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Trabajo de Fin de Máster en Traducción Especializada

**A Commentary on the English Translation of
Rául Zurita's *Purgatorio***

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Resumen

Este proyecto consiste en un análisis de la traducción del libro *Purgatorio*, de Raúl Zurita, junto al análisis de los elementos más relevantes del texto origen y del texto meta, en su traducción por Anna Deeny Morales, profesora portorriqueña y estadounidense de Estudios Latinoamericanos en la Universidad de Georgetown, Washington DC. *Purgatorio*, en sí mismo, presenta una serie de problemas de traducción interesantes. En particular, es notable el uso de numerosas referencias a obras literarias, especialmente *La Divina Comedia* de Dante Alighieri, el vocabulario polisémico y el hecho de que el texto no es completamente gramatical.

Todas estas cuestiones se consideran dentro del contexto del proceso de traducción, utilizando la teoría de la traducción para explicar las técnicas elegidas por Deeny y sugerir posibles alternativas cuando las veamos adecuadas.

Abstract

This project consists of an analysis of the translation of the book *Purgatorio*, by Raúl Zurita, together with an analysis of the most relevant elements of the source text and the target text, in its translation by Anna Deeny Morales, a Porto Rican and American professor of Latin American Studies at Georgetown University, Washington DC. The text of *Purgatorio* itself presents a number of interesting translation problems. Particularly noteworthy is its use of numerous references to literary works, especially the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, polysemic vocabulary and the fact that the text is not completely grammatical.

All of these issues are considered within the context of the translation process, using translation theories to explain the techniques chosen by Deeny and suggest possible alternatives when we see them fit.

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Introduction

The following project consists of the analysis of Anna Deeny Morales's translation of the collection of poems *Purgatorio*. This study will consider the most relevant elements of the source text, as well as those of the translated version. The poems were first published in 1979 in Chile, while the translation examined came out in 2009 in the United States of America. I chose to analyse the translation of the book by Zurita's text for my final project for a variety of reasons. First, I wished to deal with a text that is close to my personal interests. Having a few Chilean friends here in Spain, I was keen to face the challenge of working with cultural and linguistic elements specific to the country. I am also interested in history and found the elements of historic events particularly motivating. Moreover, having recently travelled to the North of Chile, Zurita seemed a suitable choice in relation to his art projects in this particular region. Finally, the poet's roots and relationship with Italy together with his love for Dante made me decide to investigate his poetry further. Therefore, the cultural, historic, and linguistic subtext of the source text have made its study extremely interesting and challenging for me.

Following the Introduction, this dissertation will be structured as follows:

- In the first chapter we will introduce the author, Raúl Zurita, by providing his cultural, political, literary and social background. Moreover, we will point out key elements and themes in his works, and especially in the collection of poems around which our analysis will revolve, *Purgatorio* (Purgatory).
- The second chapter will thoroughly define a theoretical framework to our study. It will draw upon theoretical concepts which will be directly applied to the challenges and solutions that arose in the analysis of the translation of *Purgatorio*; it will specifically deal with the following issues: "method," "strategy," "technique," "polysystem" and "initial norm." In this chapter we will also briefly describe the key features of the poetic text in general as well as the overall state of the literary scene and of poetry translation in the United

States, the target culture, situating Zurita's work in this new American context.

- The dissertation will culminate in the third chapter, with an analysis of some selected poems from the English translations of *Purgatorio*, relying on the theories and priorities outlined in the previous chapters.
- Finally, the Conclusions chapter will summarize the master dissertation's contributions and findings while pointing toward possible directions for further investigations.

1. Introducing Raúl Zurita

Before starting with the analysis of this study, we believe it is necessary to provide some background on its author. Reasons for dedicating so much space to contextualizing Zurita's work lie in the fact that no discussion and analysis of any translation can effectively take place without having a basic understanding of its political, literary, cultural and social implications.

Raúl Zurita is one of the most acclaimed and controversial poets in contemporary Latin America. He was born in Santiago de Chile on 14 January 1950 from an Italian mother, who had migrated to Chile with her parents when she was 15, and a Chilean father, who died when Zurita was only two-year-old. The poet's mother was left alone to raise her two children only with the help of her mother, since her father had also died on the day of his son in law's funeral. The poet recalls how his childhood was threatened by misery: "...el de mi infancia fue un mundo de mucha pobreza, pero de una pobreza no proletaria. Se suponía que teníamos unas casas en Iquique, heredadas de tiempos del salitre, pero en realidad valían un pepino. Era una pobreza ilustrada, y bien pobre" (Fernandez, 2012)

Zurita's childhood was spent with his mother's family and, consequently, the poet's first language was Italian. When his mother started working as a secretary, he was taken care of by his grandmother, Josefina Pessolo. She was born in Italy, had attended painting classes at the Academy of Arts in Genoa and had always been interested in culture. She is the main reason why Zurita talks about an "erudite" kind of poverty when referring to his childhood. In one of his many interviews (Stavans, 2013) as well as in the autobiographical account of his early years entitled *El día más blanco*, Zurita explains that Josefina (called Veli in *El día más blanco*) found Chile to be a miserable place to live in and constantly missed her home country. This showed in the stories she used to tell her grandson, all embedded in her own childhood memories of the Ligurian seaside featuring boat rides on hot summer days, or the painters and the musicians she mixed with. But most of all, the fascinating and terrifying tales from Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. The young Zurita experienced them as if they were children stories, with little or no poetic value, as explained in an interview to the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* (Rodriguez,

2015: E2, E3): “*La Divina Comedia* nunca ha sido algo intelectual, ha sido una cosa biográfica, de vida.” Yet, eventually, those tales acquired their original poetic worth and served as a source of inspiration for the older poet, as Zurita himself acknowledged in the previously mentioned interview with Stavans interview:

Cuando, después del golpe de Pinochet, en circunstancias bastante desesperadas, volví a escribir, se me vino la voz de mi abuela. [...] Al escribir, tomé a Dante porque era como sentir de nuevo su voz. Supe entonces que nunca podría apartarme de ese libro, que era mi forma de volver a hacerla presente. (Stavans, 2013)

In Zurita’s words we see how his poetry originates both from the atrocities committed by the dictatorial government of Augusto Pinochet as well as from his childhood spent with his Italian grandmother.

It has often been written that the poet Zurita was born on 11th September 1973, only a few hours after the coup against the government of President Salvador Allende. This is confirmed by the poet himself in an interview to *El País* (Fernandez, 2012), who alludes to 11th September as the day of his artistic birth: “Mi decisión, entre comillas, artística, fue: ‘Ese día será mi día central’. Para el resto de la vida.” 11th September is the date when the then socialist president of Chile was overthrown by the army and national police. Allende was succeeded by the dictator General Augusto Pinochet, who ruled over Chile for the following 17 years. US involvement in the coup is hardly a secret: the US government and its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had worked to foment the coup against the government of Allende, which was regarded by the Nixon administration as a threat to US interests in view of the fact that the empowerment of any socialist or Marxist leader was considered to be a resistance in itself against US political and financial interests. Allende’s nationalization of foreign businesses in Chile, which had started in 1971, and included US owned copper mines, was clearly pointing in that direction. By 1973 conditions were ripe for the US to support a coup d’état: the Chilean economy was collapsing due to strikes, high inflation and food shortages. Even if the Socialists still had the support of the most part of the lower classes, the middle class was united against them.

Similarly, Zurita’s life was in shambles; he was torn between two extremes: irresponsibility and guilt. The poet describes this conflict through a powerful metaphor (Fernandez, 2012): “Era un irresponsable moralista [...] Me ronda, de entonces, la imagen

de una tipa agarrándome del abrigo para que no me fuera, y yo sacándome el abrigo para irme.” That dame grabbing his coat could well be his first wife, whom he had left together with their children. Zurita was at the time a 23-year-old young man and was studying structural engineering at the University Federico Santa María of Valparaiso. In the morning of 11th September he was on his way to the university to get some breakfast but was stopped by a group from the militia and taken first to the university, then to the Playa Ancha Stadium of Valparaiso for four days, and finally into the hold of the ship *Maipo*, anchored in the harbour of the same city. Zurita was kept on board of the *Maipo* along with other 800 prisoners for roughly three weeks, as he recalls being released a few days after the death of Pablo Neruda, which occurred on 23rd September. Zurita is well aware that what he suffered during these three weeks cannot be compared to the years of torture other prisoners underwent. Yet, the power of such traumatising events changed the course of his life and triggered his artistic awakening. His detention marked the beginning of a seventeen yearlong trauma which would define him and his homeland. That time marked by the death of Pablo Neruda and the beginning of the dictatorship meant also the birth of a whole new generation of poets, called by Jorge Montealegre *NN generation* (NN standing for *Non Nomine* to show that it was superfluous to know their names), *Generación presunta* by Eduardo Llanos, or simply as *Generation of the 70s*. Mario Blume, one of the first to collect the work of those poets in a volume entitled *Poetas de la Generación de los '70* recognized five common elements which they all share: the experience of Pinochet’s coup, the human condition, intellectual and spiritual transcendence, how to understand humanity and the link between suffering and death (Espinosa, 1996: 144). We will see how these traits are central to Zurita’s poetry.

Returning to the personal events that followed his release, Zurita found a job as a computer salesman so that he could provide for his children and his new family: the dame grabbing his coat seemed to have prevailed over his irresponsibility. In 1975 Zurita had another confrontation with the Chilean militia which led to his placing a burning hot iron against his left cheek in remembrance of the words of Jesus Christ in the Bible, an act for which he was confined in a mental institution for a short period of time. The biblical phrase he had in mind was: “But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,” which originates from the Sermon of the Mount in the New Testament (Matthew, 5:39). Following the interpretation of the passage that calls for total non-

resistance, Zurita came to a point of aggression against himself. Clearly, not in the standard Christian view of the phrase but in an allegorical one. With his act, the poet seemed to be demonstrating to the regime that he could go a step further and anticipate their moves. It was his way of protesting against the government. He commented on the events in an interview with Ernesto Carrión in 2012: “Estaba encerrado en un baño con un fierro al rojo. No fue una performance, estaba completamente solo. Horas después comprendí que, con ese acto solitario y seguramente demencial, había comenzado algo.”



Image 1. The cover of the original edition of *Purgatorio* showing Zurita’s left cheek. @ 1979. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria.

This is another key moment in Zurita’s poetry, another starting point: four years later he would choose a picture of the scar on his left cheek for the cover of his first book, *Purgatorio*. In 2004 he would also entitle a Mexican anthology of his work *Mi mejilla es el cielo estrellado* (Aldus, 2004). The burning of the cheek is an event which will never be forgotten. Tarrab Rivera (2007) went a step forward and explained it as way of engraving his country in his flesh, thus linking it to Zurita’s subsequent poems: “La cicatriz de aquella quemadura quedó marcada en su rostro como el vehemente desierto de Atacama contra las cordilleras y las llanuras: la geografía chilena tatuada en el semblante.

Desde este punto, Zurita parecía enunciar: hay heridas abiertas; heridas profundas que no responden a los tratamientos, a la progresión clínica.” We will later see in our analysis how this becomes explicit in *Purgatorio*.

Zurita’s commentary on this act leads us to another widely debated aspect of his poetry, namely his public acts which attracted widespread criticism. Zurita stating that what he did to his cheek was not a performative act, but a sudden, stupid and private action derives from the controversial prominence of the poet’s public figure and, along with that, of the negative judgement on his poetry after the publication of his first book and a number of public performances. This will become especially evident when Zurita’s third book, the final chapter of a trilogy started with *Purgatorio*, came out, as we will see later in this chapter. To shed light on this matter, a commentary of Zurita’s involvement with the artist group called C.A.D.A. is necessary. In 1979, the same year of the publication of *Purgatorio*, Zurita became involved in an artist action group called “Colectivo de Acción de Arte” (also known by its acronym C.A.D.A.), whose aim was to challenge the division between art, citizenship and poverty in an act of protest against the Pinochet government. The group was founded by Zurita, the writer Diamela Eltit, the sociologist Fernando Balcells and the artists Juan Castillo and Lotty Rosenfeld. Their first project from October 1979 is called *Para no morir de hambre en el arte* (In order not to starve to death in art) and consisted in distributing milk in a poor neighbourhood of the capital of Chile and later making works of arts out of the empty cartons. Using milk as a symbol engaged with measures from the former Allende government, which claimed the right of every child to half a litre of milk a day. This year there was an interesting exhibition at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid revolving around this project.¹

Another of C.A.D.A.’s undertakings from the same month is *Inversión de escena* (Inverted scene) which consisted in a parade of ten milk trucks in front of the Chilean National Museum of Fine Arts ending with the group members hanging an enormous white sheet on the museum’s façade. They then declared that the true works of art were not in the museum but outside, in the streets of Santiago. The group was active between 1979 and 1985 and would go on to carry out several subversive actions², aimed at creating

¹ URL: <https://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/exhibitions/colectivo-acciones-arte-cada-1979-1985>

² ‘¡Ay Sudamérica!’ (Oh South America!), from 1981 and ‘No + / No más’ (No More), from 1983-84 are their most important and significant actions.

temporary openings for critique and spontaneous civic response at the height of the Pinochet dictatorship.

