



**VNiVERSiDAD
D SALAMANCA**

CAMPUS DE EXCELENCIA INTERNACIONAL

DEPARTAMENTO DE TRADUCCIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN
FACULTAD DE TRADUCCIÓN Y DOCUMENTACIÓN

**Luis Cernuda como traductor de Friedrich Hölderlin:
nuevas perspectivas desde las últimas tendencias
en los estudios de traducción**

Tesis doctoral de
Javier Adrada de la Torre

Dirigida por
M^a Carmen África Vidal Claramonte

SALAMANCA, 2022



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Empezar esta tesis con una cita de Luis Cernuda es tan simple y predecible que a duras penas cumple con los estándares de originalidad en investigación; sin embargo, quiero recordar su célebre analogía entre el escritor y el atleta: la escritura es para nosotros lo mismo que el trampolín para el atleta, y sin duda es más importante el atleta que el trampolín. De la misma manera, lo más valioso de esta tesis doctoral no son las páginas que la conforman, sino las experiencias y las personas que la han acompañado.

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Índice

Introduction	11
1. La superación de los esencialismos	27
1. 1. La poesía y lo sagrado	29
1. 2. (In)traducibilidad y otros esencialismos	33
1. 3. La discordia entre la teoría y la práctica	49
1. 4. Conclusión: síntomas del tránsito hacia el estado actual de la cuestión	52
2. El doble filo de la traducción poética y la infinitud de la intertextualidad	56
2. 1. El traductor como lector	58
2. 1. 1. La perspectiva cognitivo-estilística y sus semejantes	61
2. 1. 2. La perspectiva hermenéutica	67
2. 2. El traductor como creador	74
2. 2. 1. El lector como creador: la hermenéutica proyectiva	76
2. 2. 2. La traducción y el infinito universo intertextual	85
2. 2. 3. Figuraciones del infinito: un nuevo modelo de intertextualidad	93
2. 2. 3. 1. <i>Estructuralismo y serialismo</i>	97
2. 2. 3. 2. <i>Más allá del serialismo: la omnisemiosis</i>	101
2. 2. 3. 3. <i>Sumario: decálogo del modelo omnisemiótico</i>	115
2. 3. Conclusión: la traducción en el marco de la omnisemiosis	117

3. La traducción en su contexto: cultura, poder e ideología	122
3. 1. El mono inmortal y la hiperrelacionalidad inter(con)textual	123
3. 2. Traducción y contexto cultural.....	133
3. 3. Traducción, poder e ideología.....	144
3. 3. 1. Foreignization as an ideological strategy.....	156
3. 4. Translation <i>against</i> and <i>towards</i> the canon: Ezra Pound and Robert Bly.....	165
3. 4. 1. Ezra Pound as a translator of Chinese poetry and his influence upon future trends	166
3. 4. 2. Robert Bly as an editor of translated European poetry	183
3. 5. Conclusión: la traducción como dispositivo ideológico	191
4. Últimas tendencias: la apertura del concepto	194
4. 1. Traducción intersemiótica	195
4. 2. <i>Outward turn</i> y multimodalidad.....	201
4. 3. Postraducción y traducción líquida	213
4. 4. <i>Vivir es traducir</i> : de la ontología hermenéutica a la ontología traslativa.....	221
4. 4. 1. El planeta de los signos: una realidad hipersemiótica	223
4. 4. 2. La traducción como fundamento del ser.....	230
4. 5. Conclusión: últimas tendencias a la luz de la omnisemiosis.....	234
5. Luis Cernuda como traductor de Friedrich Hölderlin	238
5. 1. Cernuda y Gebser: un intercambio de traducciones.....	242
5. 1. 1. Las traducciones de Hölderlin	242
5. 1. 1. 1. <i>Análisis de la selección</i>	248
5. 1. 1. 2. <i>Cuatro poemas más</i>	263

