Universidad Zaragoza

1542

Trabajo Fin de Grado

The translation of humour in *Dishonesty is the Second-Best Policy: And Other Rules to Live By*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is the final step in my degree on English Studies at the Universidad de Zaragoza and it will put to the test the knowledge and skills acquired during my studies, particularly in the field of translation. Since this essay is a commented translation, it required to apply what I learned both at the Universidad de Zaragoza, where I took three subjects on translation (*Lingüística contrastiva aplicada a la traducción, Traducción de textos literarios y audiovisuales and Traducción de textos profesionales y académicos*), as well as during my Erasmus year at the University of Southampton, where I first studied translation in two modules called 'Translation: Theory & Practice' and 'Audiovisual Translation'. During this educational training, I have become increasingly more familiar with the process of translation, the main problems that arise from it, how to identify them and how to solve them through a wide variety of strategies. I have also learned to adopt different approaches depending on the text type and its aim, the target audience intended as well as the intentionality of the author in the source text (ST).

This dissertation consists in a translation proposal of a fragment from the eighth chapter of David Mitchell's (2019) *Dishonesty is the Second-Best Policy: And Other Rules to Live By* from English into Spanish and an analysis of the main translation issues raised during the translation process which includes the strategies that were necessary to solve these issues. This essay includes an introduction, a justification of the corpus, the analysis of the translation process, a conclusion, the bibliographical references and, finally, an appendix with the ST, the target text (TT) and both of them aligned in a table.

2. SELECTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE CORPUS

When looking for a topic for this final dissertation I decided that I wanted to do something related to translation as it is the branch of my degree which I found more appealing. Furthermore, I wanted to translate a text with a high component of humour and culture since during my Erasmus year I translated some texts of the kind and, in my view, they were especially interesting. It was also preferable to choose a text that had

not yet been translated into Spanish at the moment of writing this dissertation. *Dishonesty is the Second-Best Policy: And Other Rules to Live By* suited these requirements. It is a collection of David Mitchell's columns published in The Guardian between 2014 and 2019. The book deals with Britain's political situation during this period in a very sarcastic manner. At the same time, it contains several cultural references that together with the humour of the author conformed a very valid option for what I had in mind.

At the University of Southampton, I learned how to deal with humour as well as with cultural references through different approaches and strategies. This was key in order to achieve a translation that was culturally accessible for the target audience while keeping the humour that characterised the ST. Moreover, in *Lingüística contrastiva aplicada a la traducción* and *Traducción de textos literarios y audiovisuales* I studied numerous translation strategies and when to apply them. I used many of them during the translation of this text when addressing various kinds of issues that it posed. In *Lingüística contrastiva aplicada a la traducción* I also learned to detect issues belonging to the linguistic sphere which appear in all kinds of texts, including the text subject of analysis. Furthermore, in *Traducción de textos profesionales y académicos* I also studied journalistic texts and how to approach their translation, something that was once again very useful since *Dishonesty is the Second-Best Policy: And Other Rules to Live By* is a compilation of journalistic texts.

The extract from the chapter I selected is focused on Brexit and how some political parties and figures have acted in relation to it, especially UKIP and its members. I chose this specific part because it contained a wide variety of translation problems, especially extralinguistic, which was the particularity of this text and the reason why it came to my attention. It has several humoristic devices, some of which are closely linked to the source culture. Besides, it incorporated several samples of informal language whose translation was also challenging. Finally, the author's witty comments originated some expressions coined by him as well as a rather informal register and tone that posed some problems from a pragmatic point of view.

Even if this text can be simply labelled as journalistic, it had to be categorised more precisely in order to understand what its translation demanded. According to Reiss

(1977, p. 110), this text could be labelled as 'vocative', for these texts 'aim at the first place at the production of identical behavioural reactions.', in this case making the reader laugh. This was one of the main objectives in the translation of the ST, replicating the humour inherent in it. Furthermore, the translation of humour has a series of features and implications that make it particularly complicated. As Vandaele (2010, p. 150) points out, what makes humour difficult to translate is that it is based on implicit knowledge and concepts that are exclusive to a language. This is, among other aspects, referred to cultural references belonging to the source culture, originating cultural bumps (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 4). These bumps appeared during the translation process and needed to be made intelligible for the target audience so that humour was preserved. Moreover, Vandaele (2010, p. 150) also noted that humour often relies on '(socio)linguistic particularities' and 'metalinguistic communication', both of which were part of some of the ST comical devices that became problematic.

3. THE TRANSLATION PROCESS: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

This analysis will be divided into three sections, following Hurtado's (2001) typology of problems. Hurtado establishes four types of translation problems: linguistic problems, extralinguistic problems, pragmatic problems and instrumental problems. This essay will only deal with the linguistic, extralinguistic and pragmatic problems that I encountered during the translation of the ST[1]. Instrumental problems will not be part of the analysis since there were no problems in relation to documentation or the use of computer tools.

3.1 LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS

Firstly, I will focus on the linguistic problems that I found, and I will also comment on the strategies that I employed in order to deal with them. Since it is a humorous text, it is rather informal. Thus, there are phraseological units and other types of language that are typical of this kind of text that became one of the main translation problems. These

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[1] It should be noted that page numbers could not possibly be indicated in each of the examples analysed because of the ST format, which was an electronic version with no page numbering.

issues will be divided into three categories: i) phraseological units and informal language, ii) words without an equivalent in the TL and iii) plays on words.

i) Regarding this first group, Rojo (2009, p. 129) states that "phraseological units are defined according to essential features: their fixedness and idiomacity". It was possible to translate some of these phraseological units by using another phraseological unit with similar form and meaning, accomplishing what Rojo (2009) calls 'full equivalence'. Some examples of this are 'I didn't have the stomach for', which was translated as '*no tenía estómago para soportar*', or 'I fancy there must have been a tear in his eye', which was translated as '*me creo que se le haya caído la lagrimilla*'. This second choice, adding the suffix '-*illa*' also worked to replicate the sarcasm present in the ST through the strategy of compensation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002:510).

Another strategy that was applied when dealing with this kind of expressions was using a phraseological unit that resembled the meaning of the original but not its form, achieving partial equivalence (Rojo, 2009). 'Roll the dice', which means doing something risky that could turn out to improve the situation favourably or completely the opposite, does not have an exact equivalent in the TL, but there is a similar expression related to gambling that can evoke the same image, which is '*jugárselo todo a una sola carta*'. Thus, 'rolled the referendum dice' was translated as '*se lo jugó todo a una sola carta, la del referéndum*'. However, some other expressions like the idiom 'picking holes' did not have such a convenient correspondence in the TL. Given that there was no equivalent and it was an opaque idiom (Rojo, 2009), meaning that the image that it evoked was not easy to decode, the strategy chosen was to reproduce the meaning through a paraphrase (Rojo, 2009), translating it as '*poniendo pegas*'. 'They've been going through a bumpy patch' is not opaque, but it still required the same strategy due to the lack of an equivalent idiom in Spanish. It was translated as '*han tenido una mala racha*'.

