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Not Lost in Translation: Translators' Agency in Promoting Attitudinal Change

The Example of «Las Malas» by Camila Sosa Villada (2019) and its Translation into English, French, and German

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Das Departement Angewandte Linguistik der ZHAW betreibt Angewandte Linguistik als transdisziplinär orientierte Sprachwissenschaft. Diese befasst sich mit den Problemen der realen Welt, in denen Sprache eine zentrale Rolle spielt. Sie identifiziert, analysiert und löst diese Probleme einerseits durch die Anwendung linguistischer Theorien, Methoden und Resultate, andererseits durch die Entwicklung neuer theoretischer und methodischer Ansätze.

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Abstract

Die vorliegende Arbeit ist das Ergebnis einer Analyse eines aktivistischen Romans, *Las Malas*, der von einer argentinischen Trans-Autorin geschrieben wurde, um das gesellschaftliche Bewusstsein für die Demütigung und Marginalisierung, in der die Trans-Gemeinschaft lebt, zu sensibilisieren, sowie von drei Übersetzungen des Romans. Um herauszufinden, inwieweit professionelle Übersetzer:innen ihre Handlungsfähigkeit ausüben und ihre Rolle als Ermöglicher des sozialen Wandels in ihrer jeweiligen Sprachkultur anerkennen, wurden einige kulturell und emotional geladene Auszüge aus dem Originaltext von einer Gruppe von zehn Leser:innen ausgewählt, die der Autorin nicht bekannt sind.

Diese emotional geladenen Auszüge wurden anschliessend mit den Personen diskutiert, die *Las Malas* ins Englische, Deutsche und Französische übersetzt haben.

Als konzeptueller Rahmen für die Textanalyse dienten die kontrastive Grammatik, die Diskursanalyse, des Qualitätsbewertungsmodells von Juliane House und der Normen von Gideon Toury. Die Untersuchung des Verhältnisses zwischen diesen Übersetzungen und den sozioökonomischen Bedingungen der Kultur des Ausgangstextes ergab, dass die hervorstechenden aktivistischen Inhalte meist so übersetzt wurden, dass sie die gleiche oder zumindest eine ähnliche Wirkung auf das Zielpublikum ausübten. Obwohl einige geographische, soziale, historische oder kulturelle Bezüge in den Zieltexten verloren gingen, beeinträchtigte dies weder das Verständnis der übersetzten Texte, noch schmälerte es das berufliche Selbstkonzept der Übersetzer:innen und ihre Selbstwahrnehmung als Vermittler zwischen den Sprachkulturen. Somit stützen die bisherigen Ergebnisse die Hypothese, dass Übersetzer:innen, bedingt durch die soziokulturellen Verhältnisse des LGBTQ+-Kollektivs in Argentinien, das Potenzial haben, eine entscheidende Rolle bei der gesellschaftlichen Anerkennung von *travestis* zu spielen, und ihnen zu helfen, eine Stimme zu finden und ihre weibliche Identität neu zu definieren, um so einen Wandel in der Haltung gegenüber dieser marginalisierten Gruppe zu fördern.

The present thesis is the result of an analysis of an activist novel, *Las Malas*, written by an Argentinian transvestite author seeking to raise social awareness about the indignity and marginalization in which the trans community lives, and three of the novel's translations. In order to discover to what extent the professional translators exert their agency and acknowledge their role as enablers of social change in their respective linguacultures, cultural and emotionally laden points were selected from the original text by a group of ten readers unknown to the author of this thesis. These rich points are discussed with the professional translators – working respectively into English, German and French - of *Las Malas*. The results are analyzed using contrastive grammar, discourse analysis, Juliane House's quality assessment model and Gideon Toury's norms as a conceptual framework. Studying the relationship between these translations and the socio-economic conditions of the source text's (ST) culture reveal that the salient activist rich points have mostly been

translated in a way that conveyed the same or at least a similar impact on its target readers. Although certain geographical, social, historical or cultural references were lost in the target texts (TT), this neither hindered the understanding of the translated texts nor did it belittle the translators' professional self-concept and their self-perception as mediators across linguacultures. The findings so far therefore support the hypothesis that, induced by the socio-cultural conditions of the LGBTQ+ collective in Argentina, translators have demonstrated the potential to play a critical role in making *travestis* socially acknowledged, help them to find a voice, and redefine their female identity in an effort to promote a change in attitudes towards this marginalized group.

1 Introduction

Traditionally, translation has been defined as the transfer of a text from a source language into a (text in the) target language (Snell-Horny, 2005). This illustrates that the nature of this transfer is not words or languages, but texts, texts that “[...] may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of” (in Halliday and Hasan 1985, p. 10)

Translation is crucial for all fields of human activity, ranging from economy, tourism, education, politics and governance to culture and literature (Woodsworth, 2013), and it enables communication and understanding between different language communities (Burnett, 2018). Following this line of thought, translators can be perceived as culture brokers, helping build bridges between peoples. Translation can be thus considered a form of cross-cultural communication, a communication defined by a specific purpose and aimed at a specific audience. This purpose (or *skopos*) influences the rendition of any translation, including its content, form, style, etc. (Vermeer, 1978) and, although it might seem like a trivial choice, finding the right word can be a difficult decision, for it puts the translator in the position of committing not to a word but to a reader as the translator has both an audience and different possible uses of the same language in mind. In *The Translator's Invisibility*, which in the 1990s raised many fundamental questions about the translator's work, Venuti devotes many pages to the history of translation and the role that had been attributed to it as the profession took shape. Referring to his historical analysis and interpretation, he claims that translators are exploited as they serve as agents of hegemonic designs and domesticating practices. In his later work, *Contra Instrumentalism*, Venuti (2019, p. 1) argues that translation should not be “the reproduction or transfer of an invariant that is contained in or caused by the source text” but “an interpretive act that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning, and effect according to intelligibilities and interests in the receiving culture”. For his part, Marais focusses on the inevitable agency of translators by claiming that “translators are agents through their semiotic work even if they do not have a particular activist agenda” (Marais, 2020, p. 107) In a similar vein, Tymoczko (2014, p. 7) criticizes the fact that “conceptualizations of translation can be associated with the metaphor of the translator as standing ‘between’ in the transfer process,” which “suggests that the translator is neutral, above history and ideology.” Hence “the consequence is the effacement of ideology and the evisceration of the agency of the translator as a committed, engaged, and responsible figure.”

Followers of the Sapir-Whorf school viewed language as a direct expression of culture. This has been the subject of a long debate, but the links between language, reality and culture are undeniable. Nida and Taber, like the *skopos* theorists after them, describe language as an essential component of culture. Words are considered symbols of cultural phenomena, thus translation cannot consist in providing exact equivalents of words in the source language, but rather “in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style.” (Nida

and Taber, 1969, p. 12; in Snell-Hornby, 2005). From this perspective, some scholars like Baker, Cronin or Lambert, argue that it is precisely because they are not neutral conduits that translators should aim at disseminating ideas across cultural and linguistic barriers, brandishing their work as a tool of social, economic, political and gender understanding. Precisely because translators can be agents of social change, they can enable societies to change for the better, to become more tolerant, fairer, more inclusive.

One of the defining characteristics of our time is the intense interconnectedness of economic, social, and political structures. As the world has increasingly become a dense network of relations, our view of it is constantly being reshaped through various forms of linguistic and cultural exchange. In this context, it is necessary to study and reflect on what certain scholars like Venuti and Tymoczko claim is the new position of human translators and the implications their work has in terms of added human value and as enablers of social change.

On this basis, we can say that humans, with their opinions, values, and sets of ideas, are decisively influenced by their enculturation and their own experience of the world. This squares with the latest models of 4EA cognition, which posit that human cognition is embodied, embedded, enacted, extended and affective experience of the world (Paine, 2016). For example, Hutchins (1995) speaks of distributed cognition, that is, cognition viewed as dependent on the environment, while Wheeler (2005) refers to an enactivist conception of cognition, by means of which cognitive attunement to the environment consists of the relationship between the environment itself and the perceiver's intentions. Following this line of thought, the very idea of appropriate cognition and attunement to the environment is intelligible only in terms of the cognizer's agency.

In general terms, agency alludes to the capacity all individuals enjoy to act freely and to make their own free decisions, as well as to have control over their own actions and their repercussions. For example, the second entry on the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines agency as "the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power."¹ Consequently, translators' agency refers to the professional translators' skill and willingness to comprehend and interpret a source text and the subsequent ability and willingness to make meaning of it through conscious choices and creative action. Translation has conventionally been considered in terms of and interpretive process. It is effective for informing recipients of what someone else has said, written, or thought (Gutt, 2017). However, in today's globalized world, translation practice is changing rapidly. There is increasing interconnectedness and interdependence, which inevitably has a major impact on translators and translation practice. As Gutt (2017) points out, the term translation is increasingly used to refer to communication that is descriptive in nature. It is no longer pertinent for translation to be just an

¹ See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/agency>

informative act; it can be a new utterance whose main objective is to make a remark or to address a topic. In Tymoczko's (2014) words:

I had the intuition that opening the definition of translation to include a larger range of ideas besides those currently dominant in the West, [...] would also lead to insights about the agency of translators, and ultimately to the empowerment of translators. (p. 8)

Similarly, I share the belief that there is an urgent need to rethink translation's role in new ethical terms. Translators can and, in circumstances where inclusion is a socio-cultural imperative, should be the driving force of change when translating activist content, for example about marginalized people. In order to accomplish this, professional translators ought to achieve a self-concept conducive to more adaptative methods wherever necessary, exerting their agency and making a reality of Venuti's (1995, p. 313) "utopian faith in the power of translation to make a difference." Since the reader will come across the notion of self-concept several times during the reading of this thesis, it is appropriate to explain what is meant by it. Professional self-concept refers to the individual's perception of themselves as a professional person. This includes the intuitive understanding of the social role and function of the profession. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology², self-concept contributes to the individual's sense of identity over time. Self-perception is the embodiment of self-concept, and it is manifested in the interconnection between meaningful orientations, self-esteem and self-acceptance. Ehrensberger-Dow and Massey (2013, p. 106) "loosely define translator self-concept as the awareness of the multiple responsibilities and loyalties imposed by both the act and the event of translation." In other words, a translator's professional self-concept and self-perception are constructs that describe how translators understand themselves as professionals and determine their acknowledgment of the value and influence of their work.

This Master's thesis seeks to explore if, how and the extent to which translators use their interpretive agency to promote the changes in attitude in the target linguacultures that an activist writer seeks to achieve in their original work. To do so, it aims at providing insight into the following research questions: Do translators see themselves as having agency? And if so, what role do translators play in eliciting societal change? These lead on to the following sub-questions: To what extent do translators acknowledge their potential social contribution, and do they consciously exert their agency? In other words, this thesis considers what the translators' professional self-concept and self-perception are, that is to say, their perception of professional roles and responsibilities as translators of activist literature and as mediators across linguacultures.

The investigation will be based on the literary work *Las Malas*, by the trans author Camila Sosa Villada. The book awakened the dormant conscience of a society that was ready to welcome the transvestite community, but which, far from their reality, had not realized their

² <https://dictionary.apa.org/self-concept>

struggle to get out of the marginal situation in which they were living. Since its launch in 2019, *Las Malas* has been the subject of debate and praise, and few readers have remained impassive to the strength of its message. Planeta de Libros, the online platform of Editorial Planeta, advertises the book by saying that it is

an explosive manifesto, a guided visit to the imagination of its author and a chronicle unlike any other. In its DNA converge the two trans facets that most repel and terrify the good society: transvestite fury and the celebration of being a transvestite. *Las Malas* is the kind of book that, as soon as we finish reading, we want the whole world to read it.³

Further, the trans social psychologist Marlene Wayar applauds the fact that

Camila Sosa Villada shouts truth in an overtly trans prose and from there demands a new hermeneutic from every person outside our community. Is the novel true to the point of exacerbation, is all this fantasy true? Yes! Because in her book Camila paints us in all our densities and exposes you in your lies and ominous actions towards us.³

First in Argentina, then in other Latin American countries soon afterwards, more and more people recommended reading the book, and, before long, *Las Malas*, with 6 editions in less than a year, was known in every circle of Latin American society. The Argentinian online newspaper *Redacción* published in December 2021 an article about the increase in book sales during the confinement period and, in it, makes special reference to *Las Malas*.

Pregunté en los dos grupos editoriales más grandes de la Argentina cuáles son los títulos más vendidos desde el 20 de marzo hasta hoy y me pasaron sus best-sellers (pero no me dieron las cifras ni el orden). Los más vendidos de Planeta fueron *Aramburu* (de María O' Donnell), *Las malas* (de Camila Sosa Villada), *El fin del amor* (de Tamara Tenenbaum), *Filosofía a martillazos II* (de Darío Sztajnszrajber), *Sexo ATR* (de Cecilia Ce) y *El duelo* (de Gabriel Rolón).

El ingreso de Camila Sosa Villada en el podio de cuarentena, con su historia de travestis y noches, muestra una oportunidad para leer nuevas voces. (...) La oportunidad es para la literatura: qué sucede cuando aparecen escritos que se corren del saber legítimo de la literatura.⁴

[I asked the two largest publishing groups in Argentina which are the best-selling titles since March 20 until today and they gave me their best-sellers (but they did not give me the numbers or the order).

Planeta's best sellers were *Aramburu* (by María O' Donnell), *Las malas* (by Camila Sosa Villada), *El fin del amor* (by Tamara Tenenbaum), *Filosofía a martillazos II* (by Darío Sztajnszrajber), *Sexo ATR* (by Cecilia Ce) and *El duelo* (by Gabriel Rolón).

The entry of Camila Sosa Villada in the quarantine podium, with her story of transvestites and nights, shows an opportunity to read new voices. (...) The opportunity is for literature: what happens when writings appear that move away from the legitimate knowledge of literature? (my translation)]

³ <https://www.planetadelibros.com.ar/libro-las-malas/288285> - my own translation

⁴ <https://www.redaccion.com.ar/los-libros-mas-vendidos-en-cuarentena/>

It is the social impact of the activism in the book the reason why it and three of its translations are analyzed in this thesis as a means to obtain answers to the research questions posed above.

2 Approach

With its illocutionary and perlocutionary features, the activist component of translation might be considered a speech act in its own right, one that inspires, mobilizes, and incites defiance, while effectively engaging in social movements and sociopolitical change. Baker (2012, p. 1) eloquently writes that

translation as such does not mediate cultural encounters that exist outside the act of translation but rather participates in producing these encounters. It does not reproduce texts but constructs cultural realities, and it does so by intervening in the processes of narration and renarration that constitute all encounters, and that essentially construct the world for us. It is not an innocent act of disinterested mediation but an important means of constructing identities and configuring the shape of any encounter.

From this perspective, translators can be seen as generators of new knowledge as they, sometimes unconsciously, choose to challenge the conventional faithfulness of translation and to bring their own worldview into their work. These translators' exercise of power seems to be due to their belief that the texts they produce are useful to humanity or have a positive impact on their linguaculture in a largely ideological manner. This thesis intends to analyze the extent to which translators acknowledge their potential social contribution and whether they consciously exert their agency. In other words, it explores translators' professional self-concept as mediators across linguacultures. Consequently, it adopts a broadly sociological approach to how translation is done as well as in what social context it is done. The thesis is an attempt to analyze the translators' choices in different geopolitical, social and cultural settings, contextualizing translation as a social practice to determine the extent to which translators use their skills to promote behavioral change in the target linguaculture.

The methodological design is qualitative-descriptive. It will analyze the communication process between translated books and their readers, who do not share the same language and culture as the original. The aim is to determine the role of the translator as an intercultural mediator seeking to achieve effective communication by producing texts with the same social impact (as the ST) in their own linguacultures. In order to contextualize the issues it raises, this thesis will also describe relevant aspects of the history of translation studies (TS), from the perception of it as a largely equivalence-oriented activity where the translator serves as a conduit for input and output to a more socio-culturally and socio-cognitive conceptualization of what translation is – with the purpose of outlining the changing landscape of TS and the expected function of professional translators within it. The thesis will then explore the relationship between language and culture and finally seek to position the translator as an active participant in intercultural communication, established on the basis of an analysis and evaluation of the collected data. The ultimate goal of this thesis is to explore the use that translators make of their agency when it comes to translating literary activism.

2.1 Framework and Model

The analysis of agency and its relation to activism in the present thesis will focus on salient sociocultural and activist rich points in the source text, an overtly activist novel written by an Argentinian transvestite, and ascertain how they have been translated for reception in the target culture by a combination of re-engineered analysis of target text segments and interview data collected from the translators themselves. Through the analysis of the data obtained, and taking into consideration information on the broader (socio-cultural context, institutional context, thematic setting, participants) and the more immediate contextual levels (actual rich points chosen), it intends to find out whether and how translators deal with cultural differences in the various societal settings they aim to reach and, by extension, how the translators' perceptions of their role differs from the way it is defined by the societies involved in the study.

Describing a society's expectations regarding the role and competence of a translator tends to be a complex issue. When it comes to competence, one of the most commonly held beliefs is that when working into a second language, translators deliver texts of inferior quality (cf. Durban 2011). Although this is not necessarily true, and as Hunziker Heeb (2016) states:

this perception is mostly based on anecdotal evidence provided by translation professionals, teachers and researchers alike, but it has been perpetuated by translation service providers, many of whom advertise their exclusively native speaker translations. This seems to have become an easily recognizable indicator of a provider's assumed integrity and quality of work. (p. 1)

For example, the DÜV, the Swiss interpreters and translators' association, only admits professionals working exclusively into their mother tongue as members. Their webpage (duev.ch) advertises in three Swiss official languages as well as in English: "We transfer your written texts into one or more target languages in a manner appropriate for your intended audience. Our translators work exclusively into their mother tongues." Furthermore, and according to the EU quality standards, all translated texts should comply with the general principles and quality requirements for professional translation laid down in the international standard ISO 17100⁵. Codes of conduct and ethical codes such as confidentiality, reliability, impartiality and competence (see the European Code of Professional Practice⁶) provide a framework against which the translator's role can be assessed.

⁵ ISO 17100, 5.3.1: "Throughout this process, the translator shall provide a service conforming to this International Standard as regards: a) compliance with specific domain and client terminology and/or any other reference material provided and ensuring terminological consistency during translation; b) the semantic accuracy of the target language content; c) the appropriate syntax, spelling, punctuation, diacritical marks and other orthographical conventions of the target language; d) lexical cohesion and phraseology; e) compliance with any proprietary and/or client style guide (including register and language variants); f) locale and any applicable standards; g) formatting; h) the target audience and purpose of the target language content."

⁶ [European Code of Professional Practice \(translation-ethics.ru\)](http://translation-ethics.ru)

All this points to the presupposition that societies tend to have a clear outline of what translator's competence and roles should be, namely, "the traditional tie to the source text" (Katan, 2011, p.18). In fact, survey data shows that "members of the group feel themselves to be 'professional' due to their specialized knowledge and abilities. However, their professionalism is mainly limited to their responsibilities to the text itself, and there is relatively little interest in the wider context" (Katan, 2011, p.28). Nevertheless, the interpretation of the translators' role tends to be complex, mostly because concepts such as culture and reality are becoming ever more important in the professional world. Kovács (2008) writes on the meaning of the translator's role that reality is always a serious business where it is assumed that a language is used to pin down something vital for man in order to be able to act upon such linguistic description of life in good faith. Therefore, the difficulty for the translator lies in rendering a translation that makes sense when checked against two realities. This includes reality covering our mental constructs, that need to be systematically described in terms of a high-level ontology language in order to establish relations between both languages and ensure that the depictions in the SL match their counterparts in the TL.

As previously stated, this thesis aims to explore the use professional translators' make of their agency, that is whether and how they address the cultural differences between the setting of the original novel and that of their audience's social context. In order to do so, the author of this thesis will use the corresponding salient target-text segments to ascertain the translators' approaches and strategies in conveying their meaning by a process of reverse-engineering. Particular attention will be devoted to shifts or drifts in conceptual meaning. The thesis is guided by the theoretical framework of contrastive linguistics, discourse analysis, Juliane House's functional-pragmatic model, and Gideon Toury's (1995) norm-based descriptive translation studies (DTS) approach all serving as analytical elements to reverse engineer translators' decision-making and problem-solving strategies, combined with translators' interview data (interviews as well as translations in German, French and English of an Argentinian source text).

Contrastive linguistics is concerned with pairs of languages that are socio-culturally linked either because they are used by a considerable number of bi-or multilingual speakers, or because a substantial amount of linguistic output (text, discourse) is translated from one language into the other. It compares the linguistic elements in each language with the aim of describing their similarities and differences. Though mainly used for language learning (Di Pietro, 1971) or for compiling bilingual dictionaries (Hartmann, 1991), a third use has been proposed and illustrated by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) and, more recently, by Hatim and Mason (1997); namely, to facilitate interlingual transfer in the process of translating texts from one language to another. Discourse analysis has been developed in different countries from different perspectives (i.e., social, anthropological, linguistic, among others). Research in this discipline, is concerned with understanding language in use, be it written, oral or audiovisual discourse. One of the exponents of this discipline, Teun van Dijk (1992), suggests that at all levels of discourse we can find traces of context. These traces or clues

allow us to glimpse social characteristics of participants, such as gender, class, ethnicity, age, origin, and other forms of group membership. Furthermore, he argues that social contexts are changeable and, as speakers of a language, we passively follow the dictates of the group, society or culture we belong to. In their book *Las cosas del decir: Manual de análisis del discurso*, Calsamiglia and Tusón (2007) speak of discourse as a social practice that arises from contextualized oral or written linguistic use. They argue that discourse is part of social life and at the same time an instrument that creates social life. Thus, we can say that discourse reflects society and that it is through discourse that we can understand the relationships that exist in society. In all discourses there is an end and an independence with the context. (2007, p. 113) This thesis will rely on these two disciplines to analyze the use of language, both in the original text and in the three translated versions of the text, paying special attention to the rich points salient due to their activist content, or to their enculturation.

Further, House's model is based on the assumption that translation is a linguistic phenomenon and that linguistic analysis provides the basis for judgment and evaluation. Even though her model disregards many factors that allow freedom for the translators to make decisions, it develops on the linguistic conceptions of Halliday, who believes that language is embedded in social life and therefore focuses on texts, considering texts as the products of human decision processes that can be analyzed in a more tangible and less ambiguous way (cf. Munday, 2001)

Translation quality assessment is a key element of some translation theories. House's revised model (1997; 2015) and Halliday's systemic functional theory are rooted in the analysis of pragmatics, discourse analysis and corpus-based spoken/written language differentiation. To put it simply, House bases her model on the methodical revaluation of the relationship between source and target texts, pinpointing 'mismatches' or 'errors', and thus assessing the quality of a translation. Her model draws on the key concept of register, which includes Halliday's notions of field, tenor and mode. Subject matter and social function make up a field. The social attitude (formal or casual) between the author and the reader is referred to as tenor. The "channel" (spoken/written) and the amount of involvement (monologue, conversation, etc.) between author and addressee are described by mode (see Munday, 2001). Furthermore, genre permits each textual sample to be associated with a text type with which it has a common purpose. (House, 2015). Figure 1 shows a visual representation of House's model.

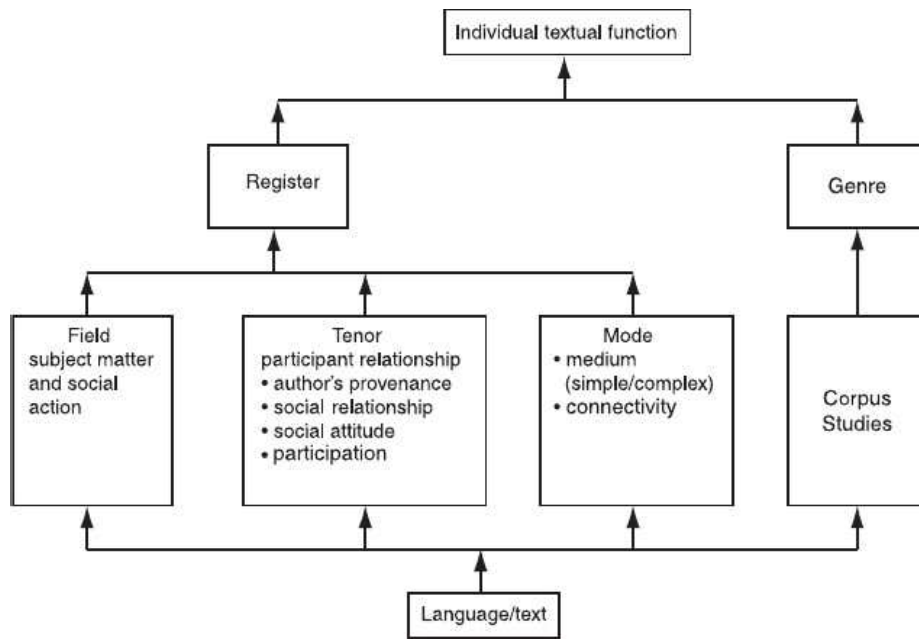


Figure 1: Scheme for analyzing and comparing original and translated texts (House, 2015, p. 127)

As House points out, any discrepancy between source text and target text is considered an error. Thus, discrepancies are divided into two categories: 'covert' – or hidden- errors (all interdimensional discrepancies, such as ignoring features like field, tenor and mode in translation) and 'overt' – or manifest- errors (differences in the denotative meanings of source and target texts). As Munday (2001) states,

House believes (p. 112) that equivalence has to be sought at the level of language/text, register and genre. The individual text function cannot, however, be the same for TT and ST since the discourse worlds in which they operate are different. (p. 93)

Undoubtedly, the novel chosen as this thesis' case study (*Las Malas*) is immersed in a unique sociolinguistic context, so that in order to characterize its textual function, the text has to be analyzed in detail intra- as well as extralinguistically. Moreover, the translation not only has to possess the same textual function, but also has to be able to capture it through the same situational and dimensional factors that characterize *Las Malas*. Juliane House's functional pragmatic model aims at assessing the quality of a translation, but for the purpose of this thesis, the very concept of quality is problematic, in the sense that it is imperative to know what quality criteria the translator has considered. Moreover, this thesis intends to examine the use professional translators make of their agency when translating activist content, and in a similar vein, how they can act as instruments of social change. In other words, in order to assess translation quality, the focus should be on a macro-analytical level and only then on a micro-analytical framework, i.e., moving from considerations of ideology, function, genre and register to the communicative value of linguistic units in order to know what choices and decisions the translator has made. To answer the research questions posed, though, this thesis ought to work in the opposite direction. Although discussed with the interviewed translators, their choices will be analyzed from the micro to the macro level.

Another difficulty can be that the category of genre is socially determined, sometimes influenced by the rigidity of the target culture's social norms and, therefore, cannot be established scientifically.

In the light of the current developments in TS and the changing landscape of the translation practice, it seems that the quality assessment of a translation would greatly benefit by the integration of aspects from intercultural studies, since translation itself can be understood as an act of intercultural communication between members of different groups. Intercultural understanding can thus be seen as the success of linguistic-cultural transposition, measured by the degree of functional equivalence achieved, that is to say, whether and to what extent certain linguistic functions are reciprocally fulfilled in a given situation (cf. House 1977). Intercultural misunderstanding, in this perspective, may be reduced to a failure to identify functional equivalence.

As stated, Juliane House's functional pragmatic model shall not be used to assess the quality of the translations analyzed in this thesis, nevertheless, it will be used as a guide and support when evaluating the translated texts. As for the attempt at reverse-engineering the translators' choices, the analysis will take into account the methodology proposed by the Israeli scholar Gideon Toury for the field of DTS.

For Toury (1995, p. 13), translations first and foremost occupy a position in the social and literary systems of the target culture, and this position determines the translation strategies that are employed. With this approach, he is continuing and building on the polysystem work of Even-Zohar and on earlier versions of his own work (Toury, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1991). Toury (1995, pp. 36–39 and 102) proposes the following three-phase methodology for systematic DTS, incorporating a description of the product and the wider role of the sociocultural system:

- (1) Situate the text within the target culture system, looking at its significance or acceptability.
- (2) Compare the ST and the TT for shifts, identifying relationships between 'coupled pairs' of ST and TT segments.
- (3) Attempt generalizations, reconstructing the process of translation for this ST–TT pair.

An important additional step is the possibility of repeating these phases for other pairs of similar texts in order to widen the corpus and to build up a descriptive profile of translations according to genre, period, author, etc. (in Munday 2001, pp. 110–111)

Toury's concept will be used to uncover patterns in translation behavior, to make inferences about the translators' decision-making processes, and to recreate the norms operating in translation. By norm, Toury (1995, p. 55) understands "the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right or wrong, adequate or inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations."

2.2 Relevant “Turns” in Translation Studies

Viewed historically and chronologically, translation was, for a long time prior to the emergence of more functionally oriented theories and models, considered a linguistic phenomenon, a process of conveying meaning through the transcoding of language. As Munday points out, “although the practice of translating is long established, the study of the field developed into an academic discipline only in the second half of the twentieth century. Before that, translation had normally been merely an element of language learning” (2001, p. 24).

When scholars first endeavored to establish the basis for the theorization of translation, they did so from the perspective of the study of languages as systems that exist for the purpose of communication: the translators themselves were not considered a major subject of study. As argued by Guzmán (2009), depending on the focus or perspective of the study, translators are found performing different tasks, responding to various ‘missions’ and obeying different characterizations. The depiction of the translator most generally acknowledged is connected with their absence and invisibility. Translators have been commonly portrayed in translation theory as a scribe, a copyist, a neutral messenger. According to these perceptions, translators and their works are secondary; and their place in relation to the author of the original work and to the work itself, is subordinate (Guzmán, 2009).

Influential theories on translation emerged in the course of the seventeenth century, for example that of John Dryden, whose trichotomy on translation types (metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation) makes big strides towards conveying the meaning of an original text rather than their exact words (thus rejecting literal, word-for-word translation as well as the construction of a new text based on the original, which would make a translator visible) As quoted in Venuti (2004, p. 17-18), Dryden refutes metaphrase (word-for-word) for lacking fluency or easy readability. Instead, he approves of paraphrasing, which seeks to render meaning. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the key issue of translatability and untranslatability was widely discussed. In 1813, the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote a key paper on different methods of translation, claiming that a foreignizing translation technique could help the German language and literature prevail and overcome the cultural and political domination that France exercised over German-speaking regions. Hence, he moved beyond the polarity of word-for-word and sense-for-sense, literal or free translation. He argued that the real question was how to bring the writer and the reader together: “Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer towards the reader” (Schleiermacher, 1813/2004, p. 49; quoted and translated in Munday, 2001, p. 29). At the onset of the twentieth century, trends in translation theory were heavily influenced by his hermeneutic views and German literature and philosophy. Language was not viewed as communicative, but as constitutive, as a representation of reality. For scholars like Schleiermacher, translation was a creative force in which specific transla-

tion strategies served a variety of cultural and social functions, paving the way for the construction of nations, literatures and languages (see Venuti, 2004, p. 74). According to this line of thought, translation can be considered an interpretation which necessarily reconstructs and alters the source text.

2.2.1 The Pragmatic Turn

From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, a more systematic and linguistic oriented approach to translation as a discipline began to emerge, and focus was placed on models and theories that see translation as a linguistic equivalence-oriented operation. Perceptions of the figure of the translator, proposed by linguistically oriented TS, suggested that the translator's role was to solve problems and that translating meaning was their most clearly defined task. As Ulrych and Bolleteiri Bosinelli (1999, p. 229) explain, the development of new linguistic paradigms that considered language "as a social phenomenon that occurs within a specific cultural context," such as discourse analysis, text linguistics, socio-linguistics, and pragmatics, strengthened the links between translation and linguistics.

For researchers such as Mounin, Vinay and Darbelnet, the main object of TS was to address the equivalence between the source text and the target text, in other words, meaning was to be transferred and preserved in the translated text. The mere possibility of meaning recovery presupposes that translation is possible; it is an empirical vision that conceives language as communicative, rather than constitutive. The conceptualization of translation under this view, therefore, sets out to explain how to translate in order to communicate meaning and how to do it well. Walter Benjamin (1923, p.159) argues in his essay, *The Translator's Task*, that the aim of a translation should not be to confer to the readers an understanding of the meaning or information content of the original but that it should express the reciprocity between languages: "The translator's task consists in this : to find the intention toward the language into which the work is to be translated, on the basis of which an echo of the original can be awakened in it."

The ideas of linguists such as Roman Jakobson, one of the main representatives of these early stages of TS, contributed to challenging the notion of untranslatability. In his canonical essay *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, Jakobson (1959) describes translation as a decoding process that results in the recoding of a certain sign or combination of signs as the end result:

any comparison of two languages implies an examination of their mutual translatability; widespread practice of interlingual communication, particular translation activities, must be kept under constant scrutiny by linguistic science. (p. 234)

Another representative of the linguistic approach is Eugene Nida, who incorporated elements of Chomsky's generative grammar as a theoretical framework and even used the word science in the title of his book *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964a) (cf. Munday,

2001). Nida also contributed to challenging the dogma of impossibility from a linguistic perspective. In *Principles of Correspondence*, he asserts that there can be no totally accurate translation and that the full impact of a translation may be "close enough to the original, but there can be no identity in detail" (Nida, 2000, p. 196). Just as Jakobson believes that translation should not be evaluated in terms of loss, betrayal or failure because "translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes" (1959, p. 233), Nida believes that the process of translation is more complex than decoding and recoding, and that "competent translation involves the linguistic operations of analysis, translation and restructuring" (p. 79). This is to say, both scholars support the idea that everything can be translated, even traditionally "untranslatable" genres such as poetry, the notion of equivalence being key. Although much criticized (i.e. by Lefevere, Larose, Gentzler) and with diverging opinions on its exact meaning and application, the concept of equivalence focuses on the receiver rather than the text, which has contributed to furthering the debate and, by extension, the theories of TS.