5. 1. 2. <i>Neue spanische Dichtung</i> , de Gebser y Winstone:	
traducir <i>contra</i> y <i>hacia</i> el canon	268
5. 1. 3. Conclusión	291
5. 2. La influencia de Hölderlin en Cernuda	294
5. 2. 1. La influencia de Hölderlin en el pensamiento poético de Cernuda	295
5. 2. 2. La repercusión de Hölderlin en Cernuda a nivel textual	313
5. 2. 3. La influencia de Hölderlin en la experiencia vital de Cernuda.....	337
5. 3. Cernuda, traducción y exilio	354
5. 3. 1. Cernuda y su exilio europeo	358
5. 3. 2. Cernuda en Nueva Inglaterra	369
5. 3. 3. Cernuda en México	387
5. 4. Conclusión: el legado de Cernuda como traductor	401
Conclusions	406
Bibliografía citada y consultada	416

Introduction

This doctoral dissertation draws on the **hypothesis** that the translation work of Luis Cernuda had a significant impact on his life as well as on his poetry and, for precisely this reason, his literary production should be analyzed from an interdisciplinary perspective that includes the most recent theories in Translation Studies. Cernuda is best known for his poetry, both his prose poetry (e.g., *Ocnos* and *Variaciones sobre tema mexicano*) and verse, which comprises more than ten books (most of them collected in *La Realidad y el Deseo*). He is currently acknowledged as one of the most influential poets of the 20th century, primarily because of his legacy for writers today but also because his work acted as a bridge for subsequent generations of writers.

During his life, Cernuda not only wrote poetry, but also explored many other genres. For example, he wrote short stories, essays, literary criticism, and even a theater play. Even though he was also a prolific translator of verse and prose from French, German, and English, this dimension of his life has attracted considerably less attention than his poetry. The few studies that address Cernuda's translations have been carried out by scholars within the field of Spanish Language and Literature. Though rich in literary theory and analysis, this perspective provides an extremely narrow understanding of the nature of translation and its influence on Cernuda's literary production.

Our main **objective** was thus to study Cernuda's translations within the context of Translation Studies and analyze how his work can enhance our understanding of the translation process. We also examine how a more modern translation viewpoint can transform the way that Cernuda has been represented as a writer. For this purpose, we

constructed a comprehensive theoretical framework with insights from Translation Studies as well as other disciplines in order to characterize Cernuda as a translator.

This main objective also encompasses more specific ones. Insofar as its theoretical framework, this dissertation addresses translation in general, and poetry translation in particular. Firstly, we explore the potential of translation as a creative activity, especially from a hermeneutic perspective. Secondly, translation is examined from the standpoint of the cultural turn (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990) and the power turn (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002) in order to highlight its ideological dimension. Thirdly, the latest trends in Translation Studies are explored in some depth. These include the outward turn (Bassnett and Johnston, 2019b), Post-Translation Studies (Arduini and Nergaard, 2011; Gentzler, 2017), multimodality, and transmediality (Boria *et al.*, 2020; Campbell and Vidal, 2019; Gambier and van Doorslaer, 2016).

Our characterization of Cernuda as a translator focuses on his translations of the German poet, Friedrich Hölderlin, which until now have received little attention. In this regard, we examine Hölderlin's influence upon Cernuda's verses, his vision of poetry, and his existential attitude. We also analyze the ideological circumstances and impact of these translations, especially in relation to Cernuda's exile and transnational identity.

To achieve these objectives, it was necessary to use an interdisciplinary **methodology** that combines methods, models, and frameworks from different fields. Our perspective is thus not limited to Translation Studies since concepts, methods, and approaches are also borrowed from other disciplines, such as literary studies, comparative literature, philosophy, cultural studies, sociology, etc.

Moreover, to illustrate our assertions, examples are also offered from all artistic disciplines, and even from semiotic areas that are not conventionally viewed as art. Since our methodology is based on postulates from the different theoretical turns in Translation

Studies, translation is regarded as a hermeneutic process of great generative power, as a process traversed by cultural and ideological dynamics, and as a concept in perpetual expansion towards new horizons.