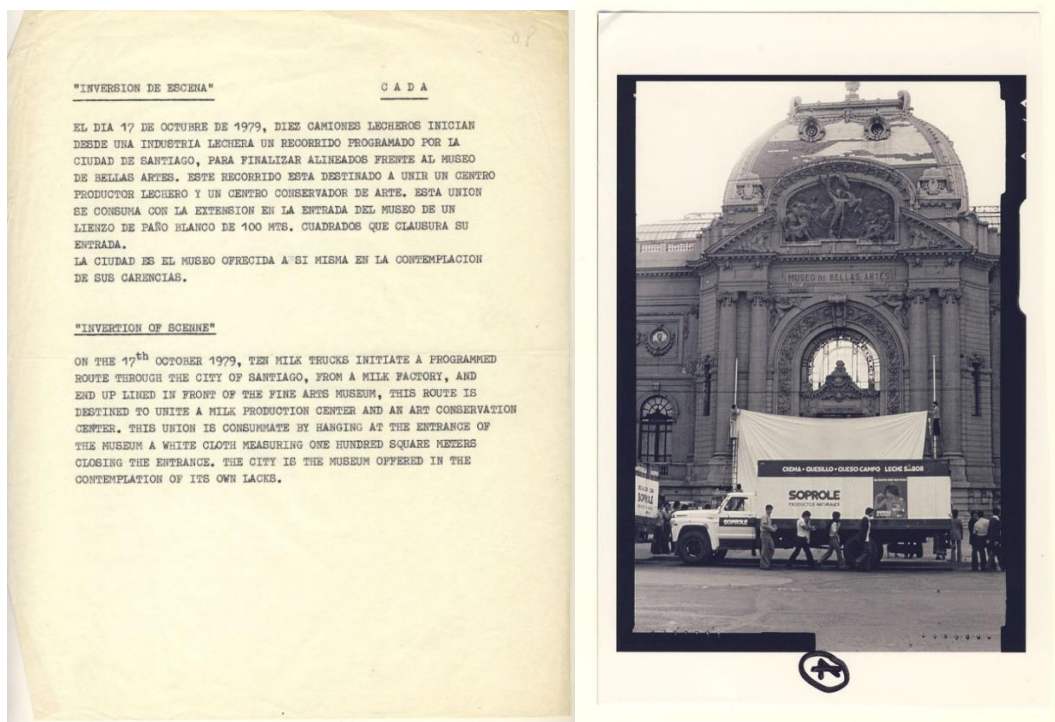


Image 2. *Inversión de escena* (Inverted Scene), CADA's second action from 17th October 1979. A text explaining the action, in Spanish and English, and a photograph of the entrance of the Museum of Fine Arts covered with a white sheet. @ C.A.D.A. (Archivos en uso: <http://www.archivosenuso.org/cada-accion/inversion-de-escena>)

It is widely believed that these group-enacted events were somehow started by solo performances of members of the group shortly before the *Colectivo* was officially established. Among whom Zurita was possibly the most daring. At the beginning of November 1979, he performed one of the first acts associated with C.A.D.A. when invited to take part on a panel at the Galería Cal, a bourgeois art gallery in the Santiago city centre. Zurita had to address the work of the internationally famous Chilean painter Juan Domingo Dávila, who at the time was living in Australia and would also later join the *Colectivo*. On that occasion, unlike the other lecturers who had given typical academic overviews of Dávila's works, Zurita only spoke the title of his presentation *No puedo más* (I Can't Take It Anymore) and went on to show photographs of his scarred face covered

in sperm after masturbating.³

Another of Zurita's legendary actions was the desperate act of throwing ammonium acid into his eyes, temporarily blinding himself. The poet explained in an interview that this, similarly to the burning of his left cheek, was a solitary and non-deliberate act, a sign of nervous-breakdown which was only later seen and used as material to protest against the Pinochet's policies of torture and disappearance. Again, it was something personal, a moment of desperation:

Estas ganas de cegarme tenían mucho que ver con la situación chilena y con un proyecto acerca de escriturar en el cielo, cosa que posteriormente hice, pero que en ese momento dudaba. Y creí que era muy fuerte que el tipo que había imaginado eso no lo pudiera ver. (Medo, 2014)

This self-destructive impulse came from the impotence against the imperative to contemplate what he wanted to stop watching. Luckily Zurita's self-preservation instinct was stronger than insecurity and impotence and the poet got to see his skywriting project come true. A solitary act translated into a powerful collection of poems and an artistic performance: in 1982 he published *Anteparaiso*, the second part of the poetic trilogy started with *Purgatorio*. Completion of the collection of poems went hand in hand with the skywriting project he had in mind: fifteen verses of one of the poems from *Anteparadise* were flown by five aeroplanes across the sky of New York City. This is Zurita's most internationally famous action, a work in which the boundaries between text and landscape became blurred.

The following are the words which appeared in the blue New York sky on 2nd June 1982⁴:

³ The performance was highly criticised and reported in several newspapers and by the news. The facts have been manipulated to the extent that we cannot know for sure what exactly happened. Some report that Zurita masturbated live in front of a painting, others that he showed a video, others claim that he displayed photographs. The poet himself has given contradictory versions of the facts (Soto Riveros, 2016). Anyhow, the importance of the performance lays in the scandal it raised.

⁴ A video of the performance was recorded by the artist Juan Downey and can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=19WvE9aeJ4o&feature=emb_logo

Mi dios es hambre	my god is hunger
Mi dios es nieve	my god is snow
Mi dios es pampa	my god is pampa
Mi dios es no	my god is no
Mi dios es desengaño	my god is disillusionment
Mi dios es carroña	my god is carrion
Mi dios es paraíso	my god is paradise
Mi dios es chicano	my god is chicano
Mi dios es cáncer	my god is cancer
Mi dios es vacío	my god is emptiness

(“La vida nueva,” *Anteparaíso* 31)



**Image 3. One of the verses as they appeared in the sky of NYC.
@ Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia.**

The verses are an implicit raising of awareness of the injustices taking place in Chile and in the US, aiming at establishing better equity and social justice. The fact that the poem was displayed in Spanish seems to imply that it was aimed at Spanish speaking

minorities in New York (corroborated by Zurita, 1987: 65). Moreover, the semantic simplicity and the rhythm of the lines give them a lightness similar to that of the smoke they are made of. An element which helps everyone understand their meaning, even those who are not literate in poetry. In Zurita's poems it is implied that poetry should be an equitable art, in that it does not distinguish between social classes. This idea of poetry calls for Pablo Neruda who, in a speech he read in the Caupolicán Theatre on 26th June 1953, now in *El retorno del soldado errante* (2001: 888), said:

Escribimos para gentes modestas que muchas veces, muchas veces, no saben leer.
Sin embargo, sobre la tierra, antes de la escritura y de la imprenta, existió la poesía.
Por eso sabemos que la poesía es como el pan, y debe compartirse por todos, los
letrados y los campesinos...

Furthermore, there is a strong ritual meaning in the fact that the letters of Zurita's poem were made of smoke and projected against the blue background of a clear sky. For the mapuche, smoke is a symbol of purification and blue is the original colour, meaning cosmic order. For Catholics, these can be linked to the symbolism of incense and the blue cape of the Virgin Mary, as well as with heaven. Zurita linked all the symbols to the Chilean identity (Santini, 2009), broadening the reach of his message as the performance took place outside his home country and could be seen by a diverse audience. The poem calls for purity and, at the same time, builds a relationship between space and the bodies of the spectators. In this act Zurita was engaging in action poetry to call for change. And to reach a wider audience, he did not confine himself to the space of the page (Donguy, 2007). Behind this, there is an understanding of poetic activity not as the simple act of writing poems, but rather as engaging in projects which could appreciate and act on the relationship between society and language. Literature is understood in the context of the reality of history and society.

Zurita continued with his solo art interventions and, in 1996, he had a verse from his latest book which had been published two years earlier, *La vida nueva* (only partially translated into English), bulldozed among five kilometres of the Atacama Desert south of Antofagasta. This can be seen as another attempt to pull poetry and nature together. The land art project reads "Ni pena ni miedo" (Neither pain nor fear) and can only be seen

from the sky.⁵ Also on this occasion, poetry and art are part of a broader personal project in which art and life come together.

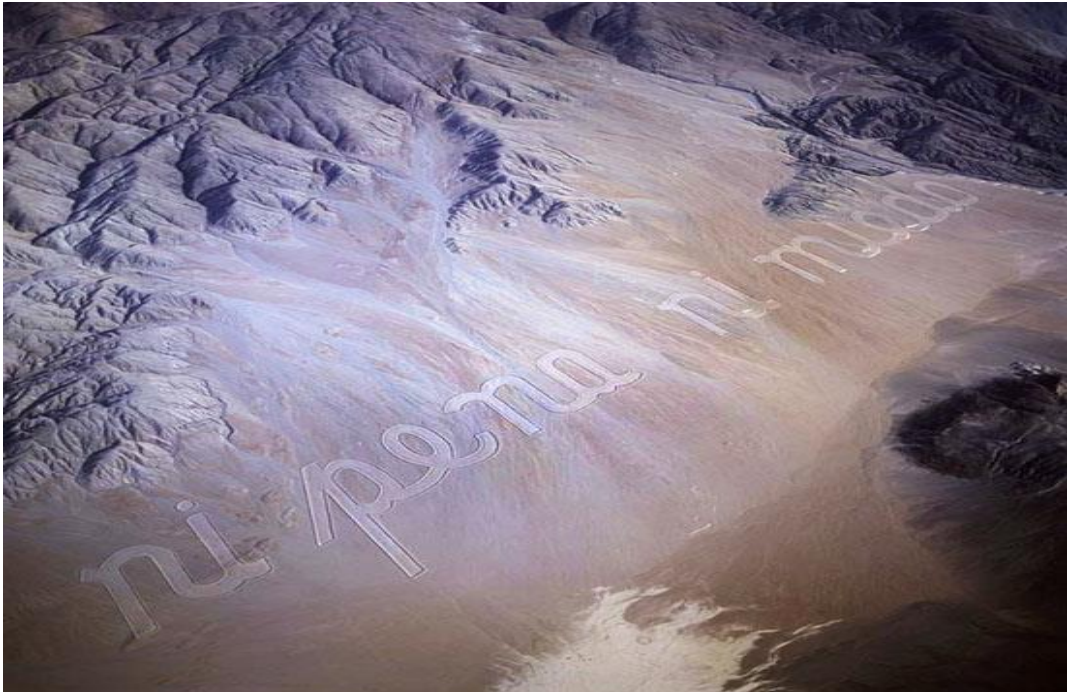


Image 4. *Ni pena ni miedo*, Atacama Desert. @ Guy Wenborne en Cervantes Virtual
http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/raul_zurita/imagenes_escritura_material/imagen/imagenes_poemas_raul_zurita_guy_wenborne_escritura_desierto/

The extremely short poem from *La vida nueva* is an allusion to Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*. In canto XXVIII Dante comes to the ninth chasm, the place of the Sowers of Discord and Scandal, and the Creators of Schism within the papacy. Virgil warns the poet that their punishment is terribly bloody: the condemned are damned to walk around the chasm until, at the end of their lap, a devil slashes them with a long sword. After that, they start walking again in an eternal vicious circle. Here Dante writes that there are no words that can describe such horrors, a topic central to Zurita's poetry. When Virgil and Dante start seeing the first characters the former tells the latter: "Né morte'l giunse ancor, né colpa'l mena" (Nor death hath reached him yet, nor guilt doth bring him). This "né,

⁵ The project can still be seen thanks to the local community tending the giant letters. Here the coordinates showing the exact location:
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?ie=UTF8&hl=es&t=h&msa=0&ll=-23.97078314045163%2C-70.32853936542938&spn=0.029393%2C0.00912&z=11&source=embed&mid=15Ga2seDYC3G8QOWqzWoT0sePuuQ>

né” structure and the evocation of guilt and death are mirrored in Zurita’s “ni, ni” and in the pain and fear he writes of.

In *Purgatorio*, Zurita had already written several passages set and revolving around the Atacama Desert, the driest place on earth and a peculiar area of its own, where many say that the sea seems to be falling in love with the desert. In Zurita’s first book the desert acts as the place of purgatory that, according to Wright (in Zurita, 2009: viii), cannot “succumb to the official lies” of the regime; it is a “brilliant, immaculate, blinding blank page.” One of the verses of *Purgatorio* reads “COMO ESPEJISMOS Y AURAS EL INRI ES MI MENTE EL / DESIERTO DE CHILE” (LIKE MIRAGES AND AURAS THE INRI IS MY MIND THE / DESERT OF CHILE). The acronym INRI represents the Latin inscription which Roman soldiers affixed to the top part of the cross of Jesus, which in English translates to “Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews” and that confirms the idea of passion and of sacrifice in this collection and in subsequent books, among which one entitled *INRI* (2003) that we will discuss later. Zurita wrote that the INRI does not “come into mind” because, like the desert, it is already in his mind: it is his mind. There is a perfect equivalence between human, poetry and nature. A successful attempt of pulling them together for a poet who has always “been startled by work that refuses to acknowledge the limits of human capacity” (Cole in Zurita, 2018: xiv).

Zurita’s Atacama writing and project are clearly linked to the Chilean prisoners “disappeared” in the 70s. During the years of the dictatorship, thousands of people “vanished” from the records. Pinochet government would not make public what had happened to them. Until 8th January 2001 when, in a nationally televised speech, President Ricardo Lagos disclosed information pertaining to those unaccounted people. Chile already knew about it, but thanks to the speech the information was made official and finally acknowledged. The President revealed that the missing people had been kidnapped and tortured by the armed forces, and to silence them for good, their bodies thrown from helicopters into Chile’s ocean, rivers and the Atacama Desert.

As we have seen earlier, the topics of memory, the desert as a place of purgatory and the “disappeared” had been hunting Zurita for decades, starting from his very first book around which this dissertation revolves. They are especially apparent in Zurita’s book from 1985 called *Canto a su amor desaparecido* (Song for His Disappeared Love), which took those crimes as its main theme and linked them to several violations committed in

America, starting from the massacre of the indigenous peoples at the time of the Spanish conquest. The “song” builds a poetic space where to mourn the disappeared of a whole continent, starting from those of Pinochet dictatorship, whose bodies will never be found. Its verses and pages take the shape of a detention camp, a graveyard, the desert, a county and finally a whole continent. Barbara Fraser-Valencia (2014) described the book as an attempt to transcend those dreadful events by creating a “Tao of love”: it is through love and empathy that the victims of any massacre will always be remembered.

A few years later, Lagos’ speech triggered another collection revolving around those issues, *INRI*, which we mentioned above. In the book’s foreword Zurita defined its poems as the result of a screech he could not get away from, precisely coming out of the image of a man saying undefined words on television (the President). In an interview (Peláez Sierra, 2019), talking about the victims of the dictatorship and their relationship with the landscape where they were made disappear, Zurita noted: “La geografía es la única dignidad final que les quedó. Creo que todo país, todo lugar con desaparecidos o muertos por violencia, es un memorial, una gran tumba.” He also comments on the years when everybody knew but nobody had the courage to say a word, once more calling for the Gospels to help him make his point. In Luke 19:40 we read: “If you keep quiet, the stones will cry out” and this is how the poet felt. Zurita once told Peláez Sierra: “Era esa sensación de que todos, excepto los hombres, podían hablar. La arena, las rocas, el viento... todo. ... Poemas hechos para escucharse y no para pronunciarse. Presos sin voz, pero con oídos. ... Atacama es una geografía del dolor.” Zurita feels that it is the poet’s duty to fight against the wall of silence, against what cannot be said. Again from Peláez Sierra’s interview: “Ese es el infierno de todo lenguaje, de toda escritura: aquello que no podrá nunca decirse, que nunca alcanzará en un mar de palabras.” And this is how most critics interpreted Zurita’s words from the very beginning. According to Óscar González Villarroel (1993: B14), for example, Zurita aimed at materialising the nearly unfeasible: “la travesía bíblica del desierto de la vida con sus sueños y esperanzas,” in an attempt to make the desert flourish through his words.

Zurita’s concise writing renders the desert no longer conceivable without its crying out; its voices and the dead bodies are made an inseparable part of that desert which defines this geography of pain, to the point of making it visible when engraving “ni dolor

ni miedo” on its land. The whole idea is well explained by William Rowe in the English edition of *INRI* (in Zurita, 2009: 131):

... it is not a simple matter of telling what happened, of finding or inventing a persona to speak as a witness. Zurita avoids that method. Perhaps because such a witness would have to speak in a known and familiar language about what the language, the common instrument of expression, had been complicit in denying. It is much more than a problem of personality or honesty... When the book seeks to find an image of what was not seen and not said (the throwing of hundreds of the disappeared into the sea and into volcanoes), the imagining of it involves the whole environment: the whole landscape of Chile. Since there is no place for those events in the remembered landscape, since they don't belong to it, it has to be re-imagined. The mountains, sky, ocean, etc. occur: the landscape is not a fixed frame in which things happen, not a map.

As Zurita himself said, the poems become a “geography of pain” containing the voices of those tortured and dead and not necessarily the poet's. Zurita's own voice disappears and the voices in the poems are those of the victims. It is a polyphonic narrative.

