

8-2015

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Inadequate Translations: Spanish/English Discrepancies in the Translated Sonnets of Garcilaso de la Vega

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Honors

By

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Introduction

The intimate relationship one develops with his native language is an experience which cannot be replicated through any amount of education. Diction, vocabulary, intonation and the connotations which accompany the many facets of language all develop along with us as we progress through life's experiences. Because of this deeply ingrained personal understanding, each individual's perspective towards a work of art, namely poetry, is completely unique to his or her experiences with the language in which it is written. Therefore, translating results in a rewriting of a text into a different set of values, traditions, cultures, and historical moments (Venuti 30). No amount of diligent translation can make a poem inhabit the same sentiment and effect in any language other than the one it was originally written in.

In her collection of essays, *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*, Suzanne Jill Levine wastes no time presenting the conundrum faced by the majority of translators. In the introduction she expresses that “Translators, upon escaping the mother tongue in order to serve another language, experience exile in their own language, and share with exiles an expanded cultural context that gives them a privileged view of their original language’s limitations.” Being bilingual thus allows translators to benefit from the linguistic advantages of expression available through two languages. On the other hand, they also are able to realize the limitations experienced by monolingual individuals who can never fully understand the connotations present in a language in which they are not fluent. Translators exist in an attempt to bridge the linguistic intercultural gap between individuals, but find themselves simply displacing an original meaning onto other words (Levine 14).

In my thesis, I will explore the restraints and advantages afforded to translation through several sonnets written by Spanish poet Garcilaso de la Vega, specifically I, X, XII, and XXIII. Although these sonnets were originally written in Spanish, I will discuss the discrepancies between several English adaptations of these poems performed by other translators as well as my own translations. This analysis serves to explain the limitations and creative potential faced by translators when attempting to translate poetry. In doing so, I will demonstrate that the encounter a reader experiences with a work of art cannot be replicated entirely in another language through any amount of translation. That specific experience is intricately linked to the original expression of the work and can only be modified into another individual's perspective.

Background on Garcilaso de la Vega

Garcilaso de la Vega was born in Toledo, Spain in 1503 into an aristocratic family. He had family members who were distinguished military figures as well as members who had been prominent in Spanish letters and politics for several centuries. Garcilaso distinguished himself as a soldier at an early age while also becoming acquainted with the poet Juan Boscán Almagávar, He is oftentimes referred to as being a man of "letters and arms" due to his association with both literary and military affairs throughout his lifetime. His relationship with Juan Boscán attracted Garcilaso to a closer study of Italian Renaissance poets such as Petrarch.

While Boscán transformed the Petrarchan Italian meters into Spanish verse, Garcilaso utilized his techniques to achieve the most out of the sonnet form; using combinations of 7- and 11- syllable lines while still maintaining the 14-line form of the Petrarchan sonnet (Sabor de Cortázar 7). As a revolutionary poet he explored a new appreciation of expression of thought and emotion, which appears frequently through a common theme of romantic love in many of his

works. He redefines Petrarchism as a genre which runs counter to ideological structures by placing an emphasis on the pervasiveness of love and suffering (*After Tunis* 21). Similarly to how Garcilaso adapted the Italian, Petrarchan sonnet into Spanish, I will attempt to adapt several of Garcilaso's Spanish works into English. Garcilaso's body of work - 38 sonnets, 5 *canciones*, 3 eclogues, 2 elegies, 1 epistle, and 8 coplas (songs) - was published in 1543 along with that of Boscán. These works were highly regarded as classics and largely determined the course of lyric poetry throughout the Golden Age in Spain (Sabor de Cortázar 8).

Naturally, each individual will experience different works of art which tend to strike a chord with them more than others. Art forms such as music, film, painting, and many more all achieve a specific experience in each individual who encounters it. Even so, certain works of art reach more mainstream popularity than others. Poetry is no exception to this phenomenon. Garcilaso de la Vega's numerous sonnets, while all holding their own significance and beauty, all possess different levels of popularity among the masses. In general, several of his sonnets have achieved a more widespread impact than others, namely sonnets I, X, and XXIII. In addition to addressing several translations of these sonnets, I will also discuss my own affinity for one of Garcilaso's less famous works, Sonnet XII. By doing so, I will articulate the wide variety of poetic adaptations from one translator to the next; showing that translation is subjected to the perspective of each individual translator. This further displays my argument that the original expression of a poem cannot be replicated completely into another language.