Parallel to this, some scholars incorporated contrastive analysis, (the systematic study of two different languages to determine their structural similarities and differences). Examples are Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) or Catford, who in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965) clearly stated his intention of assisting translation research. It may be said that this was a first attempt to study translation as a discipline. The study of translation from this perspective implied a turn, as linguistics was the first field of research to offer TS the rigor and systematicity necessary to make it a genuine discipline. However, linguistic approaches overlooked the study of translators, seeing them simply as instruments to solve problems; they have limited their analysis to explaining the mechanisms underlying translation practice under the assumption of a well-defined separation between languages, and hence, a supposed transparency of the concepts of language and translation.

But TS per se, understood as an area of research that deals with the theory, description, and relevance of translation, only really began in the 1970s after the seminal essay by James S. Holmes mapping the discipline. The term 'Translation Studies' was actually coined by Holmes, an American-Dutch poet and translator, in *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies*, where he describes the discipline as "the complex of problems clustered round the phenomenon of translating and translations" (Holmes, 1972/1988, p.181). In his paper, Holmes highlights the fact that translation research was, at the time, scattered among many other fields, which made it challenging to study it as an independent discipline. Furthermore, Holmes outlined the area of research for TS, a framework that the translation scholar Gideon Toury (1995, p. 10) later represented in a map (see Fig. 2).

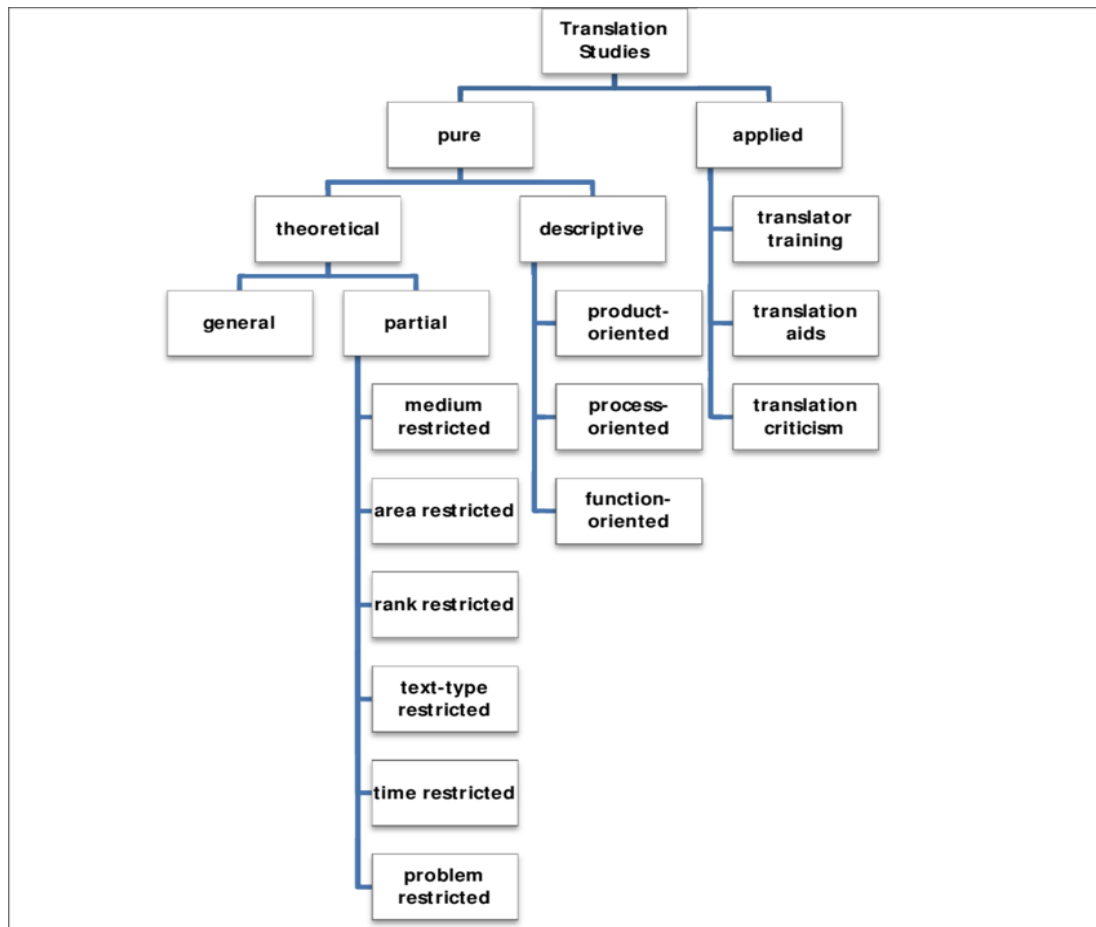


Figure 2: Holmes' "Map" of TS (Toury, 1995, p.10)

2.2.2 The Cultural Turn

The link between translation and linguistics became stronger over the following years, as new paradigms emerged in linguistics that viewed language as "[...] a social phenomenon that takes place within specific cultural context," (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli, 1999, p. 229) such as discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. As Lawrence Venuti (2004, p. 69) remarks in *The Translation Studies Reader*, one of the main contributions of the linguistic oriented approach was to enable translation theory to move away from notions of translation as impossibility and loss and, instead, address the issue of translatability by scrutinizing specific translation problems and describing the methods translators employ to solve them. Since its rise, TS has exhibited a proclivity towards paradigmatic shifts or turns. The reason lies in the very nature and the structure of the discipline's focus. Just as the pragmatic turn of the 1970s made it possible for TS to emerge, the cultural turn of the 1980s and 1990s formed the structure around which TS was shaped (Snell-Horny, 2005, p. 47). Up to that moment, the translation process was considered impervious to external disruptions, immune to social factors. Similarly, translators were supposed to remain unbiased and, above all else, unnoticed. However, as Wolf (2012) explains, from the onset of TS's

inception stage, the various forms of communication within the domain of TS entailed moving beyond the scope of the discipline. From then on, different new theories and approaches emerged. Going through all of them would be relatively ambitious, and not truly necessary for the purpose of this thesis. Nevertheless, a quick overview of this evolution is given below, with the aim of highlighting the growing interest in the cultural aspect of translation studies.

Some authors such as Hermans, van Gorp, Lefevere, Lambert and others argued that “from the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a certain degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose” (Snell-Hornby, 2005). This soon led to them being dubbed the ‘Manipulation School’. For his part, Vermeer published in 1978 a key paper entitled *Ein Rahmen für eine allgemeine Translationstheorie* (A Framework for a General Theory of Translation), which laid the foundations for *skopos theory*, which states that the text must fulfill a communicative function and that it is intended to serve a specific purpose within a given culture. According to it, every translation is subject to an ultimate purpose, *skopos*, which the text must achieve in the target language. In Brazil, Rosemary Arrojo explores the question of the source text as “sacred”, a concept inspired by the “anthropophagy movement” (anthropophagy = cannibalism) that emerged in Brazil in the 1920s as a form of political resistance aimed at rediscovering indigenous roots oppressed by European influence. Followers of this approach developed a new model of translation whereby the Other was neither ignored nor denied but absorbed and reproduced by adding elements of the target culture. In this way, “cannibalism” ceased to be a movement of political resistance and became a response against cultural domination and, later, a philosophy of translation. (Snell-Hornby, 2005, p. 60). In the 1990s, new schools and approaches to translation studies emerged, including Lawrence Venuti, who called for cultural oriented studies and pledged for greater visibility and recognition of translators, and in so doing challenged the upheld idea that transparency should be the measure of a well translated text.

2.2.3 The ‘Sociological Turn’

Like the cultural turn considers the object of TS as “text embedded within its network of both source and target cultural signs” (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, p. 12), the sociological turn views translation as a social practice. I would like to add a side note to specify that the so-called sociological turn, a term coined by Mary Snell-Hornby, is not an uncontroversial concept and, hence not generally acknowledged. Nevertheless, various scholars (like Angelelli, Wolf, Mason and others) have embraced the term, as they believe it describes the current developments:

The displacement of texts (whether written or oral) across time and space, as well as the geographic displacement of people, has encouraged researchers in Translation and Interpreting Studies to consider issues related to translation and interpreting through the lens of the sociology, sociolinguistics, and historiography. (Angelelli, 2014, p. 141)

From a sociological standpoint, any translation is inevitably embedded in social contexts because the act of translating is carried out by humans pertaining to a social system dictating, to a large extent, which strategies to apply in the translation process. “The sociological turn marks paradigmatic changes in reflection on the reasons conditioning a translation process” (Wolf, p. 130).

These new approaches arising from sociological and philosophical perspectives have offered translation a conceptual framework different from that proposed by the linguistic approach while generally paying more attention to the figure of the translator, as well as to their role. Often interested in recognizing and exploring the interpretative character of translation, the sociological turn provides a space to reflect on translation as a creative act and on translators as more visible participant. In fact, recognizing the translator as a visible subject is important not only for translators to be accorded their rightful place as professionals and institutional agents in the creation of culture, but also to reveal the real negotiations and different interests that may be at stake in the translation exchange. Hatim and Munday (2019) believe that

power play is an important theme for cultural commentators and translation scholars. In both theory and practice of translation, power resides in the deployment of language as an ideological weapon for excluding or including a reader, a value system, a set of beliefs, or even an entire culture. (p. 200)

Venuti's perspectives on translation assume that translation is much more complex than what is conventionally known as a communicative act. According to him, translation inevitably inscribes the original text in the values of the receiving culture. He states that “translation is a double writing, a rewriting of the foreign text according to domestic cultural values, any translation requires a double reading—as both communication and inscription” (1995, p. 312).

In conclusion, TS has been the subject of numerous approaches since its emergence. Dominant concepts such as, for example, translatability, equivalence, or visibility have acted as a platform for the development of the different paradigmatic turns. Up to the first half of the twentieth century translation was perceived mainly as a component of language learning. Later, in the second half of the twentieth century, the study of the discipline developed into a distinct academic field, and it achieved a certain authority within university research and teaching institutions. As this discipline moved towards the present, new methods and concepts were developed. The brief review in this MA thesis, albeit incomplete, reflects that TS is now an interdisciplinary field which brings together approaches from a wide range of language and cultural studies, that adapts and produces new models customized to its own requirements for its own use.

2.3 Previous relevant research

As mentioned above, since the early days of TS, the discipline has seen paradigmatic shifts, according to the different approaches and positions of various academics, and generated increased interest, which demonstrates the importance of translation in all fields and at all times. But it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that language started to be analyzed in relation to its sociocultural function. From that time onwards, translation began to be considered as an act of intercultural communication.

According to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue published by the Council of Europe (2008), intercultural communication is understood as

a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. (p. 17)

The importance of international, intercultural communication in the modern world is undeniable, for it plays a key role in areas such as political, economic and sociocultural integration, much as in the cohesion of different linguacultures and societies. Köksal and Yürük (2017) emphasize that

the prerequisites of an effective intercultural communication cannot be limited to a merely good command of an international language. Still, apart from the linguistic factor, such notions as equal dignity and mutual respect, gender equality, the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of the law comprise a set of conditions, necessary for a fruitful intercultural communication. (p. 11)

According to the preceding explanation, the translator serves as a liaison between two languages and two cultures. The translator is, additionally, an intercultural communication specialist with the mission of building bridges and assisting others in overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. Indeed, translation represents a place where previously separate cultures meet and build lasting relationships. It is therefore fairly self-evident why translation has become so crucial, and why the translator is tasked with not just translating the text but also determining how to convey the main concepts in the best possible way for their audiences to interpret them effectively. Köksal and Yürük (2017) say it best in their paper *The Role of Translator in Intercultural Communication*. According to them, the purpose of any translation is to replace the original text and make it comprehensible to those who cannot read it. While knowledge of history is a prerequisite for translating a work from a completely different country with a completely different linguaculture, mastering the vocabulary and grammar of a foreign language is not enough to qualify as a competent translator. This heavy responsibility places a burden on the translator. "It is essential to have a thorough knowledge of his/her own culture and own language and be aware of the source-language culture before attempting to build any bridge between them." (2017, p.329)

In this sense, the concept of 'intercultural communication' is of paramount importance in the context of globalization and the growing trend towards international cooperation in various fields, where translators need to acquire not only adequate foreign language training but also cultural training. The ultimate goal of translation is to foster integration and collaboration, as well as promote equality and tolerance, by deepening knowledge of other mindsets, world views, value systems, frames of reference and behaviors. Vermeer (1989) argues that translators should be "pluricultural", (Snell-Hornby, 2005, p.46), Snell-Hornby (2005, p.46) asserts that translation is a "cross-cultural event", and Ivir (1996, p.35) even claims that "translating means translating cultures, not languages." Translators, therefore, clearly perform a crucial function as cultural mediators between individuals and societies willing to communicate but cannot understand each other linguistically.

2.3.1 Even-Zohar – Polysystem Theory

Itamar Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory (PT) was one of the most significant ideas on translation in the twentieth century. Even-Zohar conceived PT in the early 1970s, influenced by Russian Formalism. Shuttleworth and Cowie describe a 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" (see Munday, p.108).

According to this theory, "semiotic phenomena, i.e., sign-governed human patterns of communication (such as culture, language, literature, society), can be more adequately understood and studied if regarded as systems rather than as conglomerates of disparate elements" (Even-Zohar, 1990). Furthermore, Even-Zohar proposes that the object of study should no longer be texts as cultural products, but rather the dynamic cultural patterns that determine the production of these particular cultural objects (Even-Zohar, 1978/2004). This theory intends to understand literary events through different constructs, called 'systems', in continuous contact and dynamism. To explain this, a logic of binary oppositions is used:

- there are products (texts in L1 and L2) or canonical models (accepted by the academy) and non-canonical ones;
- such products circulate between the center (the academy and the institutions that rely on its dictates) and the periphery of the system;
- there are primary (innovative) and secondary (conservative) activities in constant struggle to preserve some degree of balance between the center and of the periphery.

Simply put, a polysystem is characterized by interdependence between systems whose incessant mobility causes shifts in this complex, open and heterogeneous network, thanks to which cultural facts evolve. Dynamism characterizes the polysystemic approach.

The theory was not developed specifically for translations, but it was later applied to better comprehend the role of translations and their purpose, as well as to perceive translation

from a less prescriptive standpoint. (Munday, 2001, p.108). The position of translated literature, according to Even-Zohar, can influence translational norms, practices, and policies. The boundary between a translated work and an original work becomes "diffuse" if translated literature takes center stage, as translators do not feel constrained to follow the target literary models and are more prepared to break conventions, reproduce source culture practices (considered adequate), thereby introducing new norms, forms, and models. If translated literature assumes a peripheral role, translators are more bound to target literary models and are "faithful" to their conventions, which implies no new source culture conventions are introduced. Thus, resulting translations are non-adequate in relation to the SL, but acceptable from the TL perspective.

Since translational activity participates, when it assumes a central position, in the process of creating new, primary models, the translator's main concern here is not just to look for ready-made models in his home repertoire into which the source texts would be transferable. Instead, he is prepared in such cases to violate the home conventions. (Even-Zohar, 1978/2004, p. 50)

This was the focus point of his article *The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem* (1978/2004): the precise constellations of the polysystems under consideration determine whether translated literature becomes central or peripheral, that is, whether its position pertains to the innovative ('primary') or conservative ('secondary') repertoire. (1978/2004, p. 46). Translations positioned in the center are deemed original. This may frustrate readers who are uncomfortable with novel forms or concepts, but in actual fact, reality has shown us that such translations will have altered the receiving culture's understanding of literary works. Translated works became, in this way, not only sources of new ideas, but also sources of inspiration for creative authors in that language. However, in strong literary traditions such as French, English, or German, translations usually take a back seat because such literatures already have established styles and norms of writing. In this case, translations tend to follow established patterns rather than creating new ones. Still, there are instances when the literature appears to be stagnating given the lack of new ideas. Translations can, at such points in time, give a whole fresh insight and invigorate a polysystem (for example, Ezra Pound's translations from Chinese). This is something that this thesis will ponder on when analyzing the French, the English and the German translations of *Las Malas*: will there be no clear distinction between the original work and its translations, so that the translated literature maintains its position, ruled by the existing prescriptive conventions of the home polysystems? Or will these translations introduce non-existent features in the strong home literary polysystems and thus become an integral force of innovation?

2.3.2 Gideon Toury – Descriptive Translation Studies

Almost parallel to Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury (1995) elaborates his *theory of norms*. These are constants dependent on beliefs, practices and constraints external to the linguistic sphere, extra-textual, socio-cultural influences, which Toury (1995) calls 'norms'.

In its socio-cultural dimension, translation can be described as subject to constraints of several types and varying degrees. These extend far beyond the source text, the systemic differences between the languages and textual traditions involved in the act, or even the possibilities and limitations of the cognitive apparatus of the translator as a necessary mediator. (p. 54)

Imposed by the academy and the institutions that legitimize canonical works, norms govern the behavior of the different literary repertoires, or authors. The texts translated into a target language, which shape the products created and are placed on the market by publishers, are 'regulated' by the expectations of readers. Hence, norms are recurring patterns that determine the regularity of translator behavior both when translating a work according to canonized cases (secondary activity) and when translators decide that their work will remain on the periphery (primary activity). Thus, whereas adherence to source norms determines a translation's *adequacy* as compared to the source text, subscription to norms originating in the target culture determines its *acceptability* (Toury, 1995, p.56).

Source-oriented translation theories are something Toury rejects. He sees translations as occupying a middle ground between two conflicting extremes: total equivalence with the original material and perfect acceptance in the receptor language. He maintains that no translation could ever be entirely acceptable in the target linguaculture since it will contain numerous new components that will be difficult to integrate. The reverse is also true: no translation could ever be absolutely faithful to the source linguaculture since it will be influenced by various other distinct norms.

The apparent contradiction between any traditional concept of equivalence and the limited model into which a translation has just been claimed to be moulded can only be resolved by postulating that it is norms that determine the (type and extent of) equivalence manifested by actual translations. (Toury, 1995, p. 173)

DTS positions translation as part of a bigger system, governed by translation norms and policies determined long before the actual translation takes place. According to this, any linguaculture at any given time will have a collection of distinct norms. Whilst these norms may appear to be at odds with one another, a careful examination over time might show a distinct pattern beneath the seemingly disparate series of norms. In other words, different translations of the same work from different periods of time in the same linguaculture should reveal the dominant norms in each period. Additionally, in *Descriptive Translation Studies – and Beyond*, Toury (1995) argues that

it is not as if all translators are passive in face of these changes. Rather, many of them, through their very activity, help in shaping the process, as do translation criticism, translation ideology (including the one emanating from contemporary academe, often in the guise of theory), and, of course, various norm-setting activities of institutes where, in many societies, translators are now being trained. Wittingly or unwittingly, they all try to interfere with the 'natural' course of events and to divert it according to their own preferences. (p.62)

Some commentators (e.g., Berman 1995, pp. 50–63) believe the norm concept is too deterministic and denies the role of free choice, and they argue that translators are social agents, not simply a passive conduit for reproducing target culture norms. Nevertheless, the existence of norms does not mean translators are robbed of individual choice. Toury (1995, 163) observes that translators always have more than one option at their disposal. “However, it is not the case that all these options are equally available, given the constraints imposed by the target culture”. Compliance with - or rejection of - Toury's norms is to be observed in this thesis. Toury lays the groundwork for describing translation as the product of cultural transfer, where what matters is what kind of translation it is, what impact it has on the receiving culture, and how that impact might affect the development of the polysystem of the receiving linguaculture. In this regard, this thesis will attempt at establishing an understanding of the way the three professional translators have dealt with the concepts of norms and equivalence. Have they treated equivalence as a functional and dynamic relationship that each translation establishes with its original? Have they considered norms as a valid and acceptable choice in a particular culture and in a particular historical period? Both norms and equivalence ultimately depend on the recipients of those translations finding them valid, acceptable, and correct. In this sense, the represent assumptions - perhaps even unconscious ones - on the part of the translator about what is acceptable or unacceptable in a translation.

2.3.3 Venuti – Domestication and Foreignization

As discussed, translation is an exercise that involves bridging a gap between two linguacultures. When translating a foreign novel, translators aim to bring the original cultural references closer to those of the target culture in order to facilitate the understanding of the text while maintaining, on the one hand, the fluency of the reading in the target language and, on the other hand, preserving the features of the original work. There are many ways to accomplish this task, but most literary translations tend to be positioned either closer to the target culture or farther away from the target culture and closer to the original text. The terms “domestication” and “foreignization” were coined by the American translator Lawrence Venuti in his book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995). According to this author (Venuti 1995, p.20), domestication is “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home”, while foreignization consists of “an ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (1995, p. 20). Although these are relatively recent terms, the history of translation has produced several advocates of each of these extremes. The clearest example of a champion of domestication is Eugene Nida. Nida proposed, in his translation theory, the concept of “functional equivalence”, according to which a translation applying it “aims at a complete naturalness of expression and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture” (Nida 1964, p. 159). On the other end, that is defending translator's visibility, was Schleiermacher's description of translation that ‘leaves the reader in peace,

as much as possible, and moves the author toward him' (Schleiermacher 1813/ 2004, p. 49; in Munday, 2001). Venuti considered the concept of the translator's invisibility, that is, the concealment of the translator's intervention that makes readers form the illusion that they are reading an original work and not a translation, to be a negative practice directly related to the domestication strategy, whereby any foreign elements are reduced by incorporating terms, expressions and grammatical structures common in the target language to provoke in the reader a sense of transparency and fluency. In contrast, foreignization, according to Venuti, helps promote cultural diversity and challenges the aesthetic values of the target culture. By preserving the source language's own syntax and semantics, more abrupt, less fluent but more faithful and authentic translations emerge. Moreover, the danger of domestication lies in the high probability that the translator will end up altering the meaning of the message since, once the text has been freely modified, it is easier to fall into exaggeration or omission of details, as well as the transformation of moral, ethical or sexual nuances (Venuti, 2004, pp.483-485). This MA thesis will attempt to clarify whether the French, German and English translations of *Las Malas* allow readers of the respective linguacultures to appreciate that the text before them is not an element produced by their own culture and to see in it, therefore, the representation of cultural values other than their own.

2.4 Current State of Research

Since its foundation in Vienna in 1992, the European Society for Translation Studies (EST)⁷ has held nine congresses (between 1995 and 2019), with the tenth congress planned for 2022 to be held in Oslo, Norway. The many papers presented after each congress attest for the various dynamic interest in many aspects of translation with topics ranging from the links between translation and modern democracy to markers of ideology in translation, aspects of universal grammar, creativity in legal translation, the ethics of translation, intercultural communication competences, or gender stereotypes in translations of the Bible among other examples (Snell-Hornby et al. 1995, Chesterman et al. 1998, Hansen et al. 2001). For their part, certain scholars such as House, Baker, and Hermans to name but a few, claim that translation can affect the world, and that the EST is not activist enough in its views. As a result, the International Association for Translation and International Studies (IATIS) was born in 2004, a less mainstream international platform that caters for academics interested in "ongoing internationalization and networking, increasing population mobility, mass migration and rapidly developing communication technologies involve[ing] cross-cultural representation of one kind or another"⁸

Furthermore, the creativity of translation is a growing theme, and the crossover between translation studies and creative writing has begun to be explored, linking with the mechanics of reading, cognitive processing and the experimental reformulation of the source language

⁷ <https://est-translationstudies.org/resources/events/>

⁸ <https://www.iatis.org/index.php>

(in Munday, 2001). In this way, innovative, accepted, foreignizing, creative translation serves as an excuse for introducing difference. But the early studies did not take into account the significance of ideology in the creative aspects of translation, something that, when it began to be analyzed, was mainly applied to postcolonial translation, a Tymoczko (2021) argues:

As a form of linguistic interface, translation introduces discourse shifts, destabilizes received meanings, creates alternate views of reality, establishes new representations, and makes possible new identities. All these changes can produce creative results in a literary system and a culture. These creative dimensions of translation are particularly apparent in post-colonial contexts. (p.1)

2.4.1 Post-colonial translation

Nowadays it is generally acknowledged that TS were revolutionized during the 'cultural turn' that took place in the 1990s. Culture became then crucial to TS, rather than language being conceived primarily as a system of verbal exchange and communication. In his article *Post-colonial Literatures and Translation*, Bandia (2010) claims that culture dominates language and that they are both intrinsically intertwined when analyzing translations. This, in turn, affects TS, as concepts such as equivalence and dichotomies (literal/sense, original/translation, etc) are thrown into disarray:

By the very nature of this literature, written in colonial languages by post-colonial subjects, a host of issues often overlooked in the past, namely gender, ethnicity, sociology, linguistic alterity, identity, politics and ideology became prominent in translation research. (p. 264)

In short, post-colonial does not just mean posterior to the colonial era but also implies a reaction against the colonial discourse, i.e., any text that supports, justifies or facilitates colonial domination.

Ivir (1996, p. 35) claims that translation means translating cultures not languages. And as explained in *Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation*, "a literary translator is de facto concerned with differences not just in language (transposing word for word, mechanically), but with the same range of cultural factors that a writer must address when writing to a receiving audience composed partially or primarily of people from a different culture." (Tymoczko, 1998, p. 21) This is to say translators are faced not only with a text, but also the culture of the post-colonial writer, which acts as a metatext.

The study of post-colonial translation has kindled the debate on ethics and raised questions about the relationship between writers and translators, languages, as well as publishing policies towards minority literature (cf. Bandia.) This seems to highlight the importance of patronage as a determinant of translation practice, affecting post-colonial writing too. For, as Tymoczko (1998) claims:

Patrons – once wealthy aristocrats – now take the form of presses and publishing houses, universities and granting agencies, which are in turn dependent on such groups as a readership, a critical establishment or government officials. (...) Studies of translation are increasingly alert to the circumstances under which books are chosen for translation and translations are published, and similar questions are relevant to post-colonial writing. (p. 30)

Without making specific reference to translation, the influential book *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft et al., 1989) establishes colonial language use and practices as a defining attribute of postcolonial literatures, for postcolonial discourse aspires to reconstruct a space of self-assertion that counteracts the negating effects of colonialism, that is, a discourse of opposition, a sort of counterdiscourse. (1989, p. 2) Additionally, Bandia (2010) argues further that

the attempt by postcolonial writers to mould and shape the colonial language into a medium for expressing non-western thought and literature resulted in non-western varieties of the colonial language, challenging its hegemony and imperialist/universalist pretensions (...) Although generally understood as strategies of linguistic and cultural representation, postcolonial fictionalizing also raises some ontological issues that have become research paradigms in Translation Studies, namely by establishing parallels between postcolonial writing as resistance to hegemony and the translation of subaltern cultures as resistance to imperialism or subversion of dominant linguistic and cultural practices. (p.265)

In sum, the scholars' affirmations seemed to suggest that translators, being close to the source language, should free themselves from the representations of the target culture and preserve the language as a means of agency, even in the multiplicity of languages and voices that is specific to postcolonial literature.

2.4.2 Agency in the Bible context

As established before, agency is the social capability to act and make a difference; and translation, being an act of intercultural communication is intrinsically both, linguistic and social in nature. On this basis, it can be argued that "translation, as a successful means of engagement and social change – like most political actions – requires affiliation and collective action" (Tymoczko, 2002, p.201), and that that position is not a space in between. For his part, Marais believes that "language is always embedded in cultural and ideological structures." (2008, p.35) The result is that no translation can be introduced into a new context without prior adaptation, which, in turn, will influence that new context. Translators, therefore, ought to be aware of the active role they play through the ideological choices they make in the course of translation. (cf. Naudé)

As far as the Bible is concerned, translators exert their agency, albeit sometimes unknowingly. In *Agency and Bible Translation*, Miller-Naudé and Naudé (2019) exemplify this when they refer to two Afrikaans Bible translations, in 1933 and 1983. In the first version, the translators adopted a literal translation strategy that led to unforeseen consequences, as certain passages were used to justify the Apartheid. In the later version, the translators

intentionally chose words related to social justice to prevent the use of the Bible as excuse for social segregation (2019, p.288.) Another factor of the agentic role of the translator when considering translations of the Bible is the concept of equivalence developed by Nida specifically for Bible translations, which served to bring the Scriptures closer to minorities like indigenous peoples. This type of agency, however, is criticized by Venuti, who describes this form of translation as an act of violence: “the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible for the target audience reader.” (1995, p.195) This ‘domesticating’ practice linked with missionary work (cf. Bassnett, 2014) can be interpreted as a reflection of translators’ agency to promote social change. This because agency in translation refers to the influence a translated text has on a given social reality. In other words, translators exerting their agency are not necessarily activists, and agency could be used to preserve the status quo, to dominate another linguaculture, or to help construct a new social reality through progressive thought.

2.4.3 Eco-translation

During the past recent years, there has been a lot of interest in the prospect of exploiting translation for geopolitical purposes and political engagement. “Identity is one of the most important political and cultural issues of our time”, states Michel Cronin as way of introduction in his 2006 book *Translation and Identity*. In it he explores how translation has always played a critical role in shaping opinions about identity, language, and cultural survival. and how everything from the impact of migration on the curricula of national literatures to the way nations wage war in modern times is linked to the pressing issues of translation and identity, tells us the book description⁹. Defining the translator’s commitment to translating a text with activist content is an exercise that has recently enjoyed some popularity in TS and other disciplines. One of these areas of interest is eco-translation, that states that the task that faces us now is how to translate between the human and the nonhuman worlds, thus posits a relationship between the local and the non-local that avoids the problems of essentialist localism in political debates when ethnic exclusion is justified by cultural specificity. The research potential promises to be enormous, both in terms of establishing new, environmentally conscious approaches and in terms of probing more radical hypotheses about subjectivity and translation links between different signifying systems. In particular, there are embedded types of translation connected to ecological concerns (for instance food translation) and “point to the ecological necessity of time, care and attentiveness in doing justice in translation to the nuance of local detail” (Cronin, 2017, p.63).

This relatively new approach to translation focus on “survival and sustainability of human societies, cultures and languages” (2017, foreword), and involves green translation tech-

⁹ <https://www.routledge.com/Translation-and-Identity/Cronin/p/book/9780415364652>

nologies, bridging the gap between human and non-human constituents and, ultimately understanding how translation could play a crucial role in terms of creating a sustainable future.

2.4.4 Contra instrumentalism

In his recent work, *Contra Instrumentalism* (2019), Lawrence Venuti stimulates the debate on TS once again. He moves away from the distinction between domestication and foreignization policies of translation, which he now considers instrumentalist, to question

Where is your desire? Is it invested in the instrumentalism that has dominated thinking about translation since time immemorial? Or are you ready to stop repressing the difficult questions that translation raises, to examine the linguistic and cultural differences that it is summoned to negotiate but always proliferates, and explore the interpretative power that it commands to change forms and practices, discourses and institutions? (Venuti, 2019, p.177)

What Venuti refers to is that translation is always an act of interpretation, and thus instrumentalism underlies any approach the translator may have, whether domesticating or foreignizing the translated text. Hence, he proposes a more rigorous, non-instrumentalist hermeneutic model, to move away from instrumentalism and pave the way for an ethical, political commitment that goes beyond preconceived notions about translation. Thus, translation is seen as a more radical and universal act that encourages translators to “STOP assuming that a source text possesses an invariant form, meaning, or effect; [and] START assuming that a source text can support multiple and conflicting interpretations and therefore an equally heterogeneous succession of translations” (2019, p. 173).

As Massey (2020) summarizes in his review of Venuti’s work

Contra Instrumentalism [drives] further forward an intellectual legacy that remorselessly, unrepentantly points us towards a universalist conception of all translation as an interpretative act ‘that necessarily entails ethical responsibilities and political commitments’ (Venuti, 2019, p.6 as cited in Massey, 2020, p. 501)

While the instrumentalist approach to translation postulates that the message must be transferred from the source text to the target text, Venuti’s hermeneutic view recognizes that every translation is necessarily an interpretation, and that every interpretation inevitably changes the text. This is particularly important when analyzing the translation of *Las Malas*, since thinking of translation as an interpretation rather than as a menial act of copying not only brings us closer to the reality of the practice itself, but also acknowledges the resulting literary work by considering the translator as an interpretive collaborator whose agency and mediating power are felt in every word.

2.4.5 Gender in translation

Among the many skills required for the translation task, the reading-comprehension of the source text is of paramount importance. According to Pulitzer Prize winner Jhumpa Lahiri “translating is the most profound way of reading”¹⁰. In this line of thought, Nières-Chevrel, in her article *La Lecture du Traducteur* (1999, p. 116), states that translators are ‘great readers’ who carry out at the same time a reading, a critique and a rewriting. Indeed, translators are not ordinary readers, their reading is oriented towards a future act of writing in another linguaculture, hence their reading will produce meaning.