Similarly, there are also several instances of informal language that perhaps had less idiomatic complexity but needed to be replicated in order to keep the essence of the ST. For instance, "you've been going on and on and on" is used in the text to remark that those in favour of leaving the EU are mocking the remainers because of how they talked about certain topics that were completely useless for them, such as

multiculturalism, and in a way that they found as extremely boring and annoying. In order to imitate this same tenor of the ST, I opted for an equivalence (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p. 313) with '*dar la lata*', a colloquial expression in Spanish that also means to talk insistently about something in a way that annoys others. This strategy indeed constitutes an 'extreme case of modulation' (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p .313), implying this substantial change in the form and the point of view in order to keep the meaning.

The sentence "it turns out he's a real old softie" also presents an eminently colloquial element, the use of the word 'real' instead of 'really' as a premodifier of the adjective 'old' and the noun 'softie'. I decided to translate it as '*resulta que el tío es un viejo debilucho de primer nivel*'. The presence of the word '*tío*' is an instance of the strategy of compensation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002. p. 510) and it was motivated because of the term chosen to translate 'real', which is '*de primer nivel*', and perhaps cannot be considered as informal.

Furthermore, 'to be sick of something' is a very frequent and colloquial expression too, as well as "and that's that". Both are present in the same sentence in the text: "Everyone voted to say they were sick of it, and that's that". The first one means to be unable to stand something anymore, whereas the second one is used when one wants to finish an argument without giving the other a chance to answer back. Both of them were translated with the strategy of equivalence (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p. 313) as '*todo el mundo votó que estaba hasta las narices, y punto en boca*'.

ii) A different type of problem that is worth commenting on is that of the words in English that do not have a direct equivalent in Spanish. As a case that can fall both into this category and the previous one, we have the phrase 'to stomach the job', which is a figurative manner to refer to 'being able to tolerate an undesirable situation'. In the text, this is said about being the leader of the political party 'UKIP'. I decided to employ the strategy of modulation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510), changing the point of view, since there is a verb in the TL that can be regarded as close in terms of form, register and meaning, which is '*tragar con el cargo*'. Another example is 'to bang on about' something, which means to talk about something insistently in a boring way. In order to express this same meaning while keeping the informality of the ST, I opted for '*dar la brasa*', using the strategy of equivalence again.

Another problematic verb was 'to brick up', which means to build a wall of bricks. Even if this case is less complicated than the previous ones because the translation does not have to meet the same needs in terms of register and the only challenge is to replicate the meaning, there is no verb in Spanish that can express this concept without words from other grammatical categories. Thus, I translated it through linguistic amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510): '*levantamos un muro de ladrillo*'. Furthermore, 'grind on' also has a meaning that could not be reproduced with just a verb in Spanish, since it is used to talk about something that happens slowly and tediously. Therefore, "the consequences of last year's referendum grind remorselessly on" was translated as '*las consecuencias del referéndum del año pasado se suceden lentamente y de forma implacable*', with the same strategy of linguistic amplification, as in the previous example.

The text also included adjectives that implied the same kind of problem, such as 'slagged off'. 'To be slagged off' is an informal way of saying 'to be criticised'. Considering both the meaning and the register, I chose to translate it as '*ponerla a parir*', which constitutes another case of equivalence (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p. 313). In addition, there was a term in the text that lacked an equivalent of frequent use in Spanish, "woman's prerogative". Prerogative means 'a right or an ability that only a certain group have'. This term collocates with 'woman' and it refers to the tendency to constantly change their mind that women supposedly have. Taking into account the context in which this term is used, I decided to use the strategy of explicitation (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p. 349) and translate it as '*típico de una mujer*' in the TT, provided that there is no such collocation in Spanish. The reason for this clarification is that the author is using the term as a humorous device to say that Nigel Farage has sexist attitudes – since he would exclusively attribute this kind of behaviour to women – ironically suggesting that he radically changed his mind in the same way in which the author's baby does.

iii) Finally, as can be expected in a humorous text, there are some plays on words that belong to this linguistic field as well. The most challenging one is referred to Donald Tusk, the former European Council president. The text mentions his name and surname and the latter is preceded by a word that is very similar to it, which is 'tsk'.

This is an onomatopoeia used in writing to reproduce the sound that we make with our tongue to show disapproval. Evidently, this is a comic device to allude to the new status of the relationship between the EU and the UK, which has become irritating and falsely solemn, and how Tusk might have felt when he negotiated with the UK. Since there is not a universally recognised onomatopoeia for this sound in Spanish and therefore it would not equal the humorous impact that the ST has, I decided to utilise the strategy of omission (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p.359) because eliminating this onomatopoeia does not imply a considerable loss neither from the point of view of meaning nor humour and its presence would only obstruct the understanding of the text.

To conclude this section, the range of strategies used to deal with these linguistic problems was very diverse, especially in the case of phraseological units, due to the important variety of idioms existent in both the SL and the TL. Idioms do not always have a direct or completely accurate correspondence in the other language both in terms of form and meaning. This also happened with informal language, for which the strategy of equivalence (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p. 313) was remarkably useful to keep the meaning of the ST elements through this 'extreme modulation'. The translation of those words without an equivalent in the TL or that of the play on words also was highly varied and no generic tendencies in terms of the strategies used were found.

3.2 EXTRALINGUISTIC PROBLEMS

This text also contained several extralinguistic problems, especially related to the source culture (SC). These cultural references became particularly problematic because of what Leppihalme (1997, p. 4) denominates 'culture bumps', that is something which is specific to the SC and therefore needs to be dealt with in order to be accessible for the target readership, who probably would not recognise many of the cultural items mentioned. There were two types of cultural references that needed an adaptation through different strategies in order to achieve an effective translation. These issues were divided into: i) terms belonging to the field of British politics that lack an equivalent in the TL and ii) more general cultural references.

i) In the first category, inasmuch as this text deals with Brexit and the current political situation in the UK, there are numerous concepts related with this topic as well as diverse political terminology which is not related to Brexit, especially about political positions, which lacks an equivalent in the target culture (TC) because of how recent Brexit is and because of the different functioning of the British and the Spanish political systems. The terms related to Brexit were 'remainers', 'remoaning', 'leavers', 'no deal' and 'no deal Brexit'.

