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DISPLACING THE MASK:

JORGE LUIS BORGES AND THE TRANSLATION OF NARRATIVE

by

Leah Elizabeth Leone

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree
in Spanish in
the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2011

Thesis Supervisors: Professor Daniel Balderston
Associate Professor Brian Gollnick

ABSTRACT

Displacing the Mask: Jorge Luis Borges and the Translation of Narrative studies the transformations that occur in Jorge Luis Borges's translations of Anglo-American fiction into Spanish. This project argues that Borges inscribed his tastes, values, and judgments about the literature he was translating onto the target-language texts, and in doing so altered important aspects of the source-language narratives: the identities of their characters, the ethical and rhetorical positioning of their narrators, their plots, and even the genres to which those narratives belong. The dissertation focuses on Borges's four book-length translations from the English, *A Room of One's Own* (1929, translated 1936) and *Orlando* (1928, translated 1937) by Virginia Woolf, *The Wild Palms* (1939, translated 1940) by William Faulkner and *Bartleby* (1853, translated 1943) by Herman Melville, as well as Borges's translation fragment of "Penelope" from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922, translated 1925).

There are two major influences that guide the transformations this project explores, one aesthetic and one ideological. The aesthetic motivation is Borges's preference for plot-driven over character-driven fiction, which culminates in a strong distaste for what he terms "psychological narrative." Borges preferred adventure novels and detective fiction; correspondingly, wherever possible, he made changes to the form and content of the novels he translated to move them closer to the action-centered, personality-effacing fiction he preferred. The primary ideological influence I have found is a heteronormative understanding of gender and sexuality, which gives way to polarized representations of masculinity and femininity. In almost every translation, Borges pushes back against non-normative representations of gender and sexuality, reorienting characters toward traditional gender stereotypes. These two motivations, gender and genre, show themselves to be intertwined in Borges's translation

practice; removing or rewriting the psychological aspects of narrative texts frequently comes about by shifting the gender and sexuality of a text's characters and the ideological positioning of its author.

By focusing on a substantial subset of his translation work—Anglo-American fiction—this project fills a gap in the scholarship on Borges and translation, which to date has only selectively analyzed isolated texts. It also affords scholars of Borges's writing style access to perspectives previously unavailable, by demonstrating what his transformations to source texts' styles say about his own. A scholarly intention of this dissertation is also to demonstrate the relevance of translation to a number of academic fields, including narratology, women's studies, sexuality studies, and comparative literature. Comparative translation analyses reveal cultural representations of gender, ideological positions toward sexuality, and radical reformulations of texts' narrative communication situations, all of which open important new avenues these disciplines may follow. At the same time, this project encourages the linguistics-based and empirically oriented branches of translation studies to employ comparative translation analysis not only to study translation itself, but as a basis for the critical analysis of translated literature.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Graduate College
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

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This project began in Professor Daniel Balderston's doctoral seminar on Jorge Luis Borges in the fall of 2006 at The University of Iowa, and I thank him warmly for recognizing Borges and translation to be a path I should follow for my dissertation. His invitation to give a lecture at the Borges Symposium at The University of Pittsburgh in October 2010 was an honor, and provided me the basis for Chapter Three. I thank Professor Brian Gollnick for his encouragement and counsel throughout the composition of this dissertation, for his insistence that I approach both literature and theory critically, and for his frequent checking in to make sure this project was completed even while I taught full time at Concordia University. I am grateful to Professor Sergio Waisman, whose invitation to speak on Borges and translation as part of his panel at the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana in June 2010 was a particular honor; from that talk came several sections of Chapter Four. I would also like to recognize that the approach this project takes, analyzing the narrative features of Borges's translation, was inspired by Patricia Willson's analysis of his translation of *Orlando* in her *La constelación del sur, traductores y traducciones en la literatura argentina del siglo XX*. Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the friends and family members whose support made this project both possible and worthwhile.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation studies the transformations that occur in Jorge Luis Borges's translations of Anglo-American fiction into Spanish. With this project, I aim to add depth and breadth to studies on Borges and translation—the majority of which have selectively studied a variety of the languages and genres from which he translated—by conducting a detailed analysis of his work specifically with the English language and narrative prose. Secondly, I aim to contribute to scholars' understanding of Borges as a writer, as I argue that his translation work adds a new dimension to his already widely studied writing style. Thirdly, to Latin Americanists and Comparative Literature scholars alike, I intend to demonstrate not only the influence of translation on national literatures, but the influence that may be exerted when an important literary figure is a text's translator. Finally, I aim to build upon recently proposed theory and methodology regarding the integration of narrative theory and translation studies, while at the same time demonstrating the value of translation to literary studies as a whole.

Borges's translations are not limited to English-language fiction. It is well known that he translated poetry by authors such as e.e. cummings, Langston Hughes, Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman. Furthermore, while living in Europe during his Ultraist phase of the early 1920s, Borges introduced the influential trend of German Expressionism to the Spanish avant-garde through his translations of poetry from the German.[1] During the period he primarily worked on the translation of novels (1935 to 1943), and roughly around the time he composed his most famous translation essays (1932 and 1935), Borges also translated from the French and published André Gide's *Perséphone* (1936) and Henri Michaux's *Un barbare en Asie* (1941). Even as late as 1984 he published a translation from the Old Norse of Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*. While these additional genres and languages merit and have

[1] For an excellent discussion, see Laura Sager Eidt's, "Borges's Translations of German Expressionist Poetry: Spaniardizing Expressionism."

received several scholars' attention, my dissertation will focus on Borges's four book length translations from the English, *A Room of One's Own* (1929, translated 1936) and *Orlando* (1928, translated 1937) by Virginia Woolf, *The Wild Palms* (1939, translated 1940) by William Faulkner and *Bartleby* (1853, translated 1943) by Herman Melville; as well as his translation fragment from James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922, translated 1925). I have chosen this limit in scope because Anglo-American fiction forms the bulk of Borges's translation activity; this makes for a coherent project that addresses an important part of his literary production and establishes characteristics applicable for study in other works he translated. Furthermore, the Anglo-American fiction Borges took on can be situated within a language-specific literary tradition whose development from 1850 to 1940 is met with critical reception and response through his translations. Finally, I am choosing to address the translation of fiction because I am interested in how narrative may be transformed through the translation process, and I believe Borges, as a writer whose own narrative strategies have received significant scholarly attention, provides an excellent case for the study of narrative in translation.

This project argues that Borges inscribed his tastes, values, and judgments about the literature he was translating onto the target language texts, and in doing so, altered the identities of their characters, the ethical and rhetorical positioning of their narrators, their plots and even their genres. There are two major influences that guide the transformations this project explores, one aesthetic and one ideological. The aesthetic motivation is Borges's preference for action over description, which culminates in a strong distaste for what he terms "psychological narrative," in which characters' interiority forms an essential element of the plot. Borges enjoyed adventure novels and detective fiction; in much of his critical writing, novels that feature, as Alan Singer's book title aptly describes, the *subject as action*, were frequently criticized.[2] In his translations, they were frequently corrected: wherever

[2] *The Subject as Action: Transformation and Totality in Narrative Aesthetics*.

possible, Borges made changes to the form and content of the novels he translated to move them closer toward the action-centered, character-effacing fiction he preferred. Thus *A Room of One's Own* goes from fictional essay to novella, "Bartleby" from moral allegory to fantastic narrative, *The Wild Palms* from star-crossed love story to detective novel, and *Old Man* from psychological narrative to adventure novel.

The primary ideological influence I have found is a heteronormative understanding of gender and sexuality, which gives way to polarized representations of masculinity and femininity. In almost every translation, Borges pushes back against non-normative gender and sexuality, reorienting characters toward the traditional dichotomized ends of the gender spectrum.[3] Men are made more "masculine" as they become decisive, authoritative and prone to violence, while women are made more "feminine" as their assertiveness turns to submission, their courage either to fragility or outright aggression, their sexuality to perversion. In many cases, it is difficult to discern whether these gender normative translation practices were intentional or if they were the product of Borges's ideological worldview, as a man living in twentieth-century Argentina. Yet an important finding of this project is how closely gender identity is tied up with Borges's aesthetics, which does seem intentional; a transformation to one necessarily implies a revision of the other, suggesting many of the alterations to gender and sexuality this project discusses to be a purposeful part of a creative vision.

We thus see an intrinsic tie Borges makes between gender and genre. Removing or rewriting the psychological aspects of narrative texts frequently comes about by shifting the gender and sexuality of a text's characters and the ideological positioning of its author. For example, the lawyer of "Bartleby" loses his sexual ambiguity and becomes courageous and forthright, so Borges can place more emphasis on the strangeness of the eponymous

[3] Importantly, these traits were generally non-normative both in Borges's culture and the source culture.

character. *The Wild Palms*' Charlotte loses her complexity and domineering attitude while Harry gains assertiveness and self-possession required by the daring protagonist of a crime novel through Borges's misattribution of the dialogue between the two of them. Mona Baker notes that "all of our narratives ultimately derive from sets of skeletal storylines with recurrent motifs, and these sets may differ in their entirety or in specific details across cultures" (79). She suggests that this variation in cultural narratives is often why genres are transformed in translation to evoke target culture storylines. This, of course, can have major implications for gender, as men's and women's roles in society, and hence the cultural narratives that can be created around them, vary significantly around the world.[4] In Borges's case, however, as a critic who exhorted Argentine writers to treat universal themes rather than limit themselves to regional topics, the transformations of gender and genre through translation more closely evoke the storylines of *other* foreign texts he admired such as those by Kafka or R.L. Stevenson.