Research on the relationship between Gender Studies and TS generally acknowledges that one of the many necessary readings translators ought to do is the one that seeks to identify the adoption of a patriarchal, an epicene, or a feminizing writing by the original author. Then, following the translation-recreation paradigm (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990, p.9), translators will be able to preserve or vary the value and function of their target texts.

The Canadian specialist in gender studies and translation, Dr. Luise von Flotow, believes that the feminist approach to translation began to develop in the 1990s in Canada, with the aim of turning translation into a political action and a means of vindication for women, since the feminist translator seeks to break out of her double marginality, of being a woman and a translator, and to assert her rights. From the beginning, feminist translators have joined forces to denounce to society as a whole the enormous number of works by women that had been “lost” in the patriarchy, where the dominant canon systematically gave priority to a few privileged male authors. In addition, feminist translators reveal those translations of feminist books whose original meaning was distorted, and finally incorporated into the dominant patriarchal ideology by means of a rewriting that assigned meaning to them. Castro Vázquez (2008, p. 288) names as an example of this practice “la paradigmática traducción al inglés de la obra filosófica y feminista *Le deuxième sexe*, de Simone de Beauvoir (1949) realizada por el zoólogo Howard Parshley en 1952” [the paradigmatic English translation of Simone de Beauvoir’s philosophical and feminist work *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949) by zoologist Howard Parshley in 1952].

Feminist contributions have also helped establish new concepts such as “translation as rewriting” (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990, p.9) This concept advocates the pursuit of recreation rather than mere reproduction of the translation. In this sense, and as Castro Vázquez explains,

en este contexto de los múltiples ‘post-’, los feminismos cuestionaron la posibilidad de realizar una traducción fiel y objetiva, demostrando que la neutralidad ideológica en la traducción es una ficción del

¹⁰ <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7566258-i-think-that-translating-is-the-most-profound-most-intimate>

patriarcado y que la intervención en los textos está presente siempre, irremediablemente, a la hora de traducir. (2008, p.286)

[in this context of the multiple 'post-', feminism questioned the possibility of a faithful and objective translation, demonstrating that ideological neutrality in translation is a fiction, of the patriarchy and that text intervention is always present, inexpugnably, when translating.] (my own translation)

In this way, the dyad gender and translation collaborate, rooted in the belief that the latter, by constituting a point of contact between different linguistic, cultural and ideological realities, plays a decisive role in changing the patriarchal and sexist nature of language and societies. Language plays an important role in society through its communicative function, but it also reflects the many characteristics of each linguistic community. One of the sociocultural manifestations of language is sexism, and Spanish has been described as a particularly sexist language (cf. Eisenberg 1985; Calero Fernández 1999; Bengoechea 2011) mainly due to the presence of grammatical gender (-a for feminine, -o for masculine) and the preferred male collective nouns. In spite of this, neither Spanish nor any other language discriminate because, as Diaz Rojo (2000, pp. 43-44) explains, "just as a language cannot be conservative, nor socialist, nor liberal... It cannot be sexist, nor racist, nor xenophobic." However, "Language encodes both dispositions and practices. It is a fundamental aspect of any human culture that embodies its deepest perceptions, values, and social structures." (Tymoczko, 2021, p.37) In this context, it seems appropriate to examine how professional translators use the target language, since the original text was deliberately written to enable women's emancipation from the patriarchy and to foster gender equality.

2.4.6 Activist translation

The concept of activist translation aiming to form alliances between people and based on the notion of common precarity, is defined as a political and, often, antagonistic act with the potential of bringing about societal change (Tymoczko 2007, 2010; Wolf 2012; Baker 2013). The concept of precarity and its relation to neoliberalism, religion, capitalism, and politics is a major topic among medioambientalist groups, the LGBT+ collective, feminism or migrants, to name but a few.

Due to the increase and variety of characters belonging to the LGTB+ collective in the literary and audiovisual discourse, on the one hand, and to the growing interest of several societies in the use of inclusive language on the other hand, it is possible to notice the awakening of social awareness and of the socio-political rhetoric that goes hand in hand with it. Pleguezuelos (2018, p. 1) claims that, being a discursive practice, translation reflects the societies' representations of collective identities, and that LGTBQ+ studies have so far ne-

glected the impact the asymmetrical rapprochement between different societies has on minority sexualities¹¹. In the light of this development, it may be asked how TS are adapting and responding to this societal change, and what is the role of translators within this context.

As the TS community grows and evolves, the range of its interests widens. Venuti (2019) points out that a widely held professional self-concept of neutral, non-interventionist translation has been promoted by mainstream translation theories, training practices, and professional ethical codes, resulting in an "instrumentalist" conceptualization of an invisible, neutral translator. This has been at least partly ascribed to the priority given to fidelity by numerous ethical codes of practice among professional translation and interpreting associations worldwide (Katan, 2016, pp. 369-371; Schäffner, 2020, p. 66). Surveys carried out internationally and in Switzerland over the last decade or so reveal that translators see themselves working in a largely low-autonomy profession where fidelity to the source text ranks highest in their judgment of where their professional loyalties should lie. Mediating, advising, and co-creating rank lowest amongst the roles they see themselves properly occupying (Katan, 2011, 2016; Massey & Wieder, 2019). In the international surveys reported by Katan (2011, 2016), 60% of respondents agreed absolutely with minimum intervention in conveying translated messages, and only 30% found it usual to actively mediate cultural differences. Lambert (2018) summarizes the situation, criticizing the unrealistic codes that perpetuate the fictional construction of the "translator as a neutral conduit" (2018, p. 281) and advising that translators should be better adapted to "proliferate an empowering image of translation as an active, multi-faceted activity that requires expert knowledge and judgment, while openly exploring its inevitably manipulative basis." (2018, p. 285)

The working circumstances of professional translators have lately been transformed by technical innovations leading to the introduction of new forms of translation and also giving rise to a new awareness of the importance of a visible translator: translators that know not only the two involved languages but also understand the culture affecting them, could be considered as adding human value to their translations.

In their role as mediators, and just by translating it into another language, translators act on the text, interacting with it, manipulating it. Nevertheless, they often (perhaps too often) remain outside the text. On certain occasions, however, translators may find it necessary or opportune to intervene directly in the target text and make their voices heard. Indeed, translation is driven by ethics. Translation ethics play an important part in defining cultures and societies in various manners, as the way translators interpret them can have a substantial influence on the globalized world (Tymoczko, 2006, p. 459). Furthermore, ethical concerns about the role of translation in this setting have garnered considerable attention in recent years, as "professional translators have started to show particular interest in translation ethics, which emanates from their belief that they have become influential figures in the movements of human rights that mark today's world" (Baker & Maier, 2011, p. 1). The

¹¹ My own translation

ethical codes governing translation is a very important aspect of the debate and what Lambert (2018) – as well as Katan (2009; 2011), Schäffner (2011) and others – see as a major factor in perpetuating the “myth” of the translator as a neutral conduit. In consideration of the fact that this MA thesis aims at exploring the use professional translators make of their agency, that is how visible they are, it is worth looking at the codes that would govern professional translation in the countries from which they come. The French translators (and interpreters) association, the SFT: *le syndicat des traducteurs, traductrices et interprètes*¹², has a link in their webpage leading to a list of good practices. Number ten in the list is “Fournir une traduction conforme aux attentes de sa clientèle” [provide a translation that meets the expectations of its customers] and it goes on explaining what is meant by it; namely, that translators need to make sure they understand the purpose and expectations of the translation in order to satisfy their clients’ requests. This because their clients’ objective and the cultural codes of the target market should be the guiding principle of the work, regardless of the text. However, their *code de déontologie* names fidelity as a canon. As far as the German translator’s association, the BDÜ¹³, is concerned, their Berufs- und Ehrenordnung (professional and ethical code), redacted by its members on 2014, declares that translators should always aim to ensure the quality of their professional activity in the interest of proper communication and perform their services for the client regardless of outside influence or pressure. The American translator’s association, ATA¹⁴, for its part, lists “to convey meaning between people and cultures faithfully, accurately, and impartially” as the first principle of their ethical code, approved in 2010. In other words, although in France, fidelity is mentioned, it seems that professional associations are beginning to attach more importance to translators’ visibility.

2.5 Relevance of research

While all of these scholars study and evaluate the role of the translator as an agent of social change, and analyze their conscious use of agency, to the best of this author’s knowledge not enough translation practices and experiences have yet been examined to show how translation is integral to the development of cultures in supporting the LGBTQ+ collective to emerge from marginality. Some studies have focused on specific areas, such as the increased involvement and visibility of translation in violent conflict (Baker, 2006), but, as far as this author is aware, few studies have focused on translation strategies and their possible impact as a form of global resistance to the sociopolitical world order. The author of this thesis seeks to raise awareness of the role of translation in promoting acceptance of marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community. This thesis offers new insights into how translation may be a powerful instrument for encouraging diversity and promoting intersocial dialogue. It does so by analyzing the translation into three different languages of the same text authored by a transvestite woman who denounces such marginalization by means of

¹² <https://www.sft.fr/fr/bonnes-pratiques-0>

¹³ <https://bdue.de/der-bdue/statuten/berufs-und-ehrenordnung>

¹⁴ <https://www.atanet.org/about-us/code-of-ethics/>

activist and emotionally laden content. In other words, the analysis of the choices made by professional translators when translating activist content that is strongly tinged by the source culture will serve as an examining platform to better understand if and to what extent translators make use of their agency as well as how this affects their professional self-concept.

In a world characterized by the lack of forbearance¹⁵, the role of translators is becoming increasingly critical and sensitive. Given that translation is, more often than not, misconstrued as neutral, it is critical to reconsider it in sociocultural, geopolitical, and ethical perspectives. *The Granada Manifesto*¹⁶, also known as the '*Manifesto for Translation and Interpretation at the Service of the Whole and of All Societies*', positions translation (and interpretation) as an instrument of counteraction, a stabilizer of sorts. It urges professionals to make their skills available not only for the market, but to also think about society. In other words, it calls on translators (and interpreters) to promote linguistic diversity and, ultimately, to build more inclusive and welcoming communities for all people.

Survey data (Katan, 2011, 2016; Massey & Wieder, 2019) have revealed that many professional translators lack a professional self-concept or identity that allows them to take on more adaptable, innovative mediatory and advising responsibilities. Contextualizing translation as a social practice is, therefore, desirable and recommended to encourage professionals to make use of their agency. And as found in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Activism*, "Given the central role played by agency in constituting what Walter Benjamin called the 'task of the translator', in regard to language, the link between translation and activism is both intrinsic and necessary." (Gould & Tahmasebian, 2020.) Identifying the sociopolitical dimension of literary activism via a book and its translated versions is fundamental to elicit change.

Moreover, in terms of TS, this thesis reflects on the wider implications to do with translator visibility. With his innovative work *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995) Venuti urged for greater recognition and visibility of translators, claiming that the reduction or suppression of language and cultural distinctions in source texts have indeed been facilitated by so-called 'domesticating practices' at work in translating cultures and that "The translator's invisibility is thus a weird self-annihilation, a way of conceiving and practicing translation that undoubtedly reinforces its marginal status" (1995, p. 8). In his later work *Contra Instrumentalism: A Translation Polemic* (2019) Venuti argues that the instrumental model of translation has continued to dominate translation discourses and re-thinks a hermeneutic model which emphasizes interpretation rather than truth, as translation is nothing but "an interpretive act that inevitably varies source-text form, meaning, and

¹⁵ See Paramio (1994) on marginalized social groups in Latin America, and the chapter by Reinares (1996) on terrorism in Spain.

¹⁶ Author's translation of I Foro Internacional sobre Traducción, Interpretación y Compromiso Social, Granada University, April 2007

effect according to intelligibilities and interests in the receiving culture” (2019, p. 1). As mentioned above, few studies have focused on the agentic role of translators and the need to re-define the profession. Given the current re-positioning of the translation and interpreting professions towards human added value in the age of artificial intelligence, it is very important to start redefining the roles and professional self-concept of human translators everywhere, not just in activist literature. However, by investigating the core elements of activism and how it works, we can come closer to determining how more active agency in translation could fit in the broader setting of human-centered, embodied translation (as opposed to “disembodied” artificial intelligence).

3 Method

Discourse analysis (DA) (see Wang and Munday ed., 2021, Introduction)¹⁷, Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (1995), and House's Functional-Pragmatic Model (1997, 2015) share the view that language is a social construction, in which a discursive event influences its context, and the context is, in turn, influenced by the discursive event. Additionally, they all emphasize cultural aspects of meaning. This thesis argues as well that culture is a social construction, because culture is learned through human interaction. In this regard, human interaction involves professional translators actively constructing meaning across borders. The activity of translating one language into another places the translator 'in between' cultures, in a place where different linguacultures can meet. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the individual translator who brings their own history, preconceptions, and experiences to the constant creation and shaping of reality. Theoretical knowledge and methodological assumptions are employed in an attempt to reverse engineer the translators' choices. The text subject for translation and analysis is *Las Malas*, a novel by Argentinian trans author Camila Sosa Villada.

Using a qualitative approach, this thesis focuses on salient sociocultural and activist rich points in the source text, established and selected by a set of ten Argentinian readers. The readers are not personally known by the author of this thesis. By analyzing the obtained data and by considering information at a broader level (cultural, socioeconomic, political) as well as the more immediate contextual level (rich salient points selected), I aim to find out if the translator's role differs in the way it is defined by the societies involved in the study and, more importantly, how translators perceive themselves as they deal with these differences in the linguacultures they intend to reach.

In order to do so, this thesis uses the corresponding target-text segments to ascertain the translators' approaches and strategies in conveying their meaning by a process of reverse-engineering. Particular attention was devoted to alterations in conceptual meaning. I also conducted interviews with the translators to discover how they themselves have sought to deal with these rich points and, more generally, to obtain information on their professional

¹⁷ Wang and Munday (2021, p.1) provide an excellent updated definition of DA in the context of TS:

"Discourse analysis in its various definitions and forms deals with language use above the sentence, meaning making in whole texts in specific social and cultural contexts, the entire act of linguistic and cultural communication and the construction and representation of identity. It has long been applied in translation and interpreting studies to explain the expression of ideology and to track the translator/interpreter's cultural intervention. In the 1970s, discourse analysis moved linguistic inquiry beyond the sentence level to focus on the ways in which language users achieve their communicative goals over a whole text or sequence of talk (Mason 2015: 110); it then came to prominence in translation and interpreting studies in the 1990s, building particularly upon Halliday's systemic functional grammar (Munday 2016: 142). Such an approach has been popular in translation and interpreting research because of a strong interrelation between the linguistic choices, communicative goals and socio-cultural contexts." This quotation is particularly pertinent to this study as it elucidates the direct connection between linguistic choices, communicative goals, sociocultural environment and identity.

self-concept and their self-perception of their agentic roles - as translators of explicitly activist literature and as mediators across linguacultural divides. Therefore, contrastive linguistic and conceptual analysis were used to reverse engineer translators' decision-making and problems-solving strategies, combined with translators' interview data about the German, French and English translations of an Argentinian source text.

House's Functional-Pragmatic Model (1997, 2015) will serve as a theoretical framework, as it allows two texts to be compared and evaluated. Her model makes this possible because it draws on pragmatic theories of language use, which facilitate the analysis of the discursive and cultural linguistic characteristics of both source and target texts. Thus, the degree of equivalence between the textual profile of the source text and its translation will give us the degree of adequacy, or, in other words, its quality. Having mentioned this, a noteworthy remark ought to be made, namely that the objective of this thesis is not to assess the quality of the translations under evaluation. The model will serve, though, to consider the semantic and pragmatic recontextualization of the ST in the TL, since any translation is a complex hermeneutic process, and its evaluation is also influenced by a subjective element: human beings are important variables. As House (1997, p. 32) herself concludes that there are cultural filters in play that result in a covert or an overt version of a translation, this thesis will analyze some culturally conditioned differences in order to assert the agentic role of the translators.

Toury (1995, p. 53) states that "Translation activities should [...] be regarded as having cultural significance." Furthermore, he coined the term "translation norms", a hidden set of rules followed by most translators, "a series of tendencies that could be observed in the translation process." These norms are not understood as prescriptive rules but as norms specific to a context. Therefore, norms change with time and culture. In this thesis, DTS will serve as a framework for analyzing the extent to which translators use their agency and, if so, whether their decisions are in line with the rules in effect or, on the contrary, whether they choose to challenge them.

3.1 Object of research

Las travestis en Latinoamérica tienen un promedio de vida de 35 años. Es como en la edad media, increíble. Mueren asesinadas u olvidadas por la salud, la ternura o el respeto. Me parece que se ha articulado un idencidio, un genocidio por identidad del que toda la sociedad es cómplice. Algo que se gesta día tras día. La trata de travestis para la prostitución y la venta de drogas. Esta es una matanza imperdonable. Una se siente sucia luego de responder algo como esto, porque una siente vergüenza de que nuestras sociedades sean capaces de hechos tan malignos. Son demasiadas coincidencias, la historia de las travestis es común, como es común el horror con que nos tratan. Si una preguntara a los judíos que sobrevivieron a los campos de concentración cómo eran tratados, tendrían todos una

historia muy parecida que contar. Ser víctima de un sistema como este te iguala con el otro. Te despersonaliza. Si le diéramos 'Las malas' a otras travestis, seguramente dirían '¡Soy yo! ¡Cest moi!' ¹⁸.

[Transvestites in Latin America have an average lifespan of 35 years. It's like in the Middle Ages, unbelievable. They die murdered or forgotten by health, tenderness or respect. It seems to me that an identicide has been orchestrated, a genocide by identity in which the whole society is an accomplice. Something that develops day after day. The trafficking of transvestites for prostitution and drug dealing. This is an unforgivable slaughter. One feels dirty after having answered to something like this, because one feels ashamed that our societies are capable of such evil deeds. There are too many coincidences, the story of the transvestites is commonplace, just as the horror with which we are treated is commonplace. If one were to ask the Jews who survived the concentration camps how they were treated, they would all have a very similar story to tell. Being a victim of such a system makes you equal to the Other. It depersonalizes you. If we gave 'Bad Girls' to other transvestites, they would probably say 'It's me! Cest moi!'.] (my translation)

As we see from the above quotation, the book *Las Malas*, serves as a very salient example of what impact literary activism in translation might have. To investigate that impact, it was first decided to identify, for the purposes of the present study, certain “rich points” of the source text, and to ask the translators to comment on them.

3.2 Selection of rich points

A rich point is a linguistic description specific of the linguaculture under study that may not be understood by people outside of this environment and require, therefore, an “interpreted” translation. The translation should help the reader of the target linguaculture enter a new language and/or cultural setting and experience new situations. Some examples of rich points found in *Las Malas* are *travestis*, *la Difunta Correa*, the names of certain celebrities or social practices like drinking *mate*, among others. This was done by means of a pre-study questionnaire survey among anonymous readers of a Book Club that was reading *Las Malas* at the time and who were unknown to the researcher. The survey took place online. To address the specific content needed for this thesis, the questions were open, but focused on the identification of messages of protest and outcry as well as of hope; and on the recognition of distinctive words or expressions that could prove difficult to translate. 10 people participated in the survey, and although it is not possible to know either their ages or their sexes, it is remarkable how similar the responses are. All potential difficulties mentioned by at least 5 of the respondents involved in the pre study were included in the main investigation.

¹⁸ Author's interview with El Pais on April 2020 – My own translation.

<https://www.elpais.com.co/cultura/gaceta/las-palabras-feroces-de-camila-sosa-villada-autora-de-lanovela-las-malas.htm>

The questionnaire and the respondents' answers can be found in appendix A. (translated into English by the author.) The responses used in the main study are indicated by color coding (passages highlighted in yellow.)

First evaluation of questionnaire responses

In an attempt to reverse engineer the translators' decisions, the words, expressions and sentences in two of the translated versions (German and French) were selected as specific rich points on the basis of what the respondents who had participated in the online survey had chosen as salient. Given the fact that the third translation (English) has only been published on May 2022, it was impossible to highlight these segments in this one TT.

3.3 Interview with the translators

The questionnaire responses and interpretations of the rich-point strategies serve as the basis for the major source of data gathered for this thesis, namely the answers provided by three professional translators of the novel in question who agreed to take part in interviews with the author of this thesis. The interviews were recorded digitally on Zoom and then transcribed verbatim in their original languages. The interviews took place on August 30th (Kit Maude/English), on September 4th (Svenja Becker/German) and on September 6th (Laura Alcoba/French). All interviews were conducted from our respective homes. The full transcripts can be found in appendices C.1 (French), C.2 (English), and C.3 (German.) With two of the translators the interviews were conducted in Spanish, and with the third one in English. When referring to their answers, at times they will be paraphrased and in English, and at others they will be quoted in their original version. In this case, it is necessary to clarify that there will be grammatical errors, hesitations, repetitions and other typical indicators of oral language that I chose not to correct in order to be faithful to the emotions transmitted by the speakers. Whenever salient points from the interviews are cited in Spanish in the thesis, translations into English are provided by the present author. The focus of our discussions was, obviously, their translations of *Las Malas* (into French, English and German), and more specifically the difficulties they may have encountered and how they overcame them. As indicated, we met over Zoom, once with each translator; and during the conducted interviews, all three translators referred to the activism present in Camila Sosa Villada's work.

Relevant results

According to the results obtained through the online questionnaire, certain salient points were selected that might present translation difficulties due to their pragmatic, sociocultural or activist content. The translators interviewed commented on these rich points.

The table below presents the results obtained. The first column presents each rich point in question, and the second shows the transcripts of the comments made about them by the

French, English, and German translators. Since two of the translators spoke in Spanish during their interviews, their answers have been translated into English (by me). In my translations, I have tried to adopt what Venuti describes as a foreignizing approach and be as literal as possible, in order to be faithful to the original answers. However, as Venuti also says, every act of translation is an interpretative act, so my agency cannot be excluded here, either. All three translators have agreed to having their names divulged. Please refer to the appendices C1, C2, and C3 for the full original versions of the interview transcripts.

Richpoints selected by respondents	Translator	Translators' comments
About the book	Laura Alcoba (French)	It is essential for me to want to translate a book. And of course, when I first discovered the text, I had no doubts because I thought it was excellent and I really wanted to translate it.
	Kit Maude (English)	And in the case of <i>Las Malas</i> , I read the novel, I thought, "My Goodness! This has to be translated," and I assumed that somebody else was already working on it, I mean, it's a blockbuster book. So I, yes, I read around as much as I could in a very brief period of time, but the first thing I did was prepare an extract for the publishers. And by the time I got the extract, got the extract down, I wrote to them and they said "No, No, we haven't sold the rights yet." And I thought that was amazing. But it turned out that it was just because they, they were slow to sell the rights. As it turned out there were a lot of publishers interested. And that was a whole, that was a whole auction and bidding, something that doesn't happen very much in translation. It was a whole new experience for me.
	Svenja Becker (German)	With <i>Las Malas</i> , of course, what at first seemed very important to me is to make an image of the author for myself. Because it is such an auto-fictional text. Autobiographical. Fictional, autobiographical, so... And with a very unique voice. I think it's a novel that's very exciting, and it opens like a door, or it can open a door to a marginalized part of society. And that, in itself, is like an offer to enter. It's like, well, it's also an invitation of identification, too. And that's why I think it already includes something like, like well, something that unites us all. So it's not... it may be the society that excludes the transvestite community, but that play is an invitation to participate, at least, or to learn something about how that community feels, and feels excluded and whatever. And that, well, do you understand that?
travestis	Laura Alcoba (French)	The most difficult thing was probably the translation of <i>travestis</i> . The translation, the word choice. I immediately spoke with Nicolás Galvis, who is totally bilingual. So, he understood well what I wanted to say, that if I translated the transvestites, I would lose the strong sense of the feminine that's precisely present in <i>Las Malas</i> , let's say, the others, the society that rejects them, says transvestites and they claim the feminine with <i>las travestis</i> . So there was something very strong there. I talked about it with, uh, with several people from the LGBT group to see how it sounded, if you put the transvestite. And it wasn't terrible because it sounded precisely like the stigma, the rejection, as it sounds in the book <i>los travestis</i> , when at a certain moment on television they talk about transvestites and the narrator says so, that's what they call us. And of course, then the whole play with <i>las travestis</i> is part of the collective of the feminine. All that was getting lost and I think that was really the difficulty. And after having talked about it with people who know, let's say, the LGBT problematic, I proposed to translate to trans and I explained it to Camila Sosa Villada and asked her to react, of course, and to tell me if she agrees with it. There I had an exchange of mails with her, not so many, we exchanged a couple because there was no great difficulty, for me, to understand the text. As it was an Argentine text, I understood, let's say, what does not always happen to me. For example, when I translate Mexican authors, I am constantly sending mails and I have many doubts, but in this case it was that choice that was problematic and I wanted her to agree. Of course, it's central to the book. And well, she told me that yes, of course she understood it, that the feminine plural didn't exist in French and that because of that all that play was lost and that within the LGBT community everyone had told me <i>nous les trans</i> on one side and <i>les travestis</i> on the other, right? And well, this was really, I had a little bit of a dilemma there but, but I solved it, I think, in a good way.

	Kit Maude (English)	You might say, that <i>travesti</i> , which is, which is quite a political, politically charged term. I mean, in English. In my first draft, I put transvestite as a placeholder. But it's it's no good. And trans is Camilla feels, especially is it's a little neutral. It's a little hygienic. the English equivalent <i>trans</i> sounds too neutral, too hygienic, and does not convey the whole meaning. I trust the English readers will make the leap and understand the original version. So we're going to go with <i>travesti</i> , in the Spanish, which, which I mean, I would... there's already controversy, the editors are talking about discussing this whether. But this is what's going to happen. But it, she's been, her on board is very much on that sort of level. It's, I'm very, I'm very specific. Because this is very much representing what she wants, this is the meaning that, that she wants to imbue the text to be imbued with I could go in and say, Look, we could we could just do trans, we could just do the word we could do. It's not my place to give the book new meaning. It's my place to communicate the meaning of the original. Two authors in English.
	Svenja Becker (German)	And well, then comes all the research, all the search for information about transvestites in Argentina, transvestites here, and whatever. How it is... well, all the terminology, how people, the <i>travestis</i> talk about themselves here, well, things like that. And you find, well, I went... here is a counseling for trans people, like a support group, and I went there to ask, and well... I don't know, there's no - well. A few months later, when the play was already published in Germany, there was a talk with her and there she said more or less... Well, they asked her if there was a difference between transvestite and trans woman and she said there was not. Well, of course, the term <i>travesti</i> has a little bit another register and that's a problem in German because it doesn't exist, there's no alternative really for ...
Chongo	Laura Alcoba (French)	And, one works it out, there is always something that, obviously, I don't know if it is lost, that is perceived in another way. Yes, I think something is always lost when you change from... The book is written in a particular cultural and linguistic context, and common references; and it travels suddenly. So the reader will not have the same references.
	Kit Maude (English)	It's unusual. We've talked about specific terms. We have those. There's going to be, she liked that I haven't translated "chongo", for instance. I don't know...
	Svenja Becker (German)	Uff, <i>chongo</i> , what is a <i>chongo</i> for you? I ask you because it is one of the terms I was.... I asked Camila about it I think three times. And I still don't have a clear idea, I don't have a clear idea. I don't understand the concept of what it is, whatever it is, and that was complicated, yes. Of course, here the perception of German was different from Camila's perception of Spanish, for a person from Argentina. But I don't know if you talked to a Spaniard, because I would be interested in that too. The term "chongo", as far as I know, does not exist in Spain. Nor in Mexico, whatever, it's very Argentine. And I have no idea how it is perceived elsewhere.
Cultural references (yerba, chamamé, Virgen de Guadalupe, Difunta Correa, etc.)	Laura Alcoba (French)	Let's see, that is not... it is always very subjective, that is always very subjective and there is something there, at the moment of translation <i>il faut trancher</i> . When I have the impression that something should be kept as it is, there are many things that I don't translate sometimes, toponyms, that I say "well, this." And when it has a meaning, beyond the place, that comes to have a meaning, the meaning of the word, then I choose to translate. It is very, very subjective, isn't it? I think that in the two cases you gave it was important to translate the meaning of the toponym. But well, that is something that is done a vue, isn't it? as they say in French. I know that in many situations I say "no, I won't translate this, it sounds in Spanish as it is", especially for names, nicknames sometimes, and nicknames of characters, it is very common that I don't translate, but other times I do. When I feel that the reader would lose something, but of course, when choosing a translation, well, choosing is always...there is something that is lost, something that...what do you decide to keep? There is always a choice, which is what it is, isn't it? then you can always question it. But always with the idea of not loading the text, because on each page you could put a footnote and explain a lot of things, but you cannot. But now it is a question of giving the reader, every reader, the opportunity to read, and not burdening the text with a crushing paratext. So, from that point on, you have to choose. And well, it's always... The choice always leaves you, well, there can always be a kind of doute and regret, but I think that, as far as it goes, the book, because of the reception it has, has not been lost so much. And I think that as far as possible I

		<p>tried to preserve what seemed significant to me as a reader. The example I gave you, the transvestites, the transvestites, I think that, well....</p>
	Kit Maude (English)	<p>well, no "<i>poner la pava</i>" is "to put the kettle on", there's no much, you get that. You're not changing very much by using "kettle" or "pava", you understand that. What was the other one? The virg, virgen, yes, and "virgen", again, you have to leave that, because it's a specific version, you don't change. And it's, I mean, especially in the US, latino culture is widespread. I mean, Catholic culture is strong. People, people get catholicism, Catholicism itself is a pretty global. I did get a question from a French critic the other day, asking about "<i>La difunta Correa</i>", which, that was a lot harder to, to deal with. I mean, I left <i>Difunta Correa</i>. And I add a quick footnote to, because it's not that, because yeah, because it's, it's a very, it's a very specific thing, but it's also it's a very charged image.</p>
	Svenja Becker (German)	<p>In the paragraph where "Teehäcksels" (tea herbs) is, it is clear that they are drinking mate. [0:24:32] - Laura Caldelari And why switch to tea? [0:24:34] - Svenja Becker For people who don't know mate, as a tea, to have a connection. So that they know that mate is a kind of tea, like a kind of infusion, or something. [0:25:00] - Laura Caldelari Okay, it's trying to bring the text closer when it's too foreign to the society in which it's read. [0:25:07] - Svenja Becker Yeah, you can understand it like that. Yes, yes. It's like an implicit explanation, a little bit. Or illustration, or whatever, just to give you an idea, so that it's not too cryptic. Because me, with all the Madonnas out there I get really confused. Yes, but that, I found it that, that Madonna of the Valley in German is called "Unsere liebe Frau von" (our loving Lady of). In Germany that's the official name, more or less. So that Catholics know what we are talking about. I'm a little bit... I don't know, I'm not a Catholic, so.... I looked for her and I found her with that name: <i>unsere liebe Frau von</i>. I hope it's not... No, it's not the same Virgin of Guadalupe because the Virgin of Guadalupe is called by a different name. Yes, yes, yes, yes, but I also don't quite understand why the names of the virgins in German are, differ so much. I don't know why sometimes they say Jungfrau and sometimes they say liebe Frau von. I have no idea. But I usually try to find the same virgin.</p>
Insults	Laura Alcoba (French)	<p>That was very difficult. Very difficult. I think it was the most difficult paragraph to translate. And well, there I did a lot of questioning, as I usually do when there is something difficult. I say "well, if I write this, what do you understand? how do you perceive it?" And I usually consult people who don't know, who don't know anything about what I'm translating. And in this case I did. It was impossible. Besides, Raúl, I mean, let's say it is a bit of a ridiculous name in Argentina today, so it's a little bit derogatory, but what, how, how? Raoul also, in fact, today, in France, it is a name that practically nobody of the young generations carries. So, well, there is something there, which I think, was not so much lost, but it is the typical passage that if I could have put, well, it is necessary to explain because nothing is understood here; but well, I think that as far as possible, it was quite good. But I did question. I even, I'll tell you, I made a <i>sondage</i> about that passage on Facebook. I put, well, "if I say this, what do you understand?" Sometimes I do.</p>
	Kit Maude (English)	<p>you can, but I mean, with insults and slang, in general, Yeah, people have to, you have to find the equivalent. And in that case, I think because people need to know exactly, exactly what they're talking about. It's, it is very graphic things. This is very graphic, and I should have the text here open, so I can, like see words. The exact phrases I found, but there are but I mean, but the English is very, is a rich language for insults, for language of all kinds. There's, there's generally, there's generally something, there's generally something that does the job in that sense.</p>
	Svenja Becker (German)	<p>Always a problem. There's just one that I invented. Usually, yeah, I don't think I invented any, but there's a scene, I'm going to find it, but there's a moment where all the denominations come, do you have the...? It's just, there's one that I made up because, because I liked the original so much. <i>die Würstchen im Rock</i> (sausage with skirt) that's it, that's what I... No, I don't remember what the original says but it was a little, it was something that I thought was original and not so insulting, but, derogatory yes, but whatever, in that case, yeah, it was more of a game. I don't know if it's such a decision... You have to have, I don't know, it's not such an insulting insult, but you don't want to call anybody that either.</p>