This dissertation comprises five chapters. Chapters 1-4 are centered on constructing the theoretical framework for our analysis, whereas Chapter 5 presents our study of Cernuda's translation activity. However, before exploring the most recent proposals in our field, we first examine and analyze the tendencies of the past.

Accordingly, **Chapter 1** reviews some of the most relevant approaches to poetry and poetry translation throughout history. It highlights the fact that for centuries, essentialism has governed both the literary and academic landscape, and is still an issue even today. Some of these beliefs include the obsolete idea that poetry is untranslatable, that a «faithful» poetic translation must translate a poem's form as well as its meaning, and, finally, that only poets can translate poetry. Challenging these idealistic conceptions, which stem from the long-standing sacralization and hierarchization of culture, is the first step towards understanding the most recent tendencies in Translation Studies.

This in itself is a significant contribution to the study of Cernuda as a translator. Most previous approaches have assumed that poetry is sacred, the most sublime expression of human language, with an immaterial core that is supposedly untranslatable. That is why Cernuda, a poet himself, has been widely regarded as a mediator between dreary reality and unattainable beauty, as though the ability to write and translate poetry were a divine gift, rather than a craft. Our analysis avoids the romanticization of the poet and the creative process. It also challenges essentialist conceptions of translation that have been unquestionably accepted by many scholars outside Translation Studies.

After a review of past controversies, which have led to the misconceptions of translation so prevalent in the world today, Chapters 2-4 trace the evolution and current

position of Translation Studies. As previously mentioned, these three chapters construct and define the theoretical framework and methodology applied in our study. This research takes into account the theoretical contributions and methodological resources of the various turns that Translation Studies has experienced throughout its history.

Chapter 2 focuses on the twofold nature of translation, especially the translation of poetry. Contrary to traditional views that affirm that translation involves the replication of the original text, this chapter demonstrates that the translation process takes place in two stages: (i) an interpretive stage; and (ii) a creative stage. Starting from this fundamental idea that highlights the creative rather than the reproductive nature of translation, Chapter 2 depicts the translator both as a reader and a creator.

This statement may not appear to contribute new information because all translators obviously read and write during the translation process. However, in this case, they read the source text in order to write a target text. The focus is thus no longer on the original author or the original poem, but on the translator and the target poem. From the very beginning, even when investigating the translator's work as a reader, our focus is oriented towards the projection of the interpreted meaning. Interpretation is thus conceived as creative activity and as the foundation of all meaning production because decoding a text signifies transforming it.

The translator's reading activity is addressed from two perspectives. From a cognitive and stylistic viewpoint (Boase-Beier, 2006/2014; Gutt, 2000/2014), the interpretive phase entails the identification of all linguistic features that characterize both the style and creative decisions of the author of the source text. The translator must then find a way to somehow recreate these features in the target text. This same issue is also examined from the perspective of Rhetorical Studies (Albaladejo, 2021; Albaladejo and

Chico Rico, 2018) and Russian Formalism. Moreover, we evaluate whether it is possible to retrieve not only the original author's decisions, but also their intentions.

The translator's job as a reader is then envisaged from a hermeneutic perspective. Insights of philosophers, such as Martin Heidegger (1927/2003) and Michel Foucault (1986/2014), are applied to the decoding stage of the translation process, always within the context of the creative phase and the intertextual potential of each linguistic operation. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of George Steiner's (1975) statement that every act of translation involves a violent appropriation of meanings, offset by a posterior expansion of the original text at various levels. In our view, translating is much more than destroying the original text to construct a new one, since any exegetical approach to the text also implies dignifying it and integrating it into a cycle of semiotic enrichment.