The transformations this project will examine, while surprising, are not unique. Thanks to the work of translation scholars over the last forty years, we can now take for granted that *all* translations are a product of reception, mediation and representation, which necessarily vary from their source texts. Still, Borges's translation practices merit special attention. As one of the most influential intellectuals of the twentieth century, the process and product of Borges's translations are of particular relevance to Latin Americanists and translation scholars alike. The dialogue revealed through translation allows a view of the Argentine's practical engagement with other literatures; from such a standpoint, all of Borges's work will acquire new depth. Moreover, Borges's international stature has made his

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[4] Baker gives the example of Kuroiwa Ruikō's translations of Western detective novels into Japanese in the late nineteenth century in which he adopted the plots to bring them closer to the Japanese literary genre of *dokufu-mono* or "poison woman story." In the example she cites a French detective novel which ends with the protagonist's lover trying to prevent him from killing himself, but accidentally making him shoot himself in the stomach; the lover dies anyway, and in considerably more pain than if he had shot himself in the heart as intended. In translation, the protagonist's lover asks him to kill himself to retain his honor, and vows to kill herself along with him so they may be together forever (79-80).

work as a translator more visible, more respected and, in the case of his translated novels, more marketable than many other translations of English language literature into Spanish. These texts' famous translator has conferred additional value upon them. An analysis of Borges's translations is therefore an important project for understanding how his visible mediation (or presumed lack thereof) has influenced the re-presentation of widely influential English-language works in Spanish-speaking nations.

Over the last two decades, translation scholars such as Theo Hermans, Mona Baker, Marilyn Gaddis Rose and Lawrence Venuti have begun to question the common practice of reading a translation as if it were originally written in the translated language. They point toward academic settings in particular, where translations of Flaubert, Tolstoy, Kafka, and Borges, to name a few, are read and taught in literature courses as if they were written in English and bear no difference from the original texts. As translation scholars advocate for the visibility of the translator, they point towards cultural, ideological and linguistic differences between source and target languages to evidence the transformations that occur in translation. Not to acknowledge these changes, they argue, is both to ignore the subjectivity of the translator and the autonomy of the culture in which the text was produced. This project will demonstrate the degree to which *every* aspect of an original text can differ from the original, while still being read as its exact representation, as many of Borges's translations are.[5]

When performing translation analyses, many studies (the aforementioned authors excluded) merely point out comparisons and contrasts between the two texts, superficially treating them as isolated events. My study, however, suggests that cultural, ideological, and linguistic shifts between source and target texts indicate a deeper transformation which occurs in the translation process: the reconstruction and retelling of the narrative. Semantic

[5] Chapters Two and Three will demonstrate precisely how problematic this presumption of transparency can be when dealing with translations of authors such as Virginia Woolf, whose *A Room of One's Own* and *Orlando* had ideological intentions of promoting women's equality.

and syntactic shifts which result from differences in language structure, culture and ideology inevitably change the way a story is told, even if a translator endeavors to reproduce the text as closely as possible. Conversely, a translator such as Borges, who has no compunctions about purposely altering a text in translation, may introduce translation shifts that *radically* alter the narrative the original. If analyzed superficially, without consideration of how semantic and syntactic shifts reflect the recasting of a narrative, such studies will reveal only part of the transformation a text has undergone in translation. This project differs from Baker's work on narrative and translation, which studies narration as part of communication theory and takes into consideration the personal, public and meta narratives from within in which authors and translators create their texts.[6] I deal specifically with the narratives contained within fictional texts, and deal with the ideologies of authors and translators only as I find them to be modified or brought into relief through translation.

Questions of narratology and translation have been addressed primarily by European translation scholars Kitty M. Van Leuven-Zwart, Giuliana Schiavi, Theo Hermans, and Charlotte Bosseaux, who have usefully described how narrative may change in translation, and provided several models for its study. In many institutions in Europe, translation studies has developed as an individual, while interdisciplinary, academic field that tends to investigate linguistic, social-science and other empirical aspects of translation. In other places, the United States in particular, translation is usually studied within comparative literature, with translation theories functioning as a frame akin to (though perhaps less coherently than) postcolonial, Marxist or feminist theory—rather than occupying an separate discipline. I intend to build from the work of empirically-oriented scholars and suggest: first, that the consequences and implications of the narrative shifts found in translation analysis, rather than the mere fact of their existence, are crucial; and second, that to make the study of narrative in translation interesting and applicable to a broader field, there must be less focus

[6] *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

on empirical systems for making generalizations about translation trends and more focus on the study of the texts themselves, as modified by particular strategies of individual translators.

Working from a linguistics-based, empirically oriented approach rather than a comparative literature standpoint, most of the theorists mentioned above establish models to describe the position of the narrator within a narrative-communication situation, but treat comparative analyses of translations or common features of translated literature as an end in themselves. The models are descriptive: they explain what happens in translation. But their studies do not go on to use those models' findings to analyze translated literature as autonomous texts.[7] The similarities and differences these scholars find are described but not analyzed and they serve more to prove the validity of the model than to discuss literature. I go beyond this initiating point for study—that is, the fact of the narrative shifts themselves—and consider how they affect the content, context and genre of a text. I also consider the reasons for Borges's translation choices, taking into account his own writing and literary and cultural tradition. Rather than expend significant effort classifying changes, I consider the consequences of those changes.

The methodology I used to conduct and then critically analyze the comparative analyses between the English originals and Borges's translations cannot be neatly summed up in a diagram or a step by step process. It began with my reading the source texts, and taking into consideration the criticism already written about each, conducting my own literary analysis. I sought to establish important features of each text: its narrative-communication situation (as per Chatman), the ideological positioning of the author,

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[7] In his latest book, *The Conference of the Tongues*, Theo Hermans takes the idea of translation as an autonomous text to the extreme, suggesting that a translation might be considered an original text until the term "translation" is conferred upon it by the translator and the readership. From this approach, "transformation," as a description of what happens to a text in translation, is a null concept, because as an original work the translation has nothing to modify. I am not taking Hermans's approach here, but find it interesting as a concept, though one I would be hesitant to apply to translation analyses.

characters' identities, representations of gender and sexuality, tropes, the relationships between form and content. To be able to say why a change in translation matters, I needed to be able to relate those changes to the text in meaningful ways. At the same time, I paid close attention to Borges's writing strategies in his own fiction, to relate the ways his personal writing style might bear on his translation practice.

This preliminary analysis oriented my reading as I conducted the comparative analyses between original and translation: where formal features were of particular importance in a source text, I paid particular attention to their reconstruction in translation; where a narrator's reliability or lack thereof was essential to the positioning of the implied author, I made close regard of the sincerity or cynicism of her or his narration; where characters presented non-normative gender traits, I looked for the ways these were upheld or undermined. By manually conducting my analysis of each text in its entirety, line by line, I also had the benefit of finding many unexpected items, translations it would never have crossed my mind to look for; in other words, my original literary analyses guided but did not dictate what I was searching to compare. After completing the analyses, I was able to contrast the narrative of the source text with the target text, to do far more than point out isolated changes but to demonstrate a coherent vision of a newly constructed text.

While this research may seem tedious, it has provided me with information no scholar has managed to produce by selectively comparing isolated fragments of a text and translation. *The Wild Palms*, for example, is Borges's most widely commented translation, yet no critic, not even Marian McMaster Babierecki, who conducted a *computerized* full-length study, has noted that Borges exchanges the dialogue among the novel's characters, putting one's discourse in the mouth of another. Perhaps because the method for these comparisons is so flexible, and admittedly, subjective, those translation scholars who wish to be scientific will not find it particularly useful; as Venuti claims, "at the level of devising and executing a research project... scholarly interpretation will be laden with the values of its cultural situation"; mine, for example, is clearly entrenched in twenty-first century, North

American feminism (28).[8] Yet for those rallying around translation as a new direction for comparative literature, as suggested by the 2009 Modern Language Association Convention's Presidential Forum, "The Tasks of Translation in the Global Context," this kind of close reading can provide significant insights into literature, culture, ideology and theory impossible to locate in source-language texts alone. It is not for nothing that Borges claims translation to be destined to illustrate discussions of aesthetics.

While much attention has been paid to Borges's writings on translation and its prevalence as a theme in his fiction, there has been relatively little comparative analysis of his translation work. The two best known books on the subject, Efraín Kristal's *Invisible Work: Borges and Translation* (2002) and Sergio Waisman's *Borges and Translation: The Irreverence of the Periphery* (2005) feature analyses of Borges's translations, but focus primarily on Borges's translation theory. The analyses they provide are used as examples of Borges's theories in practice, rather than a study of the practice itself. In contrast, my analyses interrogate how aspects of Borges's translations may have exceeded his stated theories, keeping in mind that they may hold inscriptions of Borges's agency as translator which reflect judgments he may not have wished to state openly or of which he may not have been fully conscious. Kristal and Waisman's books offer important contributions, in particular, Kristal's fascinating study of the ways the texts Borges translated subsequently made their ways into his fiction, and Waisman's thorough and thoughtful analysis of the development of Borges's translation theory within his critical and fictional writings. My project will work alongside Kristal's and Waisman's studies, providing an extensive overview of Borges's translation practice, which will serve to recast his translation theory in a new light and open up new avenues for its discussion.