Proper names (People, streets, etc.)	Laura Alcoba (French)	And yes, there will always be something that is lost, but it doesn't matter, because the context, let's say, clarifies it. Well, when the novel is strong, if there is a moment in which one is a little bit wrong in interpreting as a reader, anyway <i>ça se rattrappe, non?</i> ; further and... I think.
	Kit Maude (English)	it's a city you can google it. did I, I can't remember what I did with <i>Cañada</i> . Did I leave <i>Cañada</i> ?, just I, I think I might have. I might have... Sometimes, when it's a specific geographic place I used both, the term in Spanish and then sometimes I add something like gully or gorge or ravine so that people know exactly what it is. So, or maybe I've, made now I'd have, honestly can't remember. I, yeah, no, I said, I use the word <i>Cañada</i> because you don't change, you don't change street names. You don't change other cities. But I in one of the phrases somewhere, I let the reader know that we're talking about a ravine, we're talking about something we're talking about, we're talking about a landmark that, again, is symbolic. There's no, absolutely no need to explain that that they can do if the reader the reader will understand exactly what's going on. And it doesn't really matter if they don't know exactly how big the park is, or what's there or what's very, very definitely described. And ideally, ideally, especially you want it to expand it the transcendence bits actual geographic reality to, to, to encompass something, something larger, a more metaphysical or more, more bolic view. It's, I mean, it's, it's interesting. It's a lot of listening, what's going on? It's got, it's got conversations of how, this conversations of Eden, Paradise Lost, yeah. It's fantastic
	Svenja Becker (German)	Yes, I think that the streets, in general, no, I don't translate them. It's just that you have to, well, in the texts usually, it's more or less clear that it's a street or whatever. And nowadays it's so easy to find them by Google maps. Like, if you're really interested you can even walk around on Street View. Yeah, I think...well there's a mention to, to, to that one on the radio, of a...where the zookeeper listens to the program of...I don't know I don't remember, of...of Dolina, that. And in that case I put something to make it clearer. I think I put <i>Gesprächssendung</i> (Talk-show) or something so that, so that you have at least an idea of what it might be like, what it might be like to be listening to that radio program at night. And with the actor I think I also put something so that, at least, I try to explain, that it is an actor. So that people know it for, yes, yes. It's a little bit... because she is not known here.
Marginilization (Bossom filled with jet oil)	Laura Alcoba (French)	That image had a great impact. It had a great impact because Charles Dantzig told me about it in his radio program. It transmits the extreme marginality of Argentine transvestites, obviously. It transmits, let's say, the book takes place in Argentina, that is to say that, there is a violence there that is due to the situation of trans people in Argentina, in any case up to certain recent dates, because I believe that today in Argentina there is a lot of evolution in terms of assimilation, integration and social acceptance of trans people. Perhaps in a way, let's say, very shocking because of the speed, and perhaps it has evolved faster than in France in some aspects. But, nevertheless, it is true that there is an Argentine violence there, of the situation of trans people. Particularly in the interior. Particularly in a semi-rural region, like the region where the book takes place, that has a big impact, I think. But, of course, it's true that here I don't think there are situations like that. But there are in Argentina. But it also has a symbolic dimension, I think. The character of Aunt Encarna is a kind of cyborg, isn't she? And there I think there is a very strong play of Camila beyond the reality of the jet oil, let's say. There is also something that means beyond reality, I think. But, but well; in any case it is something that has a strong impact on the French reader. Because it was commented several times and I saw it as, in several articles, as if to say the force, let's say, and the violence of the physical suffering and the violence done to the body in that context of exclusion.
	Kit Maude (English)	No, no. I was interested. It's it's actually one thing I had, I'm learning as we speak is a lot about a lot about <i>travesti</i> , trans culture, which I'm, I really wasn't familiar with before. Not very familiar with before, before starting this book, and I'm learning a lot about it, so, I mean, I am, I was, I was worrying about that was that, as I was doing the translation and but then I came across a poem by an American poet, who isn't trans or anything but he used the term <i>trannie oil</i> . So and then I learned that it is actually a, it's a thing and it's it's, it's, it's it's a, it's a technique for for shaping your body that actually, that does happen in it's a fairly global thing, apparently. It's very it's a very much as a cheap option for changing your body, but it's, it's, it's there and it's something... it's interesting, it's, the crossovers are more, they are more widespread than you might think. There's a

		<p>specificity to the experience of growing up trans in Argentina. But there's also a universality about being trans in a world that really doesn't know how to deal with it. It is also learning how to, how to, how to be more accommodating, how to be more welcoming, how to how to be more, more inclusive. And that's, that's very interesting. And that's something. That's a process, it's happening in different ways in different countries. But it's, it's a, it's a universal movement to an extent.</p>
	Svenja Becker (German)	<p>I don't think there is that in Germany, but I'm not sure, eh? I hope not, I really hope not, but I don't...I don't know. I found articles about the situation in Argentina, about jet oil; even here there was something in the TAZ [Tages Zeitung, a local newspaper], a small review about what is happening there. But I don't think that, that...I don't expect it to happen here. I hope that they have a little bit more access, even if you don't have money, even then, they give you access to something less harmful. the German society has a view of itself as a totally balanced, good, fair society, where everybody with any kind of sexual orientation or gender or whatever, has the same rights, and of course, the same representation in the society. But that's an <i>irren</i>. It's a lie, to itself, but nevertheless, it's still a lie. It is just not so. But whether transvestites here are better off than in Argentina, that I don't really know. But well, in general, the society has much more economic resources. So at that time when we're talking about a society as rich as the German society, even if people are marginalized, they have access to some basic support. What is missing in Argentina, so the situation is not comparable.</p>
Reception in the intended linguaculture	Laura Alcoba (French)	<p>Let's say, first of all, I will never choose to translate a book, I will never accept a book for political reasons. That first point, I do it only for literary reasons. I said yes to the proposal because I think the book is good. And the book seems good to me for literary reasons that are very complex as I told you, because for me literature is complex. The ambiguity. So, for me, artistically the book is good. It is very strong and that is why I said yes, not for political reasons. The fact that it echoes with experiences that are the subject matter of the book, and that resonate strongly for activist reasons, that is evident. I think it is something that is present in the translation into French, and in fact, many people from the LGBT collective contacted me, they talked about the book without coming in contact with me, they talked especially about Camila, because she is the one who managed to give birth to this incredible text, and it has the same dimension. There were articles, I think of an article published in <i>Arkhé</i>, by Clovis Maillet, who is a trans historian herself and who has a reflection that is, let's say...what was very interesting, that <i>Les Vilaines</i> provoked reactions of reading, of readers having nothing to do with the LGBT community, who said "wow; what an excellent book, I recommend it." It won the award <i>l'Héroïne de Madame Figaro</i>, so if there is a non-activist media, it is the people who read Madame Figaro. So the book managed to reach those people. Then it managed, yes, to circulate in the LGBT milieu and to give food for thought as well. I'm also thinking about that article by Clovis Maillet, which has nothing to do with what you could read in Madame Figaro. So that's the strength of the book, that's why it's good. That's why it's good. Because a book that only touches on a militant issue doesn't... but the book not only has the power to awaken and nurture reflections, but also to reach a person who has nothing to do with it, who knows nothing and who never thought there was an LGBT problem and suddenly reads a book that is good and opens their head. That's interesting. And I think that the reactions to the book show that it all worked at the same time, the book works as a book, as a novel, because it is a good, very good work of art; and the book also worked with its more "activist" content. But I believe that it generated many reflections and that it reached people, very different people, from different places. And that is what, I think, a good book achieves in general. The demonstration that it is a good book. And yes, from the reactions that I read, or some comments that were made to me, I know that in the LGBT environment it was read a lot. But it was read a lot beyond that, and it continues to be read. It is a book that continues to gain readers, adventure of <i>Les Vilaines</i> doesn't seem to end. I tell you, it was published in January, it's September, and it's still going on. It's something quite exceptional here, eh? It is something quite exceptional that a book continues to elicit, to be present in bookstores for such a long time.</p>
	Kit Maude (English)	<p>Yeah, the only way for, for, for it to be perfectly conveyed will be for Camila to have written this in English. And even if she'd written it in English, it would have been, it would be a different book. I mean, my hope is that I've got as close to what she would have done in English. And that's the, that's the that's that, that's, that's the ultimate goal of, of any translation I do. But I think that, I don't want to sound arrogant, I think that the vast, vast majority of the meaning and the</p>

importance and the fun of the book comes out 100%. There will be people don't, not many, I mean, people, a lot of people don't even know that there's a city of Cordoba that isn't Spain, we're dealing with people aren't going to get, and people aren't necessarily going to understand that even after the dictatorship, how, how nasty, how repressive, the police force can be, you know, in the US, the people are very, very aware of how repressive the police can be especially against, against, against marginalized, and in the UK increasingly, although they're a little bit more in denial about it. And there are enough the, the universality of the book, is I think, enough that, that, coupled with just the empathy that one immediately feels with the main characters, I think those two things combined, I think that people will, their reading experience will be very similar experiences, they won't be exact. And people will take out different things. But that's the glory of literature. You take, you can never predict what they're going to take from, from whatever they read. That, yeah, no, I'm not, I'm not too worried that something's going to get lost. It'll get altered; it has been altered. Hopefully, everything, everything important is there. The most important role for me is to translate the book in a way that people are going to want to read it. That's, book itself is the, has the power. It's certainly not me. But I'm hoping that Camila herself, she's being a bit shy, but I'm hoping that Camila herself will be able to play a very active role in, in promoting the book and promoting a movement in in the US because there's a lot. I was talking about universality before but there's a lot I think that people in the US and the UK, even people that were part of the trans movement, don't necessarily understand about the specificities of the movement in Latin America. That difficulties in, the different forms of, of inclusiveness that are required. I mean, to some extent, I mean, to a great extent, Argentina has recently been passing some, some laws that, that this are ahead of what's going on in the US and and well, the English speaking world, which is interesting. But, and I think, yeah, I my role is, firstly, I just want people to read the book, that's the most powerful and I want a lot of people through people who wouldn't who aren't going to pick up the book because it's it's a trans book, or because it's a Latino book, just because it's a really, really a wonderful read. I think that's, that was certainly my I'm looking I'm a privileged white cis male. I should not be leading any, any activist movement, I'm going to, we're going to make sure that that somebody from the movement in the US is involved in the editing process. (I) play a role in making it accessible to other cultures, other readers, I mean, that's, that's, that's, that's the idea. But there's a very important politically charged story that's being written here. And it's reaching a lot of people in Argentina. And across the Spanish speaking world, it's getting big and in Spain too and across Latin America. My, the most important thing I can do is to make that book is to make that story available in the best possible version, not in in a version that people are going to enjoy reading in the English speaking world. And on in, and that that's an that's an, I'm very much of my head in the clouds. I'm very much in the military thing. And as an activist in terms in this in this sense, if, if we were talking about an author who would who from the 19th century, then I'd be playing a much more prominent role as as as because I'd be the main figurehead. This for the author, across the, across the wider world, I'll be saying, look, that person has been has been forgotten, you should read them, because they tell you a lot about what life was like in the 19th century, that, but because, because Camila is a contemporary author, I think my my, my primary role was to give her a platform to speak and and I will, you know, I will do everything I can to to help her convey her message. That, yeah, I mean, that's translators shouldn't ever, I don't even like having my name on the cover. This is this is this is Camilla's work of art, it's been an enormous privilege to be involved in conveying it, but if I can help her, with her activism, I will in any way I can. But yeah, I, you, I would say sort of in terms of a translator's role in in activism, as is as much this is communications and logistics, rather than the actual activism. And that's being done, see what I mean. But, you know, any support I can give? I will,

(Author's note: Bad Girls will be published in May 2022.)

Svenja Becker (German)

it has not not sold very well here. If it had been sold it would be something else. No, the thing is that here the book was launched in January and there's no resonance really. No, it's really too bad, because I think that, well, of course here... I don't think that Camila's novel here could have as big an impact as in Argentina because it's not about German society with its specific problems, so you would need a voice like Camila's here, an original German or Swiss voice, or whatever, but I think that would be for the transvestite community here, and for activism and everything, that would be the best. But I

think that every, that it could be like a, a, a form of *Ermutigung* or *Selbstermächtigung* [encouragement or self-empowerment] that could work here as well. And it could more, if it would give more encouragement to the trans community here, to the marginalized here to, to raise their voice, or to make themselves heard. I don't know yet. It's just that I hope that, well, I hope it finds its way a little bit through that community and everything, but well... so far, the reactions are good. So the responses are good, the resonance that I got from the trans community seems pretty good to me. However, the echo seems to me to be quite small. And that has to, of course, that has to... well without all that pandemic and stuff, it would have been possible to invite the author to do a tour, to promote the book. That would be a very different scenario than what we have now.

Table 1: Interviews with the professional translators

In summary, the translators seemed to believe that they neither modified the original text nor added to it from their own personal views when translating. They seemed convinced that the source text was powerful enough and that by being neutral and invisible, they let the text speak by itself, no matter what language it was written in. But culture affects language, and therefore, translations. How translators understand specific cultural concepts in the source language affect their renderings of that concept. Although they claimed to be neutral, when discussing with them, it became clear to me how involved they all had been in the process, how much it meant to them that the trans community felt acknowledged and respected. By investigating about them and their situation, by actually talking to them and asking them how they felt about certain translation choices (i.e., *las travestis*), it became evident that they had made it possible, albeit unknowingly, for the activism present in the book to be conveyed with the same force as in the original.

This realization seems to confirm that regardless the prescribed normative in the target linguaculture, translators always interact with the text and interpret it, and that, as Katan (2016, conclusion) claims “translation *is*, in fact, intercultural communication.” Moreover, this appears to highlight that, contrary to automated translation, human translators partake in the intercultural process, for they understand the cultural meaning behind the words and recreate a new text adapted to their linguacultures, not just in literary terms but also ontologically. As a result, translations adapt to their new surroundings and might, as well, influence their new literary environment.

On a different note, the conducted interviews made palpable the translators’ enthusiasm towards the original text. They all seemed notably involved in the translation process, and more remarkably, in the end result and how their translations would affect their linguacultures. It should be interesting to conduct further research focused on the reception of the translated works by the general public and literary critics, as this would allow us to perceive whether these translations manage to traverse the canons that govern domestic literature and to introduce new models of reality. This poses an interesting possibility, as it would generate notable changes in terms of acceptance and tolerance of minority and marginalized groups. If so, it would also be worthwhile to investigate whether the changes introduced are due to translations simply fulfilling a social need, as is the case of Las Malas in Argentina (for neither English, French nor German literature are weak or young literary polysystems).

4 Combined analysis and description of results

This section proposes to analyze and interpret the obtained data in order to answer the research questions posed, namely: Do translators see themselves as having agency? And if so, what role do translators play in eliciting societal change? To what extent do translators acknowledge their potential social contribution, and do they consciously exert their agency?

The translations of *Las Malas* will be analyzed from two different perspectives: from the perspective of the product (e.g., the quality of the target text or its correct use to serve a specific purpose), and from the perspective of the translation process (e.g., the efficiency of decisionmaking in the translation process.) Therefore, the combined results from the translated texts and interviews in this thesis will be analyzed against the background of House's model and Toury's norms. To start with, the analysis is structured in three areas underpinning the Functional-Pragmatic Model. These are 1) Function Equivalence, 2) Field, Tenor, and Mode, and 3) Genre. Within these three areas, three relevant issues to be discussed were found from analyzing the chosen rich points and their translations into English, French and German.

The first issue concerns the idea that the meaning of a language unit can only be understood when considered together with the cultural context in which it appears, and it emerges from the analysis of function equivalence. It is here illustrated what may happen to a text when its translator fails to elicit the sociocultural meaning carried or decides not to add an explanation. The second issue examines translators as intuitive social agents, and is determined by an examination of Field, Tenor, and Mode. This accounts for how the context of intercultural communication may affect the professional translators' choices and the problematic of conveying emotionally loaded words. Finally, the third issue addresses untranslatability vs. translatability, discussed in relation to genre. Untranslatability can result in incorrect translations, which may affect the communicative purpose that the translation is supposed to fulfil. However, untranslatability may also create transparency by illuminating issues that can be modified, which, indeed, relies on translators exerting their agency. Simultaneously, languages are becoming more translatable due to globalization. In addition to this, Gideon Toury's concept of norms is used as an additional tool for analyzing the decision-making process of the translators interviewed. For Toury, translation norms not only guide the decisions made during the translation process, but also determine the type of equivalence obtained between the original text and its translation. It is through these findings that the translators' role as enablers of social change is explored.

4.1 House's original model for evaluating translations

House's model is based on pragmatic theories of language use that allows the analysis of the linguistic-discursive and cultural particularities of both the ST and the TT. This ensures a comparison of the two texts and the resulting evaluation. This model draws on Halliday's

functional and systemic theory, the notions of the Prague School of language and linguistics, register and stylistic theory, and discourse analysis. It focuses on translation quality assessment and equivalence in translation. Additionally, the model is based on the concept of equivalence, as House deems equivalence to be the fundamental criterion of translation quality. She considers that the basic feature of any translation is its twofold link: to the ST, and to the communicative conditions of the receiver, what in textual linguistic approaches is known as the equivalence relation (1997, p. 24).

For his part, Ivir (1996) defines what House thinks of the notion of equivalence:

equivalence is [...] relative and not absolute, [...] it emerges from the context of situation as defined by the interplay of (many different) factors and has no existence outside that context, and in particular [...] it is not stipulated in advance by an algorithm for the conversion of linguistic units of the SL into linguistic units of the TL. (p. 155)

Hence, a translated text has a function equivalent to that of its ST. However, this equivalence is differentiated according to whether the translation is overt (explicit) or covert (implicit). The purpose of this model is to evaluate how textual, pragmatic, and lexico-grammatical elements of an original text are reconfigured in a new context, in which the translated text is either a functionally identical reconstruction of the source material (covert translation), or an integral conversion to the new target language settings (overt translation.)

In the overt translation, readers must be allowed to the function of the ST, but in the TL. In this way, only a functional equivalence is avoided. There must be a second-level function, which allows the reader a view of the ST through the TL. The function of a covert translation, on the other hand, is to duplicate the ST in a different discursive context. In this case, a functional equivalence is needed and it will be made possible through a cultural filter. The shifts will occur at the levels of the language/text relationship and in the register. The cultural filter with its five dimensions referred to as “directness, self-reference, content-focus, explicitness, and routine-reliance.” (House 1997, p. 115) would make it clear to us when a covert translation is a translation and not a version. In a covert translation, if the genre of the ST does not exist in the target culture, the translation would be impossible, it would result in a version.

The concept of equivalence is directly related to the transposition of meaning between the two languages, with the semantic, pragmatic and textual components being especially significant. The semantic needs no further explanation, the pragmatic refers to the study of the purposes of the use of sentences as a unit of speech; and textual refers to the structural aspects of a text. The function of a text should not be confused with the functions of language. The function of a text would be its use or purpose in the context of a particular situation. It follows that to discern the function of any given text, a textual profile needs to be established, which would come from a linguistic and pragmatic analysis in its situational

context. But the situation is too broad a concept and should be divided into more manageable parts, what House (1997, p. 37) calls situational dimensions.

The author herself divides them into dimensions of the language user (geographic origin, social class and time) and dimensions of language use (medium, participation, social role relationship, social attitude and terrain). In each of the eight dimensions, she differentiates syntactic, lexical and textual aspects, which she calls “situational dimensions.” The function of a text would be determined through the analysis of these eight situational dimensions. Through them, the textual profile is obtained. Thus, the degree of equivalence between the textual profile of the ST and its translation will give us the degree of adequacy, or, in other words, its quality. Although as it has been established before, the objective of this MA thesis is not to assess the quality of the analyzed translations, but to reverse-engineer the translators’ choices made during the translation process, House’s model will serve as an underlying structure.

4.2 Toury’s Descriptive Translation Studies

For Toury, translation norms not only guide the decisions made during the translation process, but also determine the type of equivalence obtained between the original text and its translation. Toury establishes three types of translation norms (1995 pp. 56-61): initial, preliminary and operational. To understand the first, initial norms, he takes on both the cultural dimension that underlies the concept of norm, and the fact that in most cases, norms are particular and specific to each culture and not universal. This in order to determine that the translator must maintain an intermediate position between the two cultures. Therefore, these initial norms would have to do with the concepts of appropriateness and acceptability. Thus, the process begins when the translator has to decide between placing himself in the pole of adequacy, i.e., adhering to the norms of the source polysystem, or placing himself in the opposite pole, that of acceptability, opting for the norms in force in the target polysystem. Secondly, preliminary norms are those that deal with the aspects prior to the actual transfer phase, where aspects such as the existence of a translation project, the previous phase of documentation on the text or the author or the editorial policy will be assessed. Finally, when speaking of operational standards, i.e., those that come into play in the active phase of the translation process, they “may be described as serving as a model, in accordance the source text (i.e., adequate translation) plus certain modifications, or purely target norms, or a particular compromise between the two.” Toury (1995, p. 60) This author justifies that the latter comprise both the norms of the source polysystem as well as those of the target polysystem, although establishing a balance between the two. This thesis draws on Toury’s concept of norms with the aim to discover the extent to which professional translators make conscious use of their agency, and in extension, what their professional self-concept is.

4.3 “Rich Points” and Other Problem Areas

This section is devoted to the comprehensive analysis of the salient sociocultural features embedded in Argentinian language use that the survey responses highlighted as “difficult to translate” (see Appendix A.) It discusses in detail the rich points and problem areas of the original text and the interviewed translators’ take on each of them.

4.3.1 Title

It has been maintained that translation always mediates between both, different languages and different cultures (Katan, 2011; Chesterman, 2002; Snell-Horny, 2005). According to this ontological perception, the meaning of a language unit can only be completely understood when considered together with the cultural context in which it appears. In this regard, the choices in the translation of *Las Malas*, the title of the book in the original Argentinian Spanish version are intriguing. When asked about that, however, all three translators explained that they actually have little say in the matter (the same is true for the design of the book cover), as the last word is always the Editorial’s. While acknowledging that they were satisfied with the final choice, some believe it could have been another, one with a greater impact. Kit Maude even mentioned having insisted on leaving the title in its original Spanish version: “I didn’t go with *Bad Girls*. I wanted *Las Malas*. (...) It’s, I think that, that English readers are perfectly willing to accept a title in Spanish these days” (Appendix C.2, lines 282-293).

This exemplifies the influence exerted by what Toury calls preliminary norms. The translator made the conscious choice of being visible, of letting the target linguaculture know they were dealing with a translation of a text set in a different sociocultural context, thus challenging the established publishing norms. But the final word was that of the publishers, who felt leaving the book title untranslated risked being unappealing for the intended audience and/or the book being exhibit by mistake in the Spanish books section of a bookstore. (See sentences 292 to 300 Appendix C.2.) Laura Alcoba, on the other hand, felt strongly that *Les Vilaines* (naughty) had been the right choice, particularly since at first *Les Vilaines Filles* (naughty girls) was the preferred option. She explains why this title was discarded, and why *Les Méchantes* (mean, evil) would have been a wrong choice during the interview. According to her, while the Spanish term *mala* can be translated as *méchante*, this French term lacks the necessary empathy conveyed through the Spanish booktitle. In a similar way, *vilaine fille* is something parents scold their daughters with, which makes this option sound too childish. *Les Vilaines*, therefore, was the better option (see sentences 223 to 247 in Appendix C.1). On her part, Svenja Becker, the German translator, claims to have had no influence on the publisher’s decision as to the title of the translated novel, *Im Park der prächtigen Schwestern* [in the park of the magnificent sisters]. Moreover, she refers to the trans ‘sisterhood’ (in German *Schwesternschaft*) described in the original as “a gift” that allowed her to create a link between the title and the protagonists of the story: “Bueno, el

colectivo de las travestis alrededor de la Tía Encarna es como una hermandad, no? Asi que lo de Schwestern funciona más o menos. Espero" (Appendix C.3, lines 58-62)¹⁹.

Translation is an area in which norms seem to act, in addition to decisions taken at the lowest textual level, on decisions taken beyond that level. And this last example underlines the extent to which social phenomena follow a certain pattern only to deal with linguistic and translation singularities. But in all cases the pragmatic equivalence has been achieved, consequently, the importance of the sociocultural framework in which the translations took place was considered in all three translated versions. This seems to suggest that editors while respectful of the 'operational norms' at play, strive to find a balance between the source text's and the target text's polysystems.

4.3.2 Chongo

A clear example of 'untranslatability' might be presented by the Argentinian word *chongo*. Although the word itself exists in Spanish (for example in Mexico or Peru, to refer to a hair-style, a bun) its Argentinean definition is unique to this country, and it appears with the sexual liberation of women and the consequent idea that not all relationships are necessarily "serious." When an Argentinean woman says that someone is her *chongo*, it means that she has a relationship with someone, who is not her boyfriend neither is it something casual. With the *chongo* there is a certain frequency in the meetings, in the conversations. With the *chongo* other things besides a bed can be shared. *Chongo* was the one word most of the survey participants selected as difficult to translate, consequently something we discussed with all three translators.

Regardless of whether they felt more or less satisfied with their choices, two translators opted for a cultural equivalent, whereas the third translator decided to loan the term and leave it untranslated. He explains: "We've talked about specific terms [with Camila]. We have those. There's going to be, she liked that I haven't translated 'chongo', for instance" (Appendix C.2, lines 71-72) because, according to him, there is a lot of culture embedded in that term. This is yet another example of the translator exerting his agency, of letting the function of the text be determined by the situational dimension. By extension, employing "policy agency", i.e., his own policy of translation; the translator's agency goes beyond norms, establishing access to the readers in the first place, and affecting their emotional response. Contrariwise, the French and German translators responded, respectively, that "hay algo siempre que, evidentemente, no sé si se pierde, que se percibe de otro modo. Sí, creo que algo se pierde siempre al cambiar de... El libro está escrito en un contexto cultural y lingüístico y de referencias comunes particular; y viaja de repente. Entonces el

¹⁹ "Well, the trans collective around Aunt Encarna is like a sisterhood, isn't it? So, the 'Schwestern' thing kind of works. I hope." (my translation)

lector no va a tener las mismas referencias” (Appendix C.1, lines 79-81)²⁰ and “se lo pregunté creo como tres veces a Camila. Y todavía no tengo una idea clara, no la tengo. No entiendo el concepto de qué es, lo que sea, y eso fue complicado. El término ‘chongo’ (...), es muy argentino. Y no tengo idea de cómo se percibe en otras partes” (Appendix C.3, lines 161-167)²¹. These two translators opted for a cultural filter that would make a functional equivalence possible - *Kerl* in German and *mec* in French - thus giving the text fluidity and making it easier for the reader not to notice it is a translation.

Translation and the possibility thereof (i.e., translatability) depends on finding ‘equivalents’ in target languages. Regardless of the controversy among academics, equivalence remains a central concept in translation. Finding meanings and structures in the target language that correspond to those in the source language is crucial to translation. The search for an acceptable rendering into a target language is a challenge resulting from linguistic and sociocultural factors. In this context, Catford (1965, p. 93) claims that source language items “are *more or less* translatable rather than absolutely *translatable* or *untranslatable*.” He further proposes two types of untranslatability:

In linguistic untranslatability the functionally relevant features include some which are in fact formal features of the language of the SL text. If the TL has no formally corresponding feature, the text, or the item, is (relatively) untranslatable. (1965, p. 94)

Cultural untranslatability refers to “what appears to be a quite different problem arises, however, when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part” (Catford, 1965, p. 99). It seems that the Argentinian notion of *chongo* belong in this category.

This typically Argentinean word, which is covertly translated into German and French as “*Kerl*” and “*mec*” respectively, is difficult to translate by giving its dictionary equivalent “casual sexual acquaintance”²². The fact that this term has meaning not just on a referential level, but also pragmatically and intralingually, results in its ‘untranslatability’ difficulty. Therefore, relying exclusively on its referential equivalent to translate it will not capture its full spectrum of meaning. Because equivalents, in this instance, fall short of conveying the SL term’s full and complete subtleties of meaning, the English translator makes the deliberate decision of “untranslating” the word by leaving it in its SL form (borrowing and transcription) and rejecting its translation counterparts.

²⁰ “There is always something that, obviously, I don’t know if it is lost, that is perceived in another way. Yes, I think something is always lost when changing from... The book is written in a particular cultural and linguistic context, one of common references, and it travels suddenly. So, the reader is not going to have the same references.” (my translation)

²¹ “I asked Camila about it three times, I think. And I still don’t have a clear idea, I don’t have it. I don’t understand the concept of what it is, whatever it is, and that was complicated. The term ‘chongo’ (...), is very Argentinean. And I have no idea how it is perceived elsewhere.” (my translation)

²² <https://www.wordreference.com/esen/reverse/chongo>

4.3.3 Travesti

Travesti, one of the terms chosen by many participants in the survey, has a very specific meaning in Argentinian Spanish, what renders it 'culturally untranslatable'. Etymologically, the word 'transvestite' comes from the Latin words 'trans' which means 'to cross' or 'to surpass,' and vestite/'vestire' which means 'to dress'. Generally speaking, the word "transvestite" is part of the categories used to talk about gender identity, not sexual orientation. Similar to 'trans', 'transsexual' and 'transgender', 'transvestite' is an umbrella term for a diverse group of people who do not identify with the sex assigned at birth. However, beyond naming a personal identity, in many places in Latin America, particularly in Argentina, the term *travesti* designates a political identity that claims the right to self-definition beyond the gender binary.

There are only two grammatical genders in Spanish: masculine and feminine; and so, the articles should correspond in number and gender with the nouns (masculine=*el/los*, feminine=*la/las*). According to the Real Academia Española, the term *travesti* can be both, masculine and feminine. Nevertheless, transvestites, being generally men, are usually named *los travesties*. *Only, because they see themselves as women, they refer to themselves as las travesties*, which is much more than just a grammatical adjustment. It is a sociopolitical statement. All three interviewed translators were perfectly aware of the sociocultural, political dimension of the concept and, although their choices for a translation were all different, the reasoning behind that choice was the same, namely to revendicate the community by calling them as they had chosen to be named in real life in their linguacultures (in the case of the French and the German translators)²³, although both women admitted being quandary faced. "si yo traducía *les travesties* se perdía el el sentido fuerte del femenino, [...] la sociedad que las rechaza dice los travestis y ellas reivindican el femenino con las travestis. [...] Y claro, entonces todo el juego con las travestis es parte del colectivo del femenino. Todo eso se perdía y creo que fue realmente la dificultad," concedes Laura Alcoba (Appendix C.1, lines 38-41 / 49)²⁴. Similarly, Svenja Becker explains "el término travesti tiene un poco otro registro y eso es un problema en alemán porque no existe, no hay una alternativa realmente [...] es siempre esa duda de no tener una palabra-palabra para *la travesti* en alemán. Eso sigue siendo un problema de la novela" (Appendix C.3, lines 47-48 / 66-67)²⁵. [Conversely, the English translator settled for the term in the original Spanish, as no strong enough equivalent can be found in English. To put it in his own words

²³ French: *les trans*; German: *die Schwestern*

²⁴ "If I translated *les travesties*, the strong sense of the feminine was lost, [...] the society that rejects them says *los travestis* and they reclaim the feminine with *las travestis* [...] And of course, the whole word game with *las travestis* as part of the collective of the feminine, all that was lost and I think that was really the difficulty." (my translation)

²⁵ "The term *travesti* has a little bit another register and that is a problem in German because it doesn't exist, there is no alternative for it, really. There is always the doubt of not having an exact equivalent for *la travesti* in German. That remains a challenge." (my translation)

You might say, that *travesti*, which is, which is quite a political, politically charged term. I mean, in English, in my first draft, I put transvestite as a placeholder. But it's, it's no good. [...] The English equivalent *trans* sounds too neutral, too hygienic, and does not convey the whole meaning. I trust the English readers will make the leap and understand the original version. (Appendix C.2, lines 76-80)

Admittedly, Kit Maude also added, that it has not yet been decided whether the term could remain unexplained in the English translation, though. The reason being the publishing house's apprehension that *travesti* may be too blunt and could be considered offensive in the target linguaculture (see lines 76 to 83 in Appendix C.2).

In translation and interpreting studies, especially in the sub-field of the sociology of translation (Angelelli, 2014; Baker, 2006), activism is approached as a set of actions developed within the framework of the practice of translation and interpreting activity itself and is opposed to the traditional habitus in the profession, consisting of the internalization of a subordinate role and a submissive profile among the actors involved in it. Wolf (2012), for example, defines the activist agenda in translation in this way:

If we talk about the activist agenda of translation, this means emphasizing specific situations where the translator's intervention is shaped by a specific pattern of beliefs or convictions which follow a certain political program mostly connected with solidarity and social claim. (p.18)

Thus, the notion of activism in this field supposes, first of all, a shift towards the translator as a subject with agency, as opposed to the traditional image of the 'invisible' subject, who only constitutes an aseptic channel for the 'transmission' of the message.

From a sociocultural perspective, it is important to observe how the new discourses raised by LGBTQ+ activists underlie linguistic ideologies and demands that imply the promotion of homogenizing types of linguistic uses, as in the specific case of *las travestis*. After having discussed with the professional translators the specific use they have made of their native languages and the reasons behind those choices it is apparent that they all exerted their agency. Most of the time, however, it was not deliberate.