The idea of a multiplicity of voices taking control of the poem had started in *Purgatorio*, and it is one of its most important literary achievements. Its translator into English, Anna Deeny (in Zurita, 2009: 104), commented that it is unquestionable that this technique is Zurita's answer to an acute crisis of meaning at a nightmarish historical moment. Moreover, she added, it is also a response to a “fundamental quandary of poetry and philosophy,” namely the desire to speak of a cohesive self and a cohesive other. The juxtaposition of voices that got rid of the “I” of poetic voice was brought to an extreme in *INRI*. Stavans (2013) related of the poetic language of Zurita having its own will, to which the poet admitted that any literary text is the result of a collision between two contrasting forces. On the one side the poet's will to express an idea by using language. On the opposite, the language's will to express itself through those who use it. When the writer's will prevails, bad poetry results, as this is plagued with personal emotions and sentimentality. On the other hand, universal poems like those of Dante are the result of the victory of the language, and thus essential. To those using these words to accuse Zurita of being obsessed with what happened to him during the few weeks of his captivity and

writing only about it for over thirty years, the poet answered in several interviews (Fernandez, 2012; Stavans, 2013) denying that he wrote only about himself or the victims of Pinochet's regime. On the contrary, he wrote of the human condition. He wrote universal poems in which multiple levels of existence cohabit and where time stands still:

Es el golpe en Nagasaki-Hiroshima, es Auschwitz..., entonces no es que yo esté repitiendo un tema como una especie de letanía, sino que al hablar de un solo hombre puedo hablar en el fondo de la humanidad entera, de todos los seres humanos. La poesía intenta narrar las cosas para que no vuelvan a repetirse. Ahora, es un intento desesperado por que las cosas vuelven a repetirse. (Pelaez Sierra, 2019)

An additional value of Zurita's Atacama Land Art or New York skywriting projects, which are at the same time ephemeral and long-lasting, is for some the fact that they were not meant to be shown in an art gallery or published in a photographic book. This kind of art does not contain any commercial or utilitarian value and is disconnected from the conception of any work of art as an object which is meant to be sold, as goods (Wallis, 2004). Zurita is currently working on another project, "Verás un dios de hambre," in which he plans a light show displaying 22 verses on the cliffs of Pisagua and Iquique. The verses are a metaphor of the life of every human being on earth. The first verse is "Veras un mar de piedras," followed by "Verás margaritas en el mar," and the last one "Y llorarás." Unlike the previous two projects, which were dealing with pain and thus, day and life, this one is meant to be seen at dawn and at night. It relates to death, a thought that has become inevitable in Zurita's mind, since has been fighting Parkinson for some time now. When the light show ends, we will be left only with the sound of the ocean.

Despite all the beauty inbuilt in Zurita's poetry, as anticipated, not few came to criticize him. According to Pérez Villalobos (1995), in his first two books of the so-called trilogy, *Purgatorio* and *Anteparaíso*, the poet had succeeded in innovating with language and in changing the traditional ideas of writing. Unfortunately, in *La vida nueva*, he appeared transfigured into a poet who acts as a "clairvoyant," in the negative meaning of the term. We interpret this as a critique to the poet's public persona as well as to the failings of Chilean democratic transition.

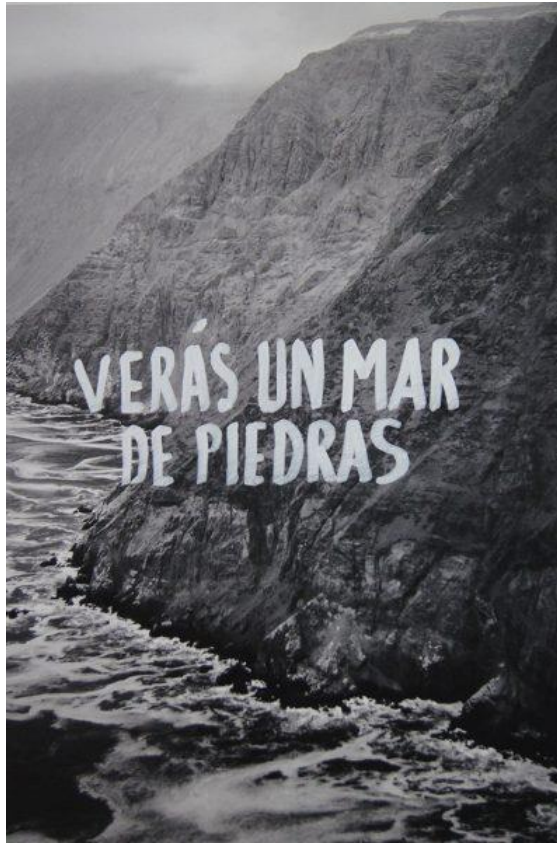


Image 5. 22 photographs of the cliffs of Pisagua and Iquique, handwritten from the poem *Verás un dios de hambre*. @ 2017 Aninat Galería.

Zurita came to cooperate with the post-Pinochet democratic government in which, for instance, was made Chile's cultural attaché in Rome in 1990, under President Patricio Aylwin. The poet was criticised because he was associated with a governmental policy aimed at gaining consensus by manipulating the past and exploiting memory. Espinosa (1999) expressed the same concerns in her critique of Zurita's autobiographical account that we have previously discussed, *El día más blanco*. It is undeniable that Zurita was originally full of enthusiasm for the new democracy he thought he could help shape in his home country. Yet, starting from the mid-90s, Zurita was very much disappointed with the result, with the way Chile had developed: "Es un Chile donde gran parte de las cosas que me habrían hecho feliz de un país no están. Las mías son visiones en derrota. Yo creo en una sociedad pobre, pero igualitaria. Cuando se vive con sentimiento comunitario, ni la bodega de un barco es un infierno" (Fernandez, 2012). In these words, we still recognize the desperate attempt of the poet to be an instrument of change.

Referring back to Espinosa's critique, according to her, Zurita focused on "la tarea de irse construyendo una historia personal que esté a la altura de la fama del último gran poeta (o primero de los nuevos tiempos)" (Espinosa, 1999). This critique brings us to another topic in Zurita's poetry. That is to say the matter of the poet's calling for the end of poetry, in a declination of Adorno's questioning the very possibility of writing poetry after the inhumane violence perpetrated in the years of the dictatorship, in Adorno's case Hitler's and in Zurita's case that of Pinochet. Adorno wrote in the essay *Cultural Criticism and Society* (1983: 34) that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today." Zurita acknowledged in the aforementioned interview with Fernandez (2012) that we are living in an age when literature is bidding its farewell to the world. Yet, he wished for the last sounds to have some dignity:

No porque la poesía esté en su fase final nos vamos a resignar a ser pedacitos de galletita. Que tenga un cierre con trompetas. Rescatar este sueño milenario que algo significó para la humanidad. Ahora viene otra cosa, y yo creo que eso que viene es mejor. Los últimos 3.000 años han sido la sombra del primer verso de la *Ilíada*: 'Cólera, canta la de Aquiles, hijo de Peleo'. Esa época se está apagando. (Fernandez, 2012)

It is to be noted that, similarly to Adorno, Zurita believes that language has been emptied of its essence by the regime. In an essay titled *Literatura, lenguaje y Sociedad* (1988), he wrote that language is one of the favourite playgrounds for totalitarian regimes. They assimilate it to use and manipulate. During and especially at the end of the Chilean dictatorship there was a vital need for a number of poets, among whom Zurita, to leave aside the style of the past and focus on a postmodern, apocalyptic and religious poetry which could revisit and transform the language of his predecessors. For Zurita especially that of Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda and the immortal Dante of his childhood. With Mari (2019), we believe that Zurita's journey is in this sense especially clear from its very beginning: his inquiry on form and language is legitimised by the analysis of Chile's political memory, which is both individual and collective.

Iván Carrasco Muñoz in the essay *El proyecto poético de Raúl Zurita* (1989) summarised the Zurita's poetry as an attempt to make art and life interact by taking as its

main reference the work of Dante. In this essay Carrasco underlined the poetic revolution taking place in Zurita's poetry:

Para el poeta, el libro no es una sucesión de poemas vinculados temática o cronológicamente (al modo de *Altazor*, de Huidobro, el *Poema de Chile*, de Gabriela Mistral, o «Alturas de Machu-Picchu», de Neruda), que requieren una lectura que los persiga en cuanto orden de continuidad, en cuanto proceso; es decir, una lectura temporal; tampoco lo considera una serie de textos aislados, una recolección de poemas enmarcados en una instancia mayor no siempre coherente o titulada simplemente «Poemas de...» o «Poesías», como los volúmenes del Romanticismo. Los libros de Zurita no pueden leerse de este modo, ya que la disposición de los textos en lugares específicos de la página y del espacio totalizante constituido por el volumen motiva al lector a buscar vínculos entre ellos para superar el aparente fragmentarismo y arbitrariedad de las emisiones y construir ámbitos de significación prefigurados por la escritura. (Carrasco Muñoz, 1989)

Carrasco linked the effort readers ought to make to two main characteristics of Zurita's texts. On the one hand, the idea that the poet's books are a "espacio global de escritura," in which the poet uses space not only to fill it with the printed word, but also with pictures, drawings, encephalograms, hand written notes and so on. On the other hand, their hermetic value which links them to allegorical medieval literature. We see this as an oscillation between two extremes. On one side a richness of visual elements and, at times, even of the language. On the other side, the stripping of anything unnecessary, in an aim of getting to the core of the matter. No doubt it is a difficult poetry to interpret. Yet, Zurita's life experience, his literature and his country have given us the tools and keys to decode its metaphors and allegories. In analysing the translation into English of *Purgatorio* we have embarked on this adventurous task which we hope to be able to successfully accomplish.

1.1. *Purgatorio*

First of all, before delving into the analysis of the translation of *Purgatorio*, it would seem best to provide some background on the original text. As we have seen earlier, *Purgatorio* is the first book published by Zurita in 1979, in which he shows his struggle to reconnect to his humanity after what he had experienced during his detention by the Chilean militia. The book inaugurated Zurita's Dantean trilogy which includes *Anteparaíso* (1982) and *La vida nueva* (1994). *Purgatorio* is also a book which marked a turning point for Latin American literature. It broke free of the Dark Age of the first years of Pinochet's regime, in which it was difficult to have anything published, and openly condemned three of the most valued institutions at the time: State, Church and Psychiatry. The collection of poems had already been completed in 1976. However, its success was achieved thanks to the support of Ignacio Valente, an influential literary critic of the newspaper *El Mercurio*, a state sponsored publication backing Pinochet regime at that time. The newspaper had published some of the poems before the book came to print and had seemed to overlook Zurita's subversive criticism of the government, emphasizing instead the collection's Christian and Dantean leitmotifs. Thanks to the support of Valente and other important poets and scholars close to the regime, the book was finally published a couple of years later by the University of Chile's publishing house, Editorial Universitaria.

The book is divided into eight parts merging into a unique poetic sequence: it is a journey where hunting and surreal images and sounds open the scene, changing settings as the pages flip. Opening with two poems ("mis amigos creen que estoy muy mala," and "Devoción"), which function as a prologue or *Antepurgatory* to the rest of the book, it is structured into other seven parts:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. EN EL MEDIO DEL CAMINO | (IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD) |
| 2. DESIERTOS | (DESERTS) |
| 3. EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA | (THE DESERT OF ATACAMA) |
| 4. ARCOSANTO | (HOLY ARCH) |
| 5. ÁREAS VERDES | (GREEN AREAS) |
| 6. MI AMOR DE DIOS | (MY LOVE OF GOD) |

They take the reader from the Atacama Desert of the atrocities committed under Pinochet government to the pastures beyond the desert, where the scene is dominated by the mooing of a cow that for Zurita becomes associated with the crucifixion of Jesus in the Aramaic “Eli Eli / lamma sabacthani” (My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?). The concluding section is titled “The New Life,” presents verses printed in the middle of the record of an electroencephalogram. The three subsections are “Inferno,” “Purgatorio” and “Paradiso” and are each linked to a verse and to one or several characters (Bernardita, Santa Juana, Yo y mis amigos. LA LUCHA). The book ends with one final page where the electroencephalogram is printed out alone.

In the collection, multiple voices and forms are pieced together, traversing identities and landscapes, as we have anticipated in the previous chapter. The poetic voice is everybody and everything: voices are juxtaposed and are at the same time masculine and feminine, living and dead, animal and human, saint and whore. Likewise, forms are various, ranging from Zurita’s ID card photo, enormous fonts, capitalization of some verses, a hand-written letter and a note, intentionally blank pages, drawings of schools of fish, non-Euclidean geometries and images of encephalograms, to name a few. Interestingly, it that serves the objective of investigating human nature and knowledge. Thus, some of the photos and verses are easily interpreted, while others are more enigmatic, similarly to human nature. Moreover, the encephalograms, which were used at the time by cognitive science to study the nature of the human mind and seemed to be able to show what is most hidden and inaccessible within the human mind, are used here to mock psychiatrists and express an intrinsic inability to explain the human mind and nature.

The communion of voices and forms is used to address pain, to express it knowing that there is no answer. Tarrab Rivera (2007) summarised it perfectly when he wrote that with his poems Zurita was crying that there were open wounds that could not be cured by any standard clinical treatment: “Hablar desde el Purgatorio implica hablar desde un estado intermedio (entre la muerte y el juicio último, por ejemplo), hablar para el futuro, para un después-de-mí; pero también, enunciar desde un estado de dolor y purificación.”

It is particularly relevant here to address the question of the meaning of the title. The current idea of purgatory has existed in the Christian world since the 3rd century. Back then, Clement of Alexandria and Origen the Pagan wrote of a purifying fire, a temporary hell that could redeem from sins. However, it was only with Saint Augustin that it acquired the name *purgatorius temporarius*, and solely in the XII century that it became a “physical” place which was finally officially acknowledged by the Council of Trent in the XVI century. It is sometime between those two last crucial events that Dante Alighieri conceived his masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*, and explored Hell, Purgatory and Heaven in an unprecedented and unique way. Such a spectacular account undoubtedly helped shape culture as we know it today. Indeed, those stories from the Florentine poet crossed the ocean six centuries after they had been written, reaching the ear of a young poet, our Zurita, who gave the name of the iconic place of redemption to his first collection of poems. Zurita, in an interview with Stavans (2013) explained his understanding of Dante’s comedy as follows:

En la entrada del infierno, Dante lee que éste fue creado antes que el hombre, que la culpa antecede al culpable. Lo que me ha obsesionado es en realidad esto: cualquier persona que haya experimentado un sentimiento radical de dolor o de angustia sabe que hay cosas que jamás accederán a las palabras, sabe que el sufrimiento expulsa del mundo. En el otro extremo, cualquiera también que haya tenido una experiencia total, ese amor que no cabe en la palabra amor, sabe que hay experiencias tan plenas que exceden a las palabras. Al medio, entre el Infierno y el Paraíso de lo no dicho, está todo el Purgatorio del lenguaje, es decir, la humanidad entera. Creo que Dante seguirá estando presente porque es lo más parecido al mundo.