I have published two articles on Borges's translations of Virginia Woolf, "La novela cautiva: Borges y la traducción de *Orlando*" (2008) and "A Translation of His Own: Borges

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[8] Lawrence Venuti makes a thoughtful critique of descriptive models and linguistics-based approaches to the study of translation in *The Scandals of Translation*, 21-30.

and *A Room of One's Own*" (2009); both articles deal specifically with Borges's subversion of feminism and non-normative sexualities in the texts. The analyses presented in this project have significantly expanded these initial investigations. Both feature many new examples of Borges's translation strategies, and the analyses move toward the broader ends of not only demonstrating misogyny and homophobia in the translations but contextualizing the results of these ideologically motivated choices within the theoretical frameworks of Judith Butler's gender performance, in the case of *Orlando,* and James Phelan's theory of dual-focalization in character narration, in the case of *A Room of One's Own*.

Chapter One of this project does resemble Kristal and Waisman's books in providing an overview of Borges's theoretical approach to translation. It is distinct, however, as it conducts a thematic rather than chronological or text-by-text treatment of Borges's writings on the subject. I argue that a primary rhetorical motivation for Borges's work is to disrupti readers' suspension of disbelief through the candid display of fiction as verbal artifice. Translation, which subverts the authenticity of the original by hinting at a proliferation of possible alternate versions, is one of Borges's favorite thematic and formal tools for foregrounding fiction's artifice. Borges argues that a translation is a variation of a text which is itself a version of the themes that came before it. Yet this point is not an artistic end in itself but becomes the basis for a politicized literary critique. Borges uses translation to criticize the Argentine nationalist project for its ethnocentrism, while at the same time lambasting the ethnocentrism of translators who claim to provide a literal translation of a text, while ignoring the textual influences to be had by virtue of their location within a culture and historical time period.

Chapter Two discusses the transformations to gender and sexual identity that Joyce's Molly Bloom and Woolf's Orlando undergo in translation. I argue that translation is a powerful tool for revealing cultural constructions of gender by contrasting its source culture constructions and target reconstructions. Employing Judith Butler's assertion that gender is created through the repetition of acts that have been deemed masculine or feminine, I

demonstrate how Borges's cultural positioning and heteronormative anxiety led him to alter these repetitions both in the characters' speech acts and physical actions, making both significantly different from their English language counterparts. Chapter Three also explores gender and sexuality, and the ways its transformation is a necessary part of Borges's project to recast the rhetorical and ethical positioning of the character narrators of *A Room of One's Own* and "Bartleby." In this chapter I use narratologist James Phelan's outline for analyzing character narration to distinguish how the narrators' functions in the English vary from those in the Spanish, and find that much like his own character narrators, Borges flattens the two out by limiting discrepancies between what they narrate and what they unwittingly disclose.

Chapter Four takes on the numerous critics who have argued that Borges's translation of *The Wild Palms* is as good as, if not better than, the original text, while providing much more than an enumeration of the many translation errors the target text contains. In my treatment of the sections of the novel which form *Las palmeras salvajes*, I demonstrate the ways Borges endeavored to transform the novel into detective fiction by adding elements of danger not present in the original, and by making the protagonists' gender traits conform to those typically found in the detective genre. In my analysis of *El Viejo*, I discuss the ways Borges transforms the chronotrope of the novel, making actions that occurred at disparate times in the source text occur within the same temporal framework in the translation. I focus on the ways Borges moves this novel away from its psychological interrogation of a southern convict's ability to narrate a story to make it an adventure novel, bringing the focus to the action rather than the protagonist's thoughts and feelings about them.

Books about translation tend to open with a complaint about the marginalization of translation by publishers and academics, the saturation of the international market with American books and the limited number of foreign books published in the United States, or translation's complicities with the political domination of the Global North. So as not to be out of keeping with this tradition, I would like to make a grievance of my own: the amount of complaining that goes on in translation studies keeps us from being taken seriously in the

academy and fails to raise sustained interest on the part of the reading public. Seminal books, such as Lawrence Venuti's, *The Translator's Invisibility*, have generated enough awareness about translation that it is now, happily, taken for granted that every translation is an intervention, that translations cannot and need not mimetically reproduce every aspect of its source text. We have come to a point where the mere fact that texts necessarily change in translation, and the fact that translation and translators can potentially wield enormous power are not compelling enough if we want translation to continue as a valid area of study. This project concerns itself with what translation *does*. It neither bemoans the lamentable regard in which translators are held, nor decries the (neo)colonial incursion of American texts flooding international markets, nor denounces the cultural cannibalization of Third World texts in First World translation and readership—which is most certainly not to say that these problems do not exist and do not merit attention and advocacy.

Yet what Borges shows us, and what this project will explore, is how, even in the flow of culturally dominant texts into the periphery, texts are never passively consumed by their translators, and that translated texts never simply pass on received ideas, even those that try and claim to. Translation for Borges is a critical dialogue, not a one way transmission. Borges, taking full advantage of his agency as a translator, effectively made the texts he translated into his own creative work and summarily produced a reading and a reception that differed significantly in the Hispanic world from the Anglophone. To become the rallying point the MLA would have translation be, it is time to demonstrate precisely why and how its critical, rather than simply metaphorical, deployment is relevant to studies of literature. This dissertation intends to do just that; avoiding facile clichés about how "everything is translation," this project will provide the material evidence as to why translation has important applications in women's and sexuality studies, cultural studies, formal criticism and narratology.

CHAPTER I

JORGE LUIS BORGES AND THE VERBAL ARTIFICE OF TRANSLATION

> Lo que afirmo es nuestra codicia de almas, de destinos, de idiosincrasias, codicia tan sabedora de lo que busca, que si las vidas fabulosas no le dan abasto, indaga amorosamente en la del autor.
>
> Jorge Luis Borges, "Profesión de fe literaria" (*Inquisiciones*)

"La forma de la espada," like many stories by Jorge Luis Borges, is a frame narrative; after the narrator—a fictionalized version of the author—asks *el Inglés* about the long scar across his face, the Irish *estanciero's* story becomes the body of the narrative. Borges turns the narrative task over to el Inglés by reporting: "ésta es la historia que contó, alternando el inglés con el español, y aun con el portugués" and following this phrase with a colon (OC I: 592). The colon and, especially, the quotation marks enclosing el Inglés's story indicate that the text is the gaucho's direct speech. Yet the code-switching Borges mentions never appears; the narrative is told in standard Spanish.[9] In Borges's transcription of el Inglés's story, there has also been a translation. While it may appear to be a device of convenience, Borges's characterization of el Ingles's speech as plurilingual while rendering it in solely Spanish is no innocent technique. For Borges had been translating fiction long before he ever began to write his own famous stories and was well acquainted with the power of translation to destabilize and decenter original texts—including his own. The pretense of invisibility he gives his translation, reporting el Ingles's story to be direct speech, has instead the effect of creating extreme visibility, because it so clearly contradicts what he claims.

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[9] Only two English terms appear in his story: "gentleman" and "Black and Tans." There is not even a word of Portuguese, while there is an added line of French: "C'est une affaire flambée."

The insinuation that the speech contained in “La forma de la espada” is true and accurate, and then the lack of those verbal anomalies the narrator attributes to el Inglés’s speech, immediately throw the narrator’s reliability into doubt. What is contained between the quotation marks is not direct speech but a mediation, subject to all the fallibilities second-hand stories entail. El Inglés would only tell his story on the condition that Borges would not “mitigar ningún oprobio, ninguna circunstancia de infamia” (OC I: 592). Yet if his story has been intercepted, translated into standard Spanish, the question arises as to whether the whole account, its infamy unmitigated, has been reproduced in Borges’s tale. Translation, and the alternate versions to the “real story” it implies, thus become a tool for foregrounding a foundational aesthetic of Borges’s fictions: for of equal importance to the plot of any Borges story are its possible variations, whatever else could or may have happened.

In his 1932 essay “Las versiones homéricas,” Borges affirms that “la traducción … parece destinada a ilustrar la discussion estética” (OC I: 280). As it makes no pretense of being anything other than a version of another text, translation positively affirms that identity “original” literature would overlook: its status as the mere variation and recombination of earlier texts. The only difference is that translation creates variations and recombinations of a *visible* text, far easier to trace and compare than the “laberinto inestimable de proyectos pretéritos” that comprise original texts (OC I: 280). Translation so usefully illuminates artistic production because it is just like original writing, but created with one’s precursor close at hand. Literature, for Borges, is best represented in his famous story,“La biblioteca de Babel” (1941). The Library of Babel contains an infinite amount of texts comprised of a finite number of symbols: “sus anaqueles registran todas las posibles combinaciones de los veintitantos símbolos ortográficos... o sea todo lo que es dables expresar: *en todos los*

idiomas" (OC I: 561, my emphasis). In other words, writing *is* translation: the decoding of those symbols that have been circulating since prehistory and their recoding into one of the infinite possible versions into which they may be creatively assembled.

In Borges's criticism, translation voids the notion of definitive texts, reveals the social and historical influences that determine how texts are read and exposes myths of originality in literature. Thematically and formally, in Borges's fiction, translation serves to destabilize mimesis, to highlight the inscrutability of origins and to remind readers of the layers of mediation intervening between them and the text—original or translation. Literary translation and translators figure prominently in Borges's stories, while many are presented (often covertly) as translations into Spanish from other languages. And as a translator, Borges's insistence upon the artifice of literature allowed him the creative freedom to recreate texts in translation, to use the original as a pre-text for his own aesthetic purposes. Skeptical of the ideas of definitive texts, of inviolable tradition, and of originality itself, Borges created translations that were faithful to nothing more than his own aesthetic (and, of course, ideological) sensibilities.