Personal Anecdote

After studying Spanish for several years throughout middle and high school, I had acquired a decent vocabulary and understanding of the language. I had learned how to express verb tenses, pronouns, indirect and direct object pronouns, the subjunctive, and numerous other linguistic technicalities. I could communicate fairly well in my second language and convey my thoughts on a basic level. Over time I began to realize that I was learning Spanish in relation to my native language, English, and was not viewing it as holding its own, specific place in my mind. When I wanted to express a thought in Spanish, I would think of what I wanted to say in English, and then translate the English words into Spanish as efficiently as possible. The Spanish words which emerged were simply a place-holder for the English thoughts I had envisioned in my brain. I imagine that the majority of learners of a secondary language attempt to acquire the new language in this way. The only way to incorporate and understand how an unfamiliar language functions is to directly compare its relationship to a native language which you already feel comfortable with.

Up until my second year of collegiate education, I believed that I could acquire fluency in Spanish by adapting a new set of vocabulary in relation to the one I had been learning my entire life, English. Not until I was immersed in an upper-level undergraduate course on the study of Spanish literature did I realize that viewing my relationship with Spanish in accordance with the one I had with English would begin to fall short. Listening to and reading the intricate intonation, rhymes, and emotions expressed in several of Garcilaso de la Vega's sonnets began to leave me speechless; in English that is. I attempted to analyze the sonnets by translating them into my more familiar language, but quickly realized that the two versions of Garcilaso's works were not comparable. English words and phrases were not equivalent to the connotations and sounds

associated with Garcilaso's carefully chosen Spanish ones. Completely converting the original significance of some of my favorite Spanish poems into English became impossible. As a translator, "I was eternally a guest in another language; something was always missing when I tried to convey the sonnets in English" (Levine 1). This personal revelation increased my affinity for my second language and allowed me to develop a deeper relationship with it. Spanish held its own place in my intellect and no longer solely existed in comparison to my native language and consequently became an inspiration to further explore the many facets of poetic translation.

Theoretical Framework

In order to establish a common ground on the specific definitions applied to frequently used terms throughout my analysis, I will individually address what is being referred to by each term. Every author or critic possesses his or her own view of certain words and phrases, which develops as a result of various personal experiences or preferences. These differences in opinion will be discussed in comparison to variations in translations as well in an upcoming section.

One of the most prominent terms used throughout my analysis is translation. Translation encompasses the rendering of something into another language or into one's own from another language (Kelly and Zetsche 43). For the purpose of my analysis, translation of poetry into poetry entails preserving the rhyme, figurative language, and the general tone of the original. Going hand in hand with translation is the frequently used term in any study of an art form, interpretation. Interpretation represents the explanation of a meaning of another's artistic or creative work; an elucidation. Interpretation looks for meanings while paying attention to context, innuendo, and body language (Kelly and Zetsche 59). The meaning that a reader feels when he or she reads a work of art can be made explicit when the reader analyzes it. While

interpretation relies on some degree of imagination, certain logic is necessary to connect the concrete with the abstract (Kelly and Zetzsche 43).

Along similar lines as translation and interpretation is the term adaptation. For the purpose of my analysis I have adopted Linda Hutcheon's definition of adaptation from her literary study, *A Theory of Adaptation*. Hutcheon delimitates a liberal definition to adaptation as product and process, where adaptation is "an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art" (170). This means that a product adaptation is "an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works," and as a process it is both "a creative and interpretative act and an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (170). Hutcheon presents the use of "adaptation as an unbiased comparative analysis of text-based sources" in a similar manner as I will explore through various adaptations of Garcilaso's sonnets (vii). While she concentrates on commonalities present in various adaptations present in media, Hutcheon's same theory can be applied to literature as well.

When approaching a work of art as a whole, there are several aspects which play a large role in the overall effect that a reader experiences through it. For clarity, several of these terms will be defined as they will be used throughout future analyses. For example, style represents the way in which an author "chooses words, arranges them in sentences or in lines of dialogue or verse, and develops ideas and actions with description, imagery, and other literary techniques" (DiYanni). Style encompasses the majority of the linguistic choices an author makes with respect to his or her work of art. The syntax, the grammatical order of words in a sentence or line of verse and the organization of words and phrases of prose, verse, and dialogue are all captured in the stylistic decisions of the author. Diction is included in this category as well. Diction refers to the selection of words in a literary work. A work's diction can be one of its centrally important

literary elements, as writers use words to convey action, emotions, attitudes, and much more. Either intentionally or not, a work of literature tends to convey a specific tone throughout the work. The tone encapsulates the implied attitude of a writer toward the subject and characters of a work, which can influence the way in which it is received by the reader. All of these aspects of style oftentimes contribute to a central theme in the literary work. A theme, the idea of a literary work abstracted from its details of language, character, and action, frequently is cast in the form of a generalization about a specific topic present in the work (DiYanni).

