

Non-Translation, Code-Switching, and the Reader-as-Translator

La no traducción, el code-switching y el lector como traductor

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Abstract: Translation possesses an inherent relationship with conflict and is inescapably involved with power relations. This essay focuses on literary texts that involve code-switching and non-translation as potential loci for such clashes. The fundamental point of argument revolves around how authors such as Helena Maria Viramontes, Cormac McCarthy, and Junot Díaz use untranslated, unmarked Spanish to create situations in which the reader assumes the role of translator. How do readers confront these critical moments in their role as translator? Situations extracted from code-switching narratives provide the textual basis for reflections upon the reconstructed reading experience of a typical, mostly monolingual English reader when faced with embedded Spanish material within an English matrix text. Combining elements of translation studies, bilingual studies, and narrative theory, the normative experience of reading is contrasted with the multitude of potential experiences that code-switching literary texts can trigger in monolingual and bilingual readers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout Francis Ford Coppola's film *The Godfather* (1972), characters speak both English and Italian in numerous scenes. In the majority of these scenes, Coppola includes English subtitles when the characters use Italian in order for the audience (presumably English-speaking) to understand what is being said. But there is a crucial exception: around midway through the film, after attempts on his father's life have been made, Michael Corleone decides to arrange a meeting with two of the main antagonists: Solozzo and McCluskey. During the meeting, Solozzo informs McCluskey that he and Michael are going to speak in Italian. They begin, and the audience realizes that McCluskey is not the only one left out: they too are excluded, because in this instance Coppola does not provide subtitles. Why deny subtitles in this one scene? Is he purposefully excluding his audience, just as Solozzo is purposefully excluding McCluskey? What are we to make of this withholding of translation?

The act of translation simultaneously exists as a multitude of other acts: transcription, interpretation, and narration. And this complicated set of activities undoubtedly involves rather serious implications for the text, the translator, and the reader. Translation studies, including scholars such as Mona Baker, Martha Cutter, and Robert Dale Parker, have consistently involved discussions of power, capital, and appropriation, much like similar discussions of bilingualism within linguistics. In this essay, I seek to take an interdisciplinary approach combining recent trends in both translation and bilingual studies; specifically, I focus on American authors and texts that implement code-switching, a term most commonly used in linguistics. I posit that code-switching in these texts is more than a linguistic element; instead, I see it as a powerful narrative device used to enact particular rhetorical, cultural, and epistemological implications on these narratives and –more prominently– on the reading experiences they afford. I argue that these code-switching (between English and Spanish) texts create unique experiences and positions for their readers. On one hand, mono- and bilingual readers alike are faced with the various effects of the authorly motivations behind these instances of code-switching. On the other hand, the unmarked, untranslated portions of these narratives afford a peculiar role for the reader: he or she *becomes* the translator. Various scholars have pointed out the inherent power –and inevitable conflict– that comes with the act of translation, and the reader-as-translator has access to forms of narrative power that other texts simply do not offer.

For a narrative to include multiple languages within a single text is by no means a recent phenomenon, and examples of bilingualism and code-switching are not unique to contemporary texts. The texts covered in this essay are noteworthy in relation to the larger corpus of bilingual literature in that they include untranslated, unmarked instances of code-switching. These two characteristics involve their own implications on textual meaning and readerly experience—something I argue explicitly in this essay. Many

scholars of translation and bilingualism have interrogated the spectrum of grammatical, structural, and rhetorical elements of code-switching texts, but the extent to which unmarked, non-translated passages impact a text and its readers has not received as much attention, especially for the authors I focus on here.

The texts I cover range in terms of the extent to which non-translated code-switching is used, as well as the biographical aspects of their authors, although they all are written in the last three decades by American authors. Specifically, I discuss texts by Helena Maria Viramontes, Junot Diaz, and Cormac McCarthy, texts that employ a significantly large amount of bilingualism. I do not contend that non-translated bilingualism *only* takes place in contemporary American texts, or that the authors I have chosen are the *only* American authors to employ this device. These are not the only authors from these areas to use unmarked code-switching, and my analyses are not intended to imply the opposite. They are intended, rather, to further promote ongoing conversations of how authors and their narratives render the multicultural, multilingual, and multifaceted nature of contemporary American culture, and how the on-the-page presence of code-switching in these texts plays a crucial role in these depictions.

2. LINGUISTICS, TRANSLATION STUDIES, AND CODE-SWITCHING

Many scholars from diverse fields have addressed code-switching, and my own approach to the topic is indebted to their work, much of which comes from bilingual studies, a specific thread of contemporary linguistics. Laura Callahan's *Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus* (2004) and Penelope Gardner-Chloros's *Code-Switching* (2009) are two examples of book-length works dedicated to the topic. Rakesh M. Bhatt and Agnes Bolonyai's article «Code-Switching and the Optimal Grammar of Bilingual Use» (2011) approaches code-switching from a sociolinguistic and socio-cognitive perspective, using scientific methods of experimentation to explain and differentiate examples of code-switching. Although these texts go in diverse directions in terms of focus and critical aim, they provide seminal definitions of the term «code-switching» (hereon referred to as CS) and guiding principles for approaches to the topic.