4.3.4 Other features of cultural specificity

Insults, violence, and discrimination

At the outset of the 20th century a few doctors maintained that sexual orientation was innate and not a deliberate choice, and that scientific understanding of sexuality would promote tolerance of sexual minorities. The German physician Magnus Hirschfeld and the German-born American sexologist and endocrinologist Harry Benjamin constitute an example of those pioneers who advocated for legal recognition of gender nonconforming people²⁶. In spite of this, the term "transvestite" was appropriated by pathologizing scientific discourses

²⁶ <https://www.britannica.com>

that, particularly from psychiatry, named the discordance between the sex assigned at birth and gender identity and used it as an expression of sexual identity and/or behavior disorders. This medical conception has had devastating consequences for transvestites as their identities were invalidated by being mistakenly conceived as the result of a temporary desire to dress in clothing associated with the opposite gender (this is known as cross-dressing.)

In Latin America, particularly in Argentina, this notion had a major impact on police codes and regulations that prohibited (especially during the years of military dictatorship) the wearing of clothing associated with the opposite gender. This act was perceived as an individual behavior (not as a viable identity) linked to a sexual perversion that, at best, should remain in the realm of the private and nocturnal.

Because of this, and because human beings have an abundance of ideas when it comes to inventing new insults (which can range from slightly witty to really offensive), new ways of referring disdainfully to transvestites have emerged, and continue to emerge (I am now specifically referring to the Argentine sociocultural context, which is where the novel is set). It is not always easy to find an idiomatic equivalent in another language. Juliane House focuses on the evaluation of translation quality and equivalence. House maintains that the fundamental characteristic of a translation is linked to two aspects, the ST and the communicative conditions of the receiver, that is to say, the relationship of equivalence between a ST and its TT. In her definition, she goes further by defining the concept: "Translation is the replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language" (House, 1997, p. 31). As we can see, she considers equivalence to be the fundamental criterion of translation quality. To achieve this equivalence, the ST must coincide with the TT in function, and this is achieved through pragmatically and semantically equivalent means.

An example of House's definition that precisely points out this difference is insults. In the Spanish version there are several insults, but one passage in particular stands out because they are vivid, colorful, and born out of popular humor:

A las travestis no nos nombra nadie, salvo nosotras. El resto de la gente ignora nuestros nombres, usa el mismo para todas: putos. Somos los manija, los sobabultos, los chupavergas, los bombacha con olor a huevo, los travesaños, los trabucos, los calefones, los Osvaldos cuando mucho, los Raúles cuando menos, los sidosos, los enfermos, eso somos. (Las Malas, 2019, p.79)

In other words, these insults could not be used in any other context or against any other social group. The literal translation would be: "Nobody names us except us. The rest of the people ignore our names, they use the same name for all of us: gays. We are the handles, the bulge-kneaders, the cocksuckers, the egg-smelling panties, the crossbars, the blunderbuss, the boilers, the Osvaldos at the most, the Raules at the least, the AIDS patients, the sick, that's what we are", something that is not usually said in any of the languages analyzed. Readers of the target texts would most likely not understand the complete meaning.

If they were able to deduce that these are insults, they would not know how to correctly interpret the contempt they convey. The same may also apply to readers of the original version who speak peninsular Spanish, given that their linguaculture is a different one, too. However, these readers might find the insults easier to decode and, therefore, should be able to indirectly understand the cultural meaning behind the words.

Neither French, German nor English have words with the same semantic and pragmatic equivalence, but two of the translators interviewed were able to make their choices feel equally strong in their linguacultures, rendering their translations adequate. Svenja Becker went as far as to create a German equivalent: she found the Spanish insults so colorful that this inspired her to transpose a term that in the German linguaculture normally defines a meal, but in the context of *Las Malas* is perfectly understandable from the semantic and the pragmatic perspective. Transposing “*Würstchen im Rock*” (p.73) (lit.: sausage with skirt, cul.: pigs in a blanket) from the culinary to the social domain was a brave decision which demonstrates how well she coped with the problematic of emotionally loaded words. The result is as expected, the target audience not only understands, but also gains a colorful (and funny?) way of expression. The third translator opted for a literal translation of the words. She justified her choice by saying that before making this decision, she had asked on her social networks for the opinion of anyone who cared to comment. According to her, her translation choices did not diminish the abusive impact of the name-calling because her informal survey suggested readers were able to grasp the meaning behind the words. In this case, the translator also adopted a foreignizing strategy, bringing the original text to the target audience, that is to say, she also exerted her agency, albeit differently. She claims that ‘Osvaldo’ and ‘Raoul’ are long forgotten names in the French linguaculture and that the target reader, therefore, understands them as insults. In any case, she did research and devoted time and careful consideration to this predicament during the translation process, which shows that her cognition, her opinions, her way of perceiving the world, affected her decision. Which equals to saying that she made use of her agency (this segment of our interview can be found in Appendix C.1, lines 168 to 179). Needless to say, this segment of the translated text does not conform to the target culture, for information is retained from the source text and inserted in the translation. This decision entails purposely breaching the target language's conventions in order to preserve the meaning of the source language. With this, Venuti's advocated foreignizing method of translation is fully accomplished, because the deliberate inclusion of foreignizing components renders the translator visible, in other words, it signals the readers that they are reading a translation of a work from a different linguaculture.

Breast enlargement

The specificity of a cultural concept can result in a cultural gap between source and target language if they apply to distant cultures. South American, North American and European cultures may not be that far apart in many respects, but the socioeconomic reality that shapes their cultures might be.

A few of the readers participating in the survey mentioned that *tetas rellenas de aceite de avión*²⁷ could prove difficult to translate. The professional translators were asked about this, but none seemed to have found it difficult. All three translators chose a literal translation given that it is the best way to convey the marginality of the trans community in Argentina. In fact, the substance applied is not properly an oil used for airplanes, but a colloquial name for biopolymers (liquid silicone), oils, liquid plastic and a series of petroleum-derived components that are used illegally as aesthetic fillers and are very harmful health-wise.

All translators admitted to being shocked by the fact that these men were willing to put themselves at risk in order to enlarge their breasts, hips and glutes, and shape their bodies in line with the feminine ideal. Both the French and the German translators said that this practice is not common in their countries, which makes it even more appalling to their audience. For his part, the English translator replied that, when researching, he came across a poem mentioning “trannie oil”. Upon further investigation he realized that the procedure is equally common in the US within groups lacking the necessary economic resources to rely on proper plastic surgery. In his own words “it’s a technique for shaping your body that actually, that does happen in, it’s a fairly global thing, apparently...It’s very much a cheap option” (Maude, Appendix C.2, lines 120- 121) .In this case, none of the translators changed anything or added any explanations, they were simply content to be a neutral and invisible conduit, having found an intentional equivalent. An equivalent that, though shocking to some, conveys the marginal situation via a certain “universality.”

Proper names

People and places names are a perennial problem in translation. Vermes (2003) states that:

The translation of proper names has often been considered as a simple automatic process of transference from one language into another, due to the view that proper names are mere labels used to identify a person or a thing. (...) the translation of proper names is not a trivial issue but, on the contrary, may involve a rather delicate decision-making process, requiring on the part of the translator careful consideration of the meanings the name has before deciding how best to render it in the target language. (p. 89-90)

In line with him, Newmark (1993, p. 15) believes that proper nouns are “a translation difficulty in any text”. Lately, the commonly upheld idea is to leave names untranslated. This trend can be observed by checking, for instance, the website of the University of Catalunya in the section entitled *What should and shouldn’t I translate?*²⁸

- As a general rule, street names should not be translated.

²⁷ bosom filled with jet oil (my translation)

²⁸<https://www.uoc.edu/portal/en/servei-linguistic/convencions/traduccio/coses/index.html>

- Leave the names of major geographical features without standard translations in the source language. However, translate any generic words used in their names (e.g., river, mount)
- Do not translate the names of contemporary figures (except for Popes.) Additionally, respect the original spellings of names written in the Latin alphabet, including any accents or other reasonably reproducible diacritical marks.

It is worth mentioning that some of the names appearing in the book are culture-specific. Some people are mentioned without any explanation, but the reader nevertheless understands who they are and why they fit in that specific segment. Some places are meaningful to the prostitution scene in Córdoba, the city where the story takes place, and the reader knows exactly what the author is referring to. In contrast, foreign readers will not understand completely, and some meaning might be lost in the translation. When asked about it, each of the translators interviewed responded that they aim at fluidity and, therefore, avoid adding footnotes – with different words but expressing the same opinion:

Yo, en la medida de lo posible, en eso estoy muy de acuerdo con Anne Marie Métaillé, yo sé que todo el equipo trata de no poner nunca notas de pie de página, a no ser que sea absolutamente necesario.” (Laura Alcoba, appendix C.1, lines 83-85)

[I absolutely agree with Anne Marie Métaillé and the whole editorial team on not adding footnotes unless it is necessary.]

the editors may want me to put in more footnotes. I hope not. (Kit Maude, appendix C.2, line 227)

Y en ese caso yo puse algo para que sea más claro. Yo creo que puse *Gesprächssendung* o algo para que, para que tengan por lo menos una idea (...) Y con la 'actora' yo creo que también puse algo como para que, por lo menos, trato de explicar, que se trata de una 'actora'. Que la gente lo sepa para, si, si. Es un poco... porque no se la conoce acá. Pero no notas de pie de página, eso frena la experiencia de la lectura. (Svenja Becker, appendix C.3, lines 268-273)

[I did add the odd explanation, like in the case of the radio commentator or the actress. But not footnotes, as they slow the reading experience down.]

Additionally, they all commented that every reader has access to the internet and can search for what they want to know. Yet, all of them added some explanatory remarks such as 'the actress' or 'the radio announcer'. The French translator went even a step further and translated *La Cañada* (an emblematic street crossed by the river Suquía) as *le Ravin* (the Ravine), and *El Abasto* (a wholesale fruit and vegetable market) as *le secteur des Abatoirs* (the slaughterhouse area.) Needless to say, her choice resulted in an entirely different city, yet the narrative's message never lost its compelling appeal because of that, which seems to suggest that any idea of absolute translatability is dismissed because

there can be no exactness in translation in any but rare and trivial cases [...] the notion of translatability therefore has to be considered in relation to each instance of translation as 'a concrete act of performance' and must be linked with the text type of ST, the purpose of translation and the translation principles being followed by the translator. (Shuttleworth and Cowie, 1999, p. 180)

Yerba

The characters in the original novel drink *mate*. *Mate* has been consumed throughout South America since long before Europeans arrived. It is the national beverage of Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay, and is also consumed in Bolivia, some areas of Chile, Southern Brazil, Syria (the world's largest importer) and Lebanon, where immigrants imported it from Paraguay and Argentina. Nowadays, globalization and social media has made *mate* better known in the world (an example of this is the Hollywood film *Captain Fantastic*, in which the main character drinks *mate*.) All this notwithstanding, and in spite of having understood that it is a beverage, readers belonging to a different linguaculture might ask themselves what *mate* actually is. It is a caffeine infused drink made by soaking dried leaves of *yerba* (the holly species *Ilex paraguariensis*) in hot water and served in a calabash gourd container with a metal straw that filters the liquid. In *Las Malas*, one of the characters is depicted as a devoted lover who every morning prepares mate to the liking of his girlfriend:

Luego se deslizaba hasta la cocina y ponía la pava al fuego mientras ordenaba los ingredientes del mate tal como le gustaba a su tirana novia: un dedo de té de burro, un dedo de peperina, la yerba colada, sin polvillo, una cucharada de miel y un jirón de cáscara de naranja. (p. 40)

Such a sentence presents absolutely no comprehension difficulty for an Argentinian reader, but it might be different for a reader that is not familiar with the South American culture due to the local ingredients mentioned. In actual fact, whether the translators opted for a literal transcription or a cultural filter would not affect the message, as in the novel, what the characters drink is of no relevance. Nevertheless, it would throw some light into their decision-making processes. This passage was translated into German as

Danach verschwand er in der Küche, stellte den Teewasserkessel auf den Herd und bereitete eine Kalebasse mit Mate vor, wie ihn seine tyrannische Freundin möchte: eine Prise Burrito, eine Prise Peperina, den Teehäcksel ohne Staub, ein Löffelchen Honig und eine Streifen Orangenschale. (p. 32)

Remarkably, the German translator chose to mention *mate* once and then refer later to *Teewasser* (tea water) and *Teehäcksel* (tea herbs.)

Para la gente que no conozca el mate, como un té, para tener una conexión. Para que sepan que el mate es una especie de té, como una especie de infusión, o algo. (...) Es como una implícita explicación, un poco. O ilustración, o lo que sea, para que tengan una idea, para que no sea demasiado enigmático." (see lines 192-198 in Appendix C.3)

[For people who do not know *mate* to have a connection. So that they know that *mate* is a kind of tea, like a kind of infusion, or something. (...) It's like an implicit explanation, a little bit. Or an illustration, or whatever, so they have an idea, so it is not too enigmatic.]

Yet, she decided to leave the names of the aromatic herbs untranslated (*Burrito* and *Peperina*), words that might be unknown or misinterpreted (German people know Burrito as a Mexican dish) but failed to explain the reasoning behind her choices. Contrary to this, the French translator rendered:

Il s'insinuait ensuite dans la cuisine et mettait la bouilloire sur le feu tandis qu'il préparait les ingrédients du maté, tel que sa fiancée tyrannique l'aimait: un doigt de menthe poivrée, un doigt de menthe fraîche, de l'herbe a maté filtrée, une cuillère de miel et un zeste d'orange. (pp. 33-34)

She opted for herbs' names that the readers recognize, even if they are not exactly the same as the ones mentioned in the original text, for *burro* and *peperina* are not to be found in France and, therefore, have no equivalents. Alcoba justifies her choices saying that there are always elements that, if not lost to the readers, will be understood in a different way (Appendix C.1, line 79) and that she, as well as the whole editorial team, avoid using footnotes as much as possible (ibid, lines 83-85). When asked about this same topic, the English translator downplayed the idea referring to the whole as "there's no much, you get that" (Appendix C.2, line 150). This represents a striking example of the two fundamental translation operations proposed by House's model: overt and covert translation. These are defined as the result of distinct reconceptualization procedures, with qualitatively different cognitive requirements. While the English translator integrates the concept into a new cultural context of arrival, indicating its foreign origin, the German and French translator opted for a covert translation, which implies considerable intervention at the levels of text/language to achieve the required functional equivalence. Both translators used a 'cultural filter', although it appears to be more of a mediation technique than a construct that captures the differences between linguistically and culturally determined conventions and expected norms between source and target language addressees. It seems that they based this cultural filter on factual, pragmatic cross-linguistic and cross-cultural analysis that inspired and justified their decisions.

La Difunta Correa

Deolinda Correa, *la Difunta Correa* (*difunta* meaning 'deceased') is revered as a saint in Argentina, especially among the working class, although she is not recognized as such by the Catholic Church.. According to popular legend, her husband fell ill far from their home (during the 1840 civil war), and in an attempt to reach him, Deolinda took her baby and followed the troop's tracks through the desert of San Juan Province. When her supplies ran out, she died. Her body was found days later, but astoundingly her baby was still alive, feeding from her inexplicably ever-full breast. Her miraculous breasts have an important, symbolic meaning in the ST and the interviewed translators were aware of this. Given that

none of the other languages offers an equivalent, all translators left the name in Spanish and added a footnote. In this case, the translators are visible, the translation itself could be considered a 'quotation' and the recipients of the translations are expected to receive the original text in a new framework and a new discursive universe.

4.3.5 Connecting with the reader

Laura Alcoba, Kit Maude and Svenja Becker have adopted different translation strategies. Both the French and the German versions (English not yet available) present segments of covert and of overt translation. During the conducted interviews all three professional translators stated that they let themselves be guided by the text. "La novela es tan fuerte, que no tenía que inventarme nada. La verdad es que puedes confiar en el texto, y te da todas las pistas" (apendix C3, lines 148-150)²⁹, says Svenja Becker. "Me entregué al texto con lo que sé y puedo hacer" (Appendix C.1, line 124)³⁰, agrees Laura Alcoba. "My role, I think, is is very much to take a take a backseat and make sure that I help to make sure that the connection, the flow of meanings, gets through without any problem without any hindrance" (Appendix C.2, lines 420-422), coincides Kit Maude. For him the most important thing is to translate a book in a way that people are going to read it. Interestingly, he seems to have a distinct professional self-concept:

my role is, firstly, I just want people to read the book, that's the most powerful and I want a lot of people through people who wouldn't who aren't going to pick up the book because it's it's a trans book, or because it's a Latino book, just because it's a really, really a wonderful read." (Maude, Appendix C2, lines 381-384)

Remarkably enough, while they have all admitted to making active choices on whether to drop, add or shift a particular concept, or whether to borrow it from the original text, it seems that none of the professional translators interviewed was first and foremost in pursue of real functional equivalences when choosing translation strategies. Perhaps because, as Alcoba admits, the source text is written in a particular cultural and linguistic context, and it travels suddenly, so the reader will not have the same references (Appendix C.1, line 81). Therefore, real functional equivalences cannot be achieved. This appears to have motivated the translators to take into account the pragmatic components of the source and target linguacultures and co-activate them in what can be considered a complex translation strategy from the psycholinguistic and cognitive perspective.

Laura Alcoba mentions

Entonces ahí, bueno, a partir de lo que yo percibía del texto, traté de estar a la altura en francés. Pero tal vez en ciertos momentos, bueno, como te digo, elegir siempre es renunciar a algo, entonces siempre hay algo que... Pero creo que, dentro de lo que cabe, el tono, el registro y la fuerza del libro se

²⁹ "I did not need to invent anything. The text is so powerful that all the clues are there" (my translation)

³⁰ "I gave myself fully to the text, with all I can and know how to do." (my translation)

preservó. (Appendix C.1, lines 259-262) [So there, well, based on my perception of the text, I tried to live up to it in French. But perhaps at certain points, well, as I said, to choose is always to give up something. But I think that, as far as possible, the tone, the register and the strength of the book were preserved],

and continues to talk about the wonderful reception her translation has in France, not only with the LGBTQ+ collective, but in all of society.

4.4 Role of translators as enablers of social change

The interviewed translators further stated that they found the book compelling and worth translating, however they did not accept the job because of its activist content. “Artistically the book is good”, says, for example, the French translator, and adds that “it is very strong and that is why I said yes, not for political reasons. The fact that it echoes with experiences that are the subject matter of the book, and that resonate strongly for activist reasons, that is evident” (my own translation, see original quote in lines 278 to 280, Appendix C.1).

With *Las Malas* Camila Sosa Villada tried, and succeeded, to raise public awareness about the indignity and marginalization in which the trans community lives. People who read her book felt outrage, sadness, shame. Many felt the need to do something to help them, some did. Camila’s literary activism reverberated and mobilized a society that was ready to welcome the LGBTQ+ collective. As highlighted by all three translators, Argentina has become a tolerant society and LGBTQ+ friendly laws are being passed regularly (refer to lines 198-201 in Appendix C.1, 379- 381 in Appendix C.2, 101-102 in Appendix C.3). There is still much to be done, in many respects, but as far as the LGBTQ+ collective is concerned, steps are being taken in the right direction, and *Las Malas* acted as an accelerator of change.

In her interview, Laura Alcoba (French translator), seemed satisfied with the end result of her translation. *Les Vilaines* is enjoying popularity, she even mentioned several times how well accepted the novel was, a literary phenomenon still present eight months after its publication, something that is not very common. There have also been articles written about it, it won an award, and the translator herself was interviewed about the original novel and about her own translation by a radio sender (please refer to lines 95-112 / 283-306 in Appendix C.1.). As it seems, *Les Vilaines* is as significant to the francophone community as *Las Malas* to the Argentinian. And not just due to the narrative on social injustices in a third world country, Alcoba’s use of her agency made her translation resonate in her linguaculture: her translation had an emotional impact on the readers, who empathize with the story.

As far as the German translation is concerned, the contrary seems to be true. Becker laments that “las respuestas son buenas, la resonancia que recibí desde la comunidad trans me parecen bastante buenas. Sin embargo el eco me parece bastante reducido. Y eso tiene que, claro, eso tiene que...bueno sin toda esa pandemia...” (appendix C.3, lines 321-

326)³¹. She explains that publishing houses in Germany organize their launches and marketing according to the too big fairs that take place annually in the country, Frankfurt and Leipzig, and that if a book fails to capture the publicum's attention in the first months after its launch it most certainly never will, as thousand other books will flood the market in the next semester (see lines 330 to 334 in Appendix C.3). However, she sincerely hopes that things will be different this year because

es una novela que yo veo como un texto fundamental e importante y todo, que, lo que mencionaste al principio, que si hay lectores que lo leen y lo difunden en su comunidad y lo comentan y lo que sea, que por esas vías pueda tener un cierto alcance a más gente. Pero hasta ahora...bueno yo estoy un poco frustrada. (ibid, lines 335-338)

[It's a novel that I see as a fundamental and important text and everything, that, what you mentioned at the beginning. That if there are readers who read it and spread it in their community and comment on it and whatever, that by those means it can have a certain reach to more people. But so far...well I'm a little frustrated – my own translation.]

“I mean, my hope is that I've got as close to what she would have done in English,” (Appendix C.2, line 340) says Kit Maude, whose translation will only be available in May 2023. He further adds that

my primary role was to give her a platform to speak and, and I will, you know, I will do everything I can to, to, to help her convey her message. [...] it's been an enormous privilege to, to be involved in conveying it [Camila's message], but if I can help her, with her activism, I will in any way I can. (see lines 403 to 407 in Appendix C.2)

In fact, all three translators mentioned to be willing to help Camila with her claim by acting as liaison between her and their audience, especially during oral interviews. They maintained that it is during these social gatherings, particularly due to Camila being shy and not speaking their languages, that they can become her voice and contribute to spread her message. In spite of this, only Kit Maude referred explicitly to activism. In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Butler examines the meaning of public gatherings in the contemporary economic and political climate. Demonstrations, she believes, are public forms of performative action used to make political demands. While no matter the sort, no interview should, by no means, be considered a public demonstration, the message conveyed (especially if translators make use of their agency) can mobilize a social gathering. This gathering also generates a new understanding of social life essential to political life. Moreover, mobilization makes visible the precarity of people who gather in public. Butler (2015, p. 33) defines precarity as a “politically induced condition of maximized vulnerability and exposure for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence, to street or domestic violence.” Ultimately, the purpose of public gatherings is to express dissatisfaction with the

³¹ "responses to the book are good, and so is the eco I've got from the trans community. Nevertheless, sales are low, mainly due to the pandemic." (my translation)

political and economic forces at work, considered the root of such material precarity. This entails that people are resilient, symbiotic and self-sufficient, implying, consequently, that their lives matter. When working with activist content, translators should constantly keep this in mind. To have encountered three translators, all working into different languages, who used their agency actively and made deliberate choices like adding, explaining, or changing something to convey the same activist message that the author intended, confirms that the human component in a translation should never be underestimated.

4.5 Implications of the study

In this section, some key implications are described, derived from the findings of the present study. It will not be possible to compare these results with the data obtained by other researchers since, to the best of the author's knowledge, no works on exactly the same topic have yet been described. However, since similar research does exist, an attempt will be made assess the results obtained in this thesis against those already existing. It is not dismissed that the discussion and evaluation of the results will raise new questions on the studied topic and propose new perspectives for future research.

If we apply House's functional pragmatic model, the findings appear to show that the semantic charge of the original text never disappears in any of the analyzed translated versions, and neither does the symbolism that refers to the marginality the travestis live in (Field.) As far as the social attitude is concerned, in all three translations a more literal translation into the original can be appreciated, which contributes to the preservation of the literary style that characterizes the author, and consequently to the preservation of the author's characteristic literary flair. In addition, the author-reader relationship remains present in all translations and the author-story character relationship is not only maintained, but also any possible loss is compensated for, for example by the use of explanations (Tenor.) As far as Mode is concerned, the theme of the original is preserved throughout the analyzed translations, and its cohesive force is active due to the simplification or explanation of certain concepts. Finally, neither genre nor tone are lost in the translations, as the moralizing and symbolic sense of the original is always present. It can be said that the three analyzed translations are mostly overt.

The analysis seems to reflect a slow but manifest change in how norms work within the source and target cultures' polysystems, allowing for more creativity and a more specific use of agency on the part of the translator. It is not uncommon to find a mediator between the producers and receivers of a text, e.g., a literary critic. In translation, the figure of the mediator is inevitably the translator. Traditionally, this mediation has taken place to the greatest extent possible through what Venuti (2008) calls 'invisibility'. However, the analysis of the results suggests that although invisibility might be the preferred norm for the actors at the center of the polysystems, the interviewed translators tend to exploit their agency. After analyzing the translated versions of the original text, it can be concluded that transla-

tion can be seen as a process that requires constant negotiation - at conscious and unconscious levels - of intentions and compromises that have to be made to preserve the message of the original text. Moreover, these complex negotiations are of particular interest to examine how, despite the apparent existence of a general tendency towards domesticity, the translators interviewed have managed to escape from certain cultural conventions and use their agency. This is reflected through the choices, ethical responsibility, values and professional self-concept of each translator. In this respect, the results may also raise questions not only about the models and repertoires used by the interviewed translators, but also about the models and repertoires that the readers are expected to have in order to decode the final output. From this, it can be inferred that by using their agency and making conscious decisions, translators are actively working to change the repertoire and models used and may therefore become a future source of innovation for the target polysystems.

On a different note, and as previously stated, this thesis never intended to assess the quality of the analyzed translations, consequently, whilst House's model helped in the first analytical stages of the evaluation, it felt short when considering translator's agency. This is because, while it might be useful and valid for the evaluation of the translation, since the analysis of the four variables is, in itself, a sufficient condition for reflecting on which factors can or cannot be mirrored in the translation, the model neglects to consider the richness of the interpersonal component. The necessary data could only be gathered introspectively, after talking to the translators and asking them about their choices and feelings. This factor, coupled with the recent steep development taking place in TS since the cultural and sociological turns, seems to point to the fact that quality assessment would benefit from the input of other disciplines.

According to the literature reviewed, there appears to be a growing interest in the agency of translators and interpreters, as well as the social variables that emerge from their translation and interpreting activities. Furthermore, the topics of agency and social forces are treated in a more multidisciplinary manner. Researchers tend to combine a wide range of information and methodologies from several fields, particularly the social sciences. As El-dali argues (2011, p.45) this use of theoretical and methodological tools from other disciplines makes TS "an interdiscipline par excellence." Besides, the above-mentioned development resulted in a changed landscape not only for TS, but also for translators, particularly in terms of their role and use of agency. Therefore, and in spite of TS being referred to as its own discipline or even as a science, these developments suggest that TS is still an interdiscipline, one that increasingly relies more and more on other research areas and works collaboratively with, sometimes even parallel to them. Though visibly in the process of emancipation, and with a marked ethos of liberation, it remains an interdiscipline. Following this line of thought, the development of a new quality assessment model to identify translators' agentic role and self-concept appears to be needed.

Despite my data being insufficient to be labeled representative, it seems to me that translators do not always remain translators; they sometimes migrate into other activities like

communicators, for example. This, in turn appears to indicate the use of agency on the part of the translators of activist literature. It seems to emphasize Venuti's (2019) insistence on a translator-centered translation as well as his conviction that translators must inscribe themselves visibly in the text. It is indeed a translation perspective that demands that a target text be viewed not only as a text that develops a semantic and stylistic correspondence with the source text, but also as a text in its own right, a text that modifies the source and is thus completely independent from it. This idea complements Pym's view of translation as an intercultural relationship. According to Pym (2010 pp.156-157), TS should be aware of how and why texts move between linguacultes in order to best represent such movements. In addition, translators need to inquire into the professional ethics of intercultural relations to be able to respond to them.

Yet, the translators interviewed seemed not to be aware of the active use they have all made of their agency. "Es que no tengo agencia" (appendix C.3, line 358)³², comments Svenja Becker. She sees her choices as a necessity in a text like that:

Yo creo que una decisión fundamental está en el uso del idioma. Yo traté de usar, de escribirlo en un lenguaje lo más inclusivo que hay o que se pueda sin forzar demasiado el idioma. Eso es un poco. Por ejemplo el uso de la palabra trans como adjetivo, eso es lo que la comunidad trans reclama para sí misma, que no se use como una palabra...trans Person, se una como adjetivo, y ponerlo así fue una decisión. Pero yo creo que no es, no lo veo como una cosa que era simplemente lo que yo quería poner dentro del texto, como mi agenda o algo así, sino que lo veo como una necesidad en un texto así. De respetar las decisiones de la comunidad, de las personas trans acá, y tratar de usar un lenguaje que no discrimina a nadie. (Appendix C.3, lines 358-366)

[I think a fundamental decision lies in the use of the language. I tried to express, to write it in the most inclusive language there is, or as much as possible, without forcing the language too much. That's a little bit. For example, the use of the word trans as an adjective, that is what the trans community demands for itself, that it should not be used as a word...transperson, it should be used as an adjective, and putting it that way was a decision. But I think it's not, I don't see it as something that was simply what I wanted to put in the text, as my agenda or anything like that, but rather I see it as a necessity in a text like this. To respect the decisions of the community, of the trans people here, and to use language that doesn't discriminate against anyone.] (my own translation)

Her decision to write in an inclusive, non-offensive language, to use nouns as adjectives (e.g., *trans Haus*, *schwersterliche Rosa* – trans house, sisterly pink) was made out of respect for the LGBTQ+ community, not, as she states, because she was following "her own hidden agenda." (Appendix C.3, lines 363-364) The evidence suggests that the German translator has a professional self-concept that conforms to the idea that a translator should be a mere conduit and does not acknowledge her social contribution.

³² "I do not have any agency" (my translation)

For his part, Kit Maude says

But there's a very important politically charged story that's being written here. And it's reaching a lot of people in Argentina. And across the Spanish speaking world, it's getting big and in Spain too and across Latin America. My, the most important thing I can do is to make that book, is to make that story available in the best possible version, not in in a version that people are going to enjoy reading in the English-speaking world. And on in, and that that's an that's an, I'm very much of my head in the clouds. I'm very much in the military thing. (Appendix C.2, lines 392-398)

Similarly, Laura Alcoba expresses “Bueno, yo hice todo lo que pude. Me entregué al texto con lo que puedo y sé hacer y, bueno, visiblemente, salió bien”³³ (lines 124-125, appendix c1). This seems to reflect on a more conscious use of their agency. In addition, the analysis of the results appears to highlight that the individual translator - his or her self-concept, values, opinions, ethics and ideological 'positioning', etc. - emphasizes the creative contribution of the translator. This could be taken as indicators implying that translators do play a role in eliciting social change. However, they do not seem to be fully aware of this and, as a consequence, their self-concept appears to be in line with the ethical codes at play, namely that of a competent professional who make texts accessible for readers who do not understand the SL.

In any case, according to the data, a degree of linguistic and cultural activism seems to be emerging among those trained in the translation profession, an activism fostered by the diverse backgrounds and prior individual commitments of each individual translator. This activism does not necessarily coincide with the trend described in translation and interpretation studies, as it does not seem to support Katan's (2016, p. 365) claim that “this ontological change of perception of T/Is as cultural mediators, however, remains very much more of an academic rather than professional understanding of the role and habitus”, nor does it constitute a phenomenon based on different international circuits (Baker, 2006). At the same time, it seems an important trend to highlight for two reasons: because it implies a redefining of the translator's role as a result of a convergence between the actors themselves and the normative tenets at play within the relevant polysystems, and because of the focus of such activism on linguistic and cultural rights, intertwined with identity claims and civil rights.

This begs the question of how to train future professional translators to better cope with the ever-changing demands of the world. What are the implications of an intentional use of agency for the education of translators? What could this mean for the self-perception and self-concept of professional translators? In the era of computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and neural machine translation, embodied cognition as well as agency appear to be, according to the collected evidence, the hallmark of translators' added human value. There

³³ "Well, I did my best. I gave myself to the text with everything I have and know, and visibly, it came out well." (my translation)

are many different definitions of human added value, but in the context of translation, this thesis will refer to it as the ability to generate multiple target-oriented possibilities and choose the most appropriate one.

Although not representative, the conceptualization and data presented above suggest that we cannot neglect the training of future translators in a possible double translation: interlinguistic on the one hand, and, on the other, from a dominant normative of neutrality to another that makes translators visible beyond the insertion of footnotes, prefaces, or the explicit mention of their names in the translated texts. More importantly, with overall accepted agency exertion and own ethical choices, a new way of acknowledgment may emerge. One that allows translators to be open about their ideological positions and strategies. Interpreted in this way, faithfulness becomes synonymous with honesty, so that translators are first and foremost faithful to themselves. Following this line of thought it can be argued that there is a necessity for TS to further develop and focus its research mainly on the figure of the translator. Moreover, in the context of literary translation, it can be claimed that translators who embrace an activist role guided by their ideology might break free of the prescriptive norms of TS in an environment otherwise characterized by an overwhelmingly instrumentalist concept of the translator's activity.

The results suggest that all translators exerted their agency because they performed semiotic work from which new sociocultural practices and language structures could emerge. While it is true that translators can also be activists (Tymoczko, 2014), this does not mean that activism is the only form of agency. "Translators are agents through their semiotic work even if they do not have a particular activist agenda", claims Marais (2020, p. 107) According to the results, the interviewed translators clearly had agency, and might, therefore influence and help shape various levels of their target linguacultures. This fact does not imply that they are activists, though. On the contrary, it seems to indicate that activism is just a subcategory of agency, and that agency may take particular forms in different contexts. This idea contradicts Venutti's, who considers translators as agents either resisting or complying to the hegemonic authority of the English language in our world. (1995, p. 10)

However, further research is needed on the relationship between agency, intention, and the emergence of new sociocultural patterns in the environment of the target linguacultures. It would be both desirable and beneficial if follow-up research on the impact the translated versions have in their target linguacultures could take place to continue this line of investigative work on translators' agency, translators' self-concept and their contribution in shaping more inclusive societies.