Specifically for the translation and interpretation of Garcilaso de la Vega's sonnets which captured my attention, there are several linguistic terms which are necessary to clarify. Figurative language represents a commonly used form of language in which writers and speakers alike convey something other than the literal meaning of their words. Figurative language appears in many forms including, but not at all limited to, metaphors, intonation, and even sarcasm. Garcilaso enriches his sonnets by incorporating various modes of figurative language throughout his works, which will be discussed in detail later in my analysis. More based in the structure of Garcilaso's sonnets, a stanza is a division or unit of a poem that is repeated in the same form-either with similar or identical patterns of rhyme and meter, or with variation from one stanza to another. In addition, meter captures the measured pattern of rhythmic accents in a poem. Similarly to these stylistic choices, rhyme incorporates the matching of final vowel or consonant sounds in two or more words. Structured patterns in elements such as stanza, meter, line length, and rhyme scheme of a poem can lead to a type of form or structure in poetry characterized by regularity and consistency which is referred to as closed form (DiYanni).

A basic understanding of the closed form leads to a discussion of a few specific examples of frequently used poetic forms which have been adapted for centuries. Renaissance poetics

encompasses an artistic period in 16th century Europe which was popularized by “forms such as the lyric, the elegy, the tragedy, and the pastoral” (Rahn). The chief aim of the Renaissance period was to encapsulate beauty, emotion, and truth in words. One of the most widely respected and studied poetic forms emerged during this period in England through William Shakespeare. The Shakespearean sonnet form, also known as the English sonnet, is a fourteen line poem which consists of three quatrains which each have alternating rhymes (*abab, cdcd, efef*) and concludes with a couplet (*gg*). The Shakespearean sonnet has been considered to possess the most flexible and simplest pattern of all sonnets, although the previously described form suggests otherwise.

The Petrarchan sonnet, also referred to as the Italian sonnet, is a poem which contains 14 lines in total. The beginning of the poem consists of two quartets with the rhyme scheme of *ABBACDDC*. The last two triplets of the poem are more flexible in form and can have a variety of different rhyme schemes with two or three rhymes. The adoption of Petrarchism as a poetic practice by poets such as Garcilaso de la Vega and Juan Boscán constitutes a way of bridging the cultural gap with Italy and introducing revolutionary themes in literature to Spain (*After Tunis* 26). These influential Golden Age Spanish poets discovered Italian poetry and initiated its rebirth into another culture and language during the 16th century (*After Tunis* 17). For Garcilaso, Petrarchism meant carrying over themes and images such as unrequited love and suffering into the Spanish literary world while using poetry as a vehicle for criticizing the ideological structures of empire (*After Tunis* 18). Not only was Garcilaso revolutionary in introducing a new poetic form to the Spanish-speaking community, his literary explorations of emotions throughout his sonnets captured the attention of countless individuals throughout Europe.

Aspects of Translation

For formal, written works such as car manuals, medical documents, or laboratory reports, the aesthetically pleasing characteristics of the diction do not significantly play a role in their translation. The most important aspects of the work are possessed in the general meaning of what the document is attempting to convey. As long as the overall content of the original work is successfully carried over into the translated work, then the translator has adequately performed his duty. This type of translation becomes especially important for simultaneous translators in a fast paced setting such as the doctor's office or courtroom. Formal interpreters in these settings rely on semantic correspondence as well as thematic interpretation (Venuti 31). The appropriate codes and discourse of the content are linked to a very specific genre and social context which the interpreter must be intimately aware of. These time-sensitive environments require an almost instantaneous verbal conversion from one language to another. Naturally, syntax and figurative language become insignificant in these cases because they do not play an important role in the original expression of those ideas. Oftentimes, phrases will simply be omitted from the conversation due to time constraints or because they are deemed unnecessary by the translator. This type of translator has the opportunity to alter syntax of the content, influence meaning through verbal tones and body language, and engage in conversation with the orator in order to gain clarification of what is being expressed.

The translator of literary works of art is not afforded with such leisure when approaching an endeavor which must be conveyed in another language. Transferring a specific work of art, such as a poem, to another language presents different requirements and constraints on the translator. Possessing a basic understanding of the complexity of poetic translation allows for a greater appreciation of the precision required to completely reconfigure a poem from one language into

another. Numerous details of form, context, innuendo, rhyme, and countless other subtleties must be considered by the translator when forming the altered compilation of the poem. Because of the necessary wealth of knowledge utilized in translation, some critics have expressed the sentiment that “perhaps the translator’s craft is more subtle, more civilized than the writer’s: the translator obviously comes after the writer. Translation is a more advanced stage” (Levine 1). While this statement does not necessarily condone one skill set, the writer’s, as being better than the others, the translator’s, it does afford more credit to the translator than many previous critics. Levine recognizes that a poetic translator requires an intimate relationship with two distinct languages and their respective cultures as well as a rooted understanding of poetry in general. The translator must be disciplined while remaining as faithful as possible to the poetic author in order to convey the original meaning of a work of art into a secondary language.