In her opening chapter, Gardner-Chloros provides a rather simple definition of CS after introducing examples from three different languages (French, Greek, and Creole): «Such varied combinations of two or more linguistic varieties occur in countless bilingual societies and communities, and are known as code-switching (CS). It refers to the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people» (Gardner-Chloros 2009, 4). This idea of the commonality of CS in many different cultures is echoed in other studies on the topic, as evidenced in Callahan's review of literature on work concerning CS in early literatures (Sanskrit, Medieval Latin, and Arabic) as well as

contemporary examples from all genres (fiction, nonfiction, drama) and even nonprint media (music, radio, and television) (Callahan 2004, 81-95). Callahan also provides a working definition of CS in the opening lines of her text: «Codeswitching is the use of words and structures from more than one language or linguistic variety by the same speaker within the same speech situation, conversation or utterance» (Callahan 2004, 5). These two straightforward definitions of the term correlate with most of the others I found, and there does not seem to be much critical debate on exactly what CS is. This does not mean that CS is a simple linguistic construct without various threads of critical disagreement. The extensive body of scholarly work referenced in studies like Callahan's and Gardner-Chloros's demonstrates the nature in which CS inspires various interpretations and analyses from scholars in a wide variety of fields.

The majority of this attention has focused on CS in conversational/oral rather than written contexts. Gardner-Chloros's book, along with Bhatt and Bolonyai's article serve as examples of approaches based on conversational CS. Both texts approach CS through a linguistic lens, focusing on the grammatical and systematic aspects of CS, and its linguistic implications. Bhatt and Bolonyai use empirical evidence to make claims about the implications of CS. They identify what they see as the five all-encompassing principles of oral CS usage: faith, power, solidarity, face, and perspective; these are their answers to the question of why bilingual speakers code-switch.

But certain scholars have directed much-needed attention to written CS; Callahan and Montes-Alcalá are two examples. Callahan's study focuses on a corpus of thirty texts, including novels, short stories, and poetry, that include CS. Each text was published from 1970-2000, and each includes CS between Spanish and English. Callahan's study is similar to Bhatt and Bolonyai's and Gardner-Chloros's in that she too structures her analysis on a grammatical system. According to the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model used by Callahan, CS involves a relationship between the matrix (English, in my case) language (ML) and the embedded (Spanish) language (EL) (Callahan 2004, 11-12). Based on this model, Callahan points out three potential constituent CS types: 1) ML + EL constituents, which include both ML and EL; 2) ML islands, which only include ML constituents; and 3) EL islands, which only include EL constituents (12-13). Callahan's usage of the MLF model sets a highly grammatical tone to her study, and although the structural elements of her study are different, there are resounding echoes of the structural approach of Bhatt and Bolonyai mentioned above.

The three types of CS based on the MLF model are exemplified in texts from Viramontes, Diaz, and McCarthy. Each text includes Matrix Language islands; this is an obvious statement, as they are all English language novels. But they also include Embedded Language islands. Two examples: «¡Te van a comer los niños de tierra!» (Viramontes 1996, 9); «Hay una historia allá» (McCarthy 1994, 43). Although these novels are written in English, they each include ample examples of EL islands in which the Spanish language encompasses the entire sentence or passage. And

these texts include numerous examples of phrases and sentences with both ML and EL constituents. An example from Diaz: «In the DR during summer visits to his family digs in Bani he was the worst, would stand in front of Nena Inca's house and call out to passing women—Tú eres guapa! Tú eres guapa!—until a Seventh-day Adventist complained to his grandmother and she shut down the hit parade lickety-split» (Diaz 2007, 13). The grammatical approach of the MLF model correlates with these narrative texts, as asserted by Callahan.

Similarly, the grammatical approaches from scholars like Bhatt and Bolonyai find traction in these written narratives. Specifically, Bhatt and Bolonyai's emphasis on optimization being the fundamental impetus is particularly relevant when looking at CS in fictional texts. Agreeing with Bhatt and Bolonyai, I contend that the idea of optimization is, in many cases, the guiding principle behind author decisions to incorporate CS. An example from *Under the Feet of Jesus*: «My name's Alejo y estoy muy lejos de donde nació. Como la canción Mixteca, he joked» (44). Alejo mixes English and Spanish to facilitate his musical reference and jocular tone; without Spanish this is lost, and Viramontes's linguistic choice optimizes the effect. Where I depart from Bhatt and Bolonyai, though, is in my interpretation –or my configuration– of what exactly is being optimized, or upon whom exactly this «optimal output» is based. Bhatt and Bolonyai use a theoretical assumption of optimization calibrated around optimal outputs depending on communal, contextual factors. But the question that written CS raises is who exactly benefits from this CS optimization? Who does the author have in mind when he or she decides which output is optimal? These are questions I will approach below.

To a certain extent, the five principles of Bhatt and Bolonyai's study do in fact correlate with certain motivating factors for written CS, especially for the authorly choices to do so. McCarthy's unmarked, untranslated switches between English and Spanish –as difficult as they sometimes are to follow due to his refusal to include quotation marks– undoubtedly indicate switches between perspectives, or «discourse-interactive orientations» (Bhatt and Bolonyai 2011, 524) as proposed for oral CS. This happens often in the Border Trilogy, such as the following example from *All the Pretty Horses*: «Take off your shirt, he said. I'm goin to pull that shoulder. / Mande? said the captain. / Quítese su camisa. / The captain shook his head and held his arm against him like a child. / Don't sull up on me. I aint askin, I'm tellin. / Cómo? / No tiene otra salida» (1992, 278). Both characters in this exchange speak Spanish, but the switches between Spanish and English make clear (where the lack of punctuation and exposition does not) who is speaking. But there are more factors beyond these five principles that apply to written CS. Although still geared towards optimization, these «principles» of written CS are unique; to put it another way, written CS offers distinct types of CS given that the very nature of written texts involves more levels of textual interaction than does oral CS, namely the traditional levels of narrative: author, narrator, reader, and so on. Not only do written texts afford opportunities for discussions of