5 Conclusions

Since the cultural turn of the 1990s, research on translators' agency has been a focus for scholars of TS. The translator's neutrality is questioned; the positive role of the translator is investigated in terms of 'rewriting,' 'manipulating,' and 'mediating.' Theorists such as Bassnett and Lefevere (1990), Venuti (1995), and Hatim and Mason (1997) are among the early contributors to the discussion. In contemporary TS, the translator's active role is further explored, and key words like 'intervention,' 'resistance,' and 'activism' frequently appear in TS research (see Tymoczko ,2014; Baker 2006. As mediators between societies and cultures with intrinsic characteristics and different needs, translators may encounter committed texts that force them to make decisions about their actions. In this way, they cease to be automatons, become humanized, social agents that assume the responsibility of maintaining active communication between linguacultures and ensuring that this communication is effective. They do that by smoothing out inequalities, placing the author and their readers on the same social level, and bringing the rich activist points of the original text closer to their target audience. This entails having historical, social and cultural knowledge of the target audience and their reality. And it should be pointed out that part of this cultural knowledge is to know how public institutions or administrative, educational, and social systems work.

The three translators interviewed for this thesis have enacted their agency, creating (the two of them already published) in the linguacultures their readers are an impact similar to that of Camila Sosa Villada in Argentina. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that their public praised Camila's work through their work. To have encountered three professional translators, all working into different linguacultures, who made use of their agency and actively made choices like adding, explaining, or changing a concept to bring the reader closer to the text at times, and closer to the source linguaculture at other times, appears to confirm that the human component in a translation should never be underestimated. The data collected and analyzed in this thesis imply that professional translators resort to their interpretive agency to promote the attitudinal changes in the target linguacultures that an activist writer seeks to achieve in her original work. However, although every interviewed translator made conscious choices, none interprets this decision making as exerting their agency. They seem convinced that the source text is sufficiently strong to just let it speak by itself. In other words, they seem unaware of how their choices influence their renditions, the TT published end result and, therefore, the target audiences' responses. Similarly, the results imply that although they acknowledge their role as enablers of social change, they remain convinced that the original text is due all the credit. Additionally, translators see themselves as having a responsibility towards the text itself, their professional self-concept seems to be, therefore, that of an engaged participant who ensures understanding by building bridges between cultures.

This thesis is not representative, nevertheless, the analysis of the translations seems to underline in the first place that, in translation, non-normative behavior is always a possibility. And this might be an indicator of what the future role of professional translators can become. On the one hand, it may be found that, by assuming an agentic role, translators challenge the monolithic views of operational norms and manage to effect changes in the very system. (Toury, p.64) What are seen as clear boundaries might not really be there, what is more, some of the decisions taken by the analyzed translators seem to indicate that their agency can influence policy decisions. On the other hand, this may have huge ramifications for translators' agency and self-concept, as well as for ethical considerations and accountability on the part of professional translators. As Baker (2011) states, "Increased accountability has led to increased visibility, and hence greater pressure on the profession as a whole to demonstrate that it is cognizant of its impact on society." (Baker & Maier, 2011, p. 3)

Secondly, and in light of the above, the interplay between literary activism and translation seems to become a particularly vibrant and attractive area of study for theoretical development and (committed) practical implementation. On the one hand, if the aim of translation is faithfulness, translation strategies may be at a crossroads: understanding faithfulness as a synonym of honesty, hence opening up a new path in TS, a path that recognizes the appeal of openly declaring the ideological position of the translator and their strategies, as these can no longer automatically be concealed in the name of neutrality and invisibility. On the other hand, this data results equally appealing because activism shows how gender is relevant and decisive when negotiating the construction of socio-cultural identities through translation. Precisely from this stems the need to incorporate the category of gender into TS, as a prior step to implementing a change in linguistic and translation practices that favor the use of inclusive language.

Furthermore, in an environment otherwise characterized by an overwhelmingly instrumentalist concept of the translator's agency (Venuti, 2019), translation can be put to use as an instrument of social change, as ethical grounded decisions might be transferred from literature to non-literary texts. An example of this could be a translator confronted with a marketing document justifying or perpetuating racist, or sexist, or biased, or fundamentalist values, for instance. In this sense, translators could be challenged to make decisions not only on the micro level, but also on the macro level. In a similar vein, it could be said that translators represent the added human value of a translation, for they account for its acceptability. Contrariwise, CAT tools and neural machine translations can only produce adequate translations.

Consequently, by assuming their role as enablers of social change, translators might provoke collective protest through activist translation, for they form an invisible alliance with the authors of activist texts. This notion of translation as an invisible alliance resembles Mona Baker's (2016) and other TS scholars' that have defined activist translation as the establishment of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural networks of solidarity. (Wolf, 2014; Tymoczko, 2014).

Finally, in this regard, there is a gradual, albeit slow, recognition that the move towards tolerant, all-embracing societies creates a series of needs and expectations that must be met. This implies that translator could, and indeed should, exert their agency and embrace their role as enablers of social change. To conclude, the results suggest that translation as an overtly social and political act allows for the expansion of new or invisible media, which can make the ideal of democratization of information more possible, as well as point to the importance of the translators' agency for the linguistic and collective construction of a different world.

Abbreviations

CAT	Computer Assisted Translation
DA	Discourse Analysis
DTS	Descriptive Translation Studies
PT	Polysystem Theory
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text
TL	Target language
TS	Translation Studies
TT	Target Text

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Appendix

Appendix A: Online questionnaire for readers of the original novel in Spanish (Las Malas)

Questions and answers translated by the author. The parts highlighted in yellow represent the salient points that the participants of the online survey repeatedly selected as difficult to translate.

Reader	Do you identify a message of protest/denunciation in the book? Where?	Do you identify any proposal for improvement/expectation? Where?	Is there a word/situation that you would not know how to translate?
R1	The destiny that appears as inescapable throughout the book.	Transvestite friendship networks	All the idiomatic insults and local names would be big translation problems.
R2	Denouncement of police mistreatment of transvestites, social discrimination, prejudice and hypocrisy of those who "use their services." The abuse of the "nene maricón" by adults and peers.	No.	Many, especially those related to "Argentinianness".
R3	<p>Transvestites are not named by anyone (...) they ignore our names, they use the same name for all: whores.(79)</p> <p>In the pharmacy: they are not content to leave their evil behind the counter, they begin to look for accomplices.</p> <p>they begin to look for accomplices.(144).</p>	<p>What to do with the certainty that the look of the other says the same as ours, that it is possible for a moment to love with someone, that it is possible to be saved, that happiness exists?(55)</p> <p>The arrival of "Brillo" who seems to flood the house with an unknown tenderness. The love story of Laura and Nadina. However, desolation and fear reign. The end shows that it is not possible to overcome: "Anonymous, transparent... We, the forgotten ones, no longer have a name.(220)."</p>	<p>The chest filled with airplane oil. Does this silicone replacement exist in other countries?</p> <p>The mate with burro and peperina.</p> <p>The death of Cris Miro. The beauty of Araceli</p> <p>Iconic places in Cba.by the presence of transvestites: Sarmiento park, Hangar 18.</p> <p>Insults: machi ,trabuco , travesaño,calefones.The silicon oil they use.</p>

R4	There are repeated denunciations against the police , of the hypocrisy of those who, like the Cuervas, lead a double life, in the case of the system that does not give them a work space that allows them not to opt for prostitution. A symbol of this is Sarmiento Park , a public space that can only be used at night by transvestites. In fact, each page is a denunciation and a claim.	Motherhood in the case of Laura and Nadina. They form their own family and decide to live as happily as life allows them. Also the arrival of Brillo de sus Ojos transforms and humanizes the sordidness of the life of the transvestites. Art as a way out of this situation is presented in the case of the author who will become the voice of the voiceless through writing.	Chongo, mate con burro y peperina, La Difunta Correa and many other typical Argentinian things.
R5	When the narrator expresses her deep resentment and anger at so much misunderstanding, contempt and abuse, she says: "It is true, it is so true that I am angry: with the world, with my parents, with the love on duty, with the profession, with life, with the neighborhood where I live, with politicians, with heaven and hell" (p.206).	When the protagonist assumes her own condition and loneliness and feels responsible for herself. E.g.: "The idleness of the people that day offered me a revelation: I was alone, this body was my responsibility. No distraction, no love, no argument, no matter how irrefutable, could take away my responsibility for my body. So I forgot about fear." (p.60/61)	Terms and expressions that belong to the local slang or argentinisms , e.g.: " chongo ", "groncho", "pingo", "picha", "narigona chupapijas", " burro y peperina ", "hacerse las opas", "cagar más alto que el culo."
R6	We are there to be written. To be eternal," says Camila Sosa in the middle of the novel. And that is exactly what the author does: portraying those who never appear in the photo, focusing on those who lived on the margins of the light, narrating what has always been silenced.	Everything can be so beautiful, everything can be so fertile, so unpredictable, it is hard to believe that it is the work of a god. Language is mine. It is my right, I am entitled to a part of it. It came to me, I did not look for it, therefore, it is mine. My mother inherited it from me, my father squandered it. I am going to destroy it, to make it sick, to confuse it, to make it uncomfortable, I am going to tear it to pieces and make it be reborn as many times as necessary, one rebirth for each thing well done in this world.	Magic realism. Actually, there are translations for everything, but that a 178 year old trans woman with tits filled with airplane oil feels Rawson as her second home is hard to convey, I think.
R7	the real monsters are not the transvestites, but all those who are bad on the inside, and there are many more of those, especially among the customers and the forces of law and order.	in parts moved me, because it's about seeing humanity and friendship in the midst of tragedy.	Chongo, la difunta Correa, insults. Many, in fact.

R8	<p>Her childhood in Mina Clavero and Los Sauces, in homes where men were not supposed to cry, where men, drunk with rage, pulverize every trace of beauty with their fists and then kiss the wound on their knuckles. It is in the first house, in front of the mirror, that Cristian Omar sees Camila. An old pink lipstick, scraps of fabric that become mini-skirts or tiny dresses and the prayer, to a God, that fits in a rosary, that the knife she carries between her legs ceases to exist, or at least, loses its edge.</p> <p>I say that I became the woman I am now out of pure necessity. That childhood of violence, with a father who, with any excuse, threw whatever was near him, took off his belt and hit all surrounding matter (...) That ferocious animal, my ghost, my nightmare: it was all too horrible to be a man. I could not be a man in that world" pag. 52-53"</p>	<p>The story drinks from the neo-fantastic to give these women back their magical character, the sacred nature of their metamorphosis. The author pays tribute through these pages to the coven of women who cared for her and sheltered her, to the shell that protected her for many years. It removes the dirt that society has dumped on them and restores her faith in its spell.</p> <p>Camila is an ocean of fire, made of sweet lava and <i>Las Malas</i> its reddest wave".</p>	<p>The names of famous Argentinian women, although translatable, lose their context when read in another society.</p> <p>La Difunta Correa and all the Virgins. Their bosom filled with airplane oil.</p>
R9	<p>Everything can be so beautiful, everything can be so fertile, so unpredictable, it is hard to believe that it is the work of a god. Language is mine. It is my right, I am entitled to a part of it. It came to me, I did not seek it, therefore, it is mine. My mother inherited it, my father squandered it. I am going to destroy it, to make it sick, to confuse it, to make it uncomfortable, I am going to tear it to pieces and make it be reborn as many times as necessary, one rebirth for each thing well done in this world (172 â€" 173).</p>	<p>Las malas is a painful novel. Very painful. But it is also a reading that invites to reach out to the otherness, to those who cannot be what they want to be and to those who are walking with death behind them, that is why, besides painful, it is also a song that spreads the message not to leave alone or forgotten the experiences of women and the very difficult context of being trans in this world.</p>	<p>merca - chongo - s�� son estos putos mustacheudos cuando el zapato aprieta, la difunta Correa, and many others!</p>
R10		<p>On pg. 44, when she tells the story of the women of the Villada family, "instructed to clean other people's toilets..." she manages to break the mold in several ways, including her effort to continue studying. In the rest of the book it is very difficult to identify any other part. Perhaps the passing camaraderie or the arrival of the child,</p>	<p>Page 31: "A ver c��mo est�� Camilita", "A ver c��mo est�� Encarnita", "A ver c��mo est�� Mari��ta"</p>

	but none of them linger.	
<p>"If someone wanted to make a reading of our homeland, of this homeland for which we have sworn to die in every hymn sung in the school yards, this homeland that has taken the lives of young people in its wars, this homeland that has buried people in concentration camps, if someone wanted to make an accurate record of that shit, then they should see the body of La Tía Encarna. That is what we are as a country too, the relentless damage to the body of transvestites. The mark left on certain bodies, in an unjust, random and avoidable way, that mark of hatred.</p>		<p>Pag. 52- What María writes. Insults, chongo. Names of people and places so well known to us. The ritual of drinking mate.</p>
<p>I felt that the whole text is a denunciation, towards the family that does not understand them and is ashamed, the friends that move away, the police that does not take care of them, the whole society in general that judges them. This last point I think is reflected on page 36, when she tells of a fainting spell and that no one helps her. The realization that she is alone.</p> <p>Also on page 95. The section that begins "The tumor of our resentment. The bitterness of our orphanhood.... On page 131 when she tells about the murders of transvestites. "</p>		<p>the description of the places: Sarmiento Park, Cañana, Rawson, where the linyera lives with the dogs, Abasto area. I do not know if a literal translation would represent what those places evokes.</p>
<p>The insults on page 79.</p>		<p>Pag. 79: Writing at dawn, when I came back from my round of prostitution, listening to La Negra on the radio always listening to La Negra Vernaci on the radio as support and company in my solitary</p>

	pension piece. It requires an explanation of who La Negra Vernaci is.
	Page 83: "me destruqué!"
	Pag. 95: "bitching at De la Rúa and the patacones."

Appendix B: Model questions as a guide for the interviews with professional translators

Thank you very much for granting me this interview. I will record our conversation, ok?

1. You, XX, have translated *Las Malas*, the novel by Argentinean writer CSV, into XX. How do you normally proceed when it comes to the translation of a literary work?
 - Do you first find information about the work? If so, how and where?
 - Do you contact the authors? If so, what information do you try to get?
 - Do you read the whole book before starting, or do you prefer not to have any preconceptions and start translating paragraph by paragraph? Or do you process the source text in a different way, and how?

2. What aspects of *Las Malas* did you find the most difficult to translate, and why?
 - For example, grammar, syntax, lexis, idioms, register, cultural references, intertextual references, etc.

3. Culture affects language, and therefore, translations. How translators understand specific cultural concepts in the SL affect their renderings of that concept.
 - Would you mind explaining how you went about translating concepts loaded with cultural meaning, such as “poner la pava para el mate”, “la Virgen del Valle”, or “chongo”?

4. The specificity of a cultural concept can result in a cultural gap between SL and TL if they apply to distant cultures. South American and European cultures might not be that distant, but the socioeconomic reality that shapes culture might be.
 - How did you handle the translation of “las tetas rellenas de aceite de avión”, and why?
 - Is this practice equally common in groups without economic resources within your linguaculture?
 - Does this concept still convey all their marginality?

5. Let's discuss the translatability of some specific terms. We know that one-to-one matches between words can be challenging, given their cultural specificity.
 - Did you feel the need to explain who La Negra Vernaci, Dolina, or Araceli are?
 - What about places like el Abasto, La Cañada, el Parque Sarmiento, so meaningful to the prostitution scene in Córdoba?
 - If you did, how did you do so?
6. Was it difficult for you to decide how to translate "travesties"?
 - What was your solution, and why?
 - How did you go about translating the insults that they suffer (e.g. "A las travestis no nos nombra nadie, salvo nosotras. El resto de la gente ignora nuestros nombres, usa el mismo para todas: putos. Somos los manija, los sobabultos, los chupavergas, los bombacha con olor a huevo, los travesaños, los trabucos, los calefones, los Osvaldo cuando mucho, los Raúlés cuando menos, los sidosos, los enfermos, eso somos" p.79)?
7. What about the book's title? What made you choose "XX"?
8. It has been maintained that translation always mediates between both different languages and different cultures. The meaning of a language unit can only be understood when considered together with the cultural context in which it appears. An example is malaria, which you very well understood, did not refer to the sickness but to lack of money.
 - Do you think you have conveyed the same message as the author? Why (not)?
9. Let's move now to literary activism and the role of translators as enablers of social change. CSV tried, and succeeded, to raise public awareness about the indignity and marginalization in which the trans community lives.

- Do you believe that XX (your translated version of Las Malas) has the same or a similar impact on its readers?
- Why do you say this?

Appendix C: Transcriptions of the interviews conducted with the three professional translators

C.1 Laura Alcoba (French translator)

1 [00:00:01] - Laura Caldelari
 2 Bueno, perfecto. Entonces me gustaría comenzar con una pregunta más de índole general y es:
 3 cada vez que tenés que traducir una obra literaria, ¿Cuál es el procedimiento? ¿Te contactás con el
 4 autor e investigás sobre su estilo, o no hacés nada para no tener preconceptos?
 5 [00:00:05] - Laura Alcoba
 6 No, no, a ver, en lo general y digo en general, pero es en verdad siempre, fue siempre. Las
 7 editoriales entran en contacto conmigo después de haber elegido un libro que quieren editar, o sea
 8 que nunca soy yo quien está, digamos, entra en contacto con el autor al principio y esas cosas.
 9 [00:00:53] - Laura Alcoba
 10 Yo en Francia. Bueno, yo trabajo con una serie de editoriales hasta ahora. En todo caso trabajé
 11 sobre todo con tres que son Métailié, que es la que editó a Camila Sosa Villada, Gallimard y Gracé,
 12 y a mí me gusta mucho la selección, digamos, y el trabajo editorial de Métailié. Entonces, cuando
 13 ellos me proponen algo, lo miro realmente muy rápido, porque sé que en general la elección
 14 también a mí me va a gustar.
 15 [00:01:29] - Laura Alcoba
 16 Y en este caso yo había oído hablar del libro de Camila Sosa Villada, pero no lo había leído. Había
 17 oído hablar por la prensa, digamos, y había visto una serie de reacciones en las redes sociales y
 18 sobre todo en la prensa a distancia. Pero claro, estando en Francia, yo no había tenido acceso al
 19 libro y en cuanto me propuso Anne Marie Métailié la traducción de ese libro, me dijo que le parecía
 20 que que podía ser una buena traducción de ese libro si yo aceptaba.
 21 [00:02:03] - Laura Alcoba
 22 Le dije que me lo mandara inmediatamente, lo leí, lo devoré. Em bueno, en verdad me lo propuso
 23 Anne Marie Métailié, pero sobre todo Nicolás Galvis, que es el nuevo editor que trabaja con
 24 Métailié.
 25 [00:02:22] - Laura Alcoba
 26 Entonces Nicolás Galvis me lo envió, elogiándome mucho el texto, o sea que yo estaba con buena
 27 disposición. Pero yo siempre acepto después de haber leído el libro, porque no, no acepto
 28 automáticamente, siempre mi criterio tiene que ver, claro, con la calidad literaria, si tengo ganas.
 29 Es esencial para mí si tengo ganas de traducirlo. Y claro, al descubrir el texto no tuve ninguna duda
 30 porque me pareció excelente y tenía muchísimas ganas de traducirlo. Pero digamos que fue ese el
 31 circuito.
 32 [00:02:57.20] - Laura Caldelari
 33 Y con Las Malas en particular, ¿qué fue lo que, para vos, te resultó más difícil traducir?
 34 [00:03:10.16] - Laura Alcoba
 35 No fue una traducción, eh..., Tuve traducciones más difíciles desde el punto de vista... Me encantó
 36 traducir Las Malas. Lo más difícil fue muy probablemente la traducción de las travestis. La
 37 traducción, la elección, porque inmediatamente lo primero lo hablé con Nicolás Galvis, que es
 38 totalmente bilingüe. Entonces él entendía bien lo que yo le quería decir, que si yo traducía les
 39 travesties se perdía el, el sentido fuerte del femenino, que precisamente en Las Malas hay una... los
 40 demás, digamos, la sociedad que las rechaza, dice los travestis y ellas reivindican el femenino con
 41 las travestis.
 42 [00:04:00.93] - Laura Alcoba
 43 Entonces ahí había algo muy fuerte. Lo hablé con, eh, con varias personas del grupo LGBT a ver
 44 cómo se oía, si se ponía la travesti. Y no era terrible porque sonaba como precisamente el estigma,
 45 el rechazo, como como suena en el libro Los travestis, cuando en cierto momento en la televisión
 46 se habla de los travestis y la narradora dice así, así nos llaman. Y claro, entonces todo el juego con
 47 las travestis es parte del colectivo del femenino.
 48 [00:04:36.54] - Laura Alcoba
 49 Todo eso se perdía y creo que fue realmente la dificultad.
 50 [00:04:40.74] - Laura Alcoba
 51 Y después de haberlo hablado con personas que conocen, digamos, la problemática LGBT, yo
 52 propuse de traducir par trans y se lo expliqué y le pedí que reaccionara, por supuesto, y que me
 53 dijera si está de acuerdo a Camila Sosa Villada.
 54 [00:05:00.06] - Laura Alcoba
 55 Allí con ella tuve un intercambio de mails no tantos, intercambiamos un par porqué no había gran
 56 dificultad, para mí, para entender el texto. Al ser un texto argentino, yo entendía, digamos, lo que
 57 no me ocurre siempre. Por ejemplo, cuando traduzco autores mexicanos, yo estoy constantemente
 58 enviando mails y tengo muchas dudas, pero en este caso fue esa elección que era problemática y
 59 quería que ella estuviera de acuerdo. Claro, es central en el libro.
 60 [00:05:37.32] - Laura Alcoba
 61 Y bueno, me dijo sí, claro que lo entendía, que el femenino plural no existía en francés y que
 62 entonces todo ese juego se perdía y que dentro del medio LGBT todo el mundo me ha dicho nous
 63 les trans de un lado y les travestis del otro, no?
 64 [00:05:56.70] - Laura Alcoba
 65 Y bueno, esta fue realmente, tuve ahí un dilema un poco pero, pero que resolví, creo de ese modo
 66 bien.
 67 [00:06:08.33] - Laura Alcoba
 68 En todo caso fue necesario charlarlo tanto con el editor como, sobre todo, con la autora, porque

- 69 ahí había algo, un cambio fuerte que yo hacía, pero creo que era la única solución, la verdad. O si
70 no poner una nota de pie de página y embarcarme en algo que, que en general a los editores no les
71 gusta. Y yo entiendo perfectamente porque no, uno no lee una novela con una serie de para texto
72 que tiene que ser la novela, que entregarse inmediatamente al lector y.
73 [00:06:45] - Laura Caldelari
74 ¿Y con respecto a los conceptos culturales que están dentro del libro?. Puede ser que cuando los
75 traduces cambie un poco el concepto o lo que transmiten, para un lector francés. Cuando
76 hablamos, por ejemplo, del mate o del chongo, de la Virgen del Valle, de la difunta Correa. Este tipo
77 de cosas. ¿Cómo lo solucionas?
78 [00:07:20] - Laura Alcoba
79 Y, se soluciona, hay algo siempre que, evidentemente, no sé si se pierde, que se percibe de otro
80 modo. Si, creo que algo se pierde siempre al cambiar de... El libro está escrito en un contexto
81 cultural y lingüístico y de referencias comunes particular; y viaja de repente.
82 [00:07:44] - Laura Alcoba
83 Entonces el lector no va a tener las mismas referencias. Yo, en la medida de lo posible, en eso estoy
84 muy de acuerdo con Anne Marie Métaillé, yo sé que todo el equipo trata de no poner nunca notas
85 de pie de página, a no ser que sea absolutamente necesario.
86 [00:08:03] - Laura Alcoba
87 A veces con algunas explicaciones. Yo sé que en algunas situaciones agregué algo inmediatamente
88 después de una palabra que permite entender, pero en el caso de Las Malas no creo que se haya
89 dado. Bueno, que algunas referencias se pierdan, la difunta Correa, por supuesto, es algo
90 totalmente extranjero para el lector francés. Yo creo que se entiende y que en caso de que el lector
91 se de cuenta de que le falta algo hoy con, con Internet es muy fácil verificar, confirmar, aclarar
92 algún punto que pudiera parecer oscuro, pero creo que, que no hay tales dificultades de
93 comprensión.
94 [00:08:58] - Laura Alcoba
95 Evidentemente las cosas resuenan de manera más extraña para un lector francés o digamos,
96 francófono, que no conoce Argentina, es evidente, pero creo que el libro tuvo una recepción, está
97 teniendo, sigue teniendo una recepción tan buena. Ayer pasaron un programa de France Culture,
98 me habían invitado para hablar del trabajo de traducción precisamente y de, bueno, hablar sobre
99 todo de Las Malas. Y el libro, que bueno, el libro salió aquí en enero y aún están saliendo notas y
100 este programa pasó por France Culture ayer.
101 [00:09:43] - Laura Alcoba
102 Eso es algo bastante excepcional porque en general en Francia, cuando se publica un libro, las
103 notas de prensa a los tres meses ya no hay más y el libro más o menos desaparece.
104 [00:09:56] - Laura Alcoba
105 Y ya cuando sigue habiendo durante tres meses ya es mucho. Y este está teniendo un eco muy
106 fuerte. O sea que visiblemente no se pierde tanto, porque si no no tendría este eco. Y la entrevista
107 que me hicieron en France Culture, me di cuenta, no? realmente de que el libro también tocaba
108 muy fuerte acá. Porque el presentador, Charles Dantzig, que también es escritor y que tiene ese
109 programa en France Culture que se llama Personnages en Personne estaba muy impactado, muy
110 conmovido por el libro. Me dijo "pero esto es genial, estoy diciéndole a todo el mundo que lo tiene
111 que leer", y bueno, había algo ahí también que movía mucho visiblemente, en todo caso a él como
112 lector. Lector súper advertido porque es un gran escritor por otro lado.
113 [0:10:50] - Laura Caldelari
114 ¿Y éso como te impactó a vos como traductora?
115 [0:10:58] - Laura Alcoba
116 ¿La recepción? Estoy súper contenta de haber traducido ese libro porque veo que tiene una
117 recepción muy fuerte y entonces estoy contenta porque es un excelente libro, y haber permitido,
118 digamos, que pase así al francés...bueno estoy contenta. Me siento orgulloso, digamos, de haber
119 participado de eso. Pero claro, se debe esencialmente a la gran calidad del libro de Camila Sosa
120 Villada.
121 [0:11:28] - Laura Caldelari
122 Sí y no. Porque el traductor hace mucho también con esa obra, creo yo.
123 [0:11:32] - Laura Alcoba
124 Bueno, yo hice todo lo que pude. Me entregué al texto con lo que puedo y sé hacer y, bueno,
125 visiblemente, salió bien, porque me decía Charles Dantzig que le parecía la traducción excelente.
126 Bueno, él no leyó el castellano, o sea que...pero en todo caso, que el libro lo impactó mucho y no
127 tenía la impresión...cuando se lee algo, una traducción así, donde hubo dificultad se siente, no? A
128 veces se siente como algo...y él sintió como una gran fluidez, el texto lo atrapó. Entonces eso,
129 bueno, si contribuí a eso, estoy contenta.
130 [0:12:15] - Laura Caldelari
131 Yo lo que noté es que hay ciertos lugares típicos de la escena de la prostitución en Córdoba, como
132 el Abasto o la Cañada, que están cambiados. Para La Cañada pusiste le Ravin, o para el Abasto le
133 secteur des Abattoirs, y se entiende igual, eso no cambia para nada el sentido del texto. Pero ¿cuál
134 fue tu decisión? El proceso que te hizo pensar...
135 [0:12:43] - Laura Alcoba
136 A ver, eso no...siempre es muy subjetivo, eso siempre es muy subjetivo y ahí hay algo, en el
137 momento de la traducción il faut trancher. Cuando yo tengo la impresión de que a algo hay que
138 conservarlo tal cual, yo hay muchas cosas que no traduzco a veces, toponimes, que digo "bueno,
139 esto". Y cuando tiene un significado, más allá del lugar, que viene a tener un significado el sentido
140 de la palabra, ahí opto por traducir. Es muy, muy subjetivo, ¿no? Yo creo que en los dos casos que
141 diste era importante traducir el significado del toponime. Pero bueno, eso es algo que se hace a
142 vue, ¿no? como se dice en francés. Yo sé que en muchas situaciones digo "no, a esto no lo
143 traduzco, suena en español como está", sobre todo para los nombres, los sobrenombres a veces, y
144 los apodos de los personajes, es muy común que yo no traduzca, pero otras veces sí.
145 [0:13:53] - Laura Alcoba
146 Cuando siento que perdería algo el lector, pero claro, al elegir una traducción, bueno, siempre
147 elegir es...hay algo que se pierde, algo que... ¿qué se decide conservar? Siempre hay una elección,

- 148 que es lo que es, ¿no? después siempre se puede cuestionar. Pero siempre con la idea de no cargar
 149 el texto, porque en cada página se podría poner una nota de pie de página y explicar un montón de
 150 cosas, pero no se puede. Y entonces, a partir del momento en que no se puede, bueno se podrá
 151 cuando Camila se transforme en una escritora, así, clásica, le harán una edición anoté y savant.
 152 [0:14:40] – Laura Alcoba
 153 Pero ahora se trata de dar a leer al lector, a todo lector, y no cargar el texto con un paratexto
 154 aplastante. Entonces a partir de ahí hay que elegir. Y bueno, es siempre... La elección siempre te
 155 deja, bueno, siempre puede haber una especie de doute y de regret, pero yo creo que, dentro de lo
 156 que cabe, el libro, por la recepción que tiene, no se ha perdido tanto. Y creo que en la medida de lo
 157 posible traté de conservar lo que me parecía significante, a mí como lectora. El ejemplo que te dí,
 158 las travestis, los travestis, creo que, bueno...
 159 [0:15:25] – Laura Caldelari
 160 Esa era una de las preguntas, asique la salteo, pero si, ese término. No, hay cosas que yo noto que
 161 están explicadas, pero explicadas de una manera tan normal... Uno lee en francés y no siente la
 162 traducción; fluye el texto como cuando escribís que es una "geisha version locale". Es súper simple
 163 y se entiende perfecto. Y después esta la parte de los insultos y en eso, a lo mejor yo no soy muy
 164 dotada en francés, pero cuando hablas de que "a las travestis no las nombra nadie, no conocen
 165 nuestros nombres, somos los..." y empieza a largar una serie de insultos, entre los que están los
 166 Osvaldos y los Raúlés, que quedó igual en el texto francés.
 167 [0:16:20] – Laura Alcoba
 168 Eso era difícilísimo. Difícilísimo. Creo que fue el párrafo más difícil de traducir. Y bueno, ahí hice
 169 muchos sondages, como suelo hacer cuando hay algo difícil. Digo "bueno, si yo escribo esto ¿qué
 170 entienden? ¿cómo lo perciben?" Y suelo consultar a personas que no conocen, que no saben nada
 171 de lo que estoy traduciendo. Y en ese caso lo hice.
 172 [0:16:45] – Laura Alcoba
 173 Era imposible. Aparte, ya los Raúlés, o sea, digamos que era un poco un nombre hoy con sentido
 174 ridículo en Argentina, entonces queda algo como despectivo, pero ¿qué?, ¿cómo?. Raoul también,
 175 de hecho, hoy, en Francia, no es un nombre que lleve nadie prácticamente de las jóvenes
 176 generaciones. Entonces, bueno, ahí hay algo, que yo creo, no se perdió tanto, pero es el típico
 177 passage que si hubiera podido poner, bueno, hay que explicar porque aquí no se entiende nada;
 178 pero bueno, yo creo que dentro de lo que cabe, quedó bastante bien. Pero hice sondages. Incluso,
 179 te diré, hice un sondage sobre ese passage en Facebook. Puse, bueno "si digo esto ¿qué
 180 entienden?" A veces lo hago. Hace poco tuve el mismo problema, bueno muy diferente, pero con la
 181 traducción de un libro de Selva Almada que se va a publicar en enero, que es No es un río [...habla
 182 sobre una dificultad de traducción particular de este libro, por lo que no nos incumbe
 183 directamente...]
 184 [0:21:26] – Laura Alcoba
 185 Y sí, siempre habrá algo que se pierde, pero no importa, porque el contexto, digamos, lo va
 186 aclarando. Bueno, no, cuando la novela es fuerte, si hay un momento en que uno se equivoca un
 187 poco al interpretar como lector, de todos modos ça se ratrape, non?; más lejos y... Creo.
 188 [0:21:54] – Laura Caldelari
 189 Y volviendo al tema de Las Malas, muchas veces la especificidad de un concepto se basa en la
 190 cultura y en la realidad socioeconómica. ¿Qué pasa con el tema de "las tetas rellenas de aceite de
 191 avión" en la cultura socioeconómica francesa? ¿Es una realidad? ¿transmite la misma
 192 marginalidad?
 193 [0:22:20] – Laura Alcoba
 194 Impactó mucho esa imagen. Impactó mucho porque precisamente me la comentó en el programa
 195 de radio Charles Dantzig. Transmite la suma marginalidad de las travestis argentinas, eso
 196 evidentemente. Transmite, digamos, el libro transcurre en Argentina, o sea que hay una violencia
 197 ahí que se debe a la situación de las personas trans en Argentina, en todo caso hasta ciertas fechas
 198 recientes, porque creo que al día de hoy en Argentina se está evolucionando mucho en cuanto a la
 199 asimilación, integración y aceptación social de las personas trans. Tal vez de manera, digamos, muy
 200 impactante por la rapidez, y tal vez haya evolucionado más rápido que en Francia en algunos
 201 aspectos. Pero, no obstante, es verdad que hay ahí una violencia argentina, de la situación de las
 202 trans. Particularmente en el interior. Particularmente en una región semi rural, como la región en la
 203 que transcurre el libro, que impacta mucho, yo creo.
 204 [0:23:45] – Laura Alcoba
 205 Pero, claro, es verdad que aquí no creo que haya situaciones de ese tipo. Pero sí las hay en
 206 Argentina. Si bien tiene también una dimensión, creo, simbólica. El personaje de Tía Encarna en
 207 una especie de ciborg, no? Y ahí yo creo que hay un juego muy fuerte de Camila más allá de la
 208 realidad del aceite de avión, digamos. Hay algo también que significa más allá de la realidad, creo
 209 yo. Pero, pero bueno; en todo caso es algo que impacta mucho al lector francés. Porque lo
 210 comentaron varias veces y lo ví como, en varios artículos, como para decir la fuerza, digamos, y la
 211 violencia del sufrimiento físico y la violencia hecha al cuerpo en ese contexto de exclusión.
 212 [0:24:50] – Laura Caldelari
 213 Y con respecto al título de la novela, ¿qué te llevó a elegir Les Vilaines?
 214 [0:24:54] – Laura Alcoba
 215 El título siempre es una propuesta, eh? El editor tiene le dernier mot. Hay dos elementos siempre,
 216 incluso creo que aparece en los contratos, para los escritores también, el título y la quatrième de
 217 couverture, la contraportada, ahí el responsable es el editor. Pero siempre el traductor propone.
 218 Me ocurre lo mismo a mí como autora, eh? Porque siempre tengo que negociar mis títulos con
 219 Gallimard. O sea que el título siempre es algo que, donde hay una negociación entre el autor y el
 220 editor, y en este caso, entre el traductor y el editor. Pero, por supuesto consultando también al
 221 escritor cuando se puede.
 222 [0:22:51] – Laura Alcoba
 223 Yo había propuesto Les vilaines filles, que gustó, pero después Anne Marie Métaillé me dijo "mejor
 224 Les Vilaines", bueno, sí, Les Vilaines, y bueno, luego se habló un poco con... Pero como Camila no
 225 habla francés, a ella se le informó, digamos, antes de la elección. Yo creo que era importante no
 226 poner Les Méchantes. Yo tenía claro que no había que ponerle Les Méchantes, que hubiese sido un