'Remainer' does not have an equivalent in Spanish, and it is a key concept to understand the division existent in the UK about whether to leave the EU or not. The strategy chosen was linguistic amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510), translating it as '*partidarios de quedarse en la Unión Europea*'. The translation of 'remoaning' was notably problematic, since it consists of a play on words between the word 'remaining', for the possibility of the UK to remain in the EU, and the verb 'to moan', which means to complain in a cheerless voice about something that other people do not find as important. Since this wordplay was impossible to be replicated into the TT, the only feasible option seemed to be to ignore the pun (Low, 2011, p.67), simply transferring its meaning and omitting the play on words. However, the word '*chapa*', chosen to translate 'remoaning' as in '*chapa pro-europeísta*', could be said to keep the essence of the word in the ST in terms of register, given that 'remoaning' is a word used in day-to-day colloquial contexts, meaning-wise, as well as potentially in terms of comicality. In addition, due to the impossibility to replicate the ST pun and as Low (2011, p. 67) generally suggests, I decided to use the strategy of compensation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510), creating a new pun later in that same sentence. Thus, where the ST said that "we really must stop people self-medicating their undiagnosed psychological problems by causing huge, ill-conceived geopolitical shifts.", 'undiagnosed psychological problems' was substituted in the TT for "*problemas 'brexicológicos' sin diagnosticar*", making a word play with 'Brexit' and '*psicológicos*', which would have been the adjective in a literal translation.

As it happens with 'remainers', 'leavers' lacks an equivalent in the TL. After some research about which is the most widely used term in Spanish, instead of employing a linguistic amplification as with 'remainers', I opted for the borrowing (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510) '*brexiteer*' in italics. This decision is based on the fact

that its use is becoming more frequent in the Spanish media and that the suffix '-er' – whose meaning will be familiar for a part of the target audience because of some other words that are already borrowed from English, such as hacker or *suéter* – together with the ST context – from which it becomes evident that the term refers to those in favour of Brexit because the text says that brexiteers expected remainers to stop complaining – will make 'brexiteer' intelligible enough for the target readership. Spanish *Fundéu* also suggested this translation strategy. Finally, in the case of 'no deal' and 'no deal Brexit', I also researched to translate this idea in the most accessible manner. After checking several Spanish newspapers as well as *Fundéu* again, the most widely accepted translation was found to be '*salida sin acuerdo*'.

In the category of political terminology unrelated to Brexit, the most challenging elements were 'Ukippers', 'local elections', 'MPs', 'foreign secretary' and 'Tory cabinet minister'. 'Ukipper' refers to the members or sympathisers of the political party UKIP. As it happened with '*brexiteer*', the suffix '-er' can give the target reader an idea of the meaning of the word, but it might be argued that the context is not so favourable as in the previous example, where the reader probably knew that there were sides to be taken. Moreover, it should not be assumed that the target reader is familiar with UKIP or that they will be able to connect '*ukippers*' with the political organisation. Thus, I chose to translate it through linguistic amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510) in the two occasions in which it appeared in the ST. In the first one, 'But the Ukippers, even in their hour of victory, don't appear to be very happy', I translated it as '*los simpatizantes de Ukip*'. The translation of the second case, however, was different because 'ukippers' was accompanied by 'leading'. Therefore, the author is not talking about mere supporters but about members of the party. Thus, the translation in this case was '*los miembros más importantes de Ukip*'.

As has been aforementioned, the differences between the Spanish and the British political systems and structures leads to the presence of some 'cultural bumps' (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 4). This was the case with 'local elections'. In Spain, there are no '*elecciones locales*', which would be the literal translation. In Spain, there are two types of elections to elect non-central governments: '*elecciones municipales*' and '*elecciones autonómicas*'. After examining the nature of local elections, I observed that they resembled neither the *elecciones municipales* nor *elecciones autonómicas*, since in local

elections citizens elect their political representatives for their council. Each council can be assigned to considerably diverse territories in terms of extension, from a borough to a whole county. Hence, it would not be possible to use '*municipios*' or '*comunidades autónomas*' as equivalents for those territories. Taking all this into account, I decided to use a literal translation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510), '*elecciones locales*'. Furthermore, in the context of the ST, even if some readers were not familiar with how local elections work, it would not be an insurmountable obstacle for them in the understanding of the text.

'MPs', short for 'members of parliament', seemed at first suitable for a literal translation as well. However, once again considering the differences between political systems, there are two chambers in the British parliament, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. A literal translation could then provoke a loss in meaning because the target reader may wrongly include the Lords into the category of '*miembros del parlamento*'. Consequently, this was translated with an amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510) as '*los miembros de la Cámara de los Comunes*' in order to eliminate this ambiguity that the literal translation created.

Finally, the last two terms from British politics that posed some problems, both referring to Jeremy Hunt and political positions, were 'foreign secretary' and 'cabinet minister', and both were translated with their respective 'established equivalents' (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510) into the TL. In the first case, the established equivalent was the Spanish '*ministro de exteriores*', who indeed has the same functions as their British counterpart. The second was translated as '*ministro*'. Even if it could be argued that it is not the same as the British cabinet minister – a *ministro* always is the head of a department whereas in the UK some cabinet ministers are not – the reader knows that the author is talking about Jeremy Hunt, who is a head of a department, so this established equivalent, even if it is not as accurate as that of the first case, works correctly.

ii) In the second category, we can find those cultural references that were not related to politics. 'Tommy' is an informal word to make reference to a British soldier. It became especially popular during WWI. German soldiers shouted 'Tommy' when they wanted to speak with someone from the British Army. As a wide part of the target

audience will not be familiar with this term, for it requires a certain historical knowledge, borrowing it was not a possibility. The most adequate strategy was using a hypernym (Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 136), simply translating it as '*soldados*'.

'Pita bread' was problematic too as it is not as popular in Spain as it is in the UK. In addition, the translation not only involved finding an equivalent because of the context in which it was used:

"For years you've been going on and on and on about multiculturalism and fair trade and equal marriage, and how foreigners are lovely and we're nasty, and chickens get treated terribly, and recycling and rape and pitta bread […]."

As it can be inferred from this extract, this type of bread also has humoristic connotations, what complicates the translation further. It is being included into the group of things about which Remainers allegedly talked constantly and that Leavers were said to hate. Thus, keeping this notion in the TT was the main objective. As it has been said, pita bread is not that frequent in Spanish culinary tradition, so it had to be replaced in the TT, so I looked for an idea related to food that can be said to be controversial nowadays, which is veganism. This practice undeniably has its detractors and defenders in very differentiated and polarised sides. Therefore, I used a discursive creation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510):

"*Habéis estado dando la lata con el multiculturalismo, el comercio justo y el matrimonio gay durante años, y con que los de fuera (pensaba que podía ser pragmático por la intención del autor dadas las connotaciones de "foreigners") son maravillosos y nosotros damos asco, y con que tratamos fatal a los pollos, y con el reciclaje, y con las violaciones, y con que hay que ser vegano […].*"

The next cultural reference is the British radio station 'LBC', which stands for "Leading Britain's Conversation". There is a strong likelihood that some of the Spanish readers would not know what the author is talking about – also because the ST does not mention what the acronym stands for – although they would probably infer that it is some kind of mass media. In order to clarify what LBC is, I chose the strategy of amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510), reproducing it in the TT as follows: '*la*

emisora británica LBC'. The ST also contains a reference to the National Health System, commonly known by its acronym 'NHS', which is the way in which it appears in the text. As the ST only mentioned the acronym, I transferred it into the TT with a calque (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.510) as '*Sistema Nacional de Salud* (NHS)' although keeping the SL acronym because of how often it is used in daily life and mass media.