Because of this some critics believe that “translation can be even more challenging than creative writing due to the lack of flexibility afforded to translation because it must remain faithful to the original text” (Kelly and Zetzsche 93). A translator becomes a linguistic slave whose every move is dictated by the subtleties of writing chosen specifically by another individual. The creative writer has the ability to freely express whatever emotions emerge from his or her imagination without being constrained by the works of others. Javier Lorenzo, author of “Traducción, autoría e imperio: el caso de los prólogos al libro de *El Cortesano*”, believes that this causes the translator to confess an inferiority and disadvantage with respect to the translated text (1043). Lorenzo expresses that the translator finds himself in a subordinate condition and his influence is much less than that of the original author (1045). The translator must eliminate his or her own linguistic preferences to better serve an audience who wishes to experience a work of art which they could not approach without the translator’s special craft and wealth of knowledge.

Being in a subordinate position does not necessarily make the translator any less skilled than the creative writer, although Lorenzo continues to disagree. He expresses that translation is “at worst, a mechanical and merely utilitarian exercise of no literary merit whatsoever” which does not require any form of artistic talent (Lorenzo 1042).

Making a work of art accessible to a wider array of individuals benefits not only the original author, but also the audience which could not enjoy the benefits of such a work previously. The translator might possess a subservient position to the creative writer and to the constraints of poetic form and diction, but he or she holds the capability to elevate the status of a work of art to a level which otherwise could not be achieved. For example, one of the most popular published works of all time in the United States, the children’s poem “Sam I Am” by Dr. Seuss, would not have been able to achieve worldwide success without translation (Kelly and Zetsche 101).

While it becomes close to impossible to entirely adapt every single succinct, peculiar, and unique poetic rhyme of “Sam I Am” into the completely new set of Spanish linguistic guidelines, that is exactly the type of challenge which translation embraces. The invented words and phrases of Dr. Seuss are characteristics which made his works so popular, and many scholars have delved into the study of whether or not these works are even translatable. Translation did not undermine the creative talent of Dr. Seuss, but instead spread the joy of his artistic creations to a much broader, Spanish speaking audience with a children’s poem entitled “Juan Ramón” (Kelly and Zetsche 102).

In a similar instance, one of the most famous Spanish tongue twisters of all time, “Tres tristes tigres”, attempted to reach the English world when translated into “Three Trapped Tigers” (Levine viii). In this case, the translator decided to remain faithful to the intricate alliteration of the title and multiple lines of the poem, and as a result, altered the direct meaning of it.

Alliteration is an important musical device and mnemonic aid, as well as a sensual device which sets the tone for the rest of the poem (Levine 52). *Tristes*, which translates to sad, was substituted for the adjective “trapped”. Obviously sad and trapped do not signify the same state that the tigers from the poem find themselves in. This linguistic choice displays that the translator does possess some degree of freedom to make preferential decisions when transferring a literary work from one language to another. While the translator’s options are still limited, he or she is not constrained to specific terms, poetic forms, or similar aspects of the original work. In translation, the original meaning must be displaced onto other words in another language, and these supplementary meanings unavoidably divert the original statement (Levine 14). Therefore the translator is forced to choose whether to remain faithful to the sound or the meaning, resulting in an alteration of the original. The process of altering a work of art leads to the enrichment of its linguistic power as well when it transforms into a construct which more individuals can understand.

Many of these liberties in translation disappear when approaching the translation of a poetic literary work of art. Constraints emerge which limit the translator’s freedom to express the work of art in another language. While there may be more constraints with poetry, these limitations allow for the translator to become more intimately integrated with the original work. Translation is the closest possible reading of a text and because poetry itself is about the impossible, some believe that “translation of poetry is impossible” (Kelly and Zetsche 107). Every aspect of figurative language, syntax etc. must be meticulously analyzed to ascertain its relationship to other words and the role that it plays in the poem as a whole. The minute details of a poem are what make them so influential and beautiful to encounter. Letting oneself completely emerge in a work of art allows the reader the ability to experience emotions expressed by the author which

can speak in a multitude of ways. The task then appears for the translator to attempt to express these same emotions in another language. Because there are so many factors which play a role in the effect that a poem has on the reader, the difficulty of successfully translating poetry can become daunting.