- grave error. ¿Por qué? Porque Les Vilaines es algo, es un adjetivo que tiene una connotación como, se utiliza a veces para retar a las niñas "t'est une vilaine. T'est une mechante, une vilaine". Entonces hay algo que a la vez significa, bueno, lo mismo que Las Malas, pero que tiene un punto de empatía en la persona que lo escucha como condena.
- [0:27:11] – Laura Alcoba
- No sé si lo digo bien, pero que no había que traducir Les Méchantes, yo estaba segura. La duda era si Les vilaines filles o Les Vilaines. Les vilaines filles era demasiado infantil, entonces Les Vilaines sonaba mejor. Tu est une vilaine fille es algo que se le dice a una niña. Tu est une vilaine... es una manera de retar el niño, en francés, pero claro son connotaciones muy leves que sólo se escuchan dentro del idioma. Pero es verdad que había esa doble opción.
- [0:27:47] – Laura Alcoba
- Mechante, vilaine... estaba claro que tenía que ser por el lado de vilaine. Y entonces vilaine fille, vilaine sola; vilaine sola, creo, Les Vilaines suena mejor y corresponde más de todos modos a Las Malas que tampoco iba con un sustantivo. Y creo que lo infantiliza un poco menos, pero tiene ese toque que despierta empatía porque es algo que le dicen a alguien desde arriba, un poco, o desde retarlo, desde quien debe enderezarlo. Y al mismo tiempo, la persona que recibe ese adjetivo puede rebelarse con la legitimidad que tienen los niños al rebelarse. Porque hay algo que hace un poco violencia, que marca algo como despectivo que puede despertar una especie de ganas de sublevarse.
- [0:28:38] – Laura Alcoba
- Creo que todo eso podía estar en Las Malas y que es bueno traducir por Les Vilaines.
- [0:28:44] – Laura Caldelari
- Gracias. Y ¿pensás que transmitiste el mismo mensaje que la autora? ¿por qué? O ¿por qué no?
- [0:28:50] – Laura Alcoba
- Imposible contestar. Yo no creo que los autores tengan un mensaje. Ahí yo tengo... Y creo que el libro de Camila es muy sutil, por eso es una novela. Cuando uno tiene un mensaje tal vez no escriba una novela, escriba un ensayo, escriba un panfleto. Una novela siempre es más complicado, dice mil cosas al mismo tiempo, y es lo que hace para mí la fuerza de la literatura, por eso yo traduzco sólo literatura. No me interesa traducir, por ejemplo, ensayos y esas cosas; nunca traduje ni me interesaría. A mí me interesa traducir literatura porque, para mí, la literatura, siempre en términos de "lo que quiere decir" es muy complejo. Por eso es lo que es.
- [0:29:50] – Laura Alcoba
- Entonces ahí, bueno, a partir de lo que yo percibía del texto, traté de estar a la altura en francés. Pero tal vez en ciertos momentos, bueno, como te digo, elegir siempre es renunciar a algo, entonces siempre hay algo que... Pero creo que, dentro de lo que cabe, el tono, el registro y la fuerza del libro se preservó. Después, en cada frase podríamos, digamos, comparar y charlar, y... Pero creo que globalmente, algo debo haber traicionado porque es inevitable, pero no tanto, me parece.
- [0:30:40] – Laura Caldelari
- Para mí el libro tiene un cierto activismo: logró sensibilizar a la opinión pública, por decirlo de alguna manera, contra la indignidad y la marginalización en la que vive esta comunidad. Y ahí es donde me centro yo con mi tesis. ¿Cómo logra un traductor manejar sus ideales, sus puntos de vista para ayudar; o para ser totalmente invisible en el momento de traducir, ¿y que el lector suyo reciba esa misma fuerza activista que hay dentro del libro? Que vuelva a tener esa sensibilización. La pregunta sería ¿crees que Les Vilaines tiene ese mismo impacto en los lectores francófonos?
- [0:31:40] – Laura Alcoba
- A ver, hay muchas preguntas en tu pregunta. Digamos, yo, lo primero, nunca voy a elegir traducir un libro nunca voy a aceptar un libro por razones militantes. Eso primer punto, yo lo hago sólo por razones literarias. Yo dije que sí a la propuesta porque el libro me parece bueno. Y el libro me parece bueno por razones literarias que son muy complejas como te dije, porque para mí la literatura es lo complejo. La ambigüedad. O sea que, para mí, artísticamente el libro es bueno. Es muy fuerte y yo, por eso dije que sí, no por razones militantes. Después que entre en eco con vivencias que son la materia del libro, y que resuenan fuertemente por motivos militantes, eso es evidente. Yo creo que es algo que está presente en el libro en francés, y de hecho, muchas personas del medio LGBT entraron en contacto conmigo, hablaron del libro sin entrar en contacto conmigo, hablaron sobre todo de Camila, porque es ella la que logró dar a luz este texto increíble, y tiene esa misma dimensión. Hubo artículos, pienso en un artículo de Clovis Maillet que se publicó en Arkhé, que es una historiadora, ella misma trans y que tiene una reflexión que es, digamos... lo que fue muy interesante es que Les Vilaines provocó reacciones de lectura, de lectores así que nada que ver con el medio LGBT, que dijeron "guau; que libro excelente, lo recomiendo". Tuvo el premio de l'Héroïne de Madame Figaro, o sea que si hay un medio no militante es la gente que lee Madame Figaro. O sea que el libro logró llegar a esa gente. Después logró, sí, circular en el medio LGBT y dar a pensar también. Pienso también en ese artículo de Clovis Maillet, que no tiene nada que ver con lo que se pudo leer en Madame Figaro.
- [0:34:09] – Laura Alcoba
- O sea que esa fuerza tiene el libro, por eso es bueno. Por eso es bueno. Porque un libro que sólo toca un tema militante no... pero el libro tiene la fuerza de despertar y de nutrir reflexiones, pero también de llegar a una persona que nada que ver, que no sabe nada y que nunca pensó que había un problema LGBT y de repente lee un libro que es bueno y le abre la cabeza. Eso es interesante.
- [0:34:38] – Laura Alcoba
- Y yo creo que las reacciones que hubo al libro demuestran que funcionó todo eso a la vez, Funciona el libro como libro, como novela, porque es una obra de arte buena, muy buena; y funcionó también el libro con su contenido más "militante". Pero yo creo que generó muchas reflexiones y que llegó a gente, a personas muy diferentes, desde distintos lugares. Y ¿eso es lo que logra en general, yo creo, un buen libro. La demostración de que es un buen libro. Y sí, por las reacciones que yo leí, o algunos comentarios que me hicieron yo sé que en el medio LGBT se leyó mucho. Pero se leyó mucho más allá, y se sigue leyendo. Es un libro que sigue ganando lectores, no para la aventura de Les Vilaines. Te digo, se publicó en enero, estamos en septiembre, y sigue. Es algo bastante excepcional acá, eh? Es algo bastante excepcional que un libro siga suscitando, esté

306 presente en librerías tanto tiempo.
307 [0:36:05] – Laura Caldelari
308 Bueno, eso era todo. Desde mi punto de vista está todo cubierto, te agradezco muchísimo que te
309 hayas tomado el tiempo.
310 [0:36:17] – Laura Alcoba
311 Gracias a vos, y espero que te haya ayudado para tu trabajo
312 [0:36:26] – Laura Caldelari
313 Sí. Sí, muchas gracias
314 [0:36:28] – Laura Alcoba
315 Bueno, suerte con tu tesis

C.2 Kit Maude (English translator)

- 1 Kit Maude [00:03]
 2 Got it? Okay. All right.
 3 Laura Caldelari [00:08]
 4 Good. So you know, it's about your translation of Las Malas.
 5 Kit Maude [00:13]
 6 Aha
 7 Laura Caldelari [00:14]
 8 And I would like to start by asking you how do you usually go about translating a literary work? So
 9 do you, for instance, gather information about the author or the work itself? Or, you just go word
 10 by word? How do you... you contact the author? What is it that you do?
 11 Kit Maude [00:40]
 12 Oh, that's, I mean, to an extent every project is different. It depends very much on whether
 13 somebody's approached me to translate it, or whether it's something that I've found, and I
 14 presented to other people. And in the case of Las Malas, I read the novel, I thought, "My
 15 Goodness! This has to be translated," and I assumed that somebody else was already working on
 16 it, I mean, it's a blockbuster book. So I, yes, I read around as much as I could in a very brief period
 17 of time, but the first thing I did was prepare an extract for the publishers. And uhm, so I was, in
 18 this project I was working, I was gathering as much information as I could while still working on
 19 the text and thinking about it, so it all kind of happened at once. With other authors I read around
 20 a little bit more and prepare more, uhm, a sort of a more measured idea, where they, eh, of who
 21 they are and where their literature comes from. But firstly, Camila hasn't actually written very
 22 much, or at least she hasn't published, there wasn't an enormous amount of material to it. This is I
 23 mean, the difference, again, is also a difference between contemporary authors and historical
 24 authors.
 25 Laura Caldelari [02:57]
 26 Right
 27 Kit Maude [02:58]
 28 Authors who have a long established career you might ideally have read popular books or more by
 29 an author before starting a translation. That doesn't always work because sometimes the books
 30 don't exist or there isn't time. And that's, I mean, not to sound too pretentious, but the most
 31 important thing when working with literary texts it to work out whether I can hear what their
 32 voice is going to sound in English. That's a very subjective thing, that it's, that's the most
 33 important. So and then. So in, in that sense, you learned as much as you can about them. But also
 34 you try and think how, what kind of author they might sound like in the target language, in this
 35 case English. Both previous translations of, from literature, from which it comes and
 36 contemporary or historical authors writing in the language. With Camila I was very much guided
 37 by Manuel Puig; I think there are wonderful parallels.
 38 Laura Caldelari [03:43]
 39 Mhm, alright. I see. I see what you mean, mhm
 40 Kit Maude [03:54]
 41 So it's, I mean, fortunately I have read pretty much everything by him, so... So that was a big help.
 42 Laura Caldelari [04:05]
 43 Right. Okay. But so you didn't contact Camila directly.
 44 Kit Maude [04:09]
 45 I contacted her editor here in Argentina, firstly, and she eventually put me in touch. That, it was, it
 46 was it was interesting. It was, because, normally, I'm very late on contemporary authors. I read
 47 the book, and then I have a lot of other work to do, and I sort of get around to it. And by the time I
 48 got the extract, got the extract down, I wrote to them and they said "No, No, we haven't sold the
 49 rights yet." And I thought that was amazing. But it turned out that it was just because they, they
 50 were slow to sell the rights. As it turned out there were a lot of publishers interested. And that
 51 was a whole, that was a whole auction and bidding, something that doesn't happen very much in
 52 translation. It was a whole new experience for me.
 53 Kit Maude [05:11]
 54 And then we, when did I meet Camila? No, I didn't actually meet Camila until after the rights had
 55 been sold, because this was all a kind of a woven process. I did the extract. Then a few months
 56 later, a publisher said, "Oh, we'd love to do this." And then I put them in touch. And then it turned
 57 out that they were, then, I don't know, I don't know what went on with the, with the bidding or
 58 the buying of the rights. It was quite a stressful process. I get getting phone calls from, from the
 59 publisher, say, "Hey, we want to do this", from a dude at Other Press, "we want to do this, you
 60 know who else is bidding?" I didn't know anything at all.
 61 Laura Caldelari [05:44]
 62 Right.
 63 Kit Maude [05:45]
 64 But no, and then, and then since since, since it was confirmed that I was going to be the translator,
 65 Camila and I've been... Although she is very reluctant to read the English texts. But I'm going to, I'm
 66 going to make her look at it before the final draft gets approved. But so far, she's been seized
 67 hasn't been she hasn't been. She hasn't read a word of this in English.
 68 Laura Caldelari [06:17]
 69 Okay. That's unusual.
 70 Kit Maude [06:20]
 71 It's unusual. We've talked about specific terms. We have those. There's going to be, she liked that
 72 I haven't translated "chongo", for instance. I don't know.
 73 Laura Caldelari [06:32]
 74 I was going to ask you about that, actually. You left it.

- 75 Kit Maude [06:35]
 76 You might say, that “travesti”, which is, which is quite a political, politically charged term. I mean,
 77 in English. In my first draft, I put transvestite as a placeholder. But it’s it’s no good. And trans is
 78 Camilla feels, especially is it’s a little neutral. It’s a little hygienic. the English equivalent trans
 79 sounds too neutral, too hygienic, and does not convey the whole meaning. I trust the English
 80 readers will make the leap and understand the original version. So we’re going to go with travesti,
 81 in the Spanish, which, which I mean, I would ... there’s already controversy, the editors are talking
 82 about discussing this whether. But this is what’s going to happen. But it, she’s been, her on board
 83 is very much on that sort of level. It’s, I’m very, I’m very specific.
 84 Laura Caldelari [07:16]
 85 Right, because they’re emotionally loaded terms. And there’s a lot of culture embedded in the
 86 term itself.
 87 Kit Maude [07:20]
 88 exactly
 89 Laura Caldelari [07:21]
 90 So, it’s quite difficult. How do you choose the correct word? How do you go about with all the
 91 meaning that it carries?
 92 Kit Maude [07:33]
 93 Well, that’s the thing. I mean, that’s, that’s, that’s, that’s essentially something that the author has
 94 to, has to decide for herself.
 95 Laura Caldelari [07:42]
 96 Okay,
 97 Kit Maude [07:43]
 98 if, if and when, in or, or the editors that. Because this is very much representing what she wants,
 99 this is the meaning that, that she wants to imbue the text to be imbued with I could go in and say,
 100 Look, we could we could just do trans, we could just do the word we could do. It’s not my place to
 101 give the book new meaning. It’s my place to communicate the meaning of the original. Two
 102 authors in English.
 103 Laura Caldelari [08:16]
 104 Yeah, so that was something else, too. The specificity of the cultural term can get lost sometimes
 105 Kit Maude [08:28]
 106 Yes, absolutely.
 107 Laura Caldelari [08:29]
 108 in the whole process. And especially when the cultures are different. So maybe North American or
 109 British cultures are not that distant to South American, but the socio economic situation that
 110 shape a country is, so how did you solve the “las tetas rellenas con aceite de avion” thing, for
 111 instance? Is that a reality? in the target language, culture?
 112 Kit Maude [09:02]
 113 Yes. It’s interesting. I was muting on that, I wasn’t sure.
 114 “...” (Kit talks to a person entering he room)
 115 No, no. I was interested. It’s it’s actually one thing I had, I’m learning as we speak is a lot about a
 116 lot about travesti, trans culture, which I’m, I really wasn’t familiar with before. Not very familiar
 117 with before, before starting this book, and I’m learning a lot about it, so, I mean, I am, I was, I was
 118 worrying about that was that, as I was doing the translation and but then I came across a poem by
 119 an American poet, who isn’t trans or anything but he used the term tranny oil. So and then I
 120 learned that it is actually a, it’s a thing and it’s it’s, it’s, it’s it’s a it’s a technique for for shaping
 121 your body that actually, that does happen in it’s a fairly global thing, apparently.
 122 Laura Caldelari [10:26]
 123 Okay. Okay, so it also combines the marginality of the whole
 124 Kit Maude [10:31]
 125 Yeah, absolutely very much. It’s very it’s a very much as a cheap option.
 126 Laura Caldelari [10:37]
 127 Right
 128 Kit Maude [10:38]
 129 for changing your body, but it’s, it’s, it’s there and it’s something... it’s interesting, It’s, the
 130 crossovers are more, they are more widespread than you might think. There’s a specificity to the
 131 experience of growing up trans in Argentina. But there’s also a universality about being trans in a
 132 world that really doesn’t know how to deal with it. I’m also learning how to, how to, how to be
 133 more accommodating, how to be more welcoming, how to how to be more, more inclusive. And
 134 that’s, that’s very interesting. And that’s something. That’s a process, it’s happening in different
 135 ways in different countries. But it’s, it’s a, it’s a universal movement to an extent.
 136 Laura Caldelari [11:31]
 137 It is, yes
 138 Kit Maude [11:33]
 139 So, then, so then the question is, how does one, how does one convey the specificity in and also
 140 that as and, and the hope is the reader will, will be able to, will make that make that jump for
 141 themselves. I mean, personally, I would just, I just did I mean, I would just translate the words as
 142 as the words of the text as as well as possible. And I’m, I put a lot of faith in the reader to to be
 143 able to make leaps to build understanding what’s going on. Because I think that’s always the best
 144 way, I don’t want to spoon feed the reader of any text.
 145 Laura Caldelari [12:19]
 146 So for instance, when it’s written “poner la pava” or “la Virgen del Valle” do just leave it like that,
 147 or you add “for tea”, or something that is more culturally specific in your target language?
 148 Kit Maude [12:26]
 149 well, no “poner la pava” is “to put the kettle on”, there’s no much, you get that. You’re not
 150 changing very much by using “kettle” or “pava”, you understand that. What was the other one?
 151 The virg, virgen, yes, and “virgen”, again, you have to leave that, because it’s a specific version,
 152 you don’t change. And it’s, I mean, especially in the US, latino culture is widespread. I mean,
 153 Catholic culture is strong. People, people get catholicism, Catholicism itself is a pretty global.

- 154 I did get a question from a French critic the other day, asking about “La difunta Correa”, which,
 155 that was a lot harder to, to to deal with. I mean, I left Difunta Correa. And I add a quick footnote
 156 to,
 157 Laura Caldelari [12:56]
 158 to add a bit what it is
 159 Kit Maude [13:02]
 160 because it's not that, because yeah, because it's, it's a very, it's a very specific thing, but it's also
 161 it's a very charged image.
 162 Laura Caldelari [13:51]
 163 Of course it is.
 164 Kit Maude [13:52]
 165 t's important and there is important for the reader to understand
 166
 167 Laura Caldelari [13:54]
 168 Specially in this book, yes.
 169
 170 Kit Maude [13:56]
 171 Exactly
 172
 173 Laura Caldelari [13:59]
 174 And then, what about places that are so important for the travesti scene in Córdoba, like Abasto,
 175 Parque Sarmiento? Do you explain a bit what those places are and why? I mean, you have La
 176 Cañada, which divides the night scene. So because I've read other versions, I've read the French
 177 and the German translations, and they've chosen different approaches, completely.
 178
 179 Kit Maude [14:31]
 180 oh, really? And what have they done? I'm curious
 181
 182 Laura Caldelari [14:34]
 183 some, the German left everything, was really, yeah, faithful to the Spanish version, in most of the
 184 cases. And the French author, although she was born in Argentina, she changed a lot of things and
 185 made it like more French, more approachable to the French audience. Yes. Now, I am going to ask
 186 them about that as well, but well, you're the first.
 187
 188 Kit Maude [15:03]
 189 ok. I, it sounds like I've taken more of the German approach. I mean, it's a city you can google it.
 190 did I, I can't remember what I did with Cañada. Did I leave Cañada?, just I, I think I might have. I
 191 might have... Sometimes, when it's a specific geographic place I used both, the term in Spanish
 192 and then sometimes I add something like gully or gorge or ravine so that people know exactly
 193 what it is. So, or maybe I've, made now I'd have, honestly can't remember.
 194 I, yeah, no, I said, I use the word Cañada because you don't change, you don't change street
 195 names. You don't change other cities. But I in one of the phrases somewhere, I let the reader
 196 know that we're talking about a ravine, we're talking about something we're talking about, we're
 197 talking about a landmark that, again, is symbolic. It's I should say before this final text, I haven't
 198 got the edits back yet. So the final text has yet to be determined. So I can only give you what I did.
 199 I don't I mean, a translation. Ideally, a translation is always in, in a, made, done in conjunction with
 200 the editor and the author where, where possible. I mean, the final text is always a group effort.
 201 You know, my name goes on. But, but yes, yeah, no. Specific and then the park I mean, the Park
 202 Sarmiento is a, is a good setting. So it's so again, it's the opening of the book you have the statute
 203 can't do that. There's no, absolutely no need to explain that that they can do if the reader the
 204 reader will understand exactly what's going on. And it doesn't really matter if they don't know
 205 exactly how big the park is, or what's there or what's very, very definitely described. And ideally,
 206 ideally, especially you want it to expand it the transcendence bits actual geographic reality to, to,
 207 to encompass something, something larger, a more metaphysical or more, more bolic view. It's, I
 208 mean, it's, it's interesting. It's a lot of listening, what's going on? It's got, it's got conversations of
 209 how, this conversations of Eden, Paradise Lost, yeah. It's fantastic. It's, it works very well, I
 210 honestly think this is, this is this was her first novel. But, goodness me, she's really nailed on, she's,
 211 she's achieved the clarity of view with this book that, that you really don't often, you don't see in
 212 verticals, you don't, you see them in when a, when an author is writing a beat generally. I mean,
 213 she is apparently, she's already reached it. But that was, I mean, sorry. I'm just, I'm just guessing
 214 that, that was one of the things that really drew me to the book. But so, it's important that, that
 215 clarity of vision, you don't want to mess it up by trying to explain too much. Let the, let like let
 216 Camila speak to the reader and as clearly as possible and get out the way as much.
 217 Laura Caldelari [18:42]
 218 So you didn't feel the need to explain, for instance, who some characters are like Negra Vernacci,
 219 Dolina, Araceli...
 220 Kit Maude [18:52]
 221 To an extent, again, you try and do is a subtler way as possible. The actress, that's easy. I mean, I
 222 had to look up some of these characters. I didn't I didn't grow up in Buenos Aires in the 70s and
 223 80s. But yeah, the actress, as little as possible. And then again, we live in a world where you can
 224 google anything. I mean, you don't really want the author to be doing that. They understand that
 225 this is a new. This is another country that this is going to be references to people. They don't take,
 226 they're not familiar with. But, again, with, it's so clear, you can really you get exactly what they're
 227 talking about from the context. Again, the editors may want me to put in more footnotes. I hope
 228 not. That may be that that's I mean, I can tell you how that that they're insisting that Camila writes
 229 a little prologue explaining the term travesti.
 230
 231 Laura Caldelari [20:01]
 232 Oh,

- 233
234 Kit Maude [20:04]
235 because especially in the US they're terribly worried about offending anyone explaining? And is it
236 it's, it's a reclaimed term. It's like Bill was back in the day. So I don't know, there may be more,
237 they may, they may require more explanation.
238
239 Laura Caldelari [20:30]
240 OK
241
242 Kit Maude [20:30]
243 I'm hoping not, I'm hoping that I mean, as a translator, you just want them to read the book. You
244 want people to read the book, not to worry to be thrown in immediately. And hopefully, I've
245 achieved that, so there's never, should never be a point of thinking, oh, what's, what's she talking
246 about here? I hope we'll see.
247
248 Laura Caldelari [20:57]
249 What about the insults that the travestis are named by? They're really specific. So
250
251 Kit Maude [21:04]
252 yes, really
253
254 Laura Caldelari [21:04]
255 did you choose English versions of those insults, or
256
257 Kit Maude [21:08]
258 Mostly. Mostly there are equivalents.
259
260 Laura Caldelari [21:12]
261 OK
262
263 Kit Maude [21:13]
264 I think. I think that
265
266 Laura Caldelari [21:17]
267 Los Osvaldos, los Raúlés, that is quite difficult!
268
269 Kit Maude [21:23]
270 This is, yeah, but you can, but I mean, with insults and slang, in general, Yeah, people have to, you
271 have to find the equivalent. And in that case, I think because people need to know exactly, exactly
272 what they're talking about. It's, it is very graphic things. This is very graphic, and I should have the
273 text here open, so I can, like see words. The exact the exact phrases I found, but there are but I
274 mean, but the English is very, is a rich language for insults, for language of all kinds. There's,
275 there's generally, there's generally something, there's generally something that does the job in
276 that sense.
277
278 Laura Caldelari [22:11]
279 Okay. All right. And what about the book title? You went with Bad Girls? Right?
280
281 Kit Maude [22:17]
282 Yeah, I didn't go with Bad Girls. I wanted Las Malas.
283
284 Laura Caldelari [22:21]
285 Okay, why?
286 Kit Maude [22:24]
287 I think
288
289 Laura Caldelari [22:25]
290 As a power move?
291 Kit Maude [22:26]
292 It is the obvious choice. But there's also it's, it's less matte. It's, I think that, that English readers
293 are perfectly willing to accept a title in Spanish these days. And that goes, I mean, in fact, goes
294 works, it's fine. This is going to be great. But I would have liked to have made more of a statement.
295 Saying, but I mean, again, you, you want the book to sell. You don't want someone to accidentally
296 put it in the Spanish language section in the bookshops. And you want them to have to find it on
297 the internet and all these things. I assume. I mean, it was I, Bad Girls is going to work. It does, to
298 an extent the job of Las Malas, so I'm sure it has all the connotations, but neither would the
299 reader in English get all the connotations anyway. Yes, I mean, I, they initially were getting with
300 Bad Women. Just awful.
301
302 Laura Caldelari [23:44]
303 Yeah. That sound a bit off
304
305 Kit Maude [23:49]
306 Yeah, um, you know, they. Yeah, but no, I, it wasn't my decision, but...But you have to trust the
307 publisher.
308
309 Laura Caldelari [24:02]
310 Yeah. Yeah. It's a joint work, actually.
311 Right. And when the meaning of the word is conveyed by the culture of, like in "malaria", for

- 312 instance, it's not just the sickness, but the lack of money.
 313
 314 Kit Maude [24:23]
 315 Yeah,
 316
 317 Laura Caldelari [24:24]
 318 Those kinds of things. Were they difficult for you to translate? Or was it okay?
 319
 320 Kit Maude [24:29]
 321 I think yeah, I think I since I saw "malaria" I think I used "malaise". Which is not an exact
 322 equivalent, but it gets you get the idea you have. Yeah, it has the idea of decay. Like a malaise, a
 323 malaise can be it can be an illness, but it can also be it's a disease of the spirit. A disease of, come
 324 back to a it has it has enough connotation of neglect and, and decline for it to work. But yeah, you
 325 have to think about these things. But I mean, English generally has good options for Spanish terms
 326 like that. I think I use "malaise". So it's I'm Yes. Sorry.
 327
 328 Laura Caldelari [25:31]
 329 So, in general, do you think you convey the same meaning that the author did?
 330
 331 Kit Maude [25:37]
 332 I hope so. I hope so. It will never.
 333
 334 Laura Caldelari [25:42]
 335 Why do you think that? or why do you hope?
 336
 337 Kit Maude [25:44]
 338 Yeah, the only way for, for, for it to be perfectly conveyed will be for Camila to have written this in
 339 English. And even if she'd written it in English, it would have been, it would be a different book. I
 340 mean, my hope is that I've got as close to what she would have done in English. And that's the,
 341 that's the that's that, that's, that's the ultimate goal of, of any translation I do. But I think that, I
 342 don't want to sound arrogant, I think that the vast, vast majority of the meaning and the
 343 importance and the fun of the book comes out 100%. There will be people don't, not many, I
 344 mean, people, a lot of people don't even know that there's a city of Cordoba that isn't Spain,
 345 we're dealing with people aren't going to get, and people aren't necessarily going to understand
 346 that even after the dictatorship, how, how nasty, how repressive, the police force can be, you
 347 know, in the US, the people are very, very aware of how repressive the police can be especially
 348 against, against, against marginalized, and in the UK increasingly, although they're a little bit more
 349 in denial about it. And there are enough the, the universality of the book, is I think, enough that,
 350 that, coupled with just the empathy that one immediately feels with the main characters, I think
 351 those two things combined, I think that people will, their reading experience will be very similar
 352 experiences, they won't be exact. And people will take out different things. But that's the glory of
 353 literature. You take, you can never predict what they're going to take from, from whatever they
 354 read. That, yeah, no, I'm not, I'm not too worried that something's going to get lost. It'll get
 355 altered; it has been altered. Hopefully, everything, everything important is there.
 356
 357 Laura Caldelari [28:09]
 358 Now just to finish it off. I'd like to move to the activism in the book.
 359
 360 Kit Maude [28:17]
 361 Yes,
 362
 363 Laura Caldelari [28:19]
 364 no, actually, this literary activism in the role of the translator as enabler of social change, because
 365 that's the point of my dissertation. That the translator is invisible, but at the same time should
 366 profit from his role or her role to enable social change. So she tried, Camila, and succeeded in
 367 raising awareness to the marginalization and all the suffering in this group. So how did you help to
 368 convey that as well?
 369 And if that your translated version brings that to light as well,
 370
 371 Kit Maude [29:04]
 372 they might, I mean, the most important role for me is to translate the book in a way that people
 373 are going to want to read it. That's, book itself is the, has the power. It's certainly not me. But I'm
 374 hoping that Camila herself, she's being a bit shy, but I'm hoping that Camila herself will be able to
 375 play a very active role in, in promoting the book and promoting a movement in in the US because
 376 there's a lot. I was talking about universality before but there's a lot I think that people in the US
 377 and the UK, even people that were part of the trans movement, don't necessarily understand
 378 about the specificities of the movement in Latin America. That difficulties in, the different forms
 379 of, of inclusiveness that are required. I mean, to some extent, I mean, to a great extent, Argentina
 380 has recently been passing some, some laws that, that this are ahead of what's going on in the US
 381 and and well, the English speaking world, which is interesting. But, and I think, yeah, I my role is,
 382 firstly, I just want people to read the book, that's the most powerful and I want a lot of people
 383 through people who wouldn't who aren't going to pick up the book because it's it's a trans book,
 384 or because it's a Latino book, just because it's a really, really a wonderful read. I think that's, that
 385 was certainly my I'm looking I'm a privileged white cis male. I should not be leading any any
 386 activist movement, I'm going to, we're going to make sure that that somebody from the
 387 movement in the US is involved in the editing process.
 388
 389 Laura Caldelari [31:15]
 390 Right. You do play a role in making it accessible to other cultures, other readers