Section §2.2.1 accounts for the translator's creative labor, which is the final goal of the translation process. Translation Studies has long endeavored to defend this aspect of translation in direct opposition to the belief that translators have little room for creation and experimentation. In line with scholars such as Susan Bassnett (1998; 2016), Barbara Folkart (2007), Kirsten Malmkjær (2020), and Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella (2006), this dissertation also asserts that the translation of poetry is analogous to the writing of poetry. Both require the same level of artistry and inventiveness, given that both generate a standalone text that is received in the target literary system as an artistic creation. In order to emphasize the fact that a translation should not focus as much on the source language-culture as on the target language-culture, we propose the concept of *projective hermeneutics*. This new term underlines the ever-expanding nature of language and specifically, the projective power of translation, understood as an unlimited phenomenon of discursive multiplication.

Sections §2.2.2 and §2.2.3 explore the potential of the idea that every interaction between two texts — including translation — results in a projection towards a third point. This clearly indicates that language growth is unlimited because new meanings are systematically created. Also discussed are representations of intertextuality, such as Julia Kristeva's (1967) mosaic, Tomás Albaladejo's (2011) galaxy of discourses, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1980/1987) rhizome. In addition, we compare two paradigms of the 20th century, structuralism and serialism, and assess to what extent they are able to account for the expansion of human language and its infinity.

Finally, we propose a new *omnisemiotic* model of intertextuality, which describes the unlimited circulation of signs and meanings that permeate every segment of reality, whether material or immaterial. Although this omnisemiotic model is meant to depict the intertextual universe, it can also be applied to more general phenomena, such as the role of language in human existence, or to more specific activities, such as translation. The versatility of this model, along with the methodological resources that it places at our disposal, help to better understand and explore other theories formulated by Translation Studies practitioners, as well as to crystallize our particular vision of translation.

Chapter 3 assumes many of the omnisemiotic paradigm's principles in order to explore new ideas. For example, if a text can contain the echo of all imaginable texts, this is due to the maximum communicability of meanings. In a parallel way, if a work of art is traversed by a myriad of cultural and political dynamics, this is only possible in a context that conceives reality as a superposition of systems and languages. Section §3.1 shows that the value of any text is never intrinsic, but rather conventionally assigned. In other words, the worth of a text lies in its context. Similarly, the relevance of any work of art resides in the profusion of its projective hermeneutics, in the expansion of its

meanings towards other semiotic constructs. This assertion is explained with specific examples from different artistic disciplines.

Section §3.2 presents the main lines of thought underlying the cultural turn in Translation Studies, as proposed by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere in 1990. It also reviews all cultural dynamics that determine artistic production and, of course, translation. Already recognized as a linguistic operation of active creation, translation can also be a vehicle for social change, as well as an instrument of mediation between various actors and their ideologies. In line with this, every text hides a vast network of agents (Jones, 2011), whose worldviews and political beliefs are inevitably imprinted on each other like the successive layers of a palimpsest.

The palimpsest image (Vidal Claramonte, 2017; 2023) is discussed using examples from different artistic disciplines with a view to clarifying how every interpretation contributes to the consolidation of a text within the literary field, as affirmed by Pierre Bourdieu. Furthermore, Jacques Derrida's (1978/1979) revision of the Kantian *parergon* is also analyzed so as to emphasize the symbiosis between text and context, along with the influence of cultural circumstances upon all works of art. Naturally, all these ideas transform our understanding of translation because the translator should now be conscious of all ideological forces surrounding the text itself and the overall process.

From the cultural turn, Section §3.3 moves on to the power turn (Tymoczko and Gentzler, 2002), which raises awareness of the fact that linguistic exchange between human groups is frequently asymmetrical and conflictive. Bearing in mind Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1960/1984; 1986/1998) hermeneutic approach to human interaction, we describe and analyze translation practices from an ethical perspective in order to unveil

how semiotic transfers can involve violence between nations and communities, and how translators should act in such scenarios (Harding and Carbonell Cortés, 2018).