The following examples have something in common. For all of them, I applied what Venuti (1995) labelled as 'domestication' of the ST, substituting the cultural allusions originally written by the author by others from the TC. This decision justifies the strategies used when addressing the issues that arose from translating these allusions. The first two cultural references are correlated. "Sainsbury's" and "Tesco", two of the most famous chains of supermarkets in the UK. In the ST, they are used as an example of commercial rivalry in a joke that says that the UK blaming the EU for their problems now that they have left would be as absurd as Sainsbury's blaming the CEO of Tesco for a hypothetical economic setback. Given that not every target reader will understand this allusion, I employed the strategy of adaptation (Molina & Hurtado (2002, p. 509), changing "Sainsbury's" and "Tesco" for 'Adidas' and 'Nike', two companies that are transcultural, which exemplify this commercial rivalry and with which every reader of the TT will surely be familiar.

This chapter also alluded to Rockall, an islet in the exclusive economic zone of the UK. The author makes a joke about a statement by Ukip's Brexit spokesman, Gerard Batten. Batten claimed that the triggering of Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union – which declares that 'Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements' – was just "a trap" and that the UK should simply leave the EU. The author mocks Batten's idea of leaving, saying that they could brick up the Channel tunnel, throw a lasso around Rockall and then pull themselves off into the sea. The main concern here is not only to secure that the target reader will understand what Rockall is – which could be achieved with the strategy of amplification – but to replicate the same humoristic device. In my opinion, this comic intention could be better reproduced into the TT with an adaptation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 509), replacing Rockall for Gibraltar. Even if Gibraltar is bigger than Rockall and it is inhabited, the Spanish readers will definitely be more

familiar with Gibraltar. Besides, it is also compatible with the image of the lasso that the author evokes and because of the historical dispute between Spain and the UK over this territory, it will potentially have more comicality in the TT, which was the ultimate aim of the author.

The last cultural reference is 'rice cake'. The author compares UKIP's change of opinion regarding the triggering of Article 50 with her daughter rejecting a rice cake which he has been trying to convince her to eat, but her daughter refuses to do so. Rice cakes are not completely alien in the TC, but they are not seen as a snack for children. For this reason, this pun needs the strategy of adaptation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p.509). I translated it as '*potito*', for it is a type of food which is exclusive to children, so the reader will easily relate it to the previous sentence and the author's daughter.

Finally, there are some general tendencies in the translation of these extralinguistic problems from which a conclusion can be drawn. In the first category, the terminology related to politics posed some difficulties often due to the lack of equivalents in the TL for the reasons mentioned above. Thus, strategies like amplification or linguistic amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510) were particularly required in order to clarify the meaning of such terms. In the category of cultural references unrelated to politics, the main translation method was the strategy of adaptation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 509), following Venuti's (1995) approach of focusing on the target audience's understanding of the text, turning unfamiliar foreign cultural allusions into TC references.

3.3 PRAGMATIC PROBLEMS

The third and final section of this analysis is dedicated to pragmatic problems. According to Hurtado (2001, p. 288), this category comprises those issues linked with speech acts, the intentionality of the author, presuppositions, as well as those difficulties derived from the translation assignment, the characteristics of the addressee and the context of the translation. In the ST, the main issues had to do with the speech acts as well as the intentionality of the author. As it was mentioned in the linguistic problems, it was important to keep the informality that the ST showed in some fragments.

However, a major objective in this translation was to reproduce the original sarcastic tone that the author adopted in the ST. In effect, the way the author uses and repeats certain words and expressions – in some cases coined by him – gives them an additional value meaning-wise.

Among the cases of words being repeated, 'solemnly' resulted particularly interesting:

'On Tuesday: a snap of Theresa May solemnly signing a letter. On Wednesday: one of Sir Tim Barrow solemnly handing it over to the disapproving president of the European council, Donald "Tsk" Tusk. I didn't buy a paper on Thursday as I didn't have the stomach for the inevitable picture of Tusk solemnly wiping his arse with it. I'd already got the gist.'

The repetition of the word 'solemnly' here is remarkably ironic. It is intended to convey the exact opposite, that there is no genuine solemnity in what these political figures are doing: it is all false. In order to replicate this sarcasm, the strategy chosen for all the repetitions was not only literal translation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510) as '*de forma solemne*' but linguistic amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510). Then, the extract was translated as follows:

'*El martes, una foto de Theresa May firmando una carta de forma solemne. El miércoles, una de sir Tim Barrow entregándosela, también de forma solemne, al contrariado presidente del Consejo Europeo, Donald Tusk. No compré el periódico del jueves porque no tenía estómago para soportar la más que previsible foto de Tusk limpiándose el culo con ella, por supuesto de forma solemne. Ya había pillado la idea.*'

The addition of '*también*' and '*por supuesto*' in the first and second repetitions of the words respectively reinforces this sarcasm that the author is creating.

Another fragment that posed some difficulties was the sentence "The Few are now the Fewer, soon to be the None.", in reference to the Leave supporters that allegedly fought in the war, even if according to the author not many of them actually did. 'The Few' might be referred to the Royal Air Force, which acquired this name during WWII. Despite the fact that it could constitute an example of a cultural

reference, this sentence was not included in the extralinguistic problems section because of the lack of an equivalent in the TL and due to the bigger impact of the pragmatic issues that the sentence has on the ST. These issues outweighed the extralinguistic ones since 'the Fewer' and 'the None' are terms created by the author. For these reasons, I decided to translate 'the None' through a generalisation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510), 'The Few' with an amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510) and 'the Fewer' through a description (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p 510): ""*Los elegidos*" ("*The Few*" *en inglés) que defendieron a Inglaterra de los nazis desde el aire ahora son cada vez menos y pronto serán "los desaparecidos*".", in effect choosing not to nominalise 'The Fewer' since in a translation such as '*los cada vez menos elegidos*', '*menos*' seemed to complement '*elegidos*' in the sense that they were less 'chosen' rather than less in terms of number.

The expression '*capeesh*' which comes from the Italian '*capisci*' also needed of some sort of strategy, since the former is the English spelling of the word. I used an adaptation (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 509) substituting it for '*capichi*', a term which is sometimes used in Spanish so as to reproduce the Italian pronunciation.

Similarly, the expression 'those days are gone' could have fallen into the linguistic problems category since it is a phraseological unit that needs a correspondence in the TL. However, as it happened with '*capeesh*', this phrase seemed to pose more challenging problems because of its importance from a pragmatic point of view than from a linguistic perspective. Indeed, it is used in a remarkably sarcastic manner when referring to Jeremy Hunt blaming the EU for the UK's problems now that the latter has left, pointing out that the author considers this attitude to be ridiculous. To transfer this sarcasm of the ST to the TT, I looked for a phraseological unit that could be used in the same context and sense in the TL. In the end, I translated it for '*se acabó lo que se daba*' a partially equivalent phraseological unit, which had a similar meaning but a different form from the original (Rojo, 2009).