Translations of Sonnets

When a reader achieves the ability to understand the intricate subtleties of poetry, then the difficulty of adequately expressing the same message in another language becomes more apparent. From the rhyme scheme, to the sonnet form, to the imagery and beyond; translation of poetry is no easy feat. Even just a basic comprehension of the complexity of a poetic form can give the reader an appreciation of the diligent thought placed upon every syllable of this work of art. Aforementioned were only a handful of the various literary devices which frequently are incorporated into poetry, and specifically into the sonnets of Garcilaso de la Vega. The poet independently chooses which literary devices to include, which poetic form to capture, which emotions to convey, and numerous other facets of his work of art. While the original work undoubtedly requires an immense amount of creativity and talent, the ability to successfully transform the original message into a completely different language requires another set of skills entirely. The translator oftentimes must make independent literary decisions as well when translating any sort of document. As Linda Hutcheon believes, translation, adaptation, and interpretation all occur in an interconnected relationship with one another. She refers to this concept as “a double process of interpreting and then creating something new” (Hutcheon 20). Variations in translations which accrue can frequently be attributed to the personal relationship that an individual develops with his or her native language, as well as many other factors.

Sonnet 23 has become one of the most widely recognized sonnets written by Garcilaso de la Vega. Not only has it achieved worldwide recognition, but personally it represents a significant epiphanic moment in my Spanish education. While reading Sonnet 23 in my Survey of Spanish literature course during my second year of undergraduate education, I realized the innate beauty of Spanish poetry written in its native language. No matter how much I attempted to transpose the original work into another language, all of the intimate details of the poem could not be successfully transferred. The reality of the sentiment displayed through this poem allows the reader to connect with its message on a personal level. In addition to relating to the professed opinion of the speaker, the reader also gains the ability to revel in the harmonious details of the carefully chosen words. Not only does the message become impactful, but Sonnet 23's intricate rhyme schemes, syntax, meter, etc. create an aesthetically pleasing experience for the reader. This aspect of poetry remains true even if the reader is unable to understand the language in which the original work is written. Being consistent with a common theme professed throughout many of Garcilaso's works, Sonnet 23 describes the beauty of a youthful maiden. It expresses the temporality of beauty and how the young maiden must take advantage of the present before she succumbs to her impending aging which approaches closer and closer every day. Sonnet 23 is shown below as it was intended to be experienced, in its mother tongue of Spanish.

Soneto [XXIII]

En tanto que de rosa y de d'acucena
se muestra la color en vuestro gesto,
y que vuestro mirar ardiente, honesto,
con clara luz la tempestad serena;
y en tanto que'l cabello, que'n la vena

del oro s'escogió, con buelo presto
por el hermoso cuello blanco, enhiesto,
el viento mueve, esparze y desordena:
coged de vuestra alegre primavera
el dulce fruto antes que'l tiempo airado
cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre.
Marchitará la rosa el viento elado,
todo lo mudará la edad ligera
por no hazer mudanca en su costumbre.

(Rivers 27)

Regardless of the reader's native tongue, the structure and tone of this sonnet are impeccable, so succinct, and become nearly impossible to completely translate into any other language. The way the diction flows from one line to the next, from one stanza to another, throughout its entirety is a characteristic which was created to exist only in its original linguistic form. Sonnet 23 inhabits every literary aspect which it possesses in such a specific way that interpreting the poem using a different compilation of words and phrases seems impossible. I found myself in a personal conundrum about whether a work such as this one should be translated at all. A comparable example is displayed through Italian opera performances. The Italian opera tends to lose aspects of its spectacular influence when translated into other languages. Performers, critics, audience members, etc. have reached the consensus that opera should be performed in its native language, even if many individuals cannot understand it (Kelly

and Zetzsche 174). Italian opera tends to lose merit as an art form when translated. The same case could be made for adapting Garcilaso's sonnets into an English form.

The translations which result from several readers' adaptations of Garcilaso's original work of art become subjected to various experiences, connotations, and structures of each individual reader. These vast differences in English translations of Garcilaso's Sonnet 23 become apparent through analyzing several readers' interpretations of the same work. I have translated the original poem into English, which will be compared to other translators' adaptations of the same poem.

Sonnet XXIII

While the roses and lilies
Show their color with a gesture
And while their ardent appearance, honest,
Clearly lights the serene storm
And while her hair, which finds itself
In the vein of gold, with swift beauty
Over the beautiful, white neck, erect,
The wind moves, sparse and disordered,
Take ahold of our happy spring
The sweet fruit before harvest
Covered with snow, the beautiful summit.
The elated wind will fade the rose.
Everything will move to the age of light,
For not making a move in your custom.

In line 3 of Garcilaso's original sonnet, he describes the woman's gaze as being "*ardiente, honesto*". By looking at several adaptations of these two terms, the discrepancies from one translator to the next are surprisingly vast. Laurence Tidy describes the woman's gaze as being passionate and chaste while Dia Tsung attributes the characteristics of honesty and directness to the gaze. My own interpretation happens to be a combination of these two; ardent and honest. The connotations to these two seemingly simple words lead to a multitude of linguistic choices which the translator makes when creating his or her adaptation of a work of art. A similar example of this phenomenon arises through the very next line of the sonnet. In line 4 of Sonnet 23, where Garcilaso's words created the image of a serene storm in my mind, another reader reconfigured this phrase as "inflame my heart and restrain it" (Rivers). Another translator shows more variation by interpreting the phrase as "storms grow still in the clear light of your eyes" (Tidy). A translator's personal experiences with such terms as *tempestad* and *serena* in Spanish create the variations in how they are chosen to be transformed into English.