Important concepts discussed in this section include *cultural translation* (Asad, 1986; Bhabha, 1990; Maitland, 2017), *third space* (Bhabha, 1990; 1994), *contact zone* (Pratt, 1992/2010), *between* (Spivak, 2000), and *espacio de frontera* (Anzaldúa, 1987; Godayol, 2008; Vidal Claramonte, 2021; 2023). These terms refer to the dialectics between the Self and the Other, along with the conflictive, heterotopic, and hybrid locus arising from the linguistic exchange. Finally, Mona Baker's (2006) approach to the topic from the viewpoint of narrative theory is concisely presented in relation to previous ideas.

Regarding this topic, Section §3.3.1 takes sides in the ongoing debate on foreignization. This controversy in Translation Studies has been explained by Lawrence Venuti (1998; 2000), who articulated a series of oppositions associated with translation practice, such as fluency versus difference, sameness versus resistance, and domestication versus foreignization. Different views on Venuti's proposals are discussed in order to decide which translation strategy best preserves the cultural idiosyncrasy of the original text. Finally, we propose an amplification of William Frawley's (1984/2000) model of literary translation.

Section §3.4 begins with Edward Gentzler's (1996) reaction to Itamar Even-Zohar's (1978/1990) affirmation that translated literature only holds a central position in the literary polysystem in situations of impasse. Gentzler argues that no state of crisis is needed in Western cultures for translations to reach the center of the literary system, since translations themselves can prompt such crises. This would thus be a procedure both *towards* and *against* the canon — against the poetics that hold sway at a certain historical moment, as well as towards the conquest of the central position.

This strategy of dethronement and succession is eloquent proof of the ideological baggage and (re)shaping power of translation. Gentzler's hypothesis is confirmed with two practical examples. To begin with, we analyze Ezra Pound's translations of Chinese poetry *against* Victorian and Edwardian aesthetics, and *towards* an Imagist or Vorticist conception of writing. This is followed by a description of how Robert Bly rendered and published the verses of European authors in opposition to the activity of the Black Mountain Poets — influenced by Pound — or the New Criticism, and in favor of Deep Image poetics.

Chapter 4 reviews the latest trends and turns in Translation Studies, and outlines new avenues of research. It is a fact that this is one of the most exciting periods in Translation Studies, especially in regard to conceptual and methodological expansion. Section §4.1 focuses on the well-known concept of intersemiotic translation, coined by Roman Jakobson (1959/2000) more than six decades ago. Although it is no longer new, it laid the foundations for today's theoretical openness. Indeed, it implies that any intersemiotic exchange between different forms of expression can be called translation, which considerably expands the scope of the translation process. Intersemiotic translation is a meaningful concept in the present because it set a precedent for the current scholarly inclination towards interdisciplinarity and reconceptualization.

Sections §4.1 and §4.2 focus on groundbreaking trends that are currently popular within Translation Studies. Despite certain differences, they all agree that translation is infinitely more than a process of interlinguistic transfer and that new directions must be explored. The more traditional and narrower view of translation is characterized by the exclusivity of verbal speech, the predominance of binary structures, and the rigidity of categories. In contrast, the new vision of the translation process now goes far beyond the all-powerful word, the priority of the original over its copies, and the reluctance to accept

conceptual and discursive hybridization. As previously stated, these innovative theories are studied so as to incorporate their postulates and methodological tools in our research.

The most recent turn in Translation Studies is the outward turn, as proposed by Susan Bassnett and David Johnston (2019b) and further developed by scholars such as África Vidal Claramonte (2022a). It highlights the fact that the various means of expression are not isolated and that different artistic fields always flourish in dialogue with each other. In fact, translation is the cornerstone of any hybridization phenomenon. Furthermore, the outward turn, like other contemporary tendencies, constitutes a manifesto against statism and academic inbreeding. The way we conceive our world, as well as our way of analyzing it, determines its universal representation. This is the reason why our approach avoids immutable and monolithic categories and methods. In response to the impossibility of exploring the complexity of reality from rigid and limited perspectives, translation is regarded as a nomadic concept that constantly crosses borderlines — hence the need for a reorientation towards a heterotopic, blurred, and transversal locus.