In Zurita’s view we, as human beings, cannot describe neither hell nor heaven - neither the horrors and pain any victim suffers, nor love (Zaidenweg, 2014). Life is a never-ending purgatory which can and ought to be expressed, in Zurita’s case by writing poetry. And of course, being *purgatorius temporarius* there is always a dim hope of breaking free and entering heaven. In the preface of *Anteparadise* (1986: xv) translated by Jack Schmitt Zurita commented that “we should keep on proposing Paradise, even if the evidence at hand might indicate that such a pursuit is folly.” And from *¿Qué es el Paraíso?* (1979) the poet set out to be “a worker of Paradise, not only of art but of

experience.” He proposed *Paradise* as a “project of the construction of a new feeling and a new social form of experience” that could transform “pain into the collective construction of new meaning.” As Francine Masiello wrote in *The Art of Transition* (2001: 12), a book addressing the problems defined by writers and artists during the post dictatorship years in Argentina and Chile, the “splintering of any totalizing vision stands as a form of rebellion against state patterns of fixed representation. The expression of choice is . . . in the fragment.” Thus, the fragmentation of *Purgatorio* as a form of rebellion but also, according to Norma Cole in her introduction to *INRI* (2018: xv), as a way to evoke the sublime:

...the sublime is disharmony, fragmentation, disruption, being on the brink, the edge of the cliff, looking out onto the numinous inconceivable. The sublime can be characterized as representing pain and pleasure in the infinite, the unknown, the limitless, beyond comprehension, beyond measure, unbounded, unthinkable, untenable, unutterable.

This goes in line with Jean-Francois Lyotard (1991: 91), who wrote that avant-garde movements took up and developed a philosophy of the sublime typical from the XVIII century: of Kant, in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, for whom the dynamical sublime was an indefinite concept to be found in a formless object, and Burke, in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, who saw the sublime as our strongest passion, grounded in terror, which can overwhelm our faculty of reason. And purgatory does exactly that.

There have been many iterations of *Purgatorio* for Zurita, and ways of dealing with pain as, as he mentioned, their ideas have haunted him all his life. They appeared in his later collections and the representation of purgatory is particularly allegorical in *El día más blanco*, where the narrator lives in the mountainous region of the Cajón del Maipo and, when writing, can see the Cerro Purgatorio out of his window. It is a persistent presence that feeds his writing and stands for memory, like in real life. Thus, *Purgatorio* is clearly as an “open work” (Eco, 1962) for what concerns its possible multiple interpretations offered by the author’s intention, but also in that its themes are dealt with in subsequent works by Zurita.

The translation of *Purgatorio* we will analyse is by Anna Deeny Morales, from 2009, published by the University of California Press.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section we will give a brief overview of the main theoretical background used for our analysis while linking some of their aspects with both the source and target texts.

2.1. The Translation of Poetry

Now that the main elements of *Purgatorio* have been explored, we shall briefly examine some of the key features of the poetic text in general. Christiane Nord (1991) as well as Hatim and Mason (1990) remind us that before embarking on a translation, or in our case its study, one shall first analyse the type of text if an objective understanding of the source text is to be gained (Marco, 2002: 49). To begin with, we shall comment on the state of the art of poetic translation. A central question in theories of translation has always been the *translatability* of the source text, that is to say, in our case, whether poetry can be, or should be, translated. Since we are devoting so much time to the analysis of the translation of a collection of poems, and we would not have done so otherwise, we clearly stand with Roman Jakobson (1959/2000: 263, 116) when he wrote that “all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language” and “languages differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey.” So, there must be a degree of translatability even for a poetic text. Thus, the matter seems to be in any case, that of fidelity to forms, meaning and style.

This issue has risen the question of *equivalence* between source and target text, which differs radically among theorists. For some it is essential, while for others it is a mere chimera: they believe that there is no escape from losing, or gaining, some elements when translating a text. Charles Taber and Eugene Nida in their *Theory and Practice of Translation* (1969) have talked about a *formal correspondence*, which corresponds to the most traditional of the methods, contrasting it to a *dynamic equivalence*, where meaning

has priority over form and the focus is receptor response. This dichotomic vision seems too extreme for poetic translation, and virtually for most translations. Henri Meschonnic (1999: 57) wrote, in this direction, that neither literal translation nor complete transformation of the meaning work: “la force d’une traduction réussie est qu’elle est une poétique pour une poétique. Pas du sens pour le sens, ni un mot pour le mot, mais ce qui fait d’un acte de langage un acte de littérature.”

So, in poetic translation, we believe that if we must speak of equivalence, it should be done by following Meschonnic line. In relation to this we will look at Toury’s equivalence approach, also known as postulate (Baker and Saldanha, 2011: 99). For Toury (1980: 113), “the question to be asked in the actual study of translations (especially in the comparative analysis of ST and TT) is not whether the two texts are equivalent (from a certain aspect), but what type and degree of translation equivalence they reveal.”

The idea of equivalence brings us to that of function. There is a general understanding that latest translation theories, in particular *Skopostheorie*, see more favourably those translations whose *skopos*, or aim, is to reproduce the source text function into the target text (Reiss and Vermeer, 1996; Nord, 1991). Katharina Reiss’s classification of texts helps determine which functions of the text contribute the most to the text’s overall function. According to this functionalist theorist, the transmission of a poem’s expressive content depends on form-based tools, such as metre, figures of speech or rhyme patterns, the way “an author expresses himself” (Reiss, 2000: 31). Those “specific aesthetic effect ... contribute to a special artistic expression that is contextually distinctive and can be reproduced in a target language only by some analogous form of expression” (Reiss, 2000: 32). Therefore, to Reiss, since the creation of poetry is predominantly form focused, so should be its translation and to achieve that the translator must use similar characteristics in the target text. Following the same line of thought other theorists approve of the target text preserving the same qualities of the original in a sort of direct translation of the form of the original.

However, we shall pause for a moment and consider the fact that virtually all of Zurita’s texts which have been translated were published bilingually, and even their readings in a foreign language have been done in both Spanish and the target language. Hence, behind it, there seem to be a notion that “translation means in essence documentary writing, and therefore we need a new term (“version” or “imitation”) to describe

translation of poetry which is also instrumental ...” (Baker and Saldahna, 2011: 195), the same idea “behind Jakobson’s suggestion that what poetry required was not translation but ‘creative transposition’” (Jakobson, 1959/2000: 118 in Baker and Saldahna, 2011: 195). According to this view, successful poetic translation does not “depend upon the reader’s belief that the translated poem is an original.” Yet, the target text should hint at what the original text is like and maintain those traits and difficulties that make it poetic.

Despite of the apparent conflict between the two positions, they are not contradicting each other and can arguably converge. Source text and target text can be published in a bilingual edition targeted at readers who understand both languages, thus with a “documentary aim,” and at the same time the target text retain the style and language typical of poetry, thus creating a translation that works as poetry also in the target language.

That being said, we consider that a focus on style is central to poetic translation and we will proceed with analysing some of its key features. Clearly, the task of categorizing the original form or style of a text is not easy and poetry is hard to describe in analytical terms. Especially the work of Zurita, where rhyme and meter have been substituted by free verse. However, we will try to define some of the elements characteristic of poetic style as they have been summarised by Baker and Saldahna (2011: 195):

1. Its physical shape (Furniss and Bath, 1996: 13), among which the use of lines and space on the page which calls for a particular approach when reading the text. The fragmentation of the poems and the use of the page in Zurita’s *Purgatorio* point in this direction. This aspect will be examined more deeply in the following chapter.
2. Its use of “inventive language” (Eagleton, 2007: 46), that is to say patterns of sound and structure such as metaphors, alliteration or ambiguity. Those are used much more widely in poems, even if they are also present in non-poetic texts.
3. Its ambiguity and openness to different interpretations. This should be preserved in a good translation as, though reading and translation are inextricably linked and the translator has to interpret the meaning of the source text, they must avoid suggesting only one possible interpretation and

retain the ability of the poem “to fit in different contexts” (Verdonk, 2002). After all, by forcing any interpretation there is a risk of making the reader understand something that the author of the text did not want to suggest.

4. Its demand to be read non-pragmatically (Eagleton, 2007: 38). In other words, in poetry predominates an expressive and aesthetic function.

To sum up, we have acknowledged the key elements in the theory of poetic texts as this will help us in our analysis of the translation of *Purgatorio*.

2.2. Method, Strategy and Translation Techniques

We shall now give a brief overview of the need to distinguish between method, strategy and techniques when dealing with the analysis of a translation.

The start with the idea of “method” will be considered. Made simple, the term translation method refers to the translator’s objective. Put in other words, a global choice which affects the text as a whole. In this direction, Hurtado Albir (1999: 32) distinguished between various methods: interpretative-communicative (translation of the sense), literal (linguistic trans codification), free (modification of semiotic and communicative categories) and philological (academic or critical translation).

We will tackle the matter of method in our translation by turning to Zurita and Deeny Morales, the author and the translator. In an article, Deeny, emphasized her awareness and the importance of the musical and performative aspects of translating Zurita’s poems:

When I prepare for a bilingual reading with the Chilean poet Raúl Zurita, whose work I have the great privilege to translate into English, I find myself marking the text as if it were a musical score. These markings indicate how to sound a poem, whether I should increase the pitch at the end of a line (poets in English tend to lower the pitch), slow down, accelerate little by little, emphasize a caesura, accentuate a word, etcetera. These formal elements reflect my translation. ... This is precisely what sound permits: attention to the physicality of language and bodies in space. Sound envelops us as the first sense inseparable from touch within our mother’s womb. Unlike the visual, from which we must separate in order to experience, sound

as touch begins our life with others. ... When translation sounds it must reflect as much the meaning of pain as the sound of it, which is the embodied presence, of that pain. Therein exists the force of a bilingual reading, a *recital*, and the recognition of our inconsolable histories. (Deeny, 2017)

The importance of the sound of poetry along with its meaning was also highlighted by Zurita on another occasion. He worked closely with Deeny during her translation of *Purgatorio* and, around the same time, he was working on a translation of *The Divine Comedy*. When talking about his version of the *Inferno*, Zurita summarised his way of understanding translation as follows:

Traducir es encontrar el mar común en el que van a desembocar dos ríos de difuntos: el de la lengua del traductor y el de la lengua desde la que se traduce. En el poema como este en que atraviesa la muerte, el sonido es fundamental porque es la lengua de sus muertos. El sonido de y los sujetos que en ella comparecen son exactamente lo mismo. (Stavans, 2013)

Considering that pain and death are central themes in Zurita's *Purgatorio*, and the author's *polyphonic voice* is not far from Dante's infernal characters, it ought to be presumed that sound is to be considered vital also when translating the Chilean poet. This is exactly what Deeny aimed at. It is difficult to categorise our translation according to Hurtado Albir's four methods. Deeny's method seems to fit into the interpretative-communicative category, but it needs to be noticed that it shows a degree of literal method. Following Newmark, who had also classified methods before Hurtado Albir, "communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original," which is what Deeny aimed at, but "semantic translation (literal in Hurtado Albir) attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (Newmark, 1981: 31), something that Deeny did too. This is a complex issue to tackle and perhaps we should acknowledge the possibility of the two methods applying simultaneously as opposed to the dichotomy of Newmark's theory: Deeny's translation emphasises both the force and the content of the message of Zurita's poems.

Secondly, strategies are the procedures employed by the translator (who has a particular objective in mind, or method), to solve and bypass issues that emerge when translating. Finally, this analysis of translation techniques draws from Amparo Hurtado Albir and Lucía Molina's proposal (2002) of classifying dynamic and functional translation techniques according to their use as analytical tools. As they put it, "strategies open the way to finding a suitable solution for a translation unit. The solution will be materialized by using a particular technique" (Hurtado and Molina, 2002: 508). Additionally, a study of these redefined techniques will allow to examine how translation equivalence works in relation to the original text. Hurtado and Molina (ibid.: 498) distinguished between three general categories, which are commonly accepted by other theorists:

The categories used to analyze translations allow us to study the way translation works. These categories are related to text, context and process. Textual categories describe mechanisms of coherence, cohesion and thematic progression. Contextual categories introduce all the extra-textual elements related to the context of source text and translation production. Process categories are designed to answer two basic questions. Which option has the translator chosen to carry out the translation project, i.e., which method has been chosen? How has the translator solved the problems that have emerged during the translation process, i.e., which strategies have been chosen?

And went on to consider textual micro-units, namely the techniques which were the aim of their paper. Those will help us obtain clear data about the general methodological option chosen in the analysis of the translation of *Purgatorio*. To do so, it is essential is to bear in mind that, according to Hurtado and Molina (2002), these techniques are visible in the target text (unlike strategies) and possess five basic characteristics:

- 1) They affect the result of the translation
- 2) They are classified by comparison with the original
- 3) They affect micro-units of text
- 4) They are by nature discursive and contextual
- 5) They are functional

As we can see, one of their main characteristics is the fact that they are contextual. Hurtado and Molina (ibid: 509) believe that “if a technique is evaluated out of context as justified, unjustified, or erroneous, this denies the functional and dynamic nature of translation. A technique can only be judged meaningfully when it is evaluated within a particular context.” Thus, where any type of change is to be made, this must be evaluated in context and in relation to its effect on that context.

The techniques the two theorists proposed, which we will be using for our analysis of the translation of *Purgatorio*, are the following:

Adaptation	Baseball (E) ⇒ Fútbol (Sp)
Amplification	شهر رمضان (A) ⇒ Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting (E)
Borrowing	Pure: Lobby (E) ⇒ Lobby (Sp) Naturalized: Meeting (E) ⇒ Mitin (Sp)
Calque	École normale (F) ⇒ Normal School (E)
Compensation	I was seeking <u>thee</u> , Flathead (E) ⇒ En vérité, c'est bien <u>toi</u> que je cherche, <u>O</u> Tête-Plate (F)
Description	Panettone (I) ⇒ The traditional Italian cake eaten on New Year's Eve (E)
Discursive creation	Rumble fish (E) ⇒ La ley de la calle (Sp)
Established equivalent	They are as like as two peas (E) ⇒ Se parecen como dos gotas de agua (Sp)
Generalization	Guichet, fenêtre, devanture (F) fi Window (E)
Linguistic amplification	No way (E) ⇒ De ninguna de las maneras (Sp)
Linguistic compression	Yes, so what? (E) ⇒ ¿Y? (Sp)
Literal translation	She is reading (E) ⇒ Ella está leyendo (Sp)
Modulation	ستصير أبا (A) ⇒ You are going to have a child (Sp)
Particularization	Window (E) ⇒ Guichet, fenêtre, devanture (F)
Reduction	Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting (Sp) ⇒ شهر رمضان (A)
Substitution (linguistic, paralinguistic)	Put your hand on your heart (A) ⇒ Thank you (E)
Transposition	He will soon be back (E) ⇒ No tardará en venir (Sp)
Variation	Introduction or change of dialectal indicators, changes of tone, etc.

Table 1. Classification of translation techniques by Molina and Hurtado (2002).

2.3. Polysystem Theory and Initial Norm

In this section we aim at examining where and how the translation of *Purgatorio* into English fits into the polysystem of the target culture. We will do so by following the preliminary remark of Itamar Even-Zohar, the father of polysystem theory:

Once it has been recognised that the target text is not simply the product of selections from sets of ready-made linguistic options but is rather shaped by systemic constraints of a variety of types (concerned not only with language structure but also, for example, with questions of genre and literary taste), it becomes possible to suggest explanations for translation phenomena (such as the appearance in a translated text of functions native only to the source system) within the more general context of inter-systemic transfer. (Even-Zohar, 1990: 56-7)

As anticipated, polysystem theory was developed in the early 1970s by Even-Zohar, a scholar from Tel-Aviv, who took up the notion of system defined by Formalists earlier in the century. Even-Zohar (in Baker and Saldanha, 2011: 197) conceived the polysystem as “a heterogeneous, hierarchized conglomerate (or system), of systems which interact to bring about an ongoing, dynamic process of evolution within the polysystem as a whole.” Consequently, in Even-Zohar’s view (ibid.: 197):

Polysystems can be postulated to account for phenomena existing on various levels, so that a polysystem of a given national literature is viewed as one element making up the larger socio-cultural polysystem, which itself comprises other polysystems besides the literary, such as the artistic, the religious or the political.