In addition to variations in the diction chosen by a translator, he or she is also afforded the liberty to remain faithful to certain aspects of form and figurative language in the new adaptation from the original work. From my personal translation of Garcilaso's Sonnet 23, I decided to remain more faithful to the original message of the poem. My prerogative became to convey the sentiment and theme which I experienced when reading the Spanish sonnet for the first time. By comparing my adaptation to those created by other translators such as Laurence Tidy, Elias Rivers, and Dia Tsung, I realized that each translator possesses an individualistic sense of stylistic preference toward poetry. Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* supports this assumption as well when she views an adaptation as being "an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (8). For example, in his adaptations Tidy tends to remain

intimately faithful with the structure of Garcilaso's Petrarchan sonnet form. Rivers on the other hand, does not pay a considerable amount of attention to structure, but rather concentrates on conveying the original sentiment. Ideally I would have been able to express the exact sentiment which I experienced in a way which my non-Spanish speaking friends and family could understand. Sonnet 23 allowed me to realize that an individual's experience with any work of art cannot be conveyed in the exact manner in any way other than its original expression.

To continue my analysis of translation, several adaptations of Garcilaso de la Vega's Sonnet I will be explored. Written in the original Spanish form during the 16th century, Elias Rivers presents a compilation of the entirety of Garcilaso's works, and Sonnet I has been included below:

Soneto [I]

Quando me paro a contemplar mi'stado
Y a ver los passos por do m'ha traído,
Hallo, según por do anduve perdido
Que a mayor mal pudiera aver llegado;
Mas quando del camino 'sto olvidado,
A tanto mal no sé por do é venido;
Sé que me acabo, más é yo sentido
Ver acabar comigo mi cuydado.
Yo acabaré, que me entregué sin arte
A quien sabrá perderme y acabarme
Si quisiere, y aun sabrá querello;

Que pues mi voluntad puede matarme,
La suya, que no es tanto de mi parte,
Pudiendo, ¿Qué hará sino hazello?

(Rivers 3)

Continuing with a common theme in the majority of Garcilaso's works, he explores the melancholy associated with unrequited love and painful emotions. While Sonnet I undoubtedly addresses painful sentiments towards a romantic relationship, the reader is afforded the ability to interpret the meaning of the poem for himself. Similarly to the various translations of Sonnet XXIII done previously, Sonnet I also possesses a fair amount of adaptations as well. My personal translation of this work is shown below:

Sonnet I

When I stop to contemplate my state
And see the steps that have brought me here
I find, according to my lost path,
That so much misfortune has come upon me
And when the journey is forgotten
And the misfortune which is upon me now
I know I have reached the end and I regret more
seeing that my suffering has run out with me.
I will finish and run myself in naively
To one who can ruin me and destroy me
If she wish, and although I will know that I want it
Though my freedom can kill me

Hers, that is not any part of mine

Can, isn't that what it will do?

One of the most interesting discrepancies which stood out in the various adaptations of this poem which I encountered appeared in line 8. Where Garcilaso states “Ver acabar conmigo mi cuydado”, different translators have interpreted as “seeing my suffering end along with me” (Rivers) and “knowledge that my love will die with me” (Ingber). Seeing such vast variety in not only the diction used but also the meanings associated with these phrases is fascinating. One simple line of poetry has exploded into a multitude of interpretations, which serve to enrich its original meaning in various ways. Another term which struck me as carrying much connotation for this particular poem is “mal”. A simple translation of this term to English would be “bad”. Even so, Rivers translated it as misfortune, while Ingber adopted the replacement of misery. Both linguistic choices encompass an intense melancholy state of the author and contribute significantly to the overarching tone of the many adaptations of this poem.

Similar to the discussion on the stylistic preferences of the different adaptations of a work of art from Sonnet XXIII, Sonnet I also can be adapted in a variety of ways. For example, my translation does not consider meter, rhyme, or any other stylistic attributes of the original Petrarchan sonnet structure. The most pertinent aspect of the poem for me was the original sentiment expressed behind the visible words. For other scholars, that was not always the prerogative. Rivers once again shared a similar preference to remain faithful to the message of Sonnet I without giving as much consideration to poetic structure. He also contributed several parenthetical citations within his adaptation to give more clarity to the translated words. Alix Ingber's adaptation of the poem remained more stringent on conveying Garcilaso's original words in a form which was closely related to the Petrarchan sonnet form. Translation does not

set specific guidelines on which stylistic approach is more acceptable, although one could be more appropriate given a certain context.