This chapter will focus on the role of translation in Borges's critical and fictional writing, leaving the following three to demonstrate the manners in which the author's theory and practice meet (or do not). Rather than examine Borges's approach to translation through a chronological discussion of his essays on the subject, the most prominent being "Las dos maneras de traducir maneras de traducir" (1926). "Las versions homéricas" (1932) and "Los traductores de las 1001 noches" (1935), this chapter will proceed thematically to examine the various aesthetic and ideological motivations that led Borges to negate fidelity in translation. Sergio Waisman's chapter "Borges on Translation: The Development of a Theory" provides

a thorough and thoughtful discussion of these three and other essays. I will instead discuss the various roles translation plays in Borges's aesthetics and his rhetorical positioning as a writer treating culturally dominant themes from the geographical margins.

Versions of Versions

Borges, and the poststructuralists who would follow him, have long argued that translators as well as writers are forever dealing with versions of versions of texts that have been circulating since literature began. Into the production of any text go all the texts a writer has read previously (the attempt to approximate or distance one's work from those readings being equally influential); the mythology, religious parables and folklore of one's region; the literary tradition one is either trying to uphold or dismantle; the themes circulating in one's culture upon which writers may vary. In the preface of the English translation of *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-François Lyotard, writes:

> The *écrivain* or *écrivant* no more encounters a text than a translator deals with a text. We might say both *écrivain/écrivant* and translator find themselves faced with a thousand texts. A texture of texts. Not even a texture, not even texts, as that would imply a high degree of order…They find texts in rags and tatters. In other words, their culture…[t]heir store of literary knowledge…Their past readings…Their own texts, their own translations. (xi-xii)[10]

Likewise Borges, in "Las versiones homéricas" and numerous other essays, finds fidelity in translation to be a tautology, for the "original" is no more original than the translation. This is not only because any literary text contains "un laberinto inestimable de proyectos pretéritos," but because there is no stable, static meaning one can claim as *the* original. In the essay, he cites Bertrand Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World* to exemplify the mutability of

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[10] It should be noted that this attitude toward originality is not the province of poststructuralists alone. In *The Scandals of Translation*, Lawrence Venuti, who takes a "cultural materialist orientation" toward translation (30), writes: "Translation can be considered a form of authorship, but an authorship now redefined as derivitive, not self-originating. Authorship is not *sui generis*; writing depends on pre-existing cultural materials, selected by the author, arranged in an order of priority, and rewritten (or elaborated) according to specific values" (43).

the source text: objects in themselves are mere logical constructions, but exist in a system of possible perspectives, any of which are real to the perceiver (96-97). The same, Borges argues, may be said about a text, "dadas las repercusiones incalculables de lo verbal" (OC I: 280). He calls a translation's source text a moveable event, "un hecho móvil," since it exists as a real but separate text in the perception of every individual reader. Any translation, then, provides a differing perspective of an original whose existence hinges upon its being read and interpreted, and thus cannot be judged inferior for its dissimilarity to the original. Accordingly, Borges surmises: "presuponer que toda recombinación de elementos es obligatoriamente inferior a su original, es presuponer que el borrador 9 es obligatoriamente inferior al borrador H—ya que no puede haber sino borradores" (OC I: 239). The translation cannot be judged for its likeness or dissimilarity to the source text, for they are, in essence, not the same text. Both are drafts, possible ways to assemble the symbols circulating in the Library of Babel.

In the postmodernism essay, Lyotard refers to Borges's prose poem "Del rigor en la ciencia," a parable on the impossibility of mimetic representation, in which an empire's academy of cartographers constructs a map the exact size of the empire, with a 1:1 to correspondence with all it contains.[11] Lyotard employs Borges's poem to illustrate his point that postmodern science is legitimated by its own discourse rather than its production, because "a complete definition of the initial state of a system (or all of the independent variables) would require an expenditure of energy at least equivalent to that consumed by the system to be defined" (55). Lyotard's interpretation of the parable is as valid for literature as it is for science; we need look no further than Borges's Pierre Menard, a French symbolist poet who, in the 1920s and 1930s, undertakes the writing of Cevantes's *Don Quixote*. As we will see later in this chapter, producing the exact text, word for word, three centuries after its

[11] Except the map itself; Borges makes another cartographic analogy in "Las magias parciales del Quijote" in which he addresses this added problem. Quoting idealist philospher Josiah Royce, a 1:1 map "debe contener un mapa del mapa, que debe contener un mapa del mapa del mapa, y así hasta lo infinito" (OC II: 56).

original publication, requires an expenditure of considerably more energy than what went in to the initial "system." Creating a 1:1 correspondence between an original and its translation, matching each word, each nuance, each metaphor is an equally quixotic quest.

Irreality and Artifice

The postmodern associations one may make to Borges's characterization of all writing as a form of translation should not be confused with the "irreality" often ascribed to Borges's work.[12] Countless critics have sought to establish *irreality* as the basis for Borges's work, suggesting that, in the author's fiction, ideas take precedence over historical and social events. As Daniel Balderston argues in *Out of Context: Historical Reference and the Representation of Reality in Borges*:

> Since Borges positions himself... in opposition to the social realist mode of narrative fiction that was dominant in Latin America at the time of the composition of *Ficciones*... and *El Aleph*... it is perhaps not surprising that readers and critics, eager to have it one way or the other, have embraced his 'fantastic literature' or denounced him as an escapist, both reactions which assume that the stories have nothing significant to say about reality, history or politics. (1-2)

Real people and events, as Balderston's book shows, are central to Borges's fictional production. Historical figures and places anchor Borges's fictions in reality; the structure of his texts—which often employ authenticating devices only to more effectively tear through the veil of fiction—like the imprisoned playwright, Jaromir Hladík, of "El milagro secreto," employ techniques that "impide[n] que los espectadores olviden la irrealidad, que es condición del arte" (OC I: 615). Irreality is a condition of art, not the process of creating it. Those who accuse him of escapism hit on the fact that Borges admits that irreality is a "secret

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[12] Edna Aizenberg is critical of this association: "The 'postmodern' characteristics of Latin American and Borgesian literature enthusiastically embraced by U.S. and European critics—self-reflexivity, indeterminacy, carnivalization, decanonization, intertextuality, pastiche, hybridity, the problematizing of time and space and of historical and fictional narration—are primarily a correlative of a colonized history and an uncohered identity, of incomplete modernity and uneven cultural development, rather than postindustrialization and mass culture. Their uncritical incorporation into a metropolitan repertoire indicates that the centering impulse of a 'decentered' postmodernism is far from gone" (21).

consolation" when faced with the absoluteness of one's fate, but they miss his assertion that ultimately, it is a fallacy. As he explains in "Nueva refutación del tiempo": "nuestro destino… no es espantoso por irreal; es espantoso porque es irreversible y de hierro… El mundo, desgraciadamente, es real; yo, desgraciadamente, soy Borges" (OC II: 181). Writing in a world that is unfortunately real, Borges's stories do not question reality, but its representation.

Readily seen in the essay, "El idioma analítica de John Wilkins," in which he cites an absurd classification of animals from a fictional Chinese encyclopedia—among which are included those animals belonging to the emperor, those which have just broken a vase and those which are embalmed—Borges's fiction and criticism do not dismiss reality, but rather humans' attempts to classify, explain and control it. In the essay he concludes: "notoriamente no hay clasificación del universo que no sea arbitraria y conjectural. La razón es muy simple: no sabemos qué cosa es el universo" (OC II: 105). The universe is infinite, our knowledge of it finite; any imposition of order upon it is based on presumptions and prejudices, and generally tends to favor whomever is creating that order.

Beatriz Sarlo writes of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius": "History for Borges… can turn into a nightmare. The only antidote against its chaos, which mirrors the chaos of reality, is the activity of invention" *(Chapter 5, Borges Studies Online)*. Yet Borges's *story* is not an escapist invention, an antidote to the chaos of reality, but an allegory critiquing human beings' compulsion to believe and live by any idea which presents reality as less complex, confusing and arbitrary than it is—specifically, the ideas imposed by the totalitarian regimes proliferating across the globe in the 1930s and 40s. In the tale, a massive multigenerational effort to create the encyclopedia of an imaginary planet, Tlön, has the eventual effect of imposing Tlön's alternate reality onto Earth. In the postscript of "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" (dated 1947, though the story was published in *Sur* in 1940) the narrator Borges comments that it is no surprise that reality has given way to the edicts of Tlön's handbook, the "Obra Mayor de los Hombres"; humans' anxiety for order was such that "bastaba cualquier simetría

con apariencia de order —el materialismo dialectico, el antisemitismo, el nazismo— para embelesar a los hombres" (OC I: 528). At humans' insistence, the artificially manufactured order of Tlön comes to dominate reality, taking precedence over the language and history of Planet Earth, the real Orbis Tertius. The "realidad atroz o banal" to which Borges refers is not the cause of irreality, but the product of it (OC I: 513). While the real world disintegrates, Borges sits in the Adrogué hotel, writing the postscript to the story and translating Browne's *Urn Burial* into Spanish, thereby refusing to participate in the invented languages of Tlön.[13] In his essay "Escenarios de traducción: Traición y resistencia en J. L. Borges," Waisman notes how in this story translation becomes a site of resistance for Borges: "el refugio del narrador será retirarse a trabajar en una traducción, gesto que crea un escenario de escritura completa y literalmente al margen y afuera de la 'historia'... de Tlön" (193). With his Quevedian translation Borges is not escaping into irreality—the invented languages of Tlön—but stubbornly holding onto the materiality of English and Spanish.[14]

