates of Analogy: The Kavela in English". *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*. Ed. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere. Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters, 1998. 76-89.
- Legrás, Horacio. "El Ateneo y los orígenes del estado ético en México." *Latin American Research Review*. 38.2 (2003): 34-60.
- . "Martín Luis Guzmán: el viaje de la revolución." *MLN*. 118 (2003): 427-454.
- Leong, Lee Yew, Dolan Morgan and Florian Duijsens. "An Interview with David Mitchell." *Asymptote*, 2013. Web.
- Levine, Suzanne Jill. "The Latin American Novel in English translation." *The Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel*. Ed. Efraín Kristal. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 297-317.
- "Life of Pancho Villa." Rev. of *Here Comes Pancho Villa* by Louis Stevens. *The New York Times* 16 Nov. 1930: BR16.

- Lins, Álvaro. "Uma grande estréia." *Correio da manhã*. 12 Apr. 1946. JGR-R01,002, IEB.
- Llosa, Mario Vargas. "¿Epopéya del sertón, torre de Babel o manual del satanismo?" *Revista de cultura brasileira* 5 (2007): 100-107
- MacLachlan, Colin M. Rev. of *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa* by Friedrich Katz. *The Journal of American History*. 86.2 (Sep. 1999): 739-740.
- Manzoni, Celina. "El ensayo ex-céntrico: El Contrapunteo de Fernando Ortiz (o algo más que un cambio de nombre)." *Filología* 1-2 1996. 151-156.
- Martinez, Felipe. "A Conversation with Dr. David Treece." *A Missing Book*. 29 Apr. 2010. Web. 14 Aug. 2011.
- . "A Conversation with Dr. Piers Armstrong." *A Missing Book*. 11 Feb. 2011. Web. 1 Sept. 2012.
- . Email to Victoria Livingstone. 18 Oct. 2013.
- Martínez Torres, José and Selene Espinosa Gordillo. "Los de abajo y la polémica que hizo posible la novela de la revolución". *Estado-Nación en México: Independencia y Revolución*. Ed. Esaú Márquez Espinosa, Rafael de J. Araujo González and María del Rocío Ortiz Herrera. Chiapas: Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, 2011. 165-176.
- Martins, Nilce Sant'Anna. *O léxico de Guimarães Rosa*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2001.
- Matas, Ramiro. Rev. of *El águila y la serpiente* by Martín Luis Guzmán. Barcelona: Editorial, Casiopea, 2000. *Guaraguao*. 5.13 (Winter 2001): 176-178.
- Mead, Margaret. 1928. *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization*. New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1961.
- Mignolo, Walter D. and Freya Schiwy. "Transculturation and the Colonial Difference. Double Translation." *Translation and Ethnography* Ed. Tullio Maranhão and Bernard Streck. Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2003. 12-34.
- Millet, Sérgio. "Leituras Avulsas." *Diário de Notícias*. 21 Jul. 1946.
- Millington, Mark. "Mexican Revolutionary Politics and the Role of the Intellectual in Martín Luis Guzmán's *La sombra del caudillo* and José Revuelta's *Los días terrenales*." *Journal of Romance Studies*. 7.2 (2007): 35-52.
- ."Transculturation: Taking Stock." *Transculturation: Cities, Spaces and Architectures in Latin America*. Eds. Felipe Hernández, Mark Millington, Iain Borden. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005. 204-233.