- 391 Kit Maude [31:24]
 392 I mean, that's, that's, that's, that's the idea. But there's a very important politically charged story
 393 that's being written here. And it's reaching a lot of people in Argentina. And across the Spanish
 394 speaking world, it's getting big and in Spain too and across Latin America. My, the most important
 395 thing I can do is to make that book, is to make that story available in the best possible version, not
 396 in a version that people are going to enjoy reading in the English speaking world. And on in, and
 397 that that's an that's an, I'm very much of my head in the clouds. I'm very much in the military
 398 thing. And as an activist in terms, in this, in this sense, if, if we were talking about an author who
 400 would who from the 19th 399 century, then I'd be playing a much more prominent role as as as
 401 because I'd be the main figurehead. This for the author, across the, across the wider world, I'll be
 402 saying, look, that person has been has been forgotten, you should read them, because they tell
 403 you a lot about what life was like in the 19th 402 century, that, but because, because Camila is is a
 404 contemporary author, I think my my, my primary role was to give her a platform to speak and and
 405 I will, you know, I will do everything I can to to to help her convey her message. That, yeah, I
 406 mean, that's translators shouldn't ever, I don't even like having my name on the cover. This is this
 407 is this is Camilla's work of art, it's been an enormous privilege to to be involved in conveying it, but
 408 if I can help her, with her activism, I will in any way I can. But yeah, I, you, I would say sort of in
 409 terms of a translator's role in in activism, as is as much this is communications and logistics, rather
 410 than the actual activism. And that's being done, see what I mean. But, you know, any support I can
 411 give? I will,
- 412 Laura Caldelari [33:58]
 413 But extra, not just through your translation,
- 414
 415 Kit Maude [34:01]
 416 just to translate and yeah, I mean, I mean, ideally, it's not people are going to, I mean, you're
 417 interviewing me, because you're interested in the translation. But no, if I can, for instance, I mean,
 418 I'm sure people are going to want to interview Camila and she's not confident in her English. So, I
 419 will be there to help help translates between as as as a go between as a conduit between between
 420 those things, but in terms of given its contemporary literature, my role, I think, is is very much to
 421 take a take a backseat and make sure that I help to make sure that the connection, the flow of
 422 meanings, gets through without any problem without any hindrance.
- 423
 424 Laura Caldelari [34:53]
 425 Right. Well, I really thank you, especially because of the human added value, that you put into a
 426 translation, just understanding where it comes from, the real meaning behind every word and the
 427 whole concept of the book.
- 428 Kit Maude [35:15]
 429 I hope so! t's nothing. That's the we'll have to wait and see what critics think. And people, and the
 430 readers think, but I hope I hope I managed to do that.
- 431
 432 Laura Caldelari [35:23]
 433 And I've found on internet that starting May next year, the book will be available.
- 434
 435 Kit Maude [35:30]
 436 Yes. Yeah, it's that's the that's the
- 437 Laura Caldelari [35:34]
 438 I've pre-ordered it
- 439
 440 Kit Maude [35:37]
 441 Fantastic! I can I can probably ask them to send you a copy if you like.
- 442
 443 Laura Caldelari [35:43]
 444 That'd be really nice.
- 445
 446 Kit Maude [35:45]
 447 I'm not sure you're in you're in Europe.
- 448
 449 Laura Caldelari [35:48]
 450 Yes.
- 451
 452 Kit Maude [35:49]
 453 So I would imagine, I think, I'm not sure I think they might have a partner puncture in the UK.
- 454
 455 Laura Caldelari [35:58]
 456 or an electronic copy
- 457
 458 Kit Maude [36:00]
 459 an electronic copy to Yeah, but easier, they can ask me for a list of
- 460
 461 Laura Caldelari [36:07]
 462 that'd be nice
- 463
 464 Kit Maude [36:08]
 465 of people send the book to us. So if you'd like I can I can put you on it.
- 466
 467 Laura Caldelari [36:12]
 468 I did buy the other versions, so I can buy yours as well. So Well, I think that's it from my part.
- 469 Kit Maude [36:27]

470 Okay, so if you have any more questions, I'm I'm very willing to talk about Las Malas.
471
472 Laura Caldelari [36:35]
473 Thank you. Thank you very much.
474
475 Kit Maude [36:37]
476 Thank you. That was that was really enjoyable.
477
478 Laura Caldelari [36:40]
479 Okay. Bye.
480
481 Kit Maude [36:43]
482 Bye. Bye.
483

C.3 Svenja Becker (German Translator)

- 1 [0:00:01] – Laura Caldelari
 2 Ok, entonces, como iba diciendo, te tocó estar aquí por la traducción que hiciste de Las Malas. Y
 3 vamos a comenzar con una pregunta más general. Cada vez que comienzas un trabajo de
 4 traducción literaria, ¿cuál es el procedimiento normal? ¿Es el de buscar informaciones sobre el
 5 autor o sobre el texto?, ¿leer otras obras?, o ¿contactar al autor?, o no tener ningún prejuicio y
 6 empezar capítulo por capítulo?
 7 [0:00:49] – Svenja Becker
 8 Bueno, por lo general, empiezo claro, con leer la obra, no? eso es lo primero que hago. Es que
 9 habrá colegas que no lo hacen, pero yo, antes de empezar siempre leo antes todo el libro para
 10 tener una idea de la obra completa. Luego, depende un poco. Yo, lo que me gusta hacer, y lo hice
 11 con Camila creo que también, es escribir como un saludo a la autora para decir, bueno, yo soy,
 12 bueno, tal persona, traduzco tu libro, trataré de hacerlo lo más fiel que pueda, y entonces, si tienes
 13 algún consejo, algo que te importa mucho, que me dejes saber.
 14 [0:01:49] – Svenja Becker
 15 Para tener un poco una, sí, para tener un poco una...una conexión, digamos. Un poco un primer
 16 paso y decir, bueno, puede ser que por el camino surjan algunas preguntas; y para tener un
 17 contacto. Para eso. Y luego, por lo general, bueno, no se puede eso realmente decirlo, porque por
 18 lo general depende mucho de la obra. Con Las Malas, claro, lo que al principio me pareció muy
 19 importante es hacerme una imagen de la autora. Porque es un texto tan auto- autoficcional.
 20 Autobiográfico. Ficcional, autobiográfico, asique... Y con una voz muy única. Asique la busqué
 21 mucho en internet para, para escucharla realmente.
 22 [0:03:05] – Svenja Becker
 23 Como tiene ese discurso de, como se llama, del Ted. Ése, por ejemplo, y bueno, otras, se
 24 encuentran en YouTube, donde ella habla realmente. Y eso es como muy, me gustó mucho tener
 25 esa posibilidad realmente de escuchar su voz y de verla y de tener un poco una idea de como
 26 podría una persona así hablar el alemán. Y es un poco...es realmente una cuestión de estilo más
 27 bien, o de ritmo, no sé. Y bueno, luego viene todo lo de recherche, toda la búsqueda de
 28 información sobre las travestis en Argentina, las travestis acá, y lo que sea. Como es...bueno, toda
 29 la terminología, de como la gente, las travestis hablan de sí mismas acá, bueno, cosas así. Y se
 30 encuentra, bueno, yo me fui... aquí hay una consulta para personas trans, como un grupo de apoyo,
 31 y me fui ahí para preguntar, y bueno...
 32 [0:05:00] – Laura Caldelari
 33 OK. Interesante. Y cuando escribiste a Camila, ¿ella te sugirió algunas cosas que no debían usarse, o
 34 que ella quería que particularmente estén presentes? ¿Hubo algo de parte de ella?
 35 [0:05:20] – Svenja Becker
 36 No, en ese sentido no. Pero bueno, es que no habla alemán. Para ella será difícil, me imagino
 37 [0:05:29] – Laura Caldelari
 38 Pero creo que, tengo entendido que ella tiene una conexión muy única con el término "travesti", y
 39 no le gusta que se hable de "trans" tanto, porque cree que es muy neutral ese término.
 40 [0:05:47] – Svenja Becker
 41 No sé, no hay...bueno. Es que yo la he entendido de otra manera, no sé realmente.
 42 [0:06:00] – Laura Caldelari
 43 No, no, es que puedo estar confundida yo, porque yo no hablé con ella, ni hice nada.
 44 [0:06:02] – Svenja Becker
 45 No es que yo...Es que unos meses más tarde, cuando ya se publicó la obra en Alemania había una
 46 charla con ella y ahí dijo más o menos...Bueno, le preguntaron si había una diferencia entre travesti
 47 y mujer trans y ella dijo que no. Bueno, claro, el término travesti tiene un poco otro registro y eso
 48 es un problema en alemán porque no existe, no hay una alternativa realmente para ...
 49 [0:06:44] – Laura Caldelari
 50 ¿Y cómo es que llegaste al título Im Park der prächtigen Schwestern?
 51 [0:06:53] – Svenja Becker
 52 No es mi título, es el título de la editorial. En Alemania, por lo general los traductores no somos
 53 responsables ni tenemos una posibilidad de influir en el título. Eso no forma parte del contrato. El
 54 título es decisión de la editorial. Asique esa pregunta se la tendrás que hacer a mi editor.
 55 [0:07:33] – Laura Caldelari
 56 Pero la palabra Schwester, ¿fue tu propia decisión o la traes para incluir lo que dice en el título?
 57 [0:07:40] – Svenja Becker
 58 No, bueno, ella la usa también, ella también está hablando de hermanas, asique eso fue un poco un
 59 regalo. Hay una posibilidad de usarla realmente, y tenía la conexión con el título, para justificar de
 60 alguna manera el título, pero porque ella lo usa también. Bueno, el colectivo de las travestis
 61 alrededor de la Tía Encarna es como una hermandad, no? Asique lo de Schwestern funciona mas o
 62 menos. Espero.
 63 [0:08:25] – Laura Caldelari
 64 A mí me gustó. A mí.
 65 [0:08:31] – Svenja Becker
 66 Sí, no lo sé, es como, es un poco...es siempre esa duda de no tener una palabra-palabra para la
 67 travesti en alemán. Eso sigue siendo un problema de la novela. En alemán. Pero sin embargo, así
 68 con las hermanas y las mujeres trans, y con una.... No sé si te diste cuenta, pero lo que trato es
 69 hacer más bien una identificación más clara del lector con ella. Incluirlos a ella y los lectores, a la
 70 gente leyendo en un nosotras, mas o menos. Y bueno, no sé si funciona. Pero eso fue la idea, por lo
 71 menos.
 72 [0:09:28] – Laura Caldelari
 73 ¿Y esa idea es totalmente tuya o sentiste que en el original también está? La de crear este vínculo
 74 con el lector y hacerlo participe de la historia de Camila.
 75 [0:09:42] – Svenja Becker

- 76 Si, claro. Bueno, por supuesto creo que ya está en el libro, en el original, también. Porque bueno, es
 77 como, a mí me parece..., no sé como explicártelo, pero yo creo...
 78 [0:10:04] – Laura Caldelari
 79 Du kannst auf Deutsch reden, ich verstehe es.
 80 [0:10:06] – Svenja Becker
 81 Ja, es macht vielleicht nicht leichter. Creo que es una novela que es muy emocionante, y te abre
 82 como una puerta, o puede abrir una puerta a una parte marginada de la sociedad. Y eso, en sí, es
 83 como una oferta de entrar. Es como, bueno, es también una invitación de identificación, también. Y
 84 por eso creo que ya incluye algo como, como bueno, algo que nos una a todos y todas. Asique no
 85 es... puede ser la sociedad que excluye a la comunidad de las travestis, pero esa obra es una
 86 invitación de participar, por lo menos, o de aprender algo sobre como esa comunidad se siente, y
 87 se siente excluida y lo que sea. Y eso, bueno, ¿lo entiendes?
 88 [0:11:40] – Laura Caldelari
 89 Lo entiendo bien. Lo entiendo bien. Incluso en el libro, en una parte me llamó la atención que ella
 90 escribe algo como, cuando habla de la marginalización, del maltrato, dice que “nadie ayuda a una
 91 travesti”, y en tu traducción dice “eine von uns”. Y ahí es como que es más accesible lo que
 92 escribiste, me parece que decir eine von uns incluye más a todos en el colectivo y no solamente a
 93 las travestis. Están también otros marginados dentro del colectivo, que me pareció una muy buena
 94 decisión.
 95 [0:12:30] – Laura Caldelari
 96 Y en cuanto a esta marginalización del colectivo, ¿en Alemania también se siente? Desde afuera da
 97 la impresión de que es más tolerante, más inclusiva la sociedad.
 98 [0:12:43] – Svenja Becker
 99 Oh, no creo. No, no lo sé realmente, eso deberías preguntárselo, esa pregunta deberías hacerla a
 100 alguien...bueno, yo formo parte de la mayoría de la sociedad, asique no puedo realmente decirlo.
 101 Argentina es mucho más
 102 progre que acá. En Alemania las leyes son bastante más restrictivas. Asique yo no veo realmente
 103 que... Bueno, eso hay como... Hay esa diferencia de la percepción de Argentina u otros países
 104 latinoamericanos también, o de España, en comparación con Alemania. Porque yo creo que si
 105 echas un vistazo solamente a las estadísticas, por ejemplo, un país como España, en cuestiones de
 106 participación de mujeres en la vida, hay como un index de emancipación o lo que sea. Hay unas
 107 cifras. Y ahí, España siempre sale mucho mejor que Alemania. En Alemania las mujeres están
 108 más...están menos...gleichberechtigt, gleichbehandelt, oder que en España. Eso se puede medir.
 109 [0:15:10] – Svenja Becker
 110 Y sin embargo, la sociedad alemana tiene una vista a sí mismo como una sociedad totalmente
 111 equilibrada, bueno, justa, donde todo el mundo con cualquier tipo de orientación sexual o género o
 112 lo que sea, tenga los mismos derechos, y por supuesto, la misma representación en la sociedad.
 113 Pero eso es una irren. Es una mentira a sí misma, pero sin embargo, sigue siendo una mentira. No
 114 es así. Pero si las travestis acá están mejor que en Argentina, eso no lo sé realmente.
 115 [0:16:07] – Laura Caldelari
 116 Pero también están en una situación de marginalidad y de desigualdad actualmente. Comparadas
 117 con el resto.
 118 [0:16:14] – Svenja Becker
 119 Sí, lo están. Pero bueno, por lo general, la sociedad tiene muchos más recursos económicos. Asique
 120 en ese momento en que estamos hablando de una sociedad tan rica como la alemana, incluso si la
 121 gente está marginada, tiene acceso a algunas ayudas básicas. Lo que falta en Argentina, asique la
 122 situación no es comparable, muy bien.
 123 [0:16:46] – Laura Caldelari
 124 Aquí viene mi próxima pregunta, justamente hablando de la realidad socioeconómica de cada
 125 sociedad. Ella habla de las tetas rellenas de aceite de avión. ¿Fue algo complicado para traducir, en
 126 cuanto a la realidad? ¿O es algo que también existe en la sociedad alemana?
 127 [0:17:10] – Svenja Becker
 128 No creo que exista en Alemania, que eso no lo sé, eh? Espero que no, la verdad es que espero que
 129 no, pero no...no lo sé. Encontré artículos sobre la situación en Argentina, sobre el aceite de avión;
 130 incluso aquí salió algo en la TAZ (Tages Zeitung), una reseña pequeña sobre lo que está pasando
 131 allí. Pero no creo que, que...no espero que pase acá. Espero que tengan un poco más de acceso,
 132 incluso si no tienes dinero, incluso entonces, te dan acceso a algo menos dañino.
 133 [0:018:11] – Laura Caldelari
 134 Y ¿Qué fue para vos lo más difícil de traducir? ¿Fue simplemente la parte cultural, la parte
 135 intertextual, la gramática con su registro, o hubo algo en particular que te causó más dificultad?
 136 [0:18:36] – Svenja Becker
 137 No sé. Creo que al principio yo simplemente tenía mucho miedo, que yo no fuera la persona
 138 adecuada para el texto.
 139 [0:18:56] – Laura Caldelari
 140 Mmm, ¿Por qué eso? ¿falta de experiencia? ¿no entiendes super bien el idioma?
 141 [0:19:05] – Svenja Becker
 142 No, pero bueno, no soy una persona trans. No comparto la experiencia ni el...Ni en parte. Asique
 143 eso es pura...bueno, es así. No estoy conectada, bueno, no es así que yo creo que hay que ser una
 144 mujer para traducir a una mujer, o que hay que ser una persona negra para traducir a una
 145 autora...lo que sea. No creo que haya que estar muerto para traducir a un autor muerto. Esa no es
 146 la cosa, pero sin embargo, ahí, hay como, bueno, simplemente la idea de que yo, como persona
 147 mujer cis, en una sociedad rica traducía a una mujer trans de Argentina de los años '90, o principios
 148 del 2000, es un poco una imposición en sí. Un poco como, bueno. Pero luego la novela es tan
 149 fuerte, que no tenía que inventarme nada. La verdad es que puedes confiar en el texto, y te da
 150 todas las pistas, creo.
 151 [0:21:13] – Laura Caldelari
 152 Pero, en cierta manera, la cultura influencia el idioma, o mejor dicho, influencia la manera en que
 153 ese idioma se comprende. Y tenemos cosas como “poner la pava para el mate” o “chongo” o “la
 154 difunta correa”...

- 155 [0:21:30] – Svenja Becker
 156 Uff, chongo! ¿Qué es un chongo para vos?
 157 [0:21:36] – Laura Caldelari
 158 Un chongo es muy difícil de explicar, porque es una persona con la que hay una atracción sexual,
 159 hay relaciones carnales, pero no es un novio, no se comparte intimidad emotiva.
 160 [0:22:00] – Svenja Becker
 161 Sí, bueno, te lo pregunto porque es uno de los términos que yo estaba.... se lo pregunté creo como
 162 tres veces a Camila. Y todavía no tengo una idea clara, no la tengo. No entiendo el concepto de qué
 163 es, lo que sea, y eso fue complicado, sí. Es que claro, aquí la percepción del alemán era otra que la
 164 percepción del español de Camila, para una persona de Argentina. Pero a mí, no sé si hablaste con
 165 algún español o española, porque eso me interesaría también. El término “chongo”, que yo sepa,
 166 en España no existe. Ni en Méjico, lo que sea, es muy argentino. Y no tengo idea de como se
 167 percibe en otras partes.
 168 [0:23:36] – Laura Caldelari
 169 Bueno, pero “Kerl/Kerle” transmite lo que es, pero es cierto que estas palabras tienen un contenido
 170 que por ahí se pierde en la traducción.
 171 [0:23:23] – Svenja Becker
 172 Sí. Sí. Es que yo creo que eso es inevitable, más o menos. No hay manera de salvarlo, porque sí, es
 173 así.
 174 [0:23:43] – Laura Caldelari
 175 Sí, por ejemplo, “el mate”, que es algo tan típicamente argentino
 176 [0:23:46] – Svenja Becker
 177 Sí, pero “el mate” ya se conoce acá, no?
 178 [0:23:49] – Laura Caldelari
 179 Ya se conoce, pero en un momento dice “agua par ale mate” y escribiste “Teewasser”. O “yerba” es
 180 “Teehäcksel”, y me pregunto por qué cambiar mate por té, porque fue una decisión activa. A “té”
 181 lo comprende todo el mundo, y en Alemania todos toman té, incluso hay una tradición del té en el
 182 norte, pero...
 183 [0:24:18] – Svenja Becker
 184 No, pero antes aparece el mate ya en el texto.
 185 [0:24:19] – Laura Caldelari
 186 Sí, sí. No es en todos lados que no está.
 187 [0:24:30] – Svenja Becker
 188 No, pero yo hablo del párrafo adonde está “Teehäcksel”. Antes está claro que están tomando mate.
 189 [0:24:32] – Laura Caldelari
 190 ¿Y por qué cambiar a té?
 191 [0:24:34] – Svenja Becker
 192 Para le gente que no conozca el mate, como un té, para tener una conexión. Para que sepan que el
 193 mate es una especie de té, como una especie de infusión, o algo.
 194 [0:025:00] – Laura Caldelari
 195 Ok, es tratar de acercar el texto cuando es demasiado extranjero a la sociedad en la que se lee.
 196 [0:25:07] – Svenja Becker
 197 Sí, se puede entenderlo así. Sí, sí. Es como una implícita explicación, un poco. O ilustración, o lo que
 198 sea, para que tengan una idea, para que no sea demasiado enigmático.
 199 [0:25:26] – Laura Caldelari
 200 Y es lo mismo cuando está la Virgen de Guadalupe y la Virgen del Valle, una es Jungfrau von
 201 Guadalupe y la otra es Frau del Valle.
 202 [0:25:35] – Svenja Becker
 203 La otra es Frau del ¿qué he puesto?
 204 [0:25:40] – Laura Caldelari
 205 Frau del Valle
 206 [0:25:43] – Svenja Becker
 207 No me acuerdo. ¿Tienes la página? Hace más de un año, asique no me acuerdo
 208 [0:26:10] – Laura Caldelari
 209 En la página 28, contra el final, en el último párrafo
 210 [0:26:26] – Svenja Becker
 211 Ah, unsere liebe Frau von el Valle. ¿Es la misma Madonna?
 212 [0:26:30] – Laura Caldelari
 213 Es siempre la misma. La virgen es siempre la misma, pero depende de donde aparece que tiene
 214 otro nombre, no? Cuándo hablan de la Virgen siempre es María. Por eso que en el libro...
 215 [0:26:55] – Svenja Becker
 216 Sí, claro, claro, claro- ¿Pero es la misma que aparece en la otra parte del libro?
 217 [0:27:09] – Laura Caldelari
 218 No, en la página 28 aparece la Virgen de Guadalupe
 219 [0:27:10] – Svenja Becker
 220 Eso, entonces es otra. Porque yo, con todas las Madonnas que hay me confundo realmente.
 221 [0:27:20] – Laura Caldelari
 222 Sí, los santos y las vírgenes...
 223 [0:27:24] – Svenja Becker
 224 Sí, Sí, Sí, pero eso, yo lo he encontrado que esa Madonna del Valle en alemán se denomina “Unsere
 225 liebe Frau von”. En Alemania esa es la denominación oficial, más o menos. Para que los católicos
 226 sepan de que se habla. Es que yo, el tema de las vírgenes estoy un poco... No sé, no soy católica,
 227 asique...
 228 [0:27:56] – Laura Caldelari
 229 Sí, pero hay siempre una elección, y es una elección consciente. Por eso pregunto de donde viene.
 230 Porque no es que “ah, no sé qué poner, pongo Frau”. Elegiste Frau porque averiguaste y....
 231 [0:28:06] – Svenja Becker
 232 No, no, no. Yo la busqué y la encontré con ese nombre: unsere liebe Frau von
 233 Espero que no sea... No, no es la misma Virgen de Guadalupe porque la Virgen de Guadalupe se

- denomina de otra manera. Sí, sí, sí, pero tampoco entiendo muy bien por qué los nombres de las vírgenes en alemán son, difieren tanto. No sé por qué algunas veces dicen Jungfrau y otras veces dicen liebe Frau von. No tengo idea. Pero por lo general trato de encontrar la misma virgen.
- [0:29:00] – Laura Caldelari
- Con el tema de algunos lugares específicos, o de algunas palabras específicas que tienen que ver con la especificidad de Argentina, como por ejemplo El Abasto, La Cañada, que son tan importantes para la escena de la prostitución en Córdoba ¿elegiste dejarlos tal y como están en español? porque no hay un equivalente en alemán en el libro. ¿Sentiste la necesidad explicar qué es, o de decir algo más? O simplemente porque es un nombre de una ciudad se entiende así.
- [0:29:52] – Svenja Becker
- No me acuerdo del tema. ¿Hay muchas, muchos lugares en el libro?
- [0:30:00] – Laura Caldelari
- No, pero cuando habla de la escena de la prostitución y que las nuevas están de un lado de La Cañada, y que el Parque Sarmiento es oscuro, “la boca del lobo”. Son los lugares típicos de la prostitución y de la drogadicción.
- [0:30:20] – Svenja Becker
- Sí. Yo traduje...no me acuerdo.
- [0:30:24] – Laura Caldelari
- Dice Sarmiento Park y dice La Cañada, El Abasto; lo demás quedó en tu libro tal y como está en castellano.
- [0:30:26] – Svenja Becker
- Sí, yo creo que las calles, por lo general, no, no las traduzco. Es que hay que hacerlo, bueno, en los textos por lo general, queda mas o menos claro que se trata de una calle o lo que sea. Y hoy en día es tan fácil de encontrarlas por Google maps. Como si realmente te interesa puedes incluso ir caminando por el Street View.
- [0:31:10] – Laura Caldelari
- Sí, es verdad. Y con el tema de las personas a la que se hace referencia en el libro, como Araceli, la Negra Vernacci, ¿hubo una necesidad de explicar para el lector de tu cultura?
- [0:31:25] – Svenja Becker
- Sí, creo que...bueno hay una mención a, al, a ese de la radio, de una...donde el guardia del zoológico escucha el programa de...no sé no me acuerdo de, del
- [0:31:44] – Laura Caldelari
- De Dolina
- [0:31:46] – Svenja Becker
- De Dolina, eso. Y en ese caso yo puse algo para que sea más claro. Yo creo que puse Gesprächssendung o algo para que, para que tengan por lo menos una idea de como puede ser, como puede ser eso de estar escuchando ese programa de radio por la noche. Y con la actora yo creo que también puse algo como para que, por lo menos, trato de explicar, que se trata de una actora. Que la gente lo sepa para, si, si. Es un poco... porque no se la conoce acá. Pero no notas de pie de pagina, eso frena la experiencia de la lectura.
- [0:32:35] – Laura Caldelari
- Otra cosa que también es muy nuestra son los insultos.
- [0:32:40] – Svenja Becker
- Uff, si, siempre un problema.
- [0:32:45] – Laura Caldelari
- Bueno, creo que todos los idiomas son bastantes coloridos y hay opciones para insultar, pero, en este caso, cuando habla por ejemplo de Osvaldos o Raúl es muy complicado entender eso. Ni yo lo entiendo muy bien. Tu elección fue usar insultos alemanes. ¿Son insultos que existen para este colectivo o a algunos les diste vos la vuelta para que se entiendan, o algunos los inventaste?
- [0:33:16] – Svenja Becker
- Hay uno único que inventé. Por lo general, si, creo que no inventé ninguno, pero hay una escena, la voy a encontrar, pero hay un momento donde vienen todas las denominaciones, ¿tienes la...? Es que, hay uno que inventé porque, y eso porque me gustó tanto el original.
- [0:33:58] – Laura Caldelari
- Capaz que sé a cuál te estás refiriendo. Acá está: página 73.
- [0:34:17] – Svenja Becker
- Espera. Sí, die Würstchen im Rock, eso es como, eso es lo que yo...No, no me acuerdo que dice el original pero fue un poco, fue algo que me pareció original y no tan insultante, pero, despectivo sí, pero lo que sea, en ese caso, sí, fue más bien un juego. No sé si es una decisión tan...Hay que tener, no sé, no es un insulto insulto tan grave, pero tampoco se quiere denominar a nadie así.
- [0:35:14] – Laura Caldelari
- Vamos bien a lo general, como al principio iba diciéndote, para mí se trata de un texto con cierto contenido activista. Hay una actividad literaria con cierto activismo, y el rol del traductor es importante cuando hablamos de lo que puede lograr en un cambio social. Camila intentó que el público esté consciente de toda la marginalización que sufre el grupo, de lo denigrante que es querer, y lograr ser travesti en esta sociedad. Y en ese sentido el libro es un éxito. ¿Crees que Im Park der prächtigen Schwestern se logra un resultado similar?, ¿que el lector recibe el mismo impacto?
- [0:36:14] – Svenja Becker
- No. No, por el hecho de que aquí no se vende. Si se vendiera sería otra cosa. No, la cosa es que aquí apareció en enero y no hay resonancia realmente.
- [0:36:35] – Laura Caldelari
- OK. Qué lástima. Yo lo compré.
- [0:36:38] – Svenja Becker
- Muy bien, muy bien. No, realmente me da mucha lástima, porque yo creo que, bueno, claro aquí...No creo que la novela de Camila acá pueda tener un impacto tan grande como en Argentina porque no se trata de la sociedad alemana con sus problemas específicos, asique se necesitaría una voz como la de Camila acá, una voz original alemana o suiza, o lo que sea, pero yo creo que eso sería para la comunidad de las travestis acá, y para el activismo y todo, eso sería lo mejor. Sim

- 313 embargo yo creo que cada, que sí podría ser como una, una, una forma de Ermutigung o de
 314 Selbsermächtigung que podría funcionar acá igual. Y podría más, si le daría mas ánimos a la
 315 comunidad de las travestis de acá, a los marginados de acá para, para alzar la voz, o para hacerse
 316 oír.
 317 [0:38:30] – Laura Caldelari
 318 ¿Y este libro en el centro de ayuda que me mencionabas al principio no, no cunde? ¿No tiene
 319 repercusión en ese grupo específico? ¿Que puedan hacerlo su instrumento?
 320 [0:38:41] – Svenja Becker
 321 No lo sé todavía. Es que yo espero que, bueno, espero que encuentre un poco su camino por esa
 322 comunidad y todo, pero bueno hasta ahora, las reacciones son buenas. Así que las respuestas son
 323 buenas, la resonancia que recibí desde la comunidad trans me parecen bastante buenas. Sin
 324 embargo el eco me parece bastante reducido. Y eso tiene que, claro, eso tiene que...bueno sin toda
 325 esa pandemia y cosas, se hubiera podido invitar a la autora a hacer una gira, a hacer promoción
 326 para el libro. Eso sería un panorama muy diferente a lo que tenemos ahora.
 327 [0:39:52] – Laura Caldelari
 328 ¿Y esto no está previsto?
 329 [0:39:58] – Svenja Becker
 330 No, que yo sepa no. Porque esto es un, si, es un problema. Imagínate que en Alemania hay como
 331 dos fechas importantes para las editoriales. Uno a principio de año, eh, uno en primavera, y uno en
 332 otoño. Eso tiene que ver con las ferias, una en Frankfurt y la otra en Leipzig, y por o general, los
 333 programas de las editoriales se orientan a esas dos fechas. Y si un libro en el primer medio año no
 334 recibe la, la, no logra realmente llegar al público, entonces hay 1000 otros que llegan y absorben
 335 la... Es una lastima realmente. No sé, espero todavía que, como es una novela que yo veo como un
 336 texto fundamental e importante y todo, que, lo que mencionaste al principio, que si hay lectores
 337 que lo leen y lo difunden en su comunidad y lo comentan y lo que sea, que por esas vías pueda
 338 tener un cierto alcance a más gente. Pero hasta ahora...bueno yo estoy un poco frustrada.
 339 [0:41:51] – Laura Caldelari
 340 Lo lamento.
 341 [0:41:53] – Svenja Becker
 342 Si, es realmente una lástima, porque yo creo que es un libro tan bueno y tan importante que me
 343 gustaría tenerlo un poco más, pero no sé, no sé si la editorial...bueno, es que todavía no se puede
 344 viajar. Todavía no puedes invitar a alguien de Argentina para hacer una gira por Francia y Alemania
 345 sin más. Tendrían que encerrarla primero por dos semanas en un hotel o lo que sea y eso no, no lo
 346 van a hacer.
 347 [0:42:38] – Laura Caldelari
 348 No, no. Bueno, pero en definitiva no se trata de tu traducción sino de una situación de fuerza
 349 mayor. La repercusión del libro y el Corona.
 350 [0:42:47] – Svenja Becker
 351 Espero, espero. Espero que no sea mi culpa, por favor. No.
 352 [0:42:58] – Laura Caldelari
 353 Y ahora, mi última pregunta, es casi la misma, pero: estas decisiones que tomaste para hacer
 354 algunos cambios, algunas aclaraciones, fueron conscientes. ¿Pero también hay algunas conscientes
 355 en cuanto al uso de tu agencia, de tu punto de vista? O sea, ¿pusiste tu granito de arena para poder
 356 transmitir el mismo mensaje a la comunidad y a la realidad social y económica de tus lectores?
 357 [0:43:47] – Svenja Becker
 358 Uff, no sé. Es que no tengo una agencia. Es como...claro que quería como...Yo creo que una decisión
 359 fundamental está en el uso del idioma. Yo traté de usar, de escribirlo en un lenguaje lo más
 360 inclusivo que hay o que se pueda sin forzar demasiado el idioma. Eso es un poco. Por ejemplo el
 361 uso de la palabra trans como adjetivo, eso es lo que la comunidad trans reclama para si misma, que
 362 no se use como una palabra...trans Person, se una como adjetivo, y ponerlo así fue una decisión.
 363 Pero yo creo que no es, no lo veo como una cosa que era simplemente lo que yo quería poner
 364 dentro del texto, como mi agenda o algo así, sino que lo veo como una necesidad en un texto así.
 365 De respetar las decisiones de la comunidad, de las personas trans acá, y tratar de usar un lenguaje
 366 que no discrimina a nadie.
 367 [0:46:14] – Laura Caldelari
 368 Personalmente, a mí el libro traducido me gustó mucho, me parece muy accesible, siento la voz de
 369 Camila a través del libro. Me parece que has hecho un muy buen trabajo. Felicitaciones. Y espero
 370 que sigan subiendo las ventas.
 371 [0:46:35] – Svenja Becker
 372 ¡Sí!, hagan un poco de publicidad! Más promoción. No sé, es que yo realmente no se...
 373 [0:46:54] – Laura Caldelari
 374 Bueno, muchísimas gracias por tu tiempo.
 375 [0:46:57] – Svenja Becker
 376 De nada, un gusto. Bueno, mucho éxito con tu trabajo. ¿Vas a hablar con la traductora del ingles
 377 tambien?
 378 [0:47:15] – Laura Caldelari
 379 Con él ya hablé. Y me queda la traductora de francés.
 380 [0:47:28] – Svenja Becker
 381 Aha, bueno, entonces ánimo y suerte.
 382 [0:47:27] – Laura Caldelari
 383 Muchas gracias, Svenja. Chau, y buen fin de semana