Similar proposals, such as multimodality or transmediality, are also explored in the section in order to highlight the media and materials involved in all kinds of translation practice (Bennett, 2019b; Boria *et al.*, 2020; Campbell and Vidal, 2019; Gambier and van Doorslaer, 2016; Lee, 2013). The translator must thus observe the text from an all-encompassing viewpoint, namely that of the *artistranslator* (Vidal Claramonte, 2022a). Also provided is a list of conferences, symposia, special issues of journals, collective volumes, and monographs, published or organized in the last ten years. All of these documents are further evidence of the growing attention that these new theoretical approaches are currently receiving.

This is followed by a discussion of Post-Translation Studies, initially proposed by Stefano Arduini and Siri Nergaard (2011), and expanded by Edward Gentzler (2017). They affirm that translation should be regarded as a transdisciplinary process, rather than as an interdisciplinary one. The reason for this is that translation is linked to different realms of knowledge but not specifically bonded to any of them. Translation always means continuously crossing boundaries, traveling back and forth like a thread that interweaves all the changing signs around and within us.

Such a comprehensive conception of translation is not limited to the interaction between artistic disciplines. It is literally any correspondence between semiotic systems and texts. Translation is thus present whenever there is an exchange of meanings, and is a part of any situation in which two or more semiotic codes converge to mutually enrich each other. In this sense, translation is the basis of every communicative act, as well as a precondition of all forms of human language. Following Barthes (1984/1994: 77), as reflected in its Greek etymology, the text is regarded in this dissertation as a tissue — whatever the nature of its signs, whenever we speak of *text* or *language*, we are not only referring to verbal discourse, but to any set of conventional signs that encode meaning.

Further developing the idea of reconceptualization, Section §4.3 proposes and explains *liquid translation*, a concept based on Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) liquid modernity, and directly related to the omnisemiotic model. If Bauman's liquid modernity is governed by a principle of instability, mutability, and continuous change over time, liquid translation is relevant because it is translation that mediates such changes and fosters the fluidity of everything around us. Since categories are no longer delimited by clear borderlines, a more liquid conception of the world is helpful because it challenges the very idea of borderlines and hence the existence of a bounded system. Despite the fact

that within this context, reality seems to become an ungraspable maelstrom, the guiding thread interwoven into the inherent volatility of liquid modernity is once again translation.

Section §4.4 begins with Lluís Duch's (1998: 467) statement that to live is to translate, which suggests that translation is the foundation of all human and non-human life, inasmuch as our existence — and our awareness of existing — is built upon language and texts, thanks to translation, understood in its broadest sense. Using examples from our everyday material environment, this section shows that our omnisemiotic reality is traversed by an endless web of signs and narratives that we constantly create and decipher (§4.4.1). This question is also addressed from the perspective of Jean Baudrillard's (1976/1980; 1988/1997) hyperreality and transaesthetics, as well as from Gianni Vattimo's (1985/1986; 1989/1990) postmodern viewpoint.

These reflections pave the way to an existential approach to translation, namely, a translational ontology (§ 4. 4. 2.), derived from Heidegger's hermeneutic ontology. Accordingly, translation is the psycho-cognitive process upon which our consciousness of life is based. From this perspective, our relationship with the world is the same as with a book, inasmuch as we are texts in dialogue with other texts. This signifies that living is an intertextual process within an omnisemiotic system, and is thus a translation process.

All of these issues are the theoretical foundations of our analysis of Luis Cernuda and his translation legacy. To a greater or lesser extent, all the questions raised in Chapters 1-4 are taken into consideration in **Chapter 5**, which presents our research on Cernuda and his 1935 translations of the poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin. Of great significance is the impact of these translations on Cernuda's worldview, his artistic production, and even his life.