This works also between cultures as translation is a way of making polysystems communicate. Additionally, as far as we are concerned in this dissertation, another notion essential to the concept of the polysystem is “that the various strata and subdivisions which make up a given polysystem are constantly competing with each other for the dominant position” (ibid.: 197). And this explains the tendency of most translated texts, especially before Even-Zohar’s theory gained popularity, to conform to the literary norms at the centre of the target system. According to Even-Zohar, the

polysystem evolves when peripheral forms stimulate canonized forms that lay at its centre, which work on secondary (conservative) literary principles. Unlike primary literary principles, which are innovative, do not fossilize the existing literary canon and modify the literary system of a culture. We should keep in mind that this is a dynamic model, so:

...once a primary form has been accepted into the centre and has managed to achieve canonized status by maintaining its position there for some time, it will tend to become increasingly conservative and inflexible as it attempts to fight off challenges for newer, emerging ideas. (Baker and Saldahna 2011: 198)

We can clearly link the polysystem model to Zurita's essay *Literatura, lenguaje y Sociedad* (1988) which we have previously discussed. There Zurita commented on the literary canon dominating Chile at the time of Pinochet regime, which assimilated and manipulated the literature of some of the most outstanding writers of the time.

Although it remains very much "work in progress" (Baker and Saldahna, 2011: 200) the contribution of polysystem theory has been considerable and its most significant extension for our analysis can be found in Toury's translation norms, a notion that this theorist derives from sociology and stands for the options that translators select on a regular basis in a given sociocultural context. We will only focus on the concept of "initial norm" in this dissertation. For a definition of the notion, in Toury's words:

I use the term "initial norm" to designate the translator's basic choice between two polar alternatives deriving from TT's double nature as both a literary text in TL, filling in the appropriate "slot" in the target language literary polysystem, and a representation, or reconstruction, in TL of another, preexisting text in some other language, SL, and belonging to some other literary polysystem, the source's. (Toury, 1980: 54)

The notion of initial norm comes to define the basic choice of the translator: in general terms, if they decide to submit to the norms of the source culture Toury calls their product an *adequate* translation as it reconstructs *textemes* and functions of the source text and, as a result, employs foreignizing techniques. These are translations which

preserve in the target text the norm of source texts with no breach of their own linguistic systems. The opposite alternative is an adherence to the norms of the target culture. This is called an *acceptable* translation, which employs adaptation techniques and is a form of domestication. Even if the terms acceptable and adequate translation, similarly to those of “domestication and foreignization are abstractions, and as such, need to be treated with care in applying them to empirical studies” (Paloposky, 2011: 41), we might venture to conclude that the translation of *Purgatorio* fits more in the description of adequate translation. In Deeny translation, we will see, there is a concern over preserving the original cultural context in terms of settings, names, and even some of the meanings embedded in Spanish.

We have seen (ref. Introducing Zurita) that, in the polysystem of the source text, Zurita’s poetry aimed at modifying the canon and norms ruling literary production in 1970s Chile. The *neovanguardista* kind of poetry (Lagos, 1999) that Zurita wrote reiterated the experimental, radical, unorthodox and political gesture of the avant-garde movement that came into being after World-War I (this time after the Chilean coup), which had never got to the centre of the polysystem, had never become the literary canon. By considering that and analysing some aspects of his language, Anna Deeny set the base for her initial norm and some of her strategies. In an essay titled *Sounding Zurita* she commented that Zurita is seldom economical in his language. And is not concerned with run-on lines or being too wordy. His poems, in her opinion, allow for a modification of the English language tendency for being economical:

... one of the particular characteristics of Zurita’s poetry is a grammatical flexibility that allows for the inclusion of what are generally considered excessive or unnecessary words, particularly in English. “That” is the best example as it can be used in multiple and contradictory ways. There’s a humble and human sense “that” communicates because it’s usually omitted if it’s not indispensable within the grammatical structure of a sentence. However, to include “that” when it might be omitted represents a lack of efficiency within language. (Deeny, 2017)

Thus, Deeny’s translation considered the length of some of Zurita’s verses as a characteristic trait of the poet in the source text and foreignized her English translation by keeping the determiner “que,” “that,” usually edited out of texts because it sounds non-

economical. This passage from “The Desert of Atacama VII” proves an example to what Deeny means:

Para que mi facha comience a tocar tu facha y tu facha
a esa otra facha y así hasta que todo Chile no sea sino
una sola facha con los brazos abiertos: una larga facha coronada de espinas

So that my form begins to touch your form and your form
that other form like that until all of Chile is nothing but
one form with open arms: a long form crowned with thorns

It is of interest to note how the translator linked the undermining of efficiency in language with an implicit critique of capitalism:

Language isn’t intended to be efficient; our emotions and contradictions, our banal capacity for cruelty or extraordinary impulse to love, are in no way efficient. However, the core value of capitalism is efficiency, and this value is imposed on our flesh, on our emotions, the raising of children, ideas regarding time and memory, consciousness and how we articulate what we consider knowledge. In sum, efficiency conditions our use of language. The detail of including and emphasizing “that,” along with other similar words, when they tend to be grammatically unwarranted, reflects one element of my reading of Zurita as a poet who rejects capitalism—that is, as a poet who bitterly survived the struggle between socialism and the opening up of Chile’s markets to neoliberalism. (Deeny, 2017)

A critique of capitalism the translator linked to Zurita’s ideology but, we daresay, also linked to the place of this translation in American culture’s literary and translation scene. On the one hand, according to Venuti, the dominant Anglo-American practice and discourse of translating and Translation Studies favoured domestication in an ethnocentric discourse (Venuti, 1991, in Paloposki, 2011). Deeny seems to be totally on a Venuti’s line of thoughts, no doubt due to her multicultural upbringing.⁶ Like Venuti,

⁶ Interestingly: ‘My sister and I, along with those millions who speak Spanish and many other languages as well as English dialects in the United States, grew up within public school systems that strongly advised

Zurita's translator favours a "foreignizing" strategy as "a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs, pitched against the hegemonic English language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others" (Venuti, 1995: 20). Foreignization, for Deeny, goes beyond literalism and becomes a general strategy of intervention to express her reading of the source text.

On the other hand, it is well known that, in general, very little foreign writing is translated into English. In the collection of essays written by American writer and translator Eliot Weinberger titled *Oranges and Peanuts for Sale* the author summarised the history of translation in the USA as consisting of two translation waves, the latter of which begun in the 1950s "exploding in the 1960s [...] the result of a deep anti-Americanism among American intellectuals: first [...] against the conformist Eisenhower years and the Cold War, and then [...] during the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War [...]." Weinberger wrote also of a smaller wave taking place after 9/11 when "once again, Americans were ashamed to be American" (Weinberger, 2009: 172-4). Translation seems to become popular out of a sense of moral or intellectual inadequacy in the English language. This is an interesting idea for our study, especially when we consider that the translation of *Purgatorio* was published in 2009 by the University of California Press. California is perhaps the most important locus for the development of the Progressive reform movements which started in the twentieth century and, though significantly transformed, continue up to the present. Ranging across a spectrum that embraces gender equality, minority rights, decry US imperialism and varying ideological stances, this phenomenon is part of this state counterculture. We venture to say that progressivism is expressing itself in this translation tackling political problems such as US involvement in the Pinochet coup and capitalism. Its reading would and will help the target reader to question their social realities as much as it did so when it was first published in Chile.

Another aspect to consider and develop further than we previously did when referring to the terms of "norm" and "polysystems" is the fact that literary production works inside literary tradition, either following or rejecting it (Jakobson, 1960). The canon in

against speaking Spanish within the home. The general consensus during the 1970s was that bilingualism bred social, economic, and political "divisions," "self-interest," "separatism," "underachievement," and, of course, "a lack of proficiency in English." Despite the school's insistence, my mother told us that if we didn't speak Spanish, she simply wouldn't feed us.' (Deeny, 2017)

contemporary American poetry is generally the free verse, as well as the usual employment of meter and sound features. All of these elements dominating the poetic scene can be found in Zurita's poetry, which seem to resemble the closest American Language Poetry, an avant-garde group that emerged in United States in the late 1960s and early 1970. Language Poetry's clear references to politics and religion, together with a separation of the self and the breaking up poetic language are key features shared by a number of post-World War II poets, among whom Zurita. Thus, at first glance, a translation of the Chilean poet's work did not seem to bring any interesting innovative primary literary principle that could modify the existing literary system of culture of the US canon. Yet, Language poetry was more concerned with theory and with "a deliberate erosion of the fixed partitions between prose and poetic genres" (McCaffery, 2013) than we find in Zurita's poems. Moreover, by 2009 was apparent that Language poetry had not successfully achieved its political objectives it first attempted and seemed to have fossilized (McCaffery, 2013). Instead, we believe that the translation of Zurita's poetry brought new life and new perspectives into the existing literary canon, stirring up political and literary questions. In the 1970s, when *Purgatorio* was written, Zurita had bravely raised his voice against dictatorship, advocating for human dignity. In 2009, when Deeny's translation was published, it stood as memory, both personal and national and celebrated the universal nature of every human being. Additionally, other aspects that rendered *Purgatorio* worth translating are its "uniqueness" (Lagos, 1999) in terms of semantic and formal characteristics.

This overall, yet brief and partial, analysis of polysystem theory and initial norm has served to give an insight inasmuch as the function of *Purgatorio* in the target culture of the United States of America. Hence, hopefully, it will also contribute to our analysis of a how this might have affected some choices made by the translator at the level of the words and the grammatical structure of the target text, as well as affect reception and transference of some cultural markers.

3. Analysis

As a non-native speaker of both Spanish and English, the first step to understanding *Purgatorio* as it was written by Zurita, and then translated by Deeny Morales, required a semantic analysis. Thanks to a range of dictionaries and literary research, we believe we have understood the original semantic meanings. We have been benefited from the fact that Zurita tends to use everyday vocabulary and repetition, rather than erudite terms (despite of a few exceptions). Another issue for us have been some specific Chilean terms such as “chauchas,” “helo,” “carajas,” or “ser un perdido” and “anda de una vez.”

Also, possibly polysemic words were noted. For example, in the poem “The Desert of Atacama VII”, in the following verses we were not sure how to interpret the word “facha:”

Para que mi facha comience a tocar tu facha y tu facha
a esa otra facha y así hasta que todo Chile no sea sino
una sola facha con los brazos abiertos: una larga facha coronada de espinas

We knew only one meaning of the word, namely fascist (which we thought could not be the most obvious meaning here), but after looking up the term in the RAE dictionary, we found out that it could also mean “traza, figura, aspecto.”

3.1. The opening lines

We would like to start this analysis by exploring the opening lines of the collection, a nutshell enclosing several problems of the text translation. Zurita’s *Purgatorio* opens with the following lines:

Mis amigos creen que
Estoy muy mala
porque quemé mi mejilla

As brought forward in chapter one, these lines describe an *act of self-mutilation* by Zurita, the moment when he placed a burning hot iron against his left cheek in a desperate act of rebellion against Pinochet regime. The book cover of the first edition, displaying Zurita's left cheek, amplified the meaning of the three verses. This whole idea is maintained in the edition by the University of California Press, though with a different photograph. This shows a passport size photo of Zurita, his entire face: the scar remains visible, but is not as obvious as in the original Chilean edition of the book, where the close-up made the scar the centre of attention and, in a way, made it ambiguous. The close-up of the original, at first sight, can be interpreted as an aerial photograph, with Zurita's scar becoming a furrow in a field, and his beard a meadow or some kind of vegetation.



Image 6. The cover of the first issue of *Purgatorio* @ 1979, Editorial Universitaria, compared to the cover of the bilingual edition by Anna Deeny @ 2009, University of California Press.

A deeper reading of the three initial verses brings *about a discourse which deals with politics and psychiatry*: key elements that should be preserved in the translation. Someone

is sick because they did something that is not normal, diverts from expected behaviour and norms. Moreover, there are various voices, some obvious from the words used (my friends, who are judging the action (who believe: “creen”) and a she character who is sick), some not too obvious (the State and psychiatrists setting rules and establishing a code of conduct). It is vital to notice the feminization of the voice (“estoy muy mala”). Lagos Camaño (1999) underlined the fact that the image suggested is linked to transgender and to the allocation of new meanings to identity, similarly to other verses of the poem (e.g. “Todo maquillado contra los vidrios/ me llamé esta iluminada dime que no” o “Ven, somos las antiguas novias me dicen,”) key concepts of the twentieth century. Therefore, it seems essential to maintain the feminine in the English translation. We will now compare Deeny’s translation with the first English translation of *Purgatorio*, published in 1985. The translator was in that case Jeremy Jacobson, a professor from the British Council, and the book was also published in the US, in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) by Latin American Literary Review Press. Here are the two different translations of the opening lines:

Mis amigos creen que Estoy muy mala porque quemé mi mejilla [Zurita]	my friends think that I’ve been very bad because I burnt my cheek [Jacobson]	my friends think I’m a sick woman because I burned my cheek [Deeny]
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Perhaps the most striking feature of the translation by Jacobson is how it excludes gender, omits the feminine voice, and translates “Estoy muy mala” with “I’ve been very bad,” thus making the authorial voice “gender free.” According to Vázquez Ayora omission serves “to omit redundancy and repetition that is characteristic of the SL” (Vázquez Ayora, 1977, in Molina and Hurtado, 2002: 504), while Delisle considers it to be a translation error: “omission is the unjustifiable suppression of elements in the ST” (Delisle, 1993, in Molina and Hurtado, 2001: 505). Following Delisle, in this case we consider omission to be a translation error. Deeny maintained *the feminine voice* and translated the verse with “I’m a sick woman,” applying the technique of amplification. She used more signifiers to cover a syntactic gap.

Another error that we notice in Jacobson translation is a linguistic amplification of “estoy mala,” which Jacobson translates with “I’ve been bad.” The word “bad” is polysemic, so it can be interpreted as “evil.” Yet, in Spanish, there is a clear difference in meaning between “ser mala,” which translates with “being evil” and “estar mala,” which can be paraphrased as “estar enferma,” “sick.” If we translate “estoy mala” as “I’ve been bad,” the sentence “you’ve been bad” comes inevitably to mind. This is something we normally associate with scolding pets and children, an idea which is absent in Zurita’s text. Jacobson’s translation could also bring about the meaning of being “evil” in sex, absent in this part of the poem, but which could serve as an anticipation to the following section. Anyhow, those are meanings we do not see in the original “estoy mala” and this distracts the target reader from the idea of mental sickness. “Sick” is a much better choice as it preserves the idea of being physically or mentally ill.

Finally, we need to analyse the relevance of repetition, starting with repetition of sound: *alliteration*. Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words or stressed syllables and it helps establish links between words. Alliteration is definitely part of the schema that an English-speaker would associate with poetry as, originally, it was “a basic structural principle rather than an occasional embellishment” of poetry in Germanic languages. Although “in England, alliteration as a strict structural principle is not found after 1066 [...] alliteration is still very important” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). It is of prime importance to the English poetic form, much more than in Spanish poetry, and in Zurita’s *free verse, where rhyme and meter are not to be found*, alliteration carries a considerable value. Thus, one must make instances where the original uses any such devices even more noticeable.