The popularity received by Sonnet X is comparable to that of Sonnet XXIII. Garcilaso's ability to adapt the Petrarchan sonnet, originally written in Italian, into Spanish clearly emerges through the beauty of this poem. The combination of the particular structure and intimate themes and emotions conveyed through Garcilaso's original adaptation of the Petrarchan sonnet create an entity which becomes nearly impossible to translate.

Soneto [X]

¡O dulces prendas por mi mal halladas,
dulces y alegres cuando Dios quería,
juntas estáys en la memoria mía
Y con ella en mi muerte conjuradas!
¿Quién me dixera, quando las pasadas
Oras que'n tanto bien por vos me vía,
Que me aviades de ser en algún día
Con tan grave dolor representadas?
Pues en una ora junto me llevastes
Todo el bien que por términos me distes,
Llévame junto el mal que me dexastes;
Si no, sospecharé que me pusistes
En tantos bienes porque desseastes
Verme morir entre memorias tristes.

(Rivers 12)

The intricate rhyme scheme Garcilaso utilizes creates an intriguing atmosphere for the reader and engages him or her in the word play from one line to the next. Successfully adapting this same poem into English involves not only searching for equivalent terms to replace each of the Spanish ones, but also preserving the precise form of the original. Finding English terms which capture the same meaning, while also rhyming with one another and maintaining the correct meter, creates a potentially impossible task to complete. As an example, Garcilaso rhymes *pusistes*, *desseastes*, and *tristes* in the final lines of his poem. I would directly translate these terms to mean you placed, you desired, and sad. While each of these terms does possess several synonyms, it would be incredibly difficult to rhyme a synonym for each of them while also preserving the meter for each line. Therefore my translation (shown below), does not follow any specific rhyme scheme, but instead remains consistent with the message conveyed through Garcilaso's original work.

Sonnet X

Oh, sweet pledges found in my mourning,

Sweet and happy when God wished.

You are together in my memory

And within it you are conjured in my death!

Who told me, when the past hours

That brought me along so well,

Would avoid my very being some day

With such great pain that they represent?

But in one hour you brought to an end

All of the good that you gave me.
Take away all of the bad that you left me
If not, I will suspect that you gave me
Such happiness because you desired
To see me die consumed in sad memories.

As with the other sonnets which were previously analyzed, certain lines of the poem tend to stand out significantly through the different adaptations from other translators. For this particular sonnet, comparing my interpretation of line 4 to that of Alix Ingber's became especially intriguing. Ingber states "making my death your conspiracy", as compared to "and within it you are conjured in my death" from my version. Other than this statement, Ingber and I translated the rest of the same stanza in almost the exact same manner. Another example of preferential decisions in Sonnet X is in the next to last line. Where I used the phrase "such happiness", Ingber chose to use the description of "bounty's taste". Bounty's taste holds other connotations in my mind and would not be a phrase that I would use to translate the original sentiment. In some ways, through composing my adaptation of any of Garcilaso's works I am able to display my particular vision, internal and external, about my experience with each phrase. Given the same factors and circumstances, Ingber and I still could not adapt Garcilaso's sonnets in exactly the same way (Aparicio 67).

The final sonnet which caught my attention was Garcilaso's Sonnet XII, as shown in its original form below:

Soneto [XII]

Si para refrenar este desseo
Loco, imposible, vano, temeroso,
Y guarecer de un mal tan peligroso
Que es darme a entender yo lo que no creo,
No me aprovecha verme qual me veo
O muy aventurado o muy medroso,
En tanta confusión que nunca oso
Fiar el mal de mí que lo poseo,
¿Qué me á de aprovechar ver la pintura
D'aquel que con las alas derretidas,
Cayendo, fama y nombre al mar á dado,
Y la del que su fuego y su locura
Llora entre aquellas plantas conocidas,
Apenas en ell agua resfriado?

(Rivers 14)

Garcilaso's Sonnet XII is not considered to be one of his more famous works, but the fact that it deviates from his common theme of love drew my attention. While the focus of this poem could draw its influence from Garcilaso's melancholy experience with love, the tone professes a more internal struggle. Certain lines of the poem seemed to connect with me on a personal level and allowed me to relate to Garcilaso's expressed turmoil. The ability to connect with a reader in

this way is one of the major milestones of becoming a successful writer. Although Garcilaso de la Vega and I have a minute amount of similarities between us, the same words were able to make an emotional impact on us in an individualistic way. The rich combination of imagery, succinct meter, and the style in which he writes create a powerful experience for any reader. Translating this particular sonnet for me seemed a little clearer about which path the poem should take. Unlike the previous love sonnets, XXIII, I, and X, the concepts explored through sonnet XII seem less abstract and more direct. My translation of this sonnet is given below:

Sonnet XII

As if to restrain this desire
Crazy, impossible, vain, fearful,
And to guard the bad and dangerous ones
That gave me an understanding of what I don't believe.
I don't take advantage of seeing myself for what I am,
I'm not adventurous or fearful,
In such confusion that I never dare
To trust the deviant part of me that I possess.
What will make me take advantage of the picture
in which all of them are melted.
Falling, fame, and name are given to the sea
And the one where the fire and insanity
Cries within the implanted knowledge
Barely within the cold water.