In other words, translation serves to reinforce, rather than destabilize, what is physically real, at the same time it subverts the reality of representation in literature. Whether through a narrator claiming not to know all the details, a series of footnotes, a first-person interruption in a third-person narrative, or an unsigned translation, Borges's fiction continuously punctuates readers' suspension of disbelief. By constantly revealing his mediation of the text, and reminding readers that there are other versions of the story possible, Borges's fiction seeks to dismantle the tyranny of *ideas* and remind readers that there is nothing natural or essential about the way reality is explained, categorized, recorded

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[13] Borges notes translation as an intellectual consequence of dictatorship. Reviewing a German translation of a Chinese novel he writes: "Alemania está regido [sic] por una dictadura: uno de los efectos laterales de ese impetuoso régimen es la declinación de obras originales en alemán y el auge consiguiente de traducciones" ("Die Raeber vom Liang Schan Moor, de Shi Nai An" OC IV 469)

[14] In "La secta del Fénix" Borges describes language as a form of collective memory: "esa otra memoria que es un idioma" (OC I: 630), and does the same in "El Aleph": "Todo lenguaje es un alfabeto de símbolos cuy ejercicio presupone un pasado que los interlocutores comparten" (OC I: 752). The materiality of languages such as Spanish and English is the product of a shared past, impossible to spontaneously create with the invention of Tlönic languages.

or represented. Hladík, in "El milagro secreto"—victim of that Nazi tyranny Borges critiques in "Tlön"—composes the play he writes in verse to prohibit the audience (he would never have) from forgetting that they are watching art rather than life. Likewise, Borges composes fiction that flaunts its artifice. Reader/viewer consciousness of irreality is a condition of art precisely because its status as artifice is what separates it from reality, which can never adequately be captured in art (nor should an artist care to do so).

Borges explains that the unknowable nature of the universe applies to literature as well: "[e]n el orden de la literatura, como en los otros, no hay acto que no sea coronación de una infinita serie de causas y manantial de una infinita serie de efectos" ("La flor de Coleridge" OC II: 21). Literature, he argues, cannot mimetically copy reality, the infinitesimal causes and consequences that accompany every action. As we shall see, Borges will often complain that those texts that try to do so are tedious and poorly constructed. In his own fiction and his criticism, Borges seeks to flaunt the "verbal artifice" of literature: the calculating order and precision, the careful selection of meaningful details, which are clearly the product of human creativity, rather than a mere transcription of reality. On Tlön metaphysicians do not seek truth or even verisimilitude but rather to astonish their readers, because they know that all systems are nothing more than the arbitrary subordination of all aspects of the universe to any particular one of those aspects.[15] So, Borges would argue, must authors proceed, seeking to astonish readers with their ability to create plausible ways to order the universe, while acknowledging the fiction of that order (OC I: 520).

The translation of Browne's *Urn Burial* in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" is just one example of the way in which literary translation functions throughout Borges's work as a rhetorical tool, here making transparent humans' imposition of order onto reality, rather than onto literature where it belongs. Ana María Barrenechea's *La expresión de la irrealidad en la*

[15] This correlation is made explicit when Borges writes that the metaphysicians on Tlön "[j]uzgan que la metafísica es una rama de la literatura fantástica" (OC I: 520).

obra de Borges (1967), Jaime Alazraki's *La prosa narrativa de Jorge Luis Borges* (1968) and a host of criticism following their lead locate themes of chaos and order, time and eternity, space and infinity, and mirrors and labyrinths as the basis for formal structures that evoke a sense of irreality in Borges's work. They overlook, however, the degree to which both those themes and those discursive elements are not to be read as the encyclopedia entry about Tlön, a fiction masquerading as reality, but as the postscript to the story written about that false encyclopedia entry, which marvels at human beings' willingness to accept that fiction as real.

Literature is the arena in which Borges argues for the distinction between reality and human ideas of orders imposed upon it; the foregrounding of literature's artifice thus forms the rhetorical basis for the majority of his creative and critical work; translation is a primary aesthetic device for deploying his rhetoric. Translation, as a trope and a literary device, as we saw with "La forma de la espada" in the introduction to this chapter, is a highly visible manifestation of mediation. Thus we see a proliferation of translators and translations in Borges's ficiton. At the same time, in the practical affairs of translation, just as literary texts cannot mimetically copy reality, so translations can never mimetically copy an original.

Psychological Literature and Its Analogy to Translation

In Tlön, psychology is the predominant form of science; all others are branches stemming from it, as the Tlönic universe is nothing more than a series of mental processes. The criticism inherent in this selection comes into view upon reading essays such as "La nadería de la personalidad" (1925) and "El arte narrativo y la magia" (1932) in which Borges makes plain his distaste for psychology, especially when it forms the basis for mimesis in literature.[16] Like Aristotle, who states in the *Poetics* that literature "is mimesis not of persons but of action and life… the goal is a certain kind of action, not a qualitative state,"

[16] In a review of Lord Dunsany, Borges writes that the Irishman's stories "[no] aspiran al examen solemne de los charlatanes del psicoanálisis" (OC IV: 343).

Borges argues that characters must be included for the sake of their actions, not to provide mimesis itself (51). The events and the plot are valued over all other aspects of the narrative. If a plot is built around a personality instead of the action, it cannot be plausible. For humans are not coherent; they perform, think and feel countless contradictory actions, thoughts and feelings that make any unity in the narrative impossible.

A runthrough of even Borges's most celebrated characters is evidence for this argument; as Sylvia Molloy states, in Borges's fictions "characters are rarely *persons*, they are narrative functions" (*Signs* 40, emphasis in the original). One of Borges's chief complaints about the literature of his day was this same privileging of character over plot, which makes way for that improbability of action that makes literature formless. In his prologue to Adolfo Bioy Casares's *La invención de Morel* (1940), Borges echoes Aristotle's concern:

> La novela característica, "psicológica", propende a ser informe. Los rusos y los discípulos de los rusos han demostrado hasta el hastío que nadie es imposible: suicidas por felicidad, asesinos por benevolencia, personas que se adoran hasta el punto de separarse para siempre, delatores por fervor o por humildad… Esa libertad plena acaba por equivaler al pleno desorden. (OC IV: 29)

Making a story's characters rather than its actions the basis for the plot leads to "pleno desorden" because characters' incoherence can take the novel in countless directions, leading it away from the central narrative. This formlessness often detracts from the events by dwelling on the description of every last detail of a character's feelings, motives and environment. Borges's diatribe continues:

> Por otra parte, la novela "psicológica" quiere ser también novela "realista": prefiere que olvidemos su carácter de artificio verbal y hace de toda vana precisión (o de toda lánguida vaguedad) un nuevo toque verosímil. Hay páginas, hay capítulos de Marcel Proust que son inaceptables como invenciones: a los que, sin saberlo, nos resignamos como a lo insípido y ocioso de cada día. (OC IV: 29)

According to Borges, novelists such as Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky and their modernist progeny such as Proust sought to recreate reality, rather than reveal a creative

interpretation of it, and thus include the minutest details in their imitations. Borges argues, through his fictional novelist Herbert Quain, that "el hecho estético no puede prescindir de algún elemento de asombro, y que asombrarse de memoria es difícil" (OC I: 522-23). The insipid and mundane details of our everyday life, routine ingrained in our memory, lack the power to astonish.[17] In contrast, in the prologue, he writes of Bioy Casares's novel: "La novela de aventuras… no se propone como una transcripción de la realidad: es un objeto artificial que no sufre ninguna parte injustificada" (OC IV: 29-30). It is precisely the *artifice* of literature, its invention within an author's mind, that makes it *art* rather than an anthropologist's notes.

An important analogy may be found between Borges's disparagement of literature that attempts to mimetically transcribe reality and his disdain for translations that attempt to mimetically transcribe the source text (or merely just claim to). Both stances stem from his belief that reality is too complex to be transcribed, and that good literature is comprised of the careful selection and combination of those details that merit attention, arranged in patterns that are plausible, even if impossible. Translation, similarly, is the careful selection of those elements of a source text that may be transposed and reconstructed in the target text—not the point for point matching between the two. In either case, to transcribe reality/the original, one would need to create a map as cumbersome as that of the Academy of Cartographers. Generalization, selection and implication are necessary to create literature. In his essay, "La postulación de la realidad" (1931), Borges argues:

> La imprecisión es tolerable o verosímil en la literatura, porque a ella propendemos siempre en la realidad. La simplificación conceptual de estados complejos es muchas veces una operación instantánea. El hecho mismo de percibir, de atender, es de orden selectivo: toda

[17] One can also relate the response Borges makes in "Los traductores de las 1001 noches" for those who would demand a perfectly accurate translation to readers or writers who demand that original literature be as real as reality, but at the same time demand the artistry and artifice that literature should provide: "Nadie requiere de la verdad que sea verosímil o inmediatamente ingeniosa: pocos lectores de la *Vida y correspondencia de Carlos Marx* reclaman indignados la simetría de las *Contrerimes* de Toulet o la severa precisión de un acróstico" (OC I: 482-83).

> atención, toda fijación de nuestra conciencia, comporta una deliberada omisión de lo no interesante. (OC I: 255).

The transcription of reality is not to be avoided because reality does not exist, but because seeking to represent reality is fruitless, impossible, despite the inclusion of infinitesimal detail. Borges advocates a plausible rather than a precise representation of reality, because if human beings were truly to take notice of every detail of their existence, they would end up as paralyzed as his character Ireneo Funes. The story "Funes el memorioso" is a parody of novels that try to imitate life through the inclusion of every last detail; incapable of the generalization Borges mentions in "La postulación de la realiad," Funes notices and remembers every perception with total attention. He becomes immobilized, his infinite memory leaving him reluctant to register new details. In noteworthy parallel to the ambitious cartographers and their 1:1 map, Funes "dos o tres veces había reconstruido un día entero; no había dudado nunca, pero cada construcción había requerido un día entero" (OC I: 587). If readers are seeking the virtual reproduction of life in a text, they might do better simply not to read but to live; readers seeking the virtual reproduction of a text in translation, might simply do better to read the source text.