In the third line of *Purgatorio* there is an *alliteration of the consonant “m”* (“quemé mi mejilla”) which is preserved in both target texts with the employment of a compensation technique. By compensation we mean the introduction of elements of information or stylistic effect in another place in the target text because they cannot be reflected in the same place as in the source text (Molina and Hurado, 2002: 511). In our case it is the alliteration of the letter “b” (“because I burned”), instead of that of the “m.” Moreover, in the source text, the repetition of the “m” occurs also in the first two verses in the words “amigos” and “mala.” Jacobson maintains it by compensation using “been” in the second line, employing an amplification technique (instead of “am” for “estoy,”

which Deeny uses) and “bad” for “mala.” In Deeny’s translation the alliteration of the “b” is limited to “because I burned.” Yet, the translator compensates it by adding an alliteration of the sound “k” in “think,” “sick” and “cheek.” We end this overview of the opening lines of *Purgatorio* by suggesting that the term “believe” could have been used instead of “think” so as to preserve the alliteration of the “b” in “because I burned.” However, we should notice how in this case Deeny’s translation omits the word “that,” not because the translator adhered to the widespread notion this determiner represents a lack of efficiency within language. After all, her reading of Zurita is that of a poet who rejects capitalism. The omission owes to rhyming purposes which give the verses a rhythm completely absent in Jacobson’s translation. Jacobson also kept it because of alliteration purposes (“think that”).

3.2. In the middle of the road?

Zurita’s *Purgatorio* alludes to **Dante’s *Divine Comedy*** from its very title. We have seen earlier in this dissertation that the original fourteenth-century allegorical poem on sin and redemption, written in a medieval Italian vernacular by the Florentine poet had always been a draw for Zurita. We should remember here that the *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* and tells the story of a journey through the Christian after-life of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. As the title says, in *Purgatorio* Zurita chose to focus on purgatory. Yet, for the opening line (or title) of the second section of his book he decided to quote Dante’s *Inferno*. Here are Dante’s famous opening lines:

Nel mezzo del **cammin** di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la dritta via era smarrita.

The most common translations of the *Inferno*’s first line into Spanish read: “en medio del camino de nuestra vida,” “en el medio del camino de nuestra vida,” “en el medio del

camino de la vida.” Considered that, in Zurita’s opening the allusion to Dante is unquestionable when he wrote:

En el medio del **camino**

When we come to English, the original lines by Dante have been rendered by translators in several different ways. An informative article by Steven Moyer (2017) which appeared in *Humanities*, the magazine from The National Endowment for the Humanities (an independent federal agency created in 1965 to support and fund humanities programs in the United States) gives an overview of the best translations of Dante available in the US, the target culture of our study. Moyer chose five translations, and we will take them as a reference for our analysis of Dantean elements and quotes in Zurita’s text. Moyer noticed that in comparing translations

... there is an attempt to duplicate Dante’s terza rima, in which the first and third lines rhyme, and the second line rhymes with the first line of the following stanza. That interlocking pattern continues throughout the cantos and is one of the work’s most distinctive aspects.

Even if for our study, which considers merely the first line of Canto I of the *Inferno*, the replication of Dante’s rhyme pattern is not central, we must keep in mind that readers tend to prefer translations that are faithful to the original in form and meaning, and thus will be more familiar with the following translations:

Midway upon the **journey** of our life (Longfellow, 1867)

When half way through the **journey** of our life (Langdon, 1918)

When I had **journeyed** half of our life’s **way**, (Mandelbaum, 1984)

At the mid-point of the **path** through life, I found (James, 2001)

Midway through the **journey** of our life, I found (Palma, 2003)

One notices quickly that Dante's "cammin" is rendered into English with "journey," both as a noun and as a verb, four times out of five. In the introductory lines of the *Commedia* Dante, the fictional main character, engages in conversation with Virgil, laying out the ideological premises of the journey that the protagonist is about to undertake. Thus, the idea of the physical and spiritual journey should and is indeed kept in most English translations. Only Mandelbaum chose to translate it with "way," a term that maintains the physical meaning of the Italian word "cammino," but forgets its figurative sense as "il corso della vita terrena" (Treccani, 2020). "Way," in English, does not collocate with life (except in Søren Kierkegaard's *Stages on Life's Way* which is definitely not related to Dante's masterpiece). It is the word "journey" that collocates with life. In the *Cambridge Dictionary* the figurative meaning of the word "journey" is given with the following example: "He views his life as a spiritual journey towards a greater understanding of his faith" (*Cambridge Online Dictionary*, 2020).

Back to the translation of *Purgatorio* by Zurita, Deeny makes her own translation of Dante's words while she could have drawn upon the vast tradition in the translation of Dante:

In the middle of the road

Recurring to an already existent translation would have made the reference to Dante's *Inferno* more striking and immediate. We would possibly have opted for: "Midway upon the journey" or "Midway through the journey." Instead, Deeny kept the physical meaning of road. This could be due also to the fact that in Zurita's lines "camino" does not explicitly collocate with "life," and to Deeny's interpretation of the work of Zurita as paying vast importance to the physicality of space the Chilean landscape (see, for instance, Tesche Roa, 2017). The Dantean reference is to be inferred by the reader. Though, by removing the "journey" we believe that Deeny made it too superficial and runs the risk that the reader overlooks it. After all, Dante is vital in Zurita as much as it is the idea of space. Particularly, Dante is central because of the multiple levels of interpretation contained in his work. In an interview we have previously mentioned, Zurita made clear what is extraordinary in Dante's work and, we should say, also how Zurita's own *Purgatorio* ought to be understood:

A que día a día, los lectores de hoy continúan cruzando el Infierno, el Purgatorio y el Paraíso de sus propias existencias. Sólo para comprobar al final que lo que vio Dante en el último canto del Paraíso no fue Dios sino su propia cara, es decir, el color de la faz de lo humano recortado contra el fondo de las estrellas, con su infinita soledad. (Stavans, 2013)

This loneliness is embedded in life's "journey" as it is in the "road," the physical space. Zurita continued:

En la epístola a Can Grande della Scala, que resulta ser apócrifa, Dante (o alguien que habla por Dante) dice que La Divina Comedia, y por sinécdoque, todo texto literario, puede ser leído a cuatro niveles. De esos cuatro, uno es literal y otro es alegórico. [...] Creo que parte de la enormidad del poema es que sobrevivió a la lectura alegórica. En realidad, la alegoría es algo fascinante porque es el triunfo de la voluntad del que escribe sobre la voluntad de la lengua. [...] Lo cierto es que no existe más inconsciente que el del lenguaje y si un texto sobrevive a la tentación alegórica es porque la voluntad de la lengua triunfó sobre la voluntad de quien escribe. (Stavans, 2013)

In Dante's text the allegorical level becomes timeless and so does in *Purgatorio*, where the poet's allegorical relationship with violence under Pinochet's authoritarian regime is only one of the possible levels of reading. *Purgatorio* contains multiple levels of allegory, among which Christian, or the journey of life of every human being. In order for the language to achieve its triumph, the allegorical meaning contained in "life's journey" as in other words and expressions should be kept.

"En medio del camino" is followed by a passport photograph of Zurita, a quote from the bible "EGO SUM, QUI SUM" loaded with a messianic meaning, and a handwritten note which goes:

Me llamo Raquel
estoy en el oficio
desde hace varios

My name is Rachel
I've been in the same
business for many

años. Me encuentro
en la mitad de
mi vida. Perdí
el camino.

years. I'm in the
middle of my life.
I lost my way.

First of all, the term “camino” is repeated here but its central role is lost in Deeny’s translation, where it becomes “way:” We may suggest that the translation would have been more accurate had Deeny kept the repetition of “road” (the term she used in the title to the section) or “way” (she could have used this word in the title). We have seen that in Langdon or Mandelbaum’s translations of Dante (which are among the most established), the word “cammin” is rendered with “way.” Such choice would have made it possible to keep the repetition, as in the handwritten note Deeny translated Zurita’s “camino” with “way:”

Another striking aspect when one compares the two texts is that the original seven lines are rendered with just six lines, making the poem shorter and removing visual importance to the last line. Deeny tried to keep the form of the poem and achieved it in most lines. Yet, we believe that in the last two there is a loss of focus in two key words: one is “vida” (life), and the other, as said, is “camino” (way). We witness also a compulsory transposition of the definite article in “el camino” into a possessive article in the English “my way” due to the fact that there is a difference in the grammatical structures of Spanish and English. In this case, Deeny applies oblique translation to attain equivalence. Other examples of this technique are to be found in verb tenses: “estoy” in the present simple is rendered with a present perfect “I’ve been.”

In the target text the name Raquel must become Rachel owing to its *biblical reference*. It is an established equivalent that allows the target reader to immediately recognise the idea of the tragedy of infertility, relate it to the name of the writer (Rachel could be the feminine for Raul) and, thus, to the idea of poetic creation being difficult, if not impossible like giving birth for the infertile Rachel. Throughout the rest of this part of *Purgatorio* there are multiple references to a personal crisis and to the dichotomy between being a prostitute and a saint. Rachel is both and this makes her and him (Zurita) experience such a profound crisis. As in English the closest equivalent for the expression “el oficio más antiguo del mundo” would be the term “profession,” we believe that Deeny

chose the term “business” instead for two reasons. The first one is a criticism of capitalism, as we previously commented. The word “business,” with its idea of profit, is totally linked to capitalist societies. Secondly, because she wanted to maintain an alliteration pattern.

In these verses the *alliteration* combined with the consonance of the letter “m” is kept and actually intensified. In Zurita’s original we count four alliterations combined with two consonances, in Denny’s text a total of eight. There is a higher degree of musicality in Deeny’s poem, in line with the canon of poetry in English. This increased sound effect is possibly due to the fact that the translator wanted to make Zurita’s tactic clearly noticeable to the target reader: the presence of repetitions in the target text is paramount when one realizes that the repetitions in the original text contribute to the poems’ meaning. In this line, we should notice that in the source text the alliteration of the “m” is clearly aimed at creating a bridge between the first poem of the collection, where we saw that the “m” was also alliterated, and this second one. In the target text there is an added alliteration of the “b” which preserves the link between the first (“because I burned”) and the second poem, which compensates for losses in the first poem.

3.3. El desierto de Atacama

3.3.1. The Prologue

To continue, we will now move on to analysing the third part of *Purgatorio*, entitled “El Desierto de Atacama” (the Desert of Atacama). The guiding thread elaborated in the admittedly lengthy introduction to the work of Zurita has very much borne on the way in which the poet has dealt with the idea of landscape. The study of the translation of the third part of *Purgatorio* represents only a portion of Zurita’s poetic treatment of the sacred and scarred Chilean landscape, namely the initial stage. As anticipated, the seven poems (plus a prologue and an epilogue) are a response to the political actions of a murderous regime and are to be thought of as the poet’s attempt to reimagining the places of the Atacama Desert. As in the previous part, “Desiertos” (Deserts), the reader is confronted

with multiple voices: “yo,” “la nunca,” “nosotros,” in the pampas and deserts of Chile which stand for the *self* and the *other*, making way for collective experience into the individual experience. The Atacama Desert is an arid, barren and cursed landscape which “no vale ni tres chaucas” and yet, in its constant metamorphosis, comes to represent Chile as the country that, in all conscience, does not want to have any information of the massacre perpetrated by the regime (Tesche Roa, 2017): “Vamos: no quisiste saber nada de ese Desierto maldito,” as well as the unconscious: “LAPSUS Y ENGAÑOS SE LLAMAN MI PROPIA MENTE EL DESIERTO DE CHILE” (LAPSES AND DECEITS ARE CALLED MY OWN MIND THE DESERT OF CHILE. Como un sueño, Desiertos).

We might first examine the title of this section which, in English, is rendered with “The Desert of Atacama” instead of the more common “Atacama Desert.” Here, the translator did not use the established equivalent, which would have been “the Atacama Desert.” Deeny employed instead a literal translation and reproduced an exact structural and lexical equivalence between Spanish and English: it is word for word translation which results in a calque. That is to say, literal translation of a foreign phrase. This particular formulation, we believe, is employed for visual reasons, as this is the title of this section, and is also consistently maintained in the whole target text.

Let us turn, for a moment, to the, if we may call it, prologue to “El Desierto de Atacama.” This reads:

QUIÉN PODRÍA LA ENORME DIGNIDAD DEL
DESIERTO DE ATACAMA COMO UN PÁJARO
SE ELEVA SOBRE LOS CIELOS APENAS
EMPUJADO POR EL VIENTO

Deeny’s translation:

WHO COULD THE ENORMOUS DIGNITY OF
THE DESERT OF ATACAMA LIKE A BIRD
IT ELEVATES ITSELF OVER THE SKIES BARELY
PRESSED BY THE WIND

The target text is mostly a literal translation of the source text with their established equivalent except for the desert and perhaps the last line where “empujado” is rendered with “pressed” instead of with the most expected “pushed.” The word “presses” is more technical (we find it collocates with wind when this relates to sailing and is rather a technical term), thus a particularization, but is more powerful than “pushed.” It modulates, shifts the point of view, amplifying the feeling of oppression. Worth noticing is also the fact that the first sentence is built in such a way that a verb is missing: “Quién podría...” (Who could... what? Think, describe, dream of?) and this idea is kept in the translation. Here, there was no attempt from the translator to amplify the meaning of the source text.

Another element worth noticing is the fact that “SE ELEVA” is translated as “IT ELEVATES ITSELF.” Deeny noticed an obvious characteristic of Zurita’s poetry which involves the personification of landscapes, an effect the poet achieved through the use of reflexive verbs, and decided to apply the technique of amplification to better express the meaning. Referring to a different poem she explained:

In Spanish, verbal reflexivity is represented through two letters, “se,” in words such as “extenderse” (extend itself, oneself or themselves), “iluminarse” (illuminate itself, oneself or themselves), and “doblar” (bend over itself, oneself or themselves). In English, forming the reflexive verb with the reflexive pronoun takes at least six to ten letters that are usually placed after the verb. This is a significant number within the context of a poem, but Zurita’s grammatical flexibility allows for the adjustment. (Deeny, 2017)

And went on to link this stylistic characteristic to the idea of capitalism versus the landscape of Chile:

That is, allowing the reflexive pronoun to occupy more visual and aural volume, ironically, represents the silent Chilean landscapes. Zurita has often reminded us that those magnificent landscapes were the only ones that received the “disappeared,” “the only ones to show mercy to those bodies razed by an aberrant order,” which was the Chilean dictatorship. Thus, vocal emphasis helps shift human silence into the physicality of space. [...] This is precisely what sound permits: attention to the physicality of language and bodies in space. (Deeny, 2017)

Admittedly, the relevance of this particular rendering of reflexive verbs is made only in those poems which deal explicitly with landscape and contain a sense of freedom often associated with its features or the animal world (which craves to be free, like in this case the bird). Another section where this procedure is apparent is the following, from the fifth part of the collection, “Areas verdes” (Green Areas), where cows and pastures are the main characters of the scene:

Han visto extenderse estos pastos infinitos?