why speakers (characters) decide to use CS, but they also expand the conversation to address motivations behind why authors decide to have characters use CS –or why they (the authors) themselves switch between languages– and how this directly impacts the reading experience. This added level of analysis has direct implications for previous studies of CS, as well as on the novels themselves and how they shed light on contemporary American experiences-experiences deeply ingrained in the political and social realities of a linguistically diverse culture. A number of scholars have worked specifically in this area, proposing further «principles» of CS that describe the motivating factors –and the effects on readers– of these bilingual texts. Examples are Sarkonak and Hodgson’s article, «Seeing In Depth: The Practise of Bilingual Writing» (1993), Graham’s «On Reading Foreign Poetry: Perceptions of the Non-Fluent Reader» (1985), and Ernst Rudin’s *Tender Accents of Sound: Spanish in the Chicano Novel in English* (1996). I seek to join these conversations, but my eventual assertions depend heavily on the incorporation of another field of inquiry: translation studies. Not only are these CS novels switching between languages; they also purposefully and explicitly do so in unmarked, untranslated ways. This is a crucial aspect of this CS, and one that I see as being just as important as the switches themselves.

Robert Dale Parker (2003) offers a fascinating approach to the concept of translation. Parker approaches traditional translation studies questions such as whether or not texts should be translated, who is allowed to do the translating, and the ways in which the process(es) of translation involve cultural appropriation and an exchange of power. Like Parker, Martha J. Cutter relies heavily on the relationship between translation and appropriation in her work, *Lost & Found in Translation* (2005). Cutter asserts:

Although most of their texts are written in English and the ethnic language is most often transcribed into English words, ethnic American writers maintain a constant preoccupation with questions of cultural translation: Who can be a translator? What can be translated? When a second- or third- generation child no longer speaks the parent’s ethnic tongue, what gets «lost» in translation? And what might be «found» in translation? (1)

Although Cutter’s textual scope of «ethnic literature» is much broader than that of Parker, her text similarly deals with issues of cultural appropriation and the exchange of power at play in translation. Both texts are guided by an effort to expose and explicate these systems of exchange through their close readings.

As evidenced in her title, Cutter’s primary theoretical agenda is to find a middle ground between wholly-positive and –negative views of translation– views she sees as prevalent in other approaches to the topic. After setting a rich theoretical context, she identifies her central premise: «This book examines the simultaneous loss and gain of translation» (2). At the heart of this «loss and gain» is what she calls the «trope of

translation», which involves «transcoding ethnicity, transmigrating the ethnic tongue into the English language, and renovating the language of hegemony» (2). Her purpose is clearly to break boundaries; she is intent upon moving beyond previous discussions with a hope of finding a way in which translation can be seen for what it *really* is (in her opinion). But there is more at stake here than simply interpretation or literary analysis; her use of the term «hegemony» early on leaves no doubt that the potential price of translation involves serious cultural capital.

For Cutter, the «trope of translation» has numerous potential positive and negative effects. She sees translation as involving a «continual negotiation and renegotiation between languages and an ongoing struggle between conflicting and often clashing cultures and ideologies» (6). Her word choice is telling: in many cases, translation is a platform for (linguistic and literary) violence, a place of conflict¹. Other critics take up this relationship between cultural violence and translation, such as Mona Baker (2006). For Baker, translation and conflict go hand-in-hand; she sees the world as a conflict-ridden place, with translation as a powerful tool of legitimization and justification used by all sides. If the act of translation is the battleground for conflict and negotiation, then for Baker the translator stands as the central figure directing the exchange of power. Translators have the chance to «strengthen or undermine particular aspects of the narratives they mediate, explicitly or implicitly» (Baker 2006, 105), and this opportunity allows for specific instances of power creation-and the enactment of this power. Baker exemplifies the approaches to translation identified by Cutter, and while not all views of translation are quite as conflict-centered, the implicit relationship between translation and conflict persists broadly.

While Cutter points out general commonalities between approaches to translation and seeks to find a more comprehensive approach, Parker is much more particular in scope and purpose in his chapter in *The Invention of Native American Literature*. While Parker's focus is on the «invention» of Native American literature through the perhaps miscalculated –or at least mislabeled– work of translators and «ethnopoeticians», aspects of his critique prove relevant for the current discussion. Parker makes a call for what he sees as the work of transcribers/translators of Native American oral narratives: «If we are going to enlarge the audience for oral story... then let us draw people to the orality of the stories even when we have to or choose to represent it in written form.

1. A simple example to clarify this type of «conflict»: A translator purposefully mistranslates a certain word, phrase, or passage for the purpose of enacting some form of personal, political, or social agenda. The act of translating is an empowering act, and any form of power –as years of cultural criticism have shown– brings with it the potential for a misuse of this power. In addition to purposeful mistranslations, there are also cases in which direct translation is simply impossible due to a lack of equivalent words between languages.

The task of transcribers and translators is not to discover. Rather, like the task of storytellers, it is to narrate and to interpret» (2003, 100). This call depends upon specific definitions of what the act of translating is, what it can be, and what it should be. Like Cutter, Parker sees translation as more than a transcription of words. Instead, it is inextricably linked with interpretation and even creation: «Translations are constructions rather than discoveries» (89).