Furthermore, when parodying how certain Leavers mocked the way in which some Remainers defended foreign people in the UK, the author chose the word 'foreigners' because of the negative connotations that it carries when used by natives towards people from other countries in a derogatory way. I opted for a linguistic

amplification (Molina & Hurtado, 2002, p. 510) with '*los de fuera*' so as to replicate this derogation that was arguably present in the ST.

The author also creates some comic expressions that become an issue for the translation. In one of them – 'Self-Conservative party' – he criticises that the only concern in which the Conservative MPs seem to be able to reach an agreement is the conservation of their party. Thus, he coins this term as to suggest that the only concern of the Conservative party is to secure their existence and favour their own interests rather than those of the citizenship. I used the strategy of transposition from adjective to noun (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, p. 277), translating it as '*partido de Autoconservación*'.

To sum up, the translation had to keep the essence of the ST by replicating the informality and the sarcasm which the author creates in many of the situations that he describes. Devices such as word repetition or creating new terms as well as some of the choices in the language were key parts of this wit and intentionality of the author and were reflected in the TT through translation techniques such as linguistic amplification, adaptation, generalisation, description, transposition or partial equivalence.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the main issues that the ST posed were linguistic – specifically the humour created through informal language – and overall extralinguistic because of the wide variety of cultural references. For this reason, the most frequent strategies were linguistic amplification, which was used six times for purposes such as to address issues with political terms, words without an equivalent and as a means to replicate the intentionality of the author; equivalence, utilised in five occasions to translate informal language; and adaptation, used four times, most of them to solve translation problems created by cultural references. Since it is a text that constantly seeks comicality, the strategy of compensation also was among the most common, for it is one of the most recognised methods within the translation of humour.

Indeed, the most common type of problem was the extralinguistic one due to the prominent role of the source culture in the construction of humour as well as the presence of cultural references motivated by the nature of the topics with which it deals,

especially those related to politics. Political positions and other terms from this field were problematic and the strategies of amplification and linguistic amplification were the most adequate ones to clear up their meaning. Regarding cultural references that were not linked with politics, the most frequent strategy was adaptation in order to make those references familiar to the Spanish readership that would not understand them otherwise.

A considerable variety of linguistic issues was also raised, primarily because of the informal tone that the author adopted in the ST. The strategy of equivalence proved to be particularly useful for the translation of informal language. There was not a concrete tendency in the strategies used for the translation of idioms, word plays and words without an equivalent in the TL. The text also contained some pragmatic problems, especially in terms of speech acts and the intentionality of the author. The strategies used to deal with these issues were very diverse.

Finally, this final dissertation has given me the opportunity to test and practice what I have learned during this degree, especially with respect to translation. The translation proposal I had to elaborate and in which this essay was based was a very interesting and enriching challenge, for I consider that the translation of humour is one of the most difficult, even more if it is based on a specific culture as is the case in *Dishonesty is the Second-Best Policy: And Other Rules to Live By*. The translation had to be focused on creating the same effect in the TT reader as in the ST reader, keeping that comicality intended by David Mitchell, so every decision had to be justified on a proper basis as not to erase the intentionality of the author. Moreover, the translation process had to be explained appropriately and in a clear and precise manner. Thus, this dissertation demanded not only all the skills that I acquired in the translation subjects I took, but a good command of English that I also improved during these studies.

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APPENDIX

SOURCE TEXT AND TARGET TEXT

8	8
Brexit: Snapshots of a Festering, Self-inflicted Wound	El Brexit: Imágenes de una herida autoinfligida e infectada
[…]	[…]
2 April 2017 – three days after the triggering of Article 50	2 de abril del 2017. Tres días antes de la aplicación del Artículo 50
A dramatic photo-essay played out on the front pages of the newspapers last week. On Tuesday: a snap of Theresa May solemnly signing a letter. On Wednesday: one of Sir Tim Barrow solemnly handing it over to the disapproving president of the European council, Donald "Tsk" Tusk. I didn't buy a paper on Thursday as I didn't have the stomach for the inevitable picture of Tusk solemnly wiping his arse with it. I'd already got the gist.	La semana pasada, un dramático reportaje fotográfico acaparaba las portadas de los periódicos. El martes, una foto de Theresa May firmando una carta de forma solemne. El miércoles, una de sir Tim Barrow entregándosela, también de forma solemne, al contrariado presidente del Consejo Europeo, Donald Tusk. No compré el periódico del jueves porque no tenía estómago para soportar la más que previsible foto de Tusk limpiándose el culo con ella, por supuesto de forma solemne. Ya había pillado la idea.
Please excuse the remoaning. I know it's frowned upon. It wasn't for this that all those elderly Leave supporters dragged themselves out to vote! This isn't what they fought a war for! Though not many of them actually did that. Those guys are mainly dead. The Few are now the Fewer, soon to be the None. So I should say: this isn't what they, in many cases, lived through a bit of the war for (but often as infants, so they	Por favor, disculpen la chapa pro-europeísta, sé que está mal vista. Todos esos ancianos que apoyaron marcharnos no se arrastraron hasta las urnas para esto. Tampoco lucharon en la guerra para esto. Aunque, en realidad, no tantos lo hicieron. Esos tipos están casi todos muertos. "Los elegidos" ("The Few" en inglés) que defendieron a Inglaterra de los nazis desde el aire ahora son cada vez menos y pronto serán "los desaparecidos".

can't really remember it)!

If they can't remember it, perhaps that explains why they're so sanguine about renouncing an institution that's done more than any other in history to preserve peace between the major nations of Europe. I wonder if their parents would have been so hasty. The demobbed Tommies who voted for Attlee over Churchill might not have been as easily convinced as their children have been that youngsters with foreign accents working in coffee shops is such a diabolical threat to Britain's values and existence. They'd probably seen worse.

Anyway, this kind of remoaning isn't what members of the luckiest generation ever born betrayed the sacrifices of their parents for! I'm sure that's a form of words we can all agree on. What it feels like they actually did it for, and the clamour against remoaning has contributed hugely to this feeling, is for the Remainers to shut up. That seems to have been an outcome that was confidently expected among Leavers, and nobody even painted it on a bus.

Creo que lo que debería decir es: no sobrevivieron, en muchos casos, a un poco de guerra para esto (la mayoría eran niños, así que ni siquiera lo recuerdan).

Si no se acuerdan, quizás eso explique por qué son tan optimistas cuando se trata de abandonar una institución que ha hecho más que ninguna otra por preservar la paz entre los principales países europeos. Me pregunto si sus padres estarían tan seguros. Me pregunto si los soldados desmovilizados en la Primera Guerra Mundial que votaron a Attlee en lugar de Churchill se hubieran dejado convencer tan fácilmente como sus hijos de que los adolescentes con acentos extranjeros que trabajan en cafeterías suponen tal diabólica amenaza a los valores y a la existencia de Reino Unido. Seguramente, habían visto cosas peores.