- Mitchell, David. Interview with Lee Yew Leong, Dolan Morgan and Florian Duijsens. *Asymptote* (Jul. 2013). Web. 1 Aug. 2013.
- Monroy-Casas, Rafael. "Linearity in Language. Rhetorical-discursive Preferences in English and Spanish in the Light of Kaplan's Model." *International Journal of English Studies*. 8.2 (2008): 173-189.
- Moretti, Franco. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* 1 (2000). Web. 1 Jun. 2014. 2 Feb. 2015.
- . *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*. London: Verso, 2005.
- Moser, Benjamin. "Found in Translation." 7 Jul. 2015. *The New York Times*. Web. 8 Jul. 2015.
- Munday, Jeremy. *Style and Ideology in Translation: Latin American Writing in English*. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- "News of Food: Mrs. de Onís Puts Latins' Lore in Book, but Their Cuisine Goes Into Her Kitchen." *New York Times*. 4 Dec 1948: 8.
- Ogorzaly, Michael A. *Waldo Frank, Prophet of Hispanic Regeneration*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994.
- Oliveira, Luiz Carlos. "Por um olhar sem precauções." Artigos. *Cinema: Veredas- Os filmes a partir de João Guimarães Rosa*, n.d. Web. 14 Mar. 2014.
- Onís, Juan de. "The Town's Story is the Land's." Rev. of *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* by Jorge Amado. Transl. James L. Taylor and William L. Grossman. *New York Times* 16 Sept. 1962: 349.
- . Personal interview. 21 Feb. 2014.
- Onís, Harriet de. "The Man in the Sulka Shirt." *Portrait of a Publisher 1915/1965. Vol II. Alfred A. Knopf and the Borzoi Imprint: Recollections and Appreciations*. New York: Typophiles, 1965. 201-205.
- Ortiz, Fernando. *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (Advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación)*. La Habana, Cuba: Jesús Montero, 1940.
- *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar (Advertencia de sus contrastes agrarios, económicos, históricos y sociales, su etnografía y su transculturación)*. Ed. Enrico Mario Santí. Madrid Cátedra, 2002.
- . *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Transl. Harriet de Onís. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.

- . *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Transl. Harriet de Onís. Introduction by Fernando Coronil. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Pane, Remigio U. "A Selected Bibliography of Latin American Literature in English Translation." *The Modern Language Journal* 26.2 (Feb. 1942): 116-122.
- . "Two Hundred Latin American Books in English Translation: A Bibliography." *The Modern Language Journal* 27.8 (Dec. 1943): 593-604.
- Parks, Tim. Interview with Scott Esposito. 7 May 2015. *BOMB Magazine*. Web. 1 Jul. 2015.
- . "Literature Without Style." 7 Nov. 2013. *The New York Review of Books*. Web. 12 May 2015.
- . *Translating Style: A Literary Approach to Translation, A Translation Approach to Literature* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Manchester, UK & Kinderhook (NY): St. Jerome Publishing, 2007.
- . *Where I'm Reading From*. New York: New York Review of Books, 2015. Kindle file.
- Parra, Max. *Writing Pancho Villa's Revolution: Rebels in the Literary Imagination of Mexico*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005.
- Paz, Octavio. *Traducción: Literatura y literalidad*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 1971. *Cervantes Virtual*. Web. 5 May 2014.
- Peña Iguarán, Alina. "Próspero entre *El águila y la serpiente*: La autorepresentación del intelectual en Martín Luis Guzmán." *Latin Americanist*. 55.1 (2011): 93-108.
- Pérez Firmat, Gustavo. *The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Modern Cuban Literature*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Pinchon, Edgumb. *Viva Villa!: A Recovery of the Real Pancho Villa, Peon, Bandit, Soldier, Patriot*. New York: Arno Press, 1970,
- Pineda Franco, Adela. "Entre el exilio y el fuego revolucionario: La narrativa de Martín Luis Guzmán de 1925 a 1929." *Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana*. 66 (2007): 29-51.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Quintanilla, Susana. *A salto de mata: Martín Luis Guzmán en la Revolución Mexicana*. Mexico: Tusquets, 2009.
- . "En la hora de la Revolución." *Letras libres* (Apr. 2010): 78-81.



- Rama, Ángel. *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*. 2nd ed. Buenos Aires: Ediciones El Andariego, 2008.
- Ramón the Rover of Cuba: *The Personal Narrative of that Celebrated Pirate*. Boston: Richardson, Lord, and Holbrook, 1829.
- Roberts, Cary L. "Barbara Shelby Morello: A Translator's Life in Letters." *The Texas Writer* 1.1 (1999): 15-20. Web.
- Rocha, Gregorio C. Rev. of *And Starring Pancho Villa as Himself*, directed by Bruce Beresford. *The moving Image: The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists* 6.1 (Spring 2006): 142-145.
- Rodó, José Enrique. *Ariel*. Project Gutenberg. N.P. 2007. EBook 25586. 10 Mar. 2015.
- Rónai, Paulo. "A arte de contar em Sagarana." *Diário de Notícias*. 14 Jul. 1946.
- . *Pois é*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 2014.
- Rosa, João Guimarães. *Grande Sertão: Veredas*. 19<sup>th</sup> ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2001.
- . "Grande Sertão: Veredas." Trans. Felipe Martinez. Introduction by Nancy Fumero. *Continent*. 3.1, 2013: 27-43. Web. 1 Oct. 2013.
- . Interview with Günter Lorenz. In *Diálogo com a América Latina*. São Paulo: E.P.U., 1973.
- . "La oportunidad de Augusto Matraga." Trans. Juan Carlos Ghiano and Néstor Kraly. *Ficciones* 11 (1958): 4-35.
- . *Sagarana*. Ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteria, 2001.
- . *Sagarana*. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.
- . *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. Trans. James L Taylor and Harriet de Onís. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.
- Rostagno, Irene. *The Promotion of Latin American Literature in the United States*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997.
- Said, Edward W. "Embargoed Literature." *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts*. Ed. Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier. Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Prerss, 1995. 97-102.
- Salado, José Luis. "Conversación de un escritor de Méjico." *Heraldo de Madrid* 28 Nov. 1929: 1.