With these views of both translation and code-switching in mind, how can narratological aspects enlighten the essential questions at the heart of both Cutter and Parker in relation to texts that incorporate unmarked, untranslated passages of multiple languages? In the quote above, Parker equates the work done by translators with that done by storytellers and narrators; if this is the case, how are these various translating individuals –authors, narrators, and readers– to deal with the inherently powerful nature of translation? And what implications does this have on a narrative and on the reading experience it affords? Translation studies consistently deal with ideas of legitimacy and sincerity in relation to translations and translators. Considering these CS narratives, questions about whether or not readers have the ability –or the right– to translate certain passages lead to critical analyses of these texts and the effects they potentially have on readers. In what remains of this essay I look at contemporary American narratives in an effort to pursue the following trajectory of inquiry: If a) CS texts give readers access to moments of translation, and b) translation inherently involves conflict and an exchange of power, then c) readers encounter a confluence of these various elements. Ultimately, I argue d) CS texts create readers-as-translators, enacting unique hermeneutical, rhetorical, and narratological implications.

3. VENGEFUL LINGUISTICS

Certain scholars have paid close attention to these implications in written CS. Lourdes Torres (2007) provides a brief introduction of CS in the context of Latino/a literature. She asserts: «Using Spanish in an English language text serves to legitimize the much-maligned practice of mixing codes in vernacular speech» (Torres 2007, 76). Similarly, Evelyn Nien-Ming Ch'ien's (2004) central argument about the ways ethnic American authors are constantly «weirding English» also entails a discussion of CS in her chapter focused on Diaz. She describes Diaz's mix of languages, which is simultaneously another depiction of CS: «His fiction allows for the convergence of diverse linguistic worlds, each populated by a different language» (Ch'ien 2004, 203). These analyses see major implications at play in texts in which authors incorporate multiple languages in diverse ways.

Like all narrative techniques, there are various types and degrees of CS employed by these authors. Torres outlines specific ways in which Latino/a authors employ CS

and argues that their decisions to do so involve implications beyond the literary sphere, asserting that the use of this device in texts represents the cultural reality of the diverse, multilingual American society. Furthermore, she proposes, «A writer's linguistic choice can be a political act» (2007, 77): the author purposefully uses languages in ways that serve to alienate –or at least affect in an uncomfortable way– the monolingual reader. Interviews with Viramontes and Diaz reveal these authorly intentions.

In a 1994 interview, Viramontes speaks about her use of Spanish and English in her (then) newly completed novel, *Under the Feet of Jesus*. In response to a question about her intent with her use of Spanish, Viramontes reveals that it is a conscious, deliberate decision—one that she does not take lightly. She begins by referencing McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* and the lack of questions about the Spanish in his texts. In contrast, Viramontes exclaims, «If a Spanish-surnamed writer uses Spanish, it becomes an issue. Readers feel purposefully excluded, like, why are you keeping this from me? Well, I'm sorry. How could I not give integrity to the characters?» (Viramontes 2000, 150). For Viramontes, the decision to incorporate Spanish into the text is a decision based on remaining loyal to her characters; this echoes above discussions concerning the linguistic concept of optimization. Her characters speak Spanish, so why should she not have them speaking Spanish in the novel? She continues: «There was a question shortly after the novel went into press whether Spanish should be italicized. I said, 'Absolutely not'. I don't want to call attention to the text... I would never, never jeopardize the voices of these characters. How could I possibly?» (151). Diaz speaks similarly to Viramontes in a 2000 interview; he sets a serious tone when talking about his immigration experience to the United States from the Dominican Republic at the age of seven: «You come to the United States and the United States begins immediately, systematically, to erase you in every way, to suppress those things which it considers not digestible. You spend a lot of time being colonized» (Cespedes, Torres-Saillant, and Diaz 2000, 896). This sense of being colonized plays into his use of CS, as evidenced when he is asked to explain his use of Spanish in his collection *Drown* (1996):

For me, allowing the Spanish to exist in my text without the benefit of italics or quotation marks was a very important political move. Spanish is not a minority language. Not in this hemisphere, not in the United States, not in the world inside my head. So why treat it like one? Why 'other' it? Why denormalize it? By keeping the Spanish as normative in a predominantly English text, I wanted to remind readers of the fluidity of languages, the mutability of languages. And to mark how steadily English is transforming Spanish and Spanish is transforming English (904).

Diaz explicitly refers to his choice as being of a political nature. Like Viramontes, he asserts an «allegiance» to his characters; both authors focus on being sincere in their depictions of the people they are writing about, including the languages they speak.

These statements from Viramontes and Diaz make clear that the incorporation of Spanish in their texts is much more than a simple linguistic decision. Their use of CS correlates with the principles of power and solidarity mentioned above. Both authors assert their own form of «power» over the English language by including unmarked, untranslated Spanish. They also are clearly portraying feelings of solidarity in the face of the colonizing efforts of American culture. Rather than be controlled and dominated by the English language, Viramontes and Diaz use CS almost as a form of fraternity for Spanish speakers. Their comments also echo with the principle of faith, as Viramontes declares that her use of Spanish correlates with how her characters would actually speak; to be faithful to her characters, she has no choice but to use Spanish.