The English adaptations which I analyzed of Sonnet XII from other translators showed less variation between them than the other previously translated sonnets. A multitude of factors could contribute to this revelation, but the discrepancies between each adaptation enrich my analysis of the limitations and gains inherent in every translation. For this sonnet specifically, line 4 showed significant differences between the various translators. Alix Ingber expressed this line as “convincing myself of what I can’t see” while Laurence Tidy translated it as “by learning to accept what cannot be”. Not only is the diction of each of these lines unescapably different, but the meaning behind the phrase in its entirety is not comparable. Another similar example emerges through line 8. Ingber states “to guard against the evil deep in me” while Tidy interprets the line as “to realize what real peril faces me”. One translation shows a more personal approach to whatever struggles are upon the speaker, while the other expresses an external force causing the peril. Ingber and Tidy each interpreted line 4 and 8 of sonnet XII in an individualistic manner, and that is portrayed when they adapt the poem into English. Each reader is afforded this freedom to approach a work of art from a personal perspective, which results in an enriching process of the original work.

While I realize that in all of my translated versions of Garcilaso’s sonnets, several of the lines are not semantically or technically correct. Even such, I reached the conclusion that in order to faithfully express the personal effect that each poem had on me, it was necessary to forego certain linguistic rules in my adaptation into English. In this way, translation afforded me the freedom to adapt Garcilaso’s sonnets with my own poetic license. The pleasure of my adapted text therefore emerged through the shaping and configuration of each sentence; letting the words create words. Translation oftentimes can be distorting and involves a carrying over of features that are irreducible. It shows the capacity of a source text to support a meaning or function that

can never survive in another language, thus allowing for a mode of intercultural communication (Venuti 29). This intercultural communication method became a way for me to personally share influential Spanish poems which I encountered with my friends and family who could not otherwise benefit from them. Sharing the poems in English still did not allow me to completely convey the same sentiment which I experienced through Garcilaso's original works. The linguistic culture surrounding the English diction in the adapted versions of the poem can never fully capture the Spanish culture in which the original sonnets were written.

Conclusion

By making a personal endeavor to translate several of Garcilaso's sonnets for myself, I began to realize the poetic freedom that I still possessed in the act of translation. Being constrained by the sentiment and form of the original sonnets does not completely eliminate the translator's freedom to interpret a work of art from his or her own perspective. Poetry itself is about the impossible, and in turn complete translation of poetry becomes impossible. Each word and phrase carries along with it certain connotations which hold a varying significance for each individual reader. In the case of translation, not only are these connotations present for one language, but they are also carried over into a secondary language. Therefore, not only are there variations among the original interpretations of the Spanish version of Garcilaso's sonnets, but of the English ones as well. Arguably, more differences in opinion between bilingual interpreters emerge when a work is adapted into a new language. This can be attributed to each interpreter's personal experience with each of the two languages.

Even though I have shown that complete replication of an original work of art into an alternate language is not entirely possible, translation still presents many advantages to literature.

Interpreters and translators alike approach a work of art from an individual and unique perspective. The numerous variations throughout the translations I have analyzed only serve to enrich the depth in meaning of the original work by Garcilaso. By delving into the study of these adaptations of his works into another language, I have begun to realize the wide array of impact these sonnets have had on his readers. Each of these different adaptations of Garcilaso's sonnets as described previously cannot be deemed necessarily as superior to any other, but rather a result of being viewed through an alternate lens. Hutcheon supports this concept in what she describes as a study of "politics of intertextuality" (xii) where various adaptations exist not in a hierarchy of source material, but rather as works that are in dialogue with one another. Similarly to how a reader is granted the ability to interpret a poem freely, the translator also receives the same liberties when adapting a poem into a new language.

Even through simple examples, I have discovered the poetic liberties experienced by a translator when approaching an original work of art. Translating results in a rewriting of a text in different values, traditions, cultures, historical moments, etc. (Venuti 30). While a text must inherently undergo certain semantic and formal changes when being adapted into a new language, thus losing an integral facet of its original beauty, several benefits are gained through the new adaptation as well. The original text receives an enlightening experience of inhabiting a new form in a different context which emerges from another individual's perspective. There are losses and gains inherent in every translation, but art becomes renewed through creative mistranslation (Stam 64).

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