1. Han visto extenderse esos pastos infinitos
donde las vacas huyendo desaparecen
reunidas ingravidas delante de ellos?

Have you seen these infinite pastures extend themselves?

1. Have you seen those infinite pastures extend
themselves where the cows fleeing disappear
reunited weightless before them?

The target text occupies more printed space than the source text when the reflexive pronoun is maintained. Yet, due to the nature of both languages, the result is a similar number of syllables in the two texts, balancing the extension from the perspective of sound and rhythm.

3.3.2. El desierto de Atacama I

Back to the seven sections of “El desierto de Atacama” in which the poems are divided, this is the first part of the *Purgatorio* where the verses are structured following a logical numbering, in roman numerals, reproducing the structure of a theorem (Tarrab Rivera, 2007). Roman numerals were used in “En el medio del camino,” an in this they are an explicit reference to the *Divine Comedy*, but in Zurita the numbers did not follow any logical sequence: I, III, XIII, XXII, XXXIII, XXXVIII, XLII, LVII, LXIII, LXXXV, XCII, C. In “El desierto de Atacama” they do, and their sequencing builds new meanings to apparently contradictory and broken verses. Here is the source text:

I

A LAS INMACULADAS LLANURAS

- i. Dejemos pasar el infinito del Desierto de Atacama
- ii. Dejemos pasar la esterilidad de estos desiertos

Para que desde las piernas abiertas de mi madre se levante una Plegaria que se cruce con el infinito del Desierto de Atacama y mi madre no sea entonces sino un punto de encuentro en el camino

- iii. Yo mismo seré entonces una Plegaria encontrada en el camino
- iv. Yo mismo seré las piernas abiertas de mi madre

Para que cuando vean alzarse ante sus ojos los desolados paisajes del Desierto de Atacama mi madre se concentre en gotas de agua y sea la primera lluvia en el desierto

- v. Entonces veremos aparecer el Infinito del Desierto
- vi. Dado vuelta desde sí mismo hasta dar con las piernas de mi madre
- vii. Entonces sobre el vacío del mundo se abrirá completamente el verdor infinito del Desierto de Atacama

The title of the first poem, “A las inmaculadas llanuras” (To the immaculate plains), is a summary of the whole third part, serving also as an introduction to “Areas verdes” (Green areas). Again, references to religion, in this case the Immaculate Conception, are not hard to guess. The creative force of the immaculate Virgin Mary is that of the mother and the desert, which will bloom after tears (rain) are shed on it.

And here is the target text:

I
TO THE IMMACULATE PLAINS

i. Let's let the infinity of the Desert of Atacama pass

ii. Let's let the sterility of these deserts pass

So that from the spread-open legs of my mother a Prayer
rises that intersects the infinity of the Desert of Atacama
and my mother is then nothing but a meeting point on the road

iii. Then I myself will be a Prayer found on the road

iv. I myself will be the spread-open legs of my mother

So that when they see raised up before their eyes the desolate
landscapes of the Desert of Atacama my mother will be
concentrated in drops of water as the first rain of the desert

v. Then we'll see the Infinity of the Desert appear

vi. Turned around itself until striking my mother's legs

vii. Then over the world's emptiness the infinite green of the
Desert of Atacama will open completely

In this poem the *alliteration* of the “m” is central once more. The letter “m” is repeated and stands for “inmaculadas” (immaculate), “madre” (mother), “camino” (road) and “mundo” (world). It should be noticed that there is a significant loss in its consonance in this target text (29 in the source text against 19 in the target text). Yet, Deeny tried to compensate it in what we believe are the key points where it should be preserved. The loss of alliteration in “world” is compensated by using the word “emptiness” (for “vacío”), which contains an “m,” instead of using the most obvious translation, “void.” The same technique was employed for “road,” where the “m” is compensated in “meeting.” So “un punto de encuentro en el camino” becomes “a meeting point on the road.”

Secondly, we will comment on the first two lines. In the source text we notice a parallelism in the syntax. While alliteration is the repetition of sound, *grammatical*

parallelism is the recurrence of grammatical structures. This device is very frequent in poems written using the free verse. In the source text grammatical parallelism is used in lines one and two, both opening with “dejemos pasar.” Maintaining a similar repetition in the translation is quite difficult because of the English syntax. While Spanish is more flexible in terms of word order, English cannot be manipulated so freely and exhibits less variation in this respect. For instance, Hill (2000: 7) highlighted that attention should be called to the fact that, in English, the verb is not found in final position in normal usage. However, final positioning of the verb is ordinarily reserved for classical poetry or archaic literary styles. Thus, hyperbaton—the transposition or inversion of idiomatic word order—is regularly used in poetry written in English, making it more linguistically flexible than everyday speech. As a result, word order restrictions would make a literal translation rather unidiomatic and positioning a verb at the end of a verse would make the text immediately poetic in style. The verb is an imperative in the specific case of the two verses we are considering. In Spanish, the first person plural for commands is formed by using the present indicative (“dejemos” or “vamos a dejar”) whereas English uses the hortative auxiliary let + object + infinitive without to convey the same function. Here Deeny made her translation natural by employing the repetition of “Let’s let,” which is fairly common and idiomatic in American English (not so in British English where “let” is not repeated) and doubling the verb (“let” and “pass”), positioning the second verb at the end of the verse. The result is: “Let’s let the infinity of the Desert of Atacama pass,” which is at the same time idiomatic and poetic.

Finally, in the two lines of the target text one observes a parallelism in the assonance of “infinity” and “sterility,” where linguistic amplification is used with the result of turning up the volume in the target text and making the tactic clearly noticeable to the target reader.

Continuing or analysis with the following lines, we observe how Deeny suspended her strategy of expanding the space on the page of reflexive pronouns. “Se levante” was rendered with “rises,” and so was “se cruce” with “intersects.” The translator did not add “itself,” we believe in order not to alter the rhythm of the poem. Sibilance is maintained in the target text, making it unnecessary to employ “itself” even if this word contains an “s.” This results in shortening the English text, making it of three lines rather than four. We think this spatial reduction served to make the target reader notice that there is no

such a consonance of the “s” in the last line of this section. Moreover, in the target text there is a loss in end rhyme: “sino” rhymes with “camino.” This loss was compensated in the first two verses of the poem, where we saw that “pass” was repeated at the end of both lines to maintain the parallelism at the beginning of the verses.

The strategy employed for reflexive pronouns is used once more in the third and fourth section. Here we observe a loss in parallelism: the target text is not as exact in the repetition of “Yo mismo seré,” as in section iii there is a “then” placed before “I myself will be.” Placing “then” at the beginning of a sentence is idiomatic, and considering English word order restrictions and the number of different meanings “then” can take depending on its position in a sentence (*Cambridge Online Dictionary*), it seems only natural to succumb to a loss in parallelism. Even so there is no loss of rhythm. Additionally, the loss was compensated for in sections v and vii, which begin with “then.” This amplifies its parallelism in the target text, since in the source text “entonces” appears only in sections v and vii. The parallelism of the second lines of ii and iv is also amplified in that “Para que” and “Para cuando” are combined in “So that” in the target text.

In the following three lines of section iv, we notice a rather literal translation and the target text keeping the visual characteristics of the source text. Except in the last line, where for “y sea la primera lluvia del desierto,” we read “as the first rain of the desert.” Here we observe a transposition: the conjunction “y” and the subjunctive were not rendered with “and” and an English tense but rather with a noun phrase.

Part vii sees a grammatical flexibility in the target text, where the verb is placed at the end of the section, in a rather unidiomatic, poetic translation. The target text results more poetic than the source text, where syntax follows basic standard rules. This owes to the target text exhibiting a rather lengthy subject (which, in English, is generally to be avoided as it makes a sentence difficult to follow). Deeny kept “the world’s emptiness” close to the beginning of the sentence, as the poem develops from the sterility to the flourishing of the desert. Thus, it would have been a mistake to keep the subject short and end the sentence with an idea of void and emptiness. Keeping the idea of sterility at the beginning and varying syntax allowed to end the poem with hopeful words such as “open” and “the infinite green,” preserving the original aim.

In this poem, as well as in the ones preceding and following, we can observe how an apparent logic is constantly undermined by *non-sequiturs*: each verse is followed by

another that defy the basic rules of reason and the reader's expectations. There is no apparent logic in a child becoming a prayer as there was no logic in a woman being a man or an individual suddenly starting speaking in the first person plural. Yet, in the end, they all actually make sense in the space of the page and of poetic creation, pointing to the multi-faceted character of the self. This key element of Zurita's poetry is maintained in the target text which does not forget to use personal pronouns or plurals and singulars instead of falling into the temptation of employing an impersonal subject.

3.3.3. El desierto de Atacama II

We will now continue our analysis with the second poem of this part of the book, entitled "EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA II." This reads in the original:

Helo allí Helo allí
suspendido en el aire
El Desierto de Atacama

- i. Suspendido sobre el cielo de Chile diluyéndose
entre auroras
- ii. Convirtiendo esta vida y la otra en el mismo
Desierto de Atacama áurico perdiéndose en el
aire
- iii. Hasta que finalmente no haya cielo sino Desierto
de Atacama y todos veamos entonces nuestras
propias pampas fosforescentes carajas
encumbrándose en el horizonte

And in Deeny's translation:

There it is There
Suspended in the air
The Desert of Atacama

- i. Suspended over the sky of Chile dissolving
amid auras
- ii. Converting this life and the other into the same
Desert of Atacama luminous losing itself in the
air
- iii. Until finally there's not sky but only Desert of
Atacama and then all of us will see our own fucked
phosphorescent pampas soaring in the horizon

In the text we identify two main translation problems. The first lies in the first line, the second in section iii. We will start by looking at the former, the repetition of “helo allí,” which we had first interpreted as the usual way of answering a phone call by saying “halo, halo.” Further investigation suggested that “helo aquí / helo allí” are expressions similar to “he aquí” or “heme aquí” coming from the Arabic “he” and used starting from the middle ages in Spanish to call attention on someone or something. As in this example: “Hela (ahí) desengañada y arrepentida” (Moliner, 1980: 23). This use is rather archaic but there is some evidence of people employing them in a number of Spanish speaking countries with a comic effect. Anyhow, when investigating further, one realises that in Zurita’s text, in fact, this is yet another biblical reference.

In Reina-Valera translation of Luke 17: 21 we read: “Ni dirán: Helo aquí, ó helo allí: porque he aquí el reino de Dios está entre vosotros.” While in King James version of the Bible, among one of the most relevant in the English language: “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” And in the more recent New International Version: “Nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is in your midst.” Deeny’s translation is: “There it is There,” which seems to turn more to the latter, newer version. Once again, as with Dante, we consider that a translator should try and employ previous and established translations of great works. And in the case of the Bible, a text which is a more popular read in the US than in most Spanish speaking countries, even more so. Considering the fact that the expression “helo allí” is rather archaic in Spanish, we believe that a more suitable translation (using an established equivalent) would have been “lo there lo there” rather than “There it is There,” which is modern English, even if Deeny’s translation is

highly acceptable as it relies on a previous translation of the bible and “helo allí” is still employed in educated language. Moreover, Deeny employed a generalisation which results in a limited word repetition: it is only “there” to be repeated and not the whole clause. Perhaps this was done in an attempt to compensate the lack in rhyme of “sino” and “camino” in the previous poem, as “there” rhymes with “air,” thus creating a rhyme where there was none in the source text.

Moving on to the second problem, we find this in section iii. This is the translation of the *subjunctive* in “hasta que finalmente no haya cielo...” The subjunctive is a specific marker of mood which is only used occasionally in present-day English. According to Crystal (1980: 420), examples closely related to subjunctive occur in hypothetical constructions, such as “if I were you, ...” or “if she were...,” in fixed formulae as “I wish you were here,” or “so be it,” and clauses introduced by “that,” especially in American English (e.g. “I insist that you write a letter to apologise”). Only one form of the present subjunctive differs morphologically from the present indicative and it only exists in the singular (“were” in the subjunctive, “was” in the indicative). The rest of the forms of the English subjunctive are the same as in the indicative. Palmer points out that the subjunctive has been substituted by modal verbs in that they convey modal meanings and a speaker’s attitude: “There is no need to be much concerned with the subjunctive in English. This has largely disappeared from English, and can well be argued that it has been replaced by the modal verbs, though traditional scholars may still argue for its use.” (Palmer, 1986: 43)

English subjunctive is by no means symmetrical to Spanish. Everyone knows that the subjunctive in Spanish is used much more frequently than in English and, when it has to be translated, is normally substituted by a modal verb or a number of other constructions in order to convey the subjunctive character of the clause (Losada Durán, 2000; García Arranz, 1986). Here we only give a small selection of the possible structures:

- To + infinitive (e.g. Dile que coma = Tell her to eat)
- -ing form (e.g. Es inútil que te conteste = It’s no good trying to answer you)
- For + subject + to + infinitive (e.g. Estaba esperando a que comieran = I was waiting for them to eat)
- Modal auxiliary (e.g. Puede que estén en peligro = They may be in danger)

- That clause with the verb of the dependent clause inflected (Es necesario que coman = It is necessary that they eat)
- (That +) subject + to + infinitive (e.g. Quiero que comas = I want you to eat)
- Clauses expressing finality take the indicative (e.g. Hay precios especiales para que acuda más gente = There are cheaper prices so that people will go)

In the case of the verses we are considering, the subjunctive is used after the conjunction “hasta que,” and serves to link the previous part of the poem with the following. The two clauses have different subjects; thus, a subjunctive must be used in Spanish. By our analysis we are trying to address the problem of how to translate linguistic items into a language where they do not exist. Having a wide range of structures that can express the subjunctive, and in Deeny’s words, possessing Zurita’s poetry a degree of grammatical flexibility, the character of the target text depends not so much on the grammatical restrictions but on the free choice of the translator. Here Deeny translated “hasta que” with “until” and used the present simple of the verb to be to translate “no haya”: “there’s not.” We have seen earlier that clauses expressing finality take the indicative. Yet, in the example provided, it was not the simple present to be used, but a will + infinitive. We could therefore suggest that other obvious choices for rendering the subjunctive would have been to employ the form will + infinitive and translate “no haya” with “there won’t be,” or even a different modal verb “there may be.” The form will + infinitive would have clearly projected the idea of rebirth into the future, as would have other modal verbs. Yet, both options would have kept the meaning in the domain of possibility, the hypothetical, and the desire, in a way making such a translation transpire the subjunctive. Deeny’s reduction suppresses part of the meaning but not completely as this is maintained in “until.” After all, her translation is idiomatic and is a totally acceptable rendering of the Spanish subjunctive. However, due to the range of options available for the translation of subjunctive tenses, we would suggest that in the target text there is a lower degree of possibility conveyed, which makes the idea of rebirth more real than in the source text. For once, English is more flexible than Spanish when it comes to translation options.

3.3.4. El desierto de Atacama III

The following poem of “El Desierto de Atacama” is entitled “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA III.”

- i. Los desiertos de atacama son azules
- ii. Los desiertos de atacama no son azules ya ya dime
lo que quieras
- iii. Los desiertos de atacama no son azules porque por
allá no voló el espíritu de J. Cristo que era un perdido
- iv. Y si los desiertos de atacama fueran azules todavía
podrían ser el Oasis Chileno para que desde todos
los rincones de Chile contentos viesan flamear por
el aire las azules pampas del Desierto de Atacama

In a similar way to “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA II,” this is a poem which plays with opposites, but this time revolving around the blue colour. Blue is not only the colour of the sky, but also of the oasis and of the Chilean flag. Like green, blue is connected with hope.