Literary Superstitions

While the young ultraísta Borges employed extravagant metaphor and experimental orthography, the mature Borges would look back on that literary period with "leve remordimiento y… suma incomodidad" and characterize this vanguardist writing as false and disingenuous ("Las 'Nuevas Generaciones' literarias" OC IV: 316). In his 1969 poem "Invocación a Joyce," Borges draws a parallel between the 'Nuevas Generaciones' of Latin America and modernist writers of Europe, to satirize both parties' pretense of originality: "jugábamos a ser el primer Adán / que dio nombre a las cosas" (OC II: 436). The neologisms these groups created were representative of the Pound's exhortation to "Make it New," this generation seeking to do something radically different from their literary predecessors.

Borges was fascinated (if not occasionally put off) by Joyce's *Ulysses* as a young man and remained so throughout his career; in 1925 he considered its use of exotic language just enough to make the novel "millonario de vocablos y estilos" and Joyce "audaz como una proa y universal como la rosa de los vientos" (*Inquisiciones* 27-28).[18] And in a 1939 review of *Work in Progress* portions of *Finnegans Wake*, Borges wrote that Joyce's language use made him the premier writer of his generation and that in *Ulysses*, "hay sentencias, hay párrafos, que no son inferiores a los más ilustres de Shakespeare o de Sir Thomas Browne" (OC IV: 535). The novel under review, however, was so rife with riddles, loan-words and puns that he claimed not to exaggerate when deeming *Finnegans Wake* "una concatenación de retruécanos cometidos en un inglés onírico y que es dificil no calificar de frustrados e incompetentes" (OC IV: 535).[19] Innovative use of language can be exciting, but in excess, it can become pretentious and boring.

The use of the first-person plural in "Invocación a Joyce" is noteworthy, considering the long-standing debates on Latin American literatures in which Borges frequently participated.[20] While many writers of his time either labored slavishly to imitate European

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[18] While he often disdains its representation in modernist novels, Borges admires Joyce's techniques for postulating reality in *Ulysses*: "En las páginas del *Ulises* bulle con alborotos de picadero la realidad total. No la mediocre realidad de quienes sólo advierten en el mundo las abstraídas operaciones del alma y su miedo ambicioso de no sobreponerse a la muerte, ni esa otra realidad que entra por los sentidos y en que conviven nuestra carne y la acera, la luna y el aljibe. La dualidad de la existencia está en él: esa inquietación ontológica que no se asombra meramente de ser, sino de ser en este mundo preciso, donde hay zaguanes y palabras y naipes y escrituras eléctricas en la limpidez de las noches" (*Inquisiciones* 26).

[19] Borges stated in a 1978 talk: "Si leemos algo con dificultad, el autor ha fracasado. Por eso considero que un escritor como Joyce ha fracasado esencialmente, porque su obra requiere un esfuerzo" ("El libro" OC IV: 203). While few would qualify Borges's fiction as easy reading, his concern is primarily with the overabundance of self-reflexive language, which, he would argue, detracts from the story.

[20] The poem's critique of vanguardist art aims at Latin American and European literatures alike:

Fuimos el imagismo, el cubismo,
los conventículos y sectas
que las crédulas universidades veneran.
Inventamos la falta de puntuación,
la omisión de mayúsculas,
las estrofas en forma de paloma
de los bibliotecarios de Alejandría.

authors, or demanded that Latin American literature deal expressly with regional themes and declare itself apart from European tradition, in numerous talks and essays Borges dismisses any hierarchical relationship between the two. Further along in his prologue to *La invención de Morel*, Borges derides Ortega y Gasset's claim that psychological literature is all that can remain of interest to modern readers. In praising the adventure novel, he makes no distinction between Latin American and European literatures, locating them in one literary generation: "considero que ninguna otra época posee novelas de tan admirable argumento como *The Turn of the Screw*, como *Der Prozess*, como *Le Voyageur sur la Terre*, como esta que ha logrado, en Buenos Aires, Adolfo Bioy Casares" (OC II: 30).

Borges's candid placement of a Latin American writer alongside authors such as Henry James, Kafka and Julien Green, long before the discovery of *Cien años de soledad*, or even his own explosion on the French poststructuralist scene, indicates an incredulous and irreverent response to the mystification of the European literary canon typified by T.S. Eliot in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1920).[21] Indeed, Borges's 1951 lecture at the Colegio Libre de Estudios Superiores, later collected in the second edition of *Discusión*, entitled "El escritor argentino y la tradición," is a displacement of Eliot's claim to tradition onto Latin America. Eliot opens his essay disputing there being a lack of tradition in English language literature, and dismissing the deferential attitude held toward the establishment of French criticism. The French literary tradition, he argues, *is* the English tradition. For a writer must compose "with the feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order" (49).

Ceniza, la labor de nuestras manos
y un fuego ardiente nuestra fe. (OC II: 436).

[21] For more on Borges and Eliot, see Sergio Waisman's section "Contrasting Effects of Translation in Borges and T.S. Eliot" 146-48.

Borges's essay begins much the same way, claiming his skepticism toward the "problem" of Argentine writers' literary tradition.[22] After discussing and summarily discounting several contemporary attitudes toward the tradition of Argentine literature, "El escritor argentino y la tradición," broadens Eliot's claim to tradition not only to include Latin America but to pertain especially to it: "Creo que nuestra tradición es toda la cultura occidental, y creo también que tenemos derecho a esta tradición, mayor que el que pueden tener los habitantes de una u otra nación occidental" (OC I: 323). Borges adds that peripheral cultures, such as Jewish peoples or the Irish, create outstanding literature, because they live within a hegemonic culture, but are not bound to it with any significant devotion.[23] He writes that "los argentinos, los sudamericanos en general, estamos en una situación análoga; podemos manejar todos los temas europeos, manejarlos sin supersticiones, con una irreverencia que puede tener, y ya tiene, consecuencias afortunadas" (OC I: 323). The superstitions from which Latin American writers may be free are the cultural superiority of Europe, the backwardness of Latin America, their artistic relegation to regional themes, and disinheritance from their cultural patrimony. Argentine literature need not banish itself to the pampa, to the fetishization of the gaucho and that falsification which is "local color," for feeling disenfranchised from the universal (read: Western) themes permitted literatures from the cultural center. Inherent in the mystification of Western literature is a sense of Europe's cultural authority. Even as modernism sought to decenter the transcendental subject, it

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[22]Borges defined this "problem" in an earlier essay, "Los escritores argentinos y Buenos Aires" (1937): "Hay escritores (y lectores) que juran que ser escritor y ser argentino es una especia de contradicción, y casi de imposibilidad. Sin ir tan lejos, me atrevo a sospechar que ser porteño es uno de los actos más imprudentes que se pueden cometer en Buenos Aires… La razón es clara, los porteños carecemos de todo encanto exótico y somos demasiados para el préstamo de socorros mutuos" (OC IV: 308).

[23] It is precisely this kind of situation that Borges lays out in the opening of "Tema del traidor y del héroe": "La acción transcurre en un país oprimido y tenaz: Polonia, Irlanda, la república de Venecia, algún Estado sudamericano o balcánico" (OC I: 597). The plot of this story could have occurred in any of the regions Borges mentions because all of them share the cultural marginalization that allows for the literary irreverence required for a literary translator to devise a citywide theater and stage a play that appropriates and combines Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* with Swiss theatrical historical reenactments called *Festspielen*.

recuperated bourgeois individualism through the "strong personalities" of authors such as Pound and Eliot, creators of authoritative literary works and criticism.[24] Borges argues that there is no authority reserved solely for European writers, no demands of reverence that may be placed on Latin American writers; they may address any theme from any angle, taking to it the cultural experience they have had both at home and abroad.

Analogously, Latin Americans may translate literature with this same sense of irreverence. In "La supersticiosa ética del lector" Borges critiques what he calls the superstition of style, which leads readers to judge a text not by its efficacy in telling a good story, but in "las habilidades aparentes del escritor: sus comparaciones, su acústica, los episodios de su puntuación y de su sintáxis" (OC I: 236). Authors such as Pound and Joyce, as well as countless writers on both sides of the Atlantic, claim a style that is inalterable, perfect. Borges complains: "La preferida equivocación de la literatura de hoy es el énfasis. Palabras definitivas, palabras que postulan sabidurías adivinas o angélicas o resoluciones de una más que humana firmeza—*único, nunca, siempre, todo, perfección, acabado*—son del comercio habitual de *todo* escritor" (OC I: 239, emphasis in the original). Borges uses translation to illustrate this point, claiming that those works which presume themselves to be perfect, definitive, inalterable are the most apt to be forgotten by history. For if their perfection lies with their style, when style changes, these unique, polished texts will no longer be perfect. The natural transformations that always occur within a language make the precious words of "definitive" works sound quaint or obscure to future generations of readers. To the contrary, he claims:

> la página que tiene vocación de inmortalidad puede atravesar el fuego de las erratas, de las versiones aproximativas, de las distraídas lecturas, de las incomprensiones, sin dejar el alma en la prueba. No se puede impunemente variar (así lo afirman quienes restablecen su texto) ninguna línea de las fabricadas por Góngora; pero el *Quijote* gana

[24] Lawrence Venuti notes this pheonomenon in Pound's translations of an Anglo-Saxon text he called "The Seafarer" (1912): "The archaizing translation strategy interferes with the individualistic illusion of transparency, but the revisions intensify the theme of heroic individualism" (*Invisibility* 30).