At the same time, both responses from Viramontes and Diaz also seem to involve a certain amount of purposeful alienation of the monolingual reader, as explained by Torres. Viramontes seems to almost mock the monolingual reader who feels «purposefully excluded», to whom she retorts flippantly, «Well, I'm sorry». Eugenia Casielles-Suarez (2013) further describes authors that employ this type of CS: «Authors who want to gratify the bilingual reader and who value moments of unintelligibility, and are consciously trying not to 'other' Spanish, as Diaz is, do not translate or mark Spanish words in any way» (Casielles-Suarez 2013, 478). This idea of «valuing unintelligibility» seems to be at play here; rather than «being sorry» for «excluding» her monolingual reader, Viramontes is instead purposefully disrupting the reading experience. This has a defamiliarizing effect, which creates new, authentic experiences for the reader by disrupting the traditional, automatic experience of reading. Defamiliarization is a strategic device, and is similar in ways to this type of purposeful, difficult code-switching taking place in these texts by Viramontes and Diaz.

But beyond this sense of purposeful defamiliarization, a more political action is taking place, closely related to the inherently political and conflict-centered views of translation mentioned earlier. There is a clear amount of passion and determination in Diaz's response to the question about his use of Spanish, as his motivations come from his own experiences with the colonizing effects of language. Diaz further explains his purpose: «And by forcing Spanish back onto English, forcing it to deal with the language it tried to exterminate in me, I've tried to represent a mirror-image of that violence on the page. Call it my revenge on English» (2000, 904). This takes CS to a new level, past a sense of «purposeful unintelligibility» or defamiliarization; Casielles-Suarez refers to Diaz's usage as «radical code-switching.» She describes Diaz's text as «more interested in flouting the rules in order to create powerful, disjunctive, linguistic hybrids», a process that involves a sense of «linguistic violence» (2013, 482). This sense of violence and «revenge», to use Diaz's term, creates further implications for this type of CS.

To combat the violence he experienced as a colonized Spanish-speaking youth, Diaz «forces Spanish onto English» in a sort of vengeful linguistic maneuver. But what

effect does this linguistic revenge have on the reader of Diaz's text? How exactly is a monolingual reader—one that only speaks English—supposed to handle these sections of unmarked and non-translated Spanish text? Torres proposes that in these situations, «Sometimes [readers] must resort to a dictionary» (2007, 83). Does this mean that these authors expect readers to have a Spanish/English dictionary handy at all times while reading these texts? This would undoubtedly be a defamiliarizing reading experience: flipping back-and-forth between *Under the Feet of Jesus* and a Spanish/English dictionary, looking up words and trying not to lose the page. In other cases, according to Torres, «no reference book will help» (83). As she says later, «These texts, which cannot be translated into either Spanish or English without losing the essence of the intercultural message, are not easily decipherable by monolinguals» (90). This creates even further problems for the reader of these CS texts, and raises the question about whether or not these authors intend for these words and passages to be translated or understood by their monolingual readers, or if non-translation is precisely the point (similar to the scene from *The Godfather* which purposefully withholds subtitles). To a certain degree, this type of non-translation fosters a reading experience of exclusion-similar to the exclusion felt by monolingual Spanish speakers confronted with English language texts. This is at the heart of what Diaz says above in terms of his linguistic «revenge», and the narrative choice to code-switch in this way is a direct catalyst for this thematic emphasis. Are monolingual readers left out of the conversation on purpose, relegated to the margins like McCluskey in *The Godfather*?

Within this specific point of discussion concerning the interpretation—or translation—of these CS texts is a crossroads between studies by scholars like Ch'ien, Torres, and Casielles-Suarez, and those conducted within the field of narrative theory. Occasions of CS in these narrative texts raise theoretically important questions about the role and function of the reader; specifically, in these instances of unmarked, non-translated, bilingual narrative texts, it seems as if the role of translator is relegated to the reader. These CS texts create a unique situation of reader-as-translator, which similarly brings into question the reliability of the reader in terms of his or her ability to perform this role, variations among reader-translators, and implications these reader-translations have on textual meaning.

4. READING, TRANSLATING, AND NARRATING

In «Narrative, Being, and the Dialogic Novel: The Problem of Discourse and Language in Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing*» (2012), Alan Noble presents a fascinating analysis of McCarthy's use of bilingualism and multiple voices in relation to Bakhtin's treatises on «dialogic and polyphonic narratives» (Noble 2012, 237). Noble focuses on the passages of *The Crossing* that display the prophetic, «vatic» voice that

is often noted in many of McCarthy's texts, most notably *Blood Meridian* (1985). While *The Crossing* contains many examples, all of these vatic speeches are rendered in a similar voice; for Noble, this is the voice of the narrator (238). Noble describes the text as an example of «heteroglossia» (239), noting the constant translating being done by the narrator: «Sometimes from Spanish to English, other times simply from their voice to his» (238). Yet, the problem –or at least the crux of Noble's argument– results from the fact that the narrator's role as translator actually works to destroy this sense of heteroglossia:

In *The Crossing*, McCarthy presents a heteroglot and dialogic world in that there are many dialects, social languages, and national languages that he artistically renders, yet in the very passages which are most dialogic –those passages which define the polyphonic aspects of the text– the language of the characters are translated into the voice of the narrator, thereby losing their distinctive and autonomous voices (240).

The polyphonic nature of the text is forfeited for the single voice, creating a «privileged, or monologic, voice» (240) for the narrator. Using specific examples from the novel, Noble identifies what he sees as differences in tone/voice depending on whether the character or narrator is translating, asserting that character voices are overtaken by the narrator's and «therefore a distinctly different worldview» (243). Noble sees this as a problem in terms of the polyphonic nature of the text, and he sees at work a system of narrator domination of voices. Noble sees a sort of «double-voicing» going on in passages like this, which does allow for character voice to be heard, but only through the mediation of the narrator.