Sea como fuere, no fue para aguantar toda esta chapa pro-europeísta por lo que los miembros de la generación más afortunada que jamás ha existido echaron a perder los sacrificios de sus padres. Creo que eso es algo con lo que todos podemos estar de acuerdo. La razón por la que parece que lo hicieron (y el clamor contra la chapa pro-europeísta ha contribuido enormemente a esta causa) es para que los partidarios de quedarse en la Unión Europea se callen. Por lo visto, esa era una de las consecuencias que los *brexiteers* daban por hechas, y nadie

se molestó siquiera en pintarla en un bus.

"Come on, you lost – you have to shut up now! For years you've been going on and on and on about multiculturalism and fair trade and equal marriage, and how foreigners are lovely and we're nasty, and chickens get treated terribly, and recycling and rape and pitta bread and how nothing is quite as it seems, and now you've got to stop or it's not fair. Everyone voted to say they were sick of it, and that's that!"

That would explain why, as the consequences of last year's referendum grind remorselessly on, there's so much anger and bitterness on both sides. Surely the winning side should be chipper, at least for the moment. This is the honeymoon period – if a divorce can have a honeymoon period. Which I imagine it can: this is the leave your socks on the floor, get drunk and piss in the sink bit. The bleak contemplation of a vast acreage of solitude stretching ahead towards a cold grave is still to come. So come on, Ukip, put on your favourite pants and order another takeaway, safe in the knowledge that there's a growing chance the bloke who brings it won't be able to live here soon. "Sergei, Sergei, you know me – it's nothing personal! There is just, quite simply, not enough room, yeah? Capeesh? Now what do I owe you, my friend?"

"Venga, habéis perdido, así que ahora, a callar". Habéis estado dando la lata con el multiculturalismo, el comercio justo y el matrimonio gay durante años, y con que los de fuera son maravillosos y nosotros damos asco, y con que tratamos fatal a los pollos, y con el reciclaje, y con las violaciones, y con que hay que ser vegano, y con que nada es lo que parece, y ahora tenéis que parar o, si no, no es justo. Todo el mundo votó que estaba hasta las narices, y punto en boca.

Eso explicaría por qué, conforme las consecuencias del referéndum del año pasado se suceden lentamente y de forma implacable, hay tanto enfado y rencor en ambos bandos. Por supuesto que el bando ganador debería estar contento, al menos por ahora. Esta es la etapa de la luna de miel, si es que un divorcio puede tener una luna de miel, que supongo que sí. Esta es la época de dejar los calcetines en el suelo, emborracharse y mear en el fregadero. La lúgubre contemplación de un interminable campo de soledad que se extiende hacia una fría tumba todavía está por llegar. Así que venga, Ukip, poneos vuestros calzoncillos favoritos y pedid comida a domicilio otra vez con la tranquilidad de saber que hay bastantes probabilidades de que el tío que te la trae no pueda vivir aquí en poco tiempo. "Sergei, Sergei, tú me conoces, no

	es nada personal. Es solo que, no hay sitio para todos ¿vale? ¿*Capichi*? Bueno, ¿qué te debo, amigo?"
But the Ukippers, even in their hour of victory, don't appear to be very happy. They seem baffled and in disarray, even by their own bickering standards. I suppose they've been going through a bumpy patch: it took them a long time to find a leader who could pull off the elusive double of both being able to stomach the job for more than 18 days and not being Nigel Farage; they've just lost their only MP (not in an election – there was some sort of falling out, as usual); and nobody seems very optimistic about their prospects in the local elections in May.	Sin embargo, los simpatizantes de Ukip no parecen estar demasiado contentos ni siquiera en el momento de la victoria. Se les ve confundidos y desaliñados, incluso más de lo normal. Supongo que han tenido una mala racha, les costó mucho encontrar un líder que cumpliera dos condiciones para nada fáciles: que pudiera tragar con el cargo más de 18 días y que no fuera Nigel Farage; acaban de perder su único escaño (no fue en las elecciones, debió de haber alguna discusión, como siempre); y nadie parece ser demasiado optimista en cuanto a sus posibilidades en las elecciones locales de mayo.
It's not just that, though. I think the party's Brexit spokesman, Gerard Batten, really got to the heart of the malaise when he said last week: "We don't want Article 50 to be triggered." Wow. My daughter is 23 months old, so never in my life have I been more aware of what Farage would probably describe as "a woman's prerogative". Still, was ever such an energetically campaigned-for rice cake so rebuffed? "You what now?!" is the only response.	Pero la cosa no acaba ahí. Creo que el portavoz del Brexit del partido, Gerard Batten, llegó de verdad al fondo del problema la semana pasada cuando dijo que: "No queremos que se aplique el Artículo 50". Guau. Mi hija tiene 23 meses, por lo que en mi vida he sido más consciente de lo que Farage probablemente tacharía de "típico de una mujer". Aun así ¿alguna vez alguien ha rechazado de tal forma un potito después de ser tan promocionado? "¡¿Que no qué?!" es la única respuesta.

Contextualised, Batten's statement is marginally less mad. He reckons the whole Article 50 process is "a trap" and we should just leave. Don't get sucked into all that metropolitan liberal elite article-triggering claptrap, he reckons; instead, we just go. Brick up the Channel tunnel, throw a lasso around Rockall and then pull ourselves off into the sea – like the good old days, eh Gerard? The whole complex negotiation of Britain's departure is something he says we could "do in an afternoon". And he's Ukip's Brexit spokesman, so it's definitely his area of expertise.	Contextualizadas, las declaraciones de Batten son ligeramente menos absurdas. Él cree que todo el proceso del Articulo 50 es una "trampa" y que, simplemente, deberíamos irnos. No dejarnos atrapar por las estupideces aplica-artículos de la élite metropolitana liberal, sugiere; en vez de eso, simplemente nos vamos. Levantamos un muro de ladrillo en el túnel del Canal de la Mancha, le echamos un lazo al peñón de Gibraltar y después nos tiramos al mar. Como en los viejos tiempos ¿no, Gerard? Toda la compleja negociación para la salida de Reino Unido es algo que, según él, se podría "hacer en una tarde". Y es el portavoz de Ukip para el Brexit, por lo que definitivamente es su especialidad.
The party's new leader, Paul Nuttall, was slightly less down on Article 50, but promised that Ukip would be the "guard dogs of Brexit". He also set out "six key tests" for Brexit that he'll definitely be able to say aren't met.	A Paul Nuttall, el nuevo líder del partido, le disgusta algo menos el Artículo 50, pero prometió que Ukip sería "el perro guardián del Brexit". También presentó "seis test clave" para el Brexit que seguro que podrá decir que no se superan.
So it's all happening like they wanted it to – like they'd barely have dreamed of 15 years ago – but they're still cross, still picking holes, still cueing up the future rhetoric of betrayal. Meanwhile, Nuttall is promising a huge shake-up of the party, its structure and its policies. "The name will stay, that's the one thing I'll guarantee," he says.	Así que todo está pasando como querían, como jamás hubieran soñado hace 15 años, pero todavía están enfadados, poniendo pegas y elaborando la futura retórica de la traición. Mientras tanto, Nuttal está prometiendo un cambio radical en el partido, su estructura y sus políticas. "El nombre seguirá, eso es todo lo que puedo garantizar", declara.