> póstumas batallas contra sus traductores y sobrevive a toda descuidada versión. ("La supersticiosa ética del lector" OC I: 238)

The *Quixote* wins battles with its translators because the novel's value is located in its content rather than its style. The individual words are less important than the adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza; even replete with mistranslations, the stories remain delightful. Moreover, as each translator's language becomes antiquated with the passing of time, a new translator must take up the battle again. The superstition of style is disproven, as, despite Franco-Argentine critic Paul Groussac's condescending designation of the text as "prosa de sobremesa," the *Quixote's* charm endures despite the poverty of style he and poet Leopoldo Lugones see in it, despite the variations in its language in translation.[25] With "La supersticiosa ética del lector" Borges brings together several basic tenets of translation aesthetics: the irrelevance of authors' personalities, the importance of content over the style of its presentation, irreverence toward literary tradition and the canon, and disbelief in the existence of definitive texts, which cannot be improved.

If there is no such thing as a definitive—finished, unique, inalterable—text, then in translation there can be no unfaithfulness to an original, because the original itself keeps changing—not in how it is written but in how it is read and received. In his first major essay on translation, "Las dos maneras de traducir" (1926), Borges states: "[s]uele presuponerse que cualquier texto original es *incorregible* de puro bueno, y que los traductores son unos chapuceros irreparables, padres del frangollo y de la mentira" (256, my emphasis). In the rest of the essay, prefiguring the skepticism toward style that would appear in the aforementioned "La supersticiosa ética del lector," Borges discusses how within a language words change meaning, and how there exist many different ways to say the same thing so that the natural variation and recombination that occurs in translation cannot be traitorous, because there is

[25] In a later essay, comparing Cervantes's novel with the personality-laden perfection of an author such as Flaubert, Borges would add, "Quijote y Sancho son más reales que el soldado español que los inventó, pero ninguna criatura de Flaubert es real como Flaubert" ("Flaubert y su destino ejemplar" OC I: 314).

nothing to betray. In a future essay on translation, "Los traductores de las 1001 noches" (1935), Borges would take his argument that no text can be "incorregible" beyond his already radical affirmation in "Las dos maneras de traducir"—"creo en las buenas traducciones de obras literarias… y opino que hasta los versos son traducibles"—to suggest that a translator may even *improve* an original (OC I: 256).

Local Color

In several essays and talks, Borges looks back on his early writing with a sense of embarrassment for the falsity he ascribed to saturating his work with localisms and orthographically changing words to reflect regional pronunciation. This "local color" would come to be a major point of criticism in the original writing and translations of other writers as well, for the nationalist project, and the false sense of history "local color" gave their texts. With his "El escritor argentino y la tradición" Borges is not simply claiming the Western Tradition for Latin America, but is critiquing the ways certain oppressive aspects of that tradition already permeate Latin American writers' attitudes toward the subjects of their writing, even as they claim to distance themselves from Europe. In a nationalist project that seeks to incorporate only what is "Argentine" into its literature—whether out of rebellion toward a cultural colonizer or out of a sense of estrangement from Europe—gauchesque poets, Borges argued, were both marginalizing the gaucho and compadrito they mystify and disenfranchising the legions of immigrants who then comprised the majority of the population.[26] Speaking to this nationalist erasure of origins and of cultural others, Borges writes: "los nacionalistas simulan venerar las capacidades de la mente argentina pero quieren

[26] To use the simple term "colonizer" here would be remiss, for Spain had long since lost its political or cultural dominance over Latin America. As Sylvia Molloy rightly points out, even in the nineteenth century "there is no real 'empire' to write back to nor to substantially dissent from. Even before secession, Spain, a decaying metropolis already superseded by its energetic colonies, was no longer a model to subvert; she had long been replaced by France (and to a point England) in the cultural imaginary of Latin America." Precisely identifying Borges's project with "El escritor argentino y la tradición," she writes "It is not striking back, in name of a recuperated indigenous past, but constructing itself afresh, as an alternate, transculturated West" ("Report" 371-72).

limitar el ejercicio poético de esa mente a algunos pobres temas locales, como si los argentinos sólo pudiéramos hablar de orillas y estancias y no del universo" (OC I: 321). For, in addition to limiting the themes Argentine writers may address, gauchesque literature has the insidious ability to perpetuate the European center that nationalist authors seek to dismantle by imposing European literary and cultural standards upon gaucho and compadrito folk art.

In the first place, Borges argues, popular poets deal with universal themes: love and loss, the pain of loneliness and being far from home, rather than the topical themes of gauchesque poetry: horses, knife fights or the exact color of sunset over the pampas. There is also the affectation of gaucho speech: "los poetas gauchescos cultivan un lenguaje deliberadamente popular, que los poetas populares no ensayan" (OC I: 317). This is not to say that gaucho Spanish is always correct, he adds, but that mistakes are made out of ignorance, rather than a forced, unrealistic imitation. Thus, while the popular *payada*, or gaucho folksong, can be understood by a Colombian, a Mexican or a Spaniard, to comprehend the literature of gauchesque poets such as Estanislao del Campo or Ascasubi they would need a glossary of Argentinisms. Even the meter of gauchesque poetry has an element of affectation; while it is written in octosyllabic meter, in the vein of the popular payadores, gauchesque authors composed poetry using the lettered elite's traditional eleven-syllable stanza. Reminding us of the verbal artifice that is literature, and thereby destabilizing the hegemonic stance of those poets who are erasing the identity of gauchos and compadritos while laying claim to the authentic Argentina, Borges writes, "la poesía gauchesca… es un género literario tan artificial como cualquier otro" (OC I: 318). Access to all Western themes thus not only ensures Latin America's place at the literary table, but more importantly, diminishes those nationalist projects that oppress the very people they claim to represent.

I have dwelled on Borges's "El escritor argentino y la traducción" not only to foreground the irreverence he held toward European tradition, which made it acceptable and even preferable to translate European literature not as sacred texts, but as moveable events. I

also want to make the connection that, just as Borges indicates that "local color" has an ethnocentric twinge in Argentine national literature, in analyzing translations he is also attuned to the ideological implications a translator's ascription of "local color" has for a translated text. In his early essay "Las dos maneras de traducir" this point is already made clear. The two types of translation to which Borges refers are "classic" and "romantic." Classic translators are concerned solely with the text and not at all with the author or his context, while Romantic translators have no interest in the text but in the life and times of the author who produced it. While Borges would more likely fall in the Classic camp, he prefigures Lawrence Venuti's criticism of the domesticating efforts of "Classic" translators who, concerned only with the artistic value of the work, mold the original text's words, syntax and even metaphors to fit into existing literary structures in the target culture.[27]

"Romantic" translators are guilty of an equally serious crime: the same ethnocentrism inherent in transparently translating a foreign text to read as if it were originally written in the target language is afoot when a translator imposes imaginary cultural expectations on the source culture in the form of local color:

> Gustación de lejanía, viaje casero por el tiempo y por el espacio, vestuario de destinos ajenos, nos son prometidos por las traslaciones literarias de obras antiguas: promesa que suele quedarse en el prólogo. *El anunciado propósito de veracidad hace del traductor un falsario*, pues éste, para mantener la extrañeza de lo que traduce se ve obligado a espesar el color local, a encrudecer las crudezas, a empalagar con las dulzuras y a enfatizarlo todo hasta la mentira. (*Textos Recobrados*, 258, my emphasis)

The addition of local color obscures the fact that the history and culture of ancient (or even recent) texts are in many ways entirely inaccessible to the translator. Borges expands this point in "Las versiones homéricas" in which he insists on the fact that the ancient world is impenetrable: to translate its texts as if transcribing the reality in which they were produced is a fallacy based in arrogance. "De Homero," he writes, "ignoramos infinitamente los

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[27] See *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation.* 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2008.

énfasis" (OC I: 282). While the events of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* live on in Homer's texts, we have no access to the world in which they occurred or the people whom they affected. What is left, he argues, is "una complicada ecuación que registra relaciones precisas entre cantidades incógnitas" (OC I: 282).

As opposed to national literature, when dealing with translation Borges seems more concerned about assertions of "literality" than about the actual interpolation of "local color" into a translated text; these embellishments garner interest for their creativity, and have the added benefit of telling one as much about the translator as the original text. In "Los traductores de las 1001 noches," Borges reviews as many as eight versions of *The Thousand and One Nights*, translated by different translators into English, French and German. While the first of the Western translations, by Antoine Galland, bears the problematic feature of including numerous stories not originally found in the Arabic text, the version Borges finds most unfaithful is by J. C. Mardrus. Analyzing a section of his translation, in which Mardrus turns what is a single sentence in the other translations into ten florid lines of exoticizing prose, Borges intuits the presence of the French "Salón de Acuarelistas." He writes of the fragment, "como ensayo de prosa visual a la manera del *Retrato de Dorian Gray*, acepto (y aun venero) esa descripción: como versión 'literal y completa' de un pasaje compuesto en el siglo XIII, repito que me alarma infinitamente" (OC I: 486). Again, it is the claim to fidelity that concerns Borges, rather than the unfaithful translation.