Noble's analysis is yet another example of views of translation that involve forces of domination and appropriation. Thinking in particular about Noble's reading of the «dominating» effects of the narrator-as-translator in *The Crossing*, what implications does this have for readers of these non-translated bilingual texts? Similarly, in relation to Diaz, Ch'ien writes, «The concept of translation is crafted by a dominant culture; in practice, translation is erasure» (2004, 209). If this is the case, how is a monolingual English reader of a text such as *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* or *Under the Feet of Jesus* supposed to approach the various instances of non-translated Spanish? If translation is «erasure» and is a process closely linked with hegemony, does this necessarily mean that a reader is a participant in this domination if he or she attempts to translate? Furthermore, if translation is attempted by the reader-turned-translator, how exactly is he or she supposed to go about it? Is there a «correct» translation of the text that is «better» than other translations? Is one reader-turned-translator more reliable than the other?

Thinking back to the interviews with both Viramontes and Diaz, while they stop short of saying they do not want their monolingual English readers translating the Spanish

spoken by their characters, their focus is clearly far removed from whether or not this happens. Instead, it is directed at topics of sincerity to characters and representing the reality of the multilingualism in their characters' lives and in the social climate of the United States. Viramontes and Diaz are intent on giving appropriate agency to the Spanish language—an agency that works against the forces of linguistic colonialism responsible for the questions about their use of Spanish in the first place.

At the same time, it seems inaccurate to assume that monolingual English readers will not—or assert that they should not—attempt to perform some form of translation. If anything, the need for translation implies participation with and enjoyment of the text itself. Callahan proposes that instances of CS serve as a «cue to listeners to make conversational inferences» (2004, 17). An enhanced sense of engagement is, presumably, a positive outcome—something that most authors would encourage. If a monolingual reader was to simply pass over the bilingual passages in these texts without attempting any degree of translation, this lack of effort would seem to involve a lack of interest, something for which these authors most certainly do not hope. Therefore, the question now turns to how exactly the reader-turned-translator is supposed to go about his or her task, and in what ways this unique role impacts the interpretation of these texts.

There is a need for translation in these texts for many reasons, not least of which is comprehension and textual cohesion. Within his analysis of McCarthy's dominant narrator voice, Noble himself is reliant upon translations of *The Crossing*. After including a lengthy quote from Don Arnulfo in the original Spanish, Noble includes a bracketed English translation with a footnote. According to the note, «All translations provided are from Lt. Jim Campbell's 'A Translation of Spanish Passages in The Crossing'» (2012, 256); this translation is located on the website of the Cormac McCarthy Society. As evidenced in the various studies mentioned earlier, translation is anything but an exact science, and the role of the translator is more than simply transcribing between languages. With this in mind, Noble's reliance on Lt. Campbell's translations adds yet another level to the analysis of McCarthy's bilingualism. Noble's analysis functions on a reading of the manner in which the narrator's voice—through the act of translation—demolishes the polyphonic nature of the text and creates a unitary, «vatic» tone. Can the same be said for the act of translation being performed by Lt. Campbell? Is it not possible that Campbell's fifteen pages of translations of the Spanish words in *The Crossing* enact a similar form of voice unification? Lt. Campbell provides no information about how he went about making these translations. He does not indicate whether or not he is a native speaker of Spanish translating based on his own knowledge of the language; there are no notes about dictionaries used or tools of translation; in fact, there are no notes of any kind in the document beyond the translations themselves.

By no means am I intending to criticize the work of Lt. Campbell in his translation of McCarthy's text, nor am I condemning any other attempts made by scholars or

translators to create similar «language guides» to assist readers of bilingual texts. Instead, my point is that if we take the seminal points of discussion in translation studies mentioned above –about what translation is and what it is not– then we must also consider the implications these «language guides» have in readers’ attempts to access these bilingual texts. I have no reason to doubt Lt. Campbell’s translations as being anything other than direct translations of McCarthy’s text; but, as has been discussed, there is more to translation than the words on the page. Noble uses Lt. Campbell’s translations to form his argument, and therefore it seems as if the translations are reliable in this sense. But without this sort of reliable «guide», the reader is left with the responsibility to perform –or resist performing– similarly reliable translations of the texts.

Take the following two examples from Viramontes (1996) and Diaz’s most recent collection, *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012). First, Viramontes:

The sideboards of the truck clacked like broken dishes and the noise made him start:

- ¡Gumecindo!
- ¿Qué traes?
- I’m not feeling well.
- ‘Mano, the bump on your head looks bad. (81-2)

Here’s a similar excerpt from «Otravida, Otravez», a story from Diaz’s collection:

They day we met he look at me critically. Which pueblo are you from?
Moca.

Mata dictador, he said, and then a little while later he asked me which team I supported.
Águilas, I told him, not really caring.

Licey, he boomed. The only real team on the Island. (63)

Both of these examples contain mostly English dialogue, with specific instances of Spanish. These passages exemplify the moment in which the monolingual English reader is confronted with a decision regarding translation—a decision that essentially places him or her at the nexus of the theoretical and cultural implications discussed above.