On one level, this is a response to a practical problem: Ukip was established as a one-issue party, and that issue has been resolved in its favour. It's lost its ostensible reason to exist, but it still exists. New issues to bang on about must be found.

But my instinct is that their crisis runs deeper than this. The leading Ukippers have spent decades convinced that the anger and dissatisfaction they felt, with which their lives were infused, was caused by one thing. And now the thing has gone. What if they feel the same? A crushing realisation for them, but also for the rest of us. Their misdirected zeal could easily have tipped the balance in the referendum.

So excuse the compl(rem)aining, but we really must stop people self-medicating their undiagnosed psychological problems by causing huge, ill-conceived geopolitical shifts. First the Iraq war and now this. I blame social services.

29 July 2018

Who would have thought Jeremy Hunt was such a massive nostalgic? I mean, he's not called Jeremy Hostalgic! Seriously though, it turns out he's a real old softie, and I fancy

Por un lado, esto es una respuesta a un problema práctico: Ukip fue creado como un partido con un problema en mente, y ese problema se ha solucionado. Ha perdido su razón de ser, pero todavía existe. Tienen que encontrar nuevos problemas con los que dar la brasa.

Pero mi instinto me dice que su crisis va más allá. Los miembros más importantes de Ukip han pasado décadas convencidos de que el enfado y la insatisfacción que sentían y que llenaban sus vidas las provocaba algo. Y ahora, ese algo se ha esfumado. ¿Y si siguen sintiéndose así? Un golpe de realidad para ellos, pero también para el resto. Su fervor desencaminado fácilmente pudo haber decantado la balanza en el referéndum.

Así que disculpen la chapa pro-europeísta, pero de verdad deberíamos evitar que la gente se automedique sus problemas "brexicológicos" sin diagnosticar provocando cambios geopolíticos enormes y mal planeados. Primero la guerra de Irak y ahora esto. La culpa es de los servicios sociales.

29 de julio de 2018

¿Quién hubiera podido imaginar que Jeremy Hunt sería un nostálgico de tales proporciones? Porque claro, no se llama Jeremy Hostálgico. En serio, resulta que el

there must have been a tear in his eye on his visit to Berlin last week.

I'm not saying he misses the Nazis! Honestly! I know hyperbole is fashionable at the moment, so it's probably worth making clear that I don't think Jeremy Hunt is a Nazi. I mean, he's not called Jeremy Hazi! Seriously though, the man's not a fascist, even if I don't much like his politics. Having said that, English is all about usage, and I reckon the word "fascist" is regularly used online to mean "someone whose politics you don't much like". Which, oddly, makes it a synonym for communist.

The foreign secretary betrayed this sense of nostalgia when criticising Brussels's conduct over Brexit. "Without a real change in approach from the EU negotiators we do now face a real risk of a no deal by accident, and that would be incredibly challenging economically," he warned, adding that the British people would blame the EU for this and it "would change [their] attitudes to Europe for a generation". So there he is, a Tory cabinet minister, saying that British problems are the EU's fault. Just once more, for old times' sake?

tío es un viejo debilucho de primer nivel, y me creo que se le haya caído la lagrimilla en su visita a Berlín la semana pasada.

¡No estoy diciendo que eche de menos a los nazis! ¡Lo prometo! Sé que la hipérbole está de moda, así que probablemente merezca la pena aclarar que no pienso que Jeremy Hunt sea nazi. Porque claro, no se llama Jeremy Hazi. Va, en serio, el tío no es un fascista, aunque no me gusten demasiado sus políticas. Dicho esto, el inglés depende del uso que le des, y creo que la palabra "fascista" se usa a menudo en internet para referirse a "alguien cuyas políticas no te gustan demasiado". Algo que, extrañamente, también es sinónimo de comunista.

El ministro de exteriores dejó entrever este sentimiento de nostalgia al criticar la forma de actuar de Bruselas con respecto al Brexit. "Sin un cambio real en el enfoque de los negociadores de la UE nos enfrentamos a un riesgo real de una salida sin acuerdo por accidente, lo que sería extremadamente arriesgado en términos económicos", advirtió, y añadió que los británicos culparían a la UE por esto, lo que "cambiaría la actitud hacia Europa de toda una generación". Ahí está, un ministro conservador británico diciendo que los problemas de los británicos son culpa de la

Bless you, but you can't do that any more, Jeremy. Those days are gone. When we chose to leave, the EU's duty of care over our country came to an end. It isn't supposed to look out for our interests any more; it's not accountable to the people you say will blame it. You might as well say that Sainsbury's shareholders will blame the CEO of Tesco if their investment loses value. So what.

I understand how he must feel. For his whole political career, the EU has been there for him. Despite favouring Remain in the referendum, Hunt subsequently told LBC that he'd changed his mind due to the "arrogance of the EU". But in Berlin the other day, he said that, if Brussels allowed a no-deal Brexit, "it would lead to a fissure in relations which would be highly damaging for that great partnership we have had for so many years, which has been so important in sustaining the international order".

He doesn't seem to realise that that's all happening anyway. The "fissure in relations", the complete ending, not just damaging, of the "great partnership" is what we as a nation have decided to do. Which means that's all good, isn't it? It's the will of

Que dios te bendiga, pero ya no puedes seguir haciendo eso, Jeremy. Se acabó lo que se daba. Cuando decidimos irnos, se acabó el deber de la UE de preocuparse por nuestro país. Ya no tiene por qué seguir mirando por nuestros intereses; no te sirve para rendir cuentas ante esos que dices que le echarán la culpa a la UE. También podrías decir que los accionistas de Adidas le echarán la culpa al director ejecutivo de Nike si sus inversiones pierden valor. ¿Y qué?

Entiendo cómo se siente. La UE ha estado a su lado durante toda su carrera política. A pesar de abogar por permanecer en la UE en el referéndum, Hunt declaró a la emisora británica LBC que había cambiado de opinión acerca de la "arrogancia de la UE". No obstante, el otro día en Berlín dijo que, si Bruselas permitía una salida sin acuerdo, "daría lugar a una fisura en las relaciones que sería tremendamente dañina para esa gran alianza que hemos tenido durante tantos años, la cual ha sido muy importante para mantener el orden internacional".

Parece no darse cuenta de que eso va a ocurrir de todas formas. La "fisura en las relaciones", no solo algo dañino para "esa gran alianza", sino su final por completo es lo que nosotros hemos decidido hacer como nación. Y eso quiere decir que está todo bien

the people, Jeremy, it's lovely! The poor man is so confused and emotional, he's started talking Britain down.