Again, we can identify a number of problems that might have arisen in the translation of the source text, and we will analyse their solutions. This is section ii translation:

- ii. The deserts of Atacama aren't blue go ahead say
what you will

The repetition of “ya” is substituted, by amplification, for “go ahead” instead of recurring to a similar shorter expression. “Dime,” on the contrary, is reduced to “say,” when “tell me” could have been used instead. The two techniques result in a compensation.

The subjunctive “lo que quieras” is rendered here with the modal verb will, an established equivalent as we have seen above.

What is also interesting is the second line of the next section, which is translated: “J. Christ’s spirit didn’t fly he was lost.” Here we notice an inevitable loss of meaning in the translation. “Ser un perdido” is an expression used in Chile which is similar in meaning to “ser un caso perdido” (to be a lost cause, or to be a loser), someone who has no chance of succeeding. The target text keeps the idea of being physically lost, but relates it merely to the spirit, not to Jesus Christ himself as in the source text, and especially not in the figurative and denigrating idea of the original expression. We believe that the target text used a functional equivalent following Deeny’s larger vision: her strategy to highlight the importance of space in Zurita’s poetry. Thus, the fact that Christ is called a loser by the poet is less important than that his spirit is lost in space.

3.3.5. El desierto de Atacama IV

“EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA IV” reiterates the positive features of the desert, this time seen as green pastures feeding a herd of sheep. Dreaming is a powerful mean of transformation, not dreaming means being lost, alone in the desert. The poem also introduces another Christian symbol: sheep, standing for community, in which seem to lie the only possible salvation:

- i. El Desierto de Atacama son puros pastizales
- ii. Miren a esas ovejas correr sobre los pastizales del desierto
- iii. Miren a sus mismos sueños balar allá sobre esas pampas infinitas
- iv. Y si no se escucha a las ovejas balar en el Desierto de Atacama nosotros somos entonces los pastizales de Chile para que en todo el espacio en todo el mundo en toda la patria se escuche ahora el balar de nuestras propias almas sobre esos desolados desiertos miserables

This time the translator did not resort to the hortative auxiliary “let” to translate the imperative of the second person plural. Instead, she used an impersonal imperative, losing

this nuance: “ii. Look at those sheep run across the desert pastures / iii. Look at their very dreams bleat over there throughout those infinite pampas.” Here, unlike in the poem “To the immaculate plains,” the target text does not achieve to entirely maintain the multiplicity of voices this poem possesses. In the source text “*eschuchen*” and “*miren*” clash with an impersonal “*se escucha*” and with “*nosotros*,” there are three main voices. In the target text there are only two: you and we. Due to the nature of the English language it is extremely complicated, and unidiomatic, to distinguish between a singular and a plural “you.” However, it would have been possible to keep the impersonality in “*y si no se esucha a las ovejas*,” which in the target text is translated as “and if you don’t listen to the sheep bleat.” Zurita and his poems reflect Paul Ricoeur’s idea when he wrote in ‘Personal Memory, Collective Memory’ (2004: 93):

Why should memory be attributed only to me, to you, to her or to him, in the singular of the three grammatical persons capable of referring to themselves, of addressing another as you (in the singular), or of recounting the deeds of the third party in a narrative in the third person singular? And why could the attribution not be made directly to us to you in the plural, to them?

Zurita’s grammatical problem is central to his poetry and its polyphony, the coalescence of individual and multiple voices, should be maintained as far as possible.

A further element to analyse in this part of the translation is the choice of “i. The Desert of Atacama is nothing but pastures” for “*puros pastizales*.” The target text uses amplification when “*puros*” could have been translated for “pure,” or, also by amplification, “pure and simple,” thus not reproducing the alliteration of the letter “p” found in the source text. This loss is compensated for in “iii. Look at their very dreams bleat over there through those infinite pampas,” where the “t” is alliterated in the target text but not in the source text.

Extremely interesting is also the rendering of section iv:

iv And if you don’t listen to the sheep bleat in the
 Desert of Atacama then do we become the pastures
 of Chile so that everywhere all over the world
 all over the country you listen now to our own souls

bleat throughout those miserable desolate deserts.

Worth noticing is the treatment of the word “patria.” This is not translated with the equivalent “homeland,” “fatherland” or “motherland,” but instead generalised and rendered with “country.” Additionally, we can observe a linguistic compression (“en todo el espacio” = everywhere) and a structural modulation in the second section, so that the translation of this part of the book comes out as freer compared to the previous ones.

3.3.6. El desierto de Atacama V

Moving on to the following poem, “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA V,” one where all the previous positive expectations are questioned, where dreaming can bring nothing but “el mismísimo nunca,” the future dystopia of an inability to make dreams come true, we would like to focus only on sections three and four. Here is Zurita’s original:

- iii Mírenlo transparentarse allá lejos y sólo
acompañado por el viento

- iv Y cuando vengan a desplegarse los paisajes
convergentes y divergentes del Desierto de
Atacama Chile entero habrá sido el más allá de la
vida porque a cambio de Atacama ya se están
extendiendo como un sueño los desiertos
de nuestra propia quimera allá en estos llanos del
demonio

And Deeny’s text:

- iii Look at it become transparent faraway and just
accompanied by the wind

- iv And when the convergent and divergent landscapes
of the Desert of Atacama unfold themselves
all of Chile will have been life beyond because
unlike Atacama they are already extending themselves
like a dream the deserts of our own chimera

over there in these plains of hell

In section iii, the word “solo” stands out in Zurita’s text and suggests an idea of loneliness. However, this is not conveyed by “just,” the word used to translate it in the target text. Rather, this isolated word seems to call for justice or fairness. We might point in the direction of “only” for a better rendering, as this collocates with “accompanied” while being adequate in implying a sense of solitude.

Sections iii and iv of “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA V” make apparent the complexity of Zurita’s allegorical desert, its being a place of solitude and of shared experiences, as in “los paisajes son convergentes y divergentes en el Desierto de Atacama” (the landscapes are convergent and divergent in the Desert of Atacama). The importance that Zurita gives to determiners in this section is maintained in the target text, as we observe in “allá en estos llanos” (over there in these plains). Again, in section iv, modulation is used since the verb is postponed in the target text to convey a more poetic sound to the English translation.

To conclude, we would like to underline a generalisation in the translation of “demonio.” It appears as “hell” in the target text, thus with a more general and neutral term than “devil” or “demon.” Visually, this last word is emphasised in the source text. It is placed, alone, in a new verse. This central role is lost in the target text, thus softening this element of evil.

3.3.7. El desierto de Atacama VI and VII

Following on “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA IV,” in “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA VII,” the last of the seven sections, the desert offers the ultimate communal space where memories and multiple voices come together in order to fight loneliness and segregation. These are unquestionably connected with the element of evil introduced in the previous section, and so with loss and pain. Below the source text followed by the target text:

- i. Miremos entonces el Desierto de Atacama

ii. Miremos nuestra soledad en el desierto

Para que desolado frente a estas fachas el paisaje
devenga una cruz extendida sobre Chile y la soledad de mi
facha vea entonces el redimirse de las otras fachas: mi
propia Redención en el Desierto

iii. Quién diría entonces del redimirse de mi facha

iv. Quién hablaría de la soledad del desierto

Para que mi facha comience a tocar tu facha y tu facha
a esa otra facha y así hasta que todo Chile no sea sino
una sola facha con los brazos abiertos: una larga facha
coronada de espinas

v. Entonces la Cruz no será sino el abrirse de brazos
de mi facha

vi. Nosotros seremos entonces la Corona de Espinas
del Desierto

vii. Entonces clavados facha con facha como una Cruz
extendida sobre Chile habremos visto para siempre
el Solitario Expirar del Desierto de Atacama

i. Let's look then at the Desert of Atacama

ii. Let's look at our loneliness in the desert

So that desolate before these forms the landscape becomes
a cross extended over Chile and the loneliness of my form
then sees the redemption of the other forms: my own
Redemption in the Desert

iii. Then who would speak of the redemption of my form

iv. Who would tell of the desert's loneliness

So that my form begins to touch your form and your form
that other form like that until all of Chile is nothing but
one form with open arms: a long form crowned with thorns

- v. Then the Cross will be nothing but the opening arms
of my form
- vi. We will then be the Crown of Thorns in the Desert
- vii. Then nailed form to form like a Cross
extended over Chile we will have seen forever
the Final Solitary Breath of the Desert of Atacama

Religious redemption, in a direct allusion to the crucifixion of Christ “crowned by thorns” is faith in the ability to express pain and loss in a communal attempt to remember and overcome this state of purgatory.

When we look at some specific vocabulary employed, we see how “miren” in “EL DESIERTO DE ATACAMA IV” becomes here “miremos.” “You” becomes “we.” The target text keeps this distinction, as “look” becomes “let’s look,” linking it to the first lines of this part of the book, where “dejemos” had been rendered with “let’s let ... pass.” In her notes for the English edition, Deeny pointed out that she chose to translate “mirar” as “look” “to suggest the physical turning of the head,” as opposed to “see,” which has a more passive connotation. After all, “look,” together with “watch,” is the established equivalent for “mirar.”

The following comment of the translator is on the Chilean term “facha, which is similar to the word “look,” as in the particular quality of a person’s appearance. According to *DRAE*, the term means “traza, figura, aspecto,” and comes from the Italian “faccia” (face). Besides, according to the *Diccionario de Chilenismos y de otras Voces y Locuciones Viciosas* in Chile the term is linked to “pinta” or “buena facha,” as people mistake it with “fachada” (façade, appearance). In current Spanish society it is also a short term for fascist (and this is another borrowing from the Italian word “fascismo,”) an idea which will necessarily vanish in the English translation. We believe that here, the term “facha” is employed by Zurita to define the plurality of Chilean society. Anyhow, in English, Deeny decided to render the term with “form” because its repetition opens up

through assonance to “crown,” “thorn,” “forever” and “cross.” The same happens in the source text, where the repetition of “facha” sounds in relation to words such as “devenga” (becomes), “extendida” (extends), and “soledad” (solitude). If Deeny were to translate “facha” as “look,” “its repetition would have become evocative of commercialism, the fashion industry, and the superficial in the same way that looks or images are continuously brought out to public consumption” (Zurita, 2009: 99). Moreover, “in this context, “form” also suggests the breaking down and the piecing back together of actual aesthetic, generic, physical, spiritual, and psychological forms” (ibid.). Determining what a word evokes as a noun or as a verb can make it fit or unfit for a translation.

At the end of section iv, the strategy we have just discussed leads to a variation in textual tone. Instead of five lines like in the source text, we observe the last two lines merging into one in order to create an assonance in the target text: “a long form crowned with thorns.” However, while in the previous lines of the source text the repetition of “facha” provides an anxious rhythm to the text (which is maintained in the target text), this assonance is absent in the last part of the paragraph, causing a harsh halt which interrupts lyricism (unlike in the target text).

In this poem one also notices a variation in parallelism at the beginning of the verses. Section iii and iv start in the source text with “quién,” and v and vii with “entonces.” In the target text there is instead a parallelism only of “then,” which creates a deeper connection with the previous parts of “The Desert of Atacama” we have previously discussed.

We conclude here our analysis in which we have identified a number of repetitions, parallelism, rhymes, and problematic words and see how certain techniques were prioritized in Denny’s translation. It seems unquestionable that the preservation of sound patterns (as far as the conservation of meaning allowed) was a priority in the target text.

4. Conclusion

Translation of poetry is based on the transference of meanings across languages and the idea of making different voices audible in another language to enrich the literary canon of a certain culture. Thus, even if we share the belief that translation is a very individual task, where every translator has their own individual style and method of translating, in this dissertation we have pointed out how translatability of any poetic work should rely on fidelity to forms, meaning and style which stems from a deep understanding of the source culture, the writer, and their work.

This dissertation's introduction and theoretical framework have helped us investigate such an issue and thus included an analysis of cultural and stylistic aspects of translation. We cannot deny the subjective dimension of evaluation of poetry translation. Even so, we believe there must be a certain degree of objectivity and attempted, through the analysis of translation techniques, to tackle problems the translator might have encountered. When found, the techniques employed were considered on a case-by-case basis. In general terms, the application of a certain translation technique served to maintain rhetorical and rhythmic devices. On other occasions, they provided new meanings and sounds to the target text which served to reinforce general or specific concepts of the source text. Despite of the target text being in general a well achieved piece of translation, occasional losses of meaning cannot be denied.

For instance, in the original collection, multiple voices and forms are pieced together, traversing identities and landscapes. Zurita's own voice cohabits the poetic landscape together with other voices, which could be identified as those of the victims of Pinochet regime: it is a polyphonic narrative. However, the target text does not always achieve to entirely maintain the multiplicity of voices this poem possesses. It does so when it comes to distinguish between feminine and masculine voices but overlooks the occasional impersonal voice. Also, there are changes in meaning due to changes in the form of the translated text.

First of all, the book cover differs from the original edition. While the Chilean edition showed Zurita's scarred cheek, making the image more obscure and open to interpretations that may go into the direction of linking the image to the landscape, the

American edition is more obviously biographical in that it shows Zurita's portrait. It zooms out from the scar, making the cover less symbolic. As far as the poems are concerned, there is also a loss of meaning when the target text displays a different editing of some poems. Their length is generally shortened, resulting in some key words losing their central role.

The same happens with some metaphors. *Purgatorio* contains multiple levels of allegory, among which Christian and existentialist, in its pervading reference to the journey of life of every human being. Zurita's *Purgatorio* alludes to Dante's *Divine Comedy* from its very title. Indeed, there are a few references to the Florentine poet's work, and many more to the Bible throughout Zurita's collection. The biblical allusions are generally maintained as they are easily translated into English, especially when it comes to names (Rachel) and direct references to the life of Christ (such as his crucifixion in "crowned by thorns"). Yet, Dante's undertext is occasionally lost or weakened by the translation which highlights other elements and meanings of Zurita's poems (see "In the middle of the road").

Another important element that we have examined is Zurita's free verse, where rhyme and meter are not to be found. In virtually all of the poems, alliteration carries a considerable value and help create bridges between the different parts of the collection. The translator made instances where the original uses any such devices even more noticeable. Deeny maintained alliteration patterns by mainly using the translation techniques of compensation, at times changing the alliterated consonants. She did so also by expanding grammatical parallelisms, a very frequent device in poems written using the free verse.

All in all, this analysis has helped us gain new skills and develop deeper thought when confronted with a translation assignment, which will definitely help us in the future.

Given the large nature of the work around which this dissertation revolves, it was unfortunately not possible to examine and discuss neither all of the parts of *Purgatorio*, nor every aspect. Nevertheless, it is hoped that with the selection chosen and presented in this dissertation, an insight into the wider pattern of decisions is provided. We cannot help concluding this dissertation but by noticing there could be still much more to do. A more in-depth understanding of translation processes as well as the target and source cultures could effectively propel a better quality in future analysis and, possibly, translation.

Additionally, further investigation might point in the direction of a reception study to research how the target readers perceive the work in general, and their understanding of specific linguistic elements in a comparison between source and target text. On this note, I would like to thank you for reading this dissertation, which is far from being comprehensive of all of the different levels pertaining the field of translation studies.

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