Cutter briefly touches on this idea of reader-turned-translator: «But some of these writers... call on notions of translation that show characters speaking two (or more) languages at once or that force the reader to become a translator. This form of radical bilingualism dismantles the line between the translator and the reader, between the dominant language and the ‘disempowered’ one(s)» (2005, 25). This idea of forcing the reader to become a translator is exactly what I see at play in texts like those by Viramontes, Diaz, and McCarthy. And, as Cutter says, this bilingualism deconstructs traditional lines between the reader and the translator, creating a hybrid reader-as-translator. Yet I see

this line-blurring going a step further. As mentioned above, the roles of translator and narrator are corollary in specific ways, and I go so far as to blend the two. Therefore, if the reader becomes the translator in these bilingual texts, I contend that he or she also becomes –to a certain extent– the narrator.

For instance, take the following brief passage from McCarthy's *Cities on the Plain*, the third book of McCarthy's Border Trilogy:

The old woman came down the hall at a tottering run crying out. He caught her as she went past and pulled her around. She threw up her hands and closed her good eye. Aiee, she cried. Aiee. He gripped her wrists and shook her. *Dónde está mi compañero?* He said.

Aiee, she cried. She tried to pull away to go to the pimp lying in the floor.

Dígame. *Dónde está mi cuate?*

No sé. No sé. Por Dios, no sé nada.

Dónde está la muchacha? Magdalena? Dónde está Magdalena?

Jesús María y José ten compasión no está. No está.

Dónde está Eduardo?

No está. No está.

Aint a damn soul está, is there? (238)

This passage comes at a very important moment in the novel in which Billy has returned to Mexico in search of his buddy John Grady. I am a mostly-monolingual English reader with a working knowledge of Spanish, though my Spanish skills do not qualify me as a fluent speaker by any means. Therefore, when I read this passage I use this knowledge to perform a translation. For example, I know that when Billy says, «*Dónde está mi compañero?*» he's asking where John Grady is; and I know that the woman responds that she does not know where John Grady, Magdalena, or Eduardo are. At the same time, I am not *exactly* sure what every word means, and I do not recognize the phrase «*Jesús María y José ten compasión*», though in my first reading, I assume it is an idiomatic expression. I would argue that my reading of the passage will undoubtedly be different than other readings.

Turning to the «language guide» to *Cities on the Plain*, I find that Lt. Campbell translates the «*Dónde está mi compañero?*» question as «Where is my friend/colleague?» This is by no means vastly different from my own reading, but I definitely would not have associated the word «colleague» in my reading. As far as the next phrase goes, Lt. Campbell translates it as «Jesus, Mary and Joseph have compassion. She's not here.» Seeing this, I realize that the «ten compasión» portion is not actually part of the phrase and the phrase is not an idiomatic expression at all. This is an example that shows how differences between translations undoubtedly exist and can involve rather important variations in textual interpretations.

While the above example is rather insubstantial in terms of plot, there are more consequential moments of CS. The following passage is during one of the final scenes between John Grady and Magdalena:

She held his hands more tightly. Her dark eyes studied him. He told her that there was nothing to fear. He said that Ramón was their friend and that the papers were arranged and that no harm would come to her.

Él te recogerá a las siete por la mañana. Tienes que estar allí en punto.

Estaré allí.

Quédate adentro hasta que él llegue.

Sí, sí.

No les digas nada a nadie.

No. Nadie.

No puedes traer nada contigo.

Nada?

Nada.

Tengo miedo, she said.

He held her. Dont be afraid, he said (205-6).

This exchange takes place at a rather climactic moment and is one of the last between John Grady and his lover before she is murdered. The final line in English offers context to the preceding dialogue, but the monolingual English reader is left wondering what exactly Magdalena is afraid of. What is John Grady telling her in these few lines? What concern is she expressing? I (the reader) know that she is afraid (because of the last line), but I am not sure if her fear is increasing because of what he is telling her in Spanish or if those lines are all meant to comfort her. In long exchanges such as this, I have a decision to make: Do I use the context to guess at what is being said? Do I pause to consult a translation? Do I use an online tool or dictionary to translate the passage myself? Or do I simply skip over the Spanish?

As a reader of these passages, I simultaneously find myself becoming a translator. It is up to me how (or if) I want to read/translate words like «compañero» or a phrase such as «quédate adentro hasta que él llegue», and I have the ability to dictate the text in ways that are unavailable in strictly English narratives. In this sense, I also become the narrator of the text. When I read long passages of Spanish –of which there are many in the Border Trilogy– I am allowed to make decisions about whether or not I am going to translate every word, or simply look for the gist of the passages. At the same time, I also am making decisions about the voices of the characters, and in these instances there are times in which the character voices are forfeited for my own voice as I attempt to make these translations. In this regard, there are instances of disruption and defamiliarization in my reading–there are moments in which my automatic reading

process is disrupted as I am forced to perform these roles. But this defamiliarized reading is simultaneously an experience with the political and cultural implications of translation in general. As Cutter says, «Translation must therefore be seen as a negotiation between cultures—a back-and-forth movement between source culture and target culture» (2005, 17). The nontranslated examples of CS included above force the reader to confront this process of cultural negotiation, but they also enable a new form of reader agency. In *The Ear of the Other* (1985), Jacques Derrida asserts: «Translation is writing; that is, it is not translation only in the sense of transcription. It is a productive writing called forth by the original text» (qtd. in Cutter 2005, 22). These examples of CS offer readers the chance to participate in the telling of these stories; Derrida equates translation with writing, and in these CS examples, I equate the process of translating with narrating.