We're witnessing the end of a way of life. For decades our political leaders, both Tory and Labour, have been able to blame things that went wrong, things they failed to do, anything that seemed unfairly constraining, or frighteningly liberating, on the Brussels bureaucrats. Anything that smacked of globalisation and corporate power, but also anything that seemed overly statist and controlling, anything that was bad for business, and anything that left the individual citizen too exposed. Put simply: anything.

It was a sweet little scam: the people in charge only admitted to being in charge when it suited them. They were good cop. Bad cop was some Belgians you never met. And Brussels is an excellent receptacle for blame. It has an aura of irritating blandness and pedantry, but not of frightening or acquisitive aggression. We could project enmity on to it without getting too scared and, for several decades, without creating the political momentum for anything to be done.

¿no? Es la voluntad de la gente, Jeremy. ¡Es maravilloso! El pobre hombre está tan confuso y emocionado que está empezando a hablar de Reino Unido de forma condescendiente.

Estamos presenciando el final de un estilo de vida. Durante décadas, nuestros líderes políticos, tanto conservadores como laboristas, han podido culpar a los burócratas de Bruselas de lo que iba mal, lo que no conseguían hacer, todo lo que pudiera parecer injustamente restrictivo o alarmantemente liberal. Todo lo que oliera a globalización y poder corporativo, pero también todo lo que pareciera excesivamente estatista o controlador. Todo lo que fuera malo para los negocios, y todo lo que dejara al ciudadano de a pie demasiado expuesto. Es decir: todo.

Era un pequeño y dulce engaño: los que estaban en el poder admitían estarlo cuando les convenía. Eran el poli bueno. El poli malo eran unos belgas que nunca conocimos, y Bruselas es un receptáculo excelente para las culpas. Tiene un aura de irritante apatía y pedantería, pero no de agresividad aterradora y codiciosa. Podíamos proyectar enemistad sin asustarnos demasiado y durante décadas sin crear el impulso político como para que algo pasara.

This is why, despite the stratospheric importance of the question of whether or not Britain is in the EU – not just in terms of economics and geopolitics, but of the hearts, minds and self-image of millions of Britons – the two main parties haven't fought a general election on the issue for over 30 years.

They've argued endlessly about privatisation and NHS funding and tuition fees and foxhunting and MPs' expenses, but they've both avoided the main problem, this colossal, festering, unresolved question, and left it as a personal matter for individual members. That's like having decades of religious debate in the 16th century between two groups, both of which refuse to say whether they're Catholic or Protestant.

But it worked well for the politicians. Brussels was there to be slagged off, and there was no threat to party unity. The British people have paid a lot for the unity of their politicians' groupings and, more than anything else, that of the Conservative party, which should perhaps be renamed the "Self-Conservative party", as that appears to be the only political aim on which its MPs are

Es por esto que, a pesar de la estratosférica importancia de la pregunta de si Reino Unido está o no en la UE (no solo en términos económicos y geopolíticos, sino también de los corazones, las mentes y la identidad de millones de británicos), los dos principales partidos no se han jugado unas elecciones generales por este tema en más de treinta años.

Han discutido incansablemente sobre la privatización, la financiación del Servicio Nacional de Salud (NHS), las cuotas de las matrículas universitarias, la caza del zorro, los gastos de los miembros de la Cámara de los Comunes, pero ambos han evitado el problema principal, esa cuestión colosal, infectada y sin resolver, y la dejaron como un asunto personal de cada uno. Es como tener décadas de debate religioso entre dos grupos en el siglo XVII, y que ambos rechazaran decir si son católicos o protestantes.

Pero a los políticos les salió bien. Bruselas estaba ahí para ponerla a parir, y no suponía una amenaza para la unidad del partido. Los británicos han pagado mucho por la unidad de los grupos de sus políticos y, sobre todo, la del partido conservador, que quizá debería cambiar de nombre a "partido de Autoconservación", ya que ese parecer ser el único objetivo político en el que sus

agreed.	miembros se ponen de acuerdo.
The Labour leadership could probably have told its membership years ago, "Look, if you don't like the EU, join another party," and stayed pretty much intact. But the Tories would have split in half and turned from the electoral juggernaut of the first-past-the-post system to two Lib Dem-sized groups with little hope of office without major electoral reform of the sort Tories have been resolutely helping to block ever since the Earth's crust hardened.	La cúpula del partido laborista seguramente podría haberles dicho a sus miembros hace años: "mirad, si no os gusta la UE, meteos en otro partido", y haber salido prácticamente intactos. Pero los conservadores se hubieran partido por la mitad y habrían pasado del gigante electoral en el sistema de mayoría simple a dos grupos del tamaño de los liberal demócratas con pocas esperanzas de gobernar sin una gran reforma electoral al estilo de la que los conservadores han estado intentando bloquear decididamente desde que la corteza de la Tierra se endureció.
So with the rise of Ukip, and the pre-eminent importance of Conservative party unity in mind, David Cameron rolled the referendum dice. It is the most egregious example of putting party before country in British history, and he also screwed it up. It was cynical and it was stupid, the work of a second-rate chancer.	Así que con el ascenso de Ukip, y la preeminente importancia de la unidad del partido conservador en mente, David Cameron se lo jugó todo a una sola carta, la del referéndum. Es el ejemplo de anteponer tu partido a tu país más indignante de la historia de Reino Unido, y la cagó. Fue cínico y estúpido, la obra de un oportunista segundón.
And the long political tradition of Brussels-bashing left him in an awkward position for the campaign. He could hardly say: "You know all that stuff that we've been saying is Brussels's fault for as long as you can remember? Well, it's Westminster's fault,	Y la larga tradición política de atacar a Bruselas le dejó en una posición incómoda para la campaña. Difícilmente podía decir: "¿Sabéis todas esas cosas que hemos estado diciendo que eran culpa de Bruselas desde tiempos inmemoriales?" Bueno, pues es culpa de Westminster, es culpa mía".

it's my fault." "Your problems are my fault! So do what I suggest!" is a flawed slogan. He'd probably banked on Labour being a bit more effusively pro-EU. Yet another thing that poisonous little prick got wrong.

But when I look at Jeremy Hunt, still trying to blame the EU for everything even now, like an orphaned calf nuzzling the festering corpse of its mother because it's his instinct and that's all he's got, I take some comfort. At least the politicians are losing something too.

"Vuestros problemas son culpa mía, así que haced lo que os diga" es un eslogan con fisuras. Probablemente contaba con que el partido laborista fuera un poco más efusivamente pro-Europa. Otra cosa más en la que ese tóxico cabroncete se equivocó.

Pero cuando veo a Jeremy Hunt que todavía intenta culpar de todo a la UE incluso ahora, como un ternero huérfano acariciando con el hocico el cuerpo en descomposición de su madre porque es su instinto y es todo lo que tiene, me reconforta. Al menos los políticos también están perdiendo algo.