Section §5.1.1 addresses the interlinguistic, intercultural exchange between Cernuda and Hans Gebser, a German poet and philosopher that collaborated with Cernuda

in his translations of Hölderlin. We first analyze the translation process itself as well as its context, namely, the selection of poems, the publication of the target texts, the translation method used, etc. This is followed by an in-depth study of the features of the translated poems insofar as their form and content. We also highlight their relation to Cernuda's own poetry with particular attention to the reasons why Cernuda and Gebser selected those poems to translate from all of Hölderlin's poetic work.

Section §5.1.2 focuses on the reciprocal phase of the collaboration between Cernuda and Gebser. After Gebser helped Cernuda to translate Hölderlin's verses, Cernuda assisted Gebser in the preparation of an anthology of contemporary Spanish poetry. This is an example of how translation can actively reshape the literary field and challenge the canon, discussed in section §3.4. Similarly to Pound and Bly, Cernuda's translation strategy aspires to become the canon yet at the same time goes against it. This anthology provides a unique representation of Spanish verse, one that fosters Andalusian surrealism and dismisses Gerardo Diego's pure poetry. After reviewing the history of Andalusian surrealism, as reflected in the journal *Litoral*, Gebser's role in the process is briefly analyzed as well as Cernuda's comprehensive strategy. Also discussed is whether Cernuda's bid for international recognition was ultimately successful.

Section §5.2. assesses Hölderlin's imprint on Cernuda at three levels: (i) his verses; (ii) his conception of art; and (iii) his experience of life and society. This is only natural because poetry can be understood as a textual construct, as a set of ideas, and as a way of life. Our research indicates that after translating Hölderlin's work, Cernuda began to understand poetry in a different way, one that imbued his life with new meaning. This is reflected in his subsequent poems, which reflect his new cosmovision.

Poetry translation can thus become a source of inspiration and act as a motor of innovation, both individually, in the case of a single poet, and collectively, in the case of

a whole literary field. Cernuda's translations should thus be studied as a constitutive element of his entire literary work, insofar as they were crucial to his trajectory as a poet and subsequently prompted changes in his poetic expression.

This dissertation thus addresses Hölderlin's impact on Cernuda's poetic ideas, especially concerning the poet's place and destiny in the world. Based on Cernuda's translations of Hölderlin, we analyze Hölderlinian echoes in *La Realidad y el Deseo*, both in terms of form and content, including rewritings of Hölderlin's texts. Finally, a comparison of the biographies of both poets reveals similarities in their understanding of life as well as in the way they lived it. The results of our study show that although Cernuda's beliefs often seem romantic or idealistic, even close to the essentialist ideas criticized in the first chapter, this is not the case when his views are interpreted from a deconstructionist perspective. Our explanation of the effects of Cernuda's translations of Hölderlin is thus within the context of Post-Translation Studies.

Finally, Section §5.3 explores the different stages of Cernuda's exile, and links them to his translation activity. For this purpose, we examine how his translations affected his poetic production from 1938 onwards. This includes Hölderlin's lifelong influence, which was still perceptible in Cernuda's final days. In this dissertation, translation is perceived as an existential symbol of the identity of the exile — unstable, transborder, transcultural, multilinguistic, ideological, and ever-changing. It is hardly surprising that migratory movements and transnationalism, which have drawn the attention of Translation Studies scholars (Inghilleri, 2017; Vidal Claramonte, 2021; 2023) throughout the world, reflect the political implications of translation, explored in Chapter 3.

This section also reflects on Cernuda's feelings towards Spain, as well as the way in which he conceived and experienced his own rootlessness, especially during his early years of exile in Europe. Our study also focuses on the time that he spent in the United

States and Mexico so as to better understand the extent to which the poet's vision of his own exile changed over the years, along with his attitude towards Spain, which wavered from hope to despondency. This research was significantly enriched by new data discovered during our research stays at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst (Fall, 2021) and El Colegio de México (Spring, 2022).

In the final section of our dissertation, we present the conclusions derived from our research as well as our plans for future projects and publications.