- Sapiro, Gisèle. *Translatio Le marché de la traduction em France à l'heure de la mondialisation*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008.
- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. *Facundo: Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants; or Civilization and Barbarism*. Trans. Mary Mann. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1868.
- Shklovsky, Viktor. "Art as Technique." *The Critical Edition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Ed David H. Richter. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007. 775-785.
- Smith, Francis T. Review of *Sagarana*. *Library Journal* New York, 1 Apr. 1966. JGR-R15,02,58. IEB.
- Spitta, Silvia. *Between Two Waters Narratives of Transculturation in Latin America*. Houston, TX: Rice University Press, 1995.
- Steward, Julian, Robert A. Manners, Eric R. Wolf, Elena Padilla Seda, Sidney W Mintz, Raymond L. Scheele. *The People of Puerto Rico: A Study in Social Anthropology*. University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 1956. Fourth printing, 1972.
- Suarez Díaz, Ana. "Cuba: Vanguardia intelectual y exilio político (1930-1936)." *Revista Caliban* IX (Oct. 2010-Mar. 2011). Web. 2 Feb. 2015.
- Swain, James O. Rev. of *El águila y la serpiente* by Martín Luis Guzmán. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, Casiopea, 1943. *The Modern Language Journal*. 28.2 (Feb. 1944): 218.
- "The Mexican Revolution." Rev. of *The Eagle and the Serpent*. *The New York Times* 9 Nov. 1930: BR4.
- Thorning, Joseph. Rev. of *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* by Fernando Ortiz. *The Americas* 4.3 (Jan. 1948): 401.
- Tota, Antonio Pedro. *O amigo americano: Nelson Rockefeller e o Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 2014.
- Vasconcelos, Sandra. "João & Harriet (Notas sobre um diálogo intercultural)." *Espaços e caminhos de João Guimarães Rosa: Dimensões Regionais e Universalidade*. Eds. Chiappini, Ligia and Marcel Vejmelka. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2009. 72-81.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

- Verlangieri, Iná Valéria Rodrigues. *J. Guimarães Rosa: Correspondência Inédita com a Tradutora Norte-americana Harriet de Onís*. Diss. Universidade Estadual Paulista de Araraquara, 1993.
- Whitney, Robert. "The Architect of the Cuban State: Fulgencio Batista and Populism in Cuba, 1937-1940." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32.2 (May 2000): 435-459.
- Wilgus, Curtis. "Doors to Latin America." *World Affairs* 110.2 (Summer 1947): 150-154.
- Williams, Eric. "The Twin Bases of Cuban Economy." Rev. of *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* by Fernando Ortiz. *The Journal of Negro Education* 17.1 (Winter 1948): 66-67.
- Witt, Nicole. "Escrito em português: Lido no mundo" (Panel Discussion), Festa literária de Paraty, Paraty, Brazil, Jul. 1-5, 2011.
- Wright, Irene A. Rev. of *Contrapunteo cubano* by Fernando Ortiz. *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 21.3 (Aug. 1941): 459-461.
- Zavala, Silvio. Ver. of *Contrapunteo Cubano* by Fernando Ortiz. *Revista de Historia de América* 10 (Dec. 1940): 152-154.
- Zilly, Berthold. "Os Sertões e Grande Sertão: Veredas: Reflexões do Tradutor." *Literatura Brasileira: Região, Nação, Globalização*. Eds. Germana Sales and Roberto Acizelo de Souza. Campinas, SP: Pontes, 2013. 311-331.

**CURRICULUM VITAE**