Conversely, I do not necessarily have the same reading experiences of texts such as *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, or Diaz's other texts like *Drown* (1996) and *This is How You Lose Her*. I can vividly recall many instances in my readings of these texts in which I simply glossed over the Spanish language portions. This is perhaps partly due to the pacing of Diaz's text; unlike McCarthy, Diaz seems to create a much more hybridized «Spanglish» in his texts (something Casielles-Suarez's notes extensively) involving fast-paced dialogue and reading. In examples such as, «I mean it, these girls can't be no more than sixteen, look puro ingenio to me» (Diaz 2012, 15), Spanish words are interspersed so commonly and so quickly that I find myself overlooking them with an expectation that I can comprehend the sentence without translating. Perhaps this is dangerous, and maybe this assumption of comprehension-without-translation is setting myself (the reader) up for a loss of meaning. But, judging by Diaz's own words above, perhaps this loss of meaning is part of what Diaz intends for me. He makes explicit his purpose of «revenge» on the English language, and his desire to create a similar sense of alienation and «othering» for his readers as those he dealt with in his experiences with English. Ch'ien declares, «Diaz eschews the position of interpreter or translator for that of producer of diverse linguistic registers» (2004, 203). This forfeiture of interpretation and translation seems to carry over to the readerly experience: if Diaz does not seek to be the translator, then perhaps the reader should do the same. At the same time, Diaz's denial of the translator role, as described by Ch'ien, also opens up the opportunity for the reader to assume it.

The reading experiences afforded by these code-switching texts involve similar effects as the scene from *The Godfather* mentioned earlier. Michael and Solozzo exemplify the bilingual characters and authors of these texts, able to maneuver fluidly between two languages. This ease of shift between languages is also perhaps indicative of the reading experiences of bilingual individuals reading these CS narratives. In this regard, the idea of optimization stands strong; the shifting between the two languages correlates with the linguistic realities of numerous cultural contexts, and

the simultaneous presences of English and Spanish is, indeed, the optimal output, just as Solozzo's decision to speak in Italian is the most appropriate choice. But this idea of optimization breaks down when considering a monolingual reader. Rather than fully grasping the meaning of the words being said, monolingual readers are instead confronted by linguistic dissonance. This dissonance implies that decisions must be made on behalf of the reader—decisions that necessarily involve serious implications. Nevertheless, the presence of unmarked, non-translated Spanish in each of these texts produce situations in which traditional reader roles are challenged and expanded upon, resulting in readers acting as translators and narrators. Ultimately, I propose that readers-as-narrators perform a unique type of textual translation.

I acknowledge that all acts of reading are simultaneously acts of a certain type of translation, and the presence of multiple languages is not a prerequisite for readers to have to make interpretive decisions. Cutter proposes, «We are all, always, on some level caught in the process of translation. Language is not a perfect medium, and it is not transparent» (2005, 10). Similar to language in general, variations in reader interpretations exist in all texts, whether they code-switch or not. Parker affirms that mediation is always part of the process of translation, regardless of the form it takes, and that «remediation» is at work in the confrontation between reader and untranslated prose in the texts mentioned above (2003, 97). Parker's analysis affirms the implicit nature of mediation at work in all texts—and their invitations for interpretation. With this in mind, the specific instances of bilingual CS mentioned above provide obvious exemplifications of the manner in which translation—whether of language or of meaning—plays a role in the act of reading.

5. CONCLUSION

Readers—both mono- and bilingual—are given unique power in these texts: power that supersedes the normal amount of agency a reader has in terms of textual meaning. All texts afford readers the opportunity to participate in interpretation, but I argue that these CS English texts with instances of unmarked, untranslated Spanish take this power a step further. Readers are given the opportunity to fulfill several roles, including translator and narrator; in serving these roles, readers are forced to deal with a constant «negotiation and renegotiation» (Cutter 2005, 6) of language and meaning. As translator, the reader has the power to either «strengthen or undermine» aspects of the narrative (Baker 2006, 105). And as narrator, the reader must balance between the inevitable «double-voicing» (Noble 2012, 245-50) that takes place when he or she translates. In *Code-Switching*, Gardner-Chloros claims that most CS speakers display a fundamental disconnect in their understanding of the extent to which they use CS, revealing that they are usually unaware of the extent to which they employ CS and often

ignorant of the role it plays in their linguistic choices. Conversely, these authors are wholly devoid of this sense of disconnect and ignorance; they know exactly how much they code-switch in their texts, and they do so in purposeful, intentional ways.

I agree with Ch'ien that these literary, linguistic elements parallel the nature of American society, but I feel that there is much more to these code-switching texts than simple multiculturalism. The unmarked, untranslated aspects of these novels change the nature of the reader position, involving reader potentialities that, in my estimation, other texts do not. While the extent to which these potentialities materialize in each reading experience is a matter of a case-by-case basis, the prospective experiences and implications of these texts are particularly insightful. Parker asserts, «The task of transcribers and translators is not to discover. Rather, like the task of storytellers, it is to narrate and to interpret» (2003, 100). These code-switching texts present opportunities for storytelling, narrating, and interpreting directly to the reader in tangible, idiosyncratic ways. But whereas Parker claims that discovery is not part of the process for traditional forms of translation, I contend that these code-switching texts, and the multiple roles they offer readers, indeed provide new forms of textual discovery. They are productive (to echo Derrida's description of translation) opportunities for readers to interact with and participate in the cultural and political conversations prompted in these texts. Thus, while untranslated CS in fictional texts might be frustrating or annoying for monolingual readers, I view these instances as providing a unique form of reader agency in the narrating of the experiences of these characters and stories.

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