The seven hundred years, not to mention the change of language and of culture, that have passed between the collection of the stories of *The Thousand and One Nights* and Mardrus's translation have left a legacy of historical, literary, cultural and philosophical changes that have influenced the way Arabic culture is received. Borges writes that a text is an axis of countless intertextual relationships; as a text travels through time, relationships are added, others are lost. What holds them together is the situation of literature in that moment. We read ourselves in literature, regardless of when it was created:

> El libro no es un ente incomunicado: es una relación, es un eje de innumerables relaciones. *Una literatura difiere de otra, ulterior o anterior, menos por el texto que por la manera de ser leída*: si me fuera otorgado leer cualquier página actual—ésta, por ejemplo—como la leerán el año 2000, yo sabría cómo sería la literatura del año 2000. (OC II: 152, my emphasis)

An intractable fact of texts' being read differently in every epoch is that "Mardrus no deja nunca de maravillarse de la pobreza de 'color oriental' de *Las mil y una noches*" (OC I: 487). Compelled to include in the text those elements of local color which he and his readers attribute to the Near East leads him to include moons, viziers and palm trees: "Continuamente Mardrus quiere completar el trabajo que los lánguidos árabes anónimos descuidaron. Añade paisajes *art-nouveau*, buenas obscenidades, breves interludios cómicos, rasgos circunstanciales, simetrías, mucho orientalismo visual" (OC I: 489).[28] All of these additions of local color are problematic in the sense that when presented as "true and literal versions," the fact that readers are engaging with a text that is more French than Arabic is obscured. It gives a false sense of reality, while ignoring the fantastic verbal artifice that made Mardrus's translation so popular among French modernist authors. For just as he finds that Lane and Galland are not guilty of a mortal sin for eliminating the erotic from *The Thousand and One Nights*, "cuando lo primordial es destacar el ambiente mágico," Borges does not write his review to censure Mardrus's translation, but to emphasize that it should not be praised for its fidelity but for its creativity (OC I: 478). He writes, "celebrar la fidelidad de

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[28] These additions of local color to translations are parallel to those Borges writes of in "El escritor argentino y la traducción," in which he makes quite an apt analogy: "...en el libro árabe por excelencia, en el Alcorán, no hoy camellos; yo creo que si hubiera alguna duda sobre la autenticidad del Alcorán, bastaría esa ausencia de camellos para probar que es árabe. Fue escrito por Mahoma, y Mahoma, como árabe, no tenía por qué saber que los camellos eran especialmente árabes; eran para él parte de la realidad, no tenía por qué distinguirlos; en cambio, un falsario, un turista, un nacionalista árabe, lo primero que hubiera hecho es prodigar camellos, caravanas de camellos en cada página" (OC I: 320).

It is worth noting that a search on the University of Michigan's Digital Reproduction Service provides eighteen references to camels in the Qur'an (http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/k/koran/koran-idx?type=simple&q1=camel&size=First+100). Borges appears to have seized on a footnote in Gibbon's sixth volume of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in which the historian discusses the many uses made of camels, including of their milk: "Mohamet himself, who was fond of milk, prefers the cow and does not even mention the camel" (199).

Mardrus es omitir el alma de Mardrus, es no aludir siquiera a Mardrus. Su infidelidad, su infidelidad creadora y feliz, es lo que nos debe importar" (OC I: 490).

The long equation of relationships between texts and their cultural influence, the precursors they create and the texts they inspire, as Borges mentions in "Las versiones homéricas," is not an obstacle to translation, making it a pointless procedure because it cannot reproduce the past. Rather, it provides a new trajectory, a new web of texts, with which to create. Free from the literary superstitions that have compelled translators to be painstaking in their efforts to reproduce the last detail of a venerated text from a supposed superior culture; to erase all otherness of the original by forcing it into current literary standards; or to falsify and misrepresent that otherness by imposing local color, Borges's approach to translation allows an original text *and* its afterlife, as Benjamin and Derrida call it, to form the basis for literary creation in the target language, rather than a cultural, historical and linguistic transposition of a text and a time that is irrecoverable.

Origins and Originality

In a 1938 review of a translation from the Chinese, Borges relates an event that occurred while he was a young man studying Asian literatures:

> Hacia 1916 resolví entregarme al estudio de las literaturas orientales. Al recorrer con entusiasmo y credulidad la versión inglesa de cierto filósofo chino, di con este memorable pasaje: 'A un condenado a muerte no le importa bordear un precipicio, porque ha renunciado a la vida'. En ese punto el traductor colocó un asterisco y me advirtió que su interpretación era preferible a la de otro sinólogo rival que traducía de esta manera: "Los sirvientes destruyen obras de arte, para no tener que juzgar sus bellezas y sus defectos'. Entonces… dejé de leer. Un misterioso escepticismo se había deslizado en mi alma.
>
> Cada vez que el destino me sitúa frente a la 'versión literal' de alguna obra maestra de la literatura china o arábiga, recuerdo ese penoso incidente. ("Una versión inglesa de los cantares más antiguos del mundo" OC IV: 488)

Borges holds "literal versions" of translated works in dubious regard, because even translations that follow a text word for word, to the point of refusing to translate metaphor

and figurative speech into equivalent expressions, still produce wildly different results. Like Lane, Galland, Burton, Mardrus and the other translators of *The Thousand and One Nights*, each translator brings to a text a set of cultural assumptions, historical background, and social conditioning, so that, even within the same nation and language, any word from the original might have contradictory translations in the target language. This discrepancy can only grow from generation to generation. What is more, a translator's own cultural experience, in combination with the temporal and spatial distance translations entail, obscure many aspects of an original text, even when the translator believes that she or he can understand each word. Borges's fiction and critical work is adamant in its insistence that history is irretrievable, that interpretation is all an author, a historian or a translator has available, and that admission—or creative revelation—of this fact is essential to any writerly endeavor.

Borges illustrates this with the story "La busca de Averroes" (1949). The tale recalls the twelfth century philosopher ibn-Rushd (called Averroes by his successors) of al-Andalus, and his process of writing a commentary on the *Poetics*. Averroes is stumped by what the narrator ironically calls "un problema de índole filológica." The words Averroes cannot comprehend as he comments this translation of a translation are *tragedy* and *comedy*: "esas dos palabras arcanas pululaban en el texto de la *Poética*; imposible eludirlas" (OC I: 701). The problem, of course, is not philological, but cultural. Even while below his window, boys in the street are playing make-believe—one pretending to be a minaret, another standing on his shoulders chanting like the muezzin making his call to prayer, and the other boys bowing in the street, playing the congregation—the concept of theater is simply beyond Averroes's grasp.

That evening at a dinner, Abulcásim, who has spent time in China, relates the experience of visiting a Chinese theater. He explains the chairs facing the stage, the fifteen men on stage who prayed, sang and spoke to one another; who rode horses, though one could not see the horses; who sat in prisons though the prisons were invisible. The other philosophers at the dinner could not envision what Abulcásim was describing, or at least, the

narrator adds, "nadie pareció querer comprender" (OC I: 704). The prohibition against representational art, which had become predominant in Islam since the ninth century, made even the thought of theater dangerous, even if not inconceivable. When Abulcásim invites the dinner guests to imagine that "alguien muestra una historia en vez de referirla" and explains, we *see* the characters wake up, we *see* them eat, we *see* them sleep, the host, Farach, asks if these characters spoke (OC I: 704). When Abulcásim responds that they not only spoke but sang and gave sermons, Farach replies simply, "En tal caso… no se requieren *viente* personas. Un solo hablista puede referir cualquier cosa, por compleja que sea" (OC I: 705, emphasis in the original). Conceptually, Farach, and Averroes, cannot, and perhaps will not, move past the only conceivable performance they can imagine: a single speaker referring the events of a history. They had not yet had the experience afforded the Greeks as early as 500 b.c.e., when, as Aristotle states in the *Poetics*, Aeschylus "innovated [tragedy] by raising the number of actors from one to two" (43). In his 1952 essay "El pudor de la historia" Borges emphasizes the significance of this addition for the future of art: "lo significativo de aquel pasaje del uno al dos, de la unidad a la pluralidad y así a lo infinito. Con el segundo actor entraron el diálogo y las indefinidas posibilidades de la reacción de unos caracteres sobre otros" (OC II: 161).[29] Yet even with Aristotle's own explanation, Averroes cannot conceive the meaning of the elusive terms.

The time, distance, culture, art, religion and philosophy that separate Averroes and Aristotle make literal translation impossible. Yet Borges, unlike Renan—Averroes's biographer—does not ridicule the philosopher for his efforts at understanding an other; he holds up to equal scrutiny contemporary practices of imagining the past. Upon concluding the tale, the narrator adds a paragraph of his own commentary in which he writes, "Sentí que Averroes, queriendo imaginar lo que es un drama sin haber sospechado lo que es un teatro,

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[29] See Balderston's "Borges, Aristotle, Averroes: The Poetics of *Poetics*" (203) for more on this subject.

no era más absurdo que yo, queriendo imaginar a Averroes, sin otro material que unos adarmes de Renan, de Lane y de Asín Palacios" (OC I: 707). Borges does not regret the inassimilable distance that separates cultures of the past and present, but rather uses it to explain that literalness cannot be a criterion for judging the worth of translations. The past, the day to day doings of others, cannot be fully grasped…so why try? Why not instead use an original text to openly inquire its significance for the translator? As a subject who is firmly rooted in a cultural context, who comes into contact with the original text at a different point in its cultural trajectory, the translator has a new pile of "rags and tatters," as Lyotard called it, with which to patch up or construct upon the gaps and potentialities of the original.

If "La busca de Averroes" illustrates how certain concepts, for either historical or cultural reasons, become inaccessible in translation, "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote" (1939) approaches translation from another angle, allegorizing how a text, once removed from its original context, takes on new meanings not present at the time of publication. As the story opens, the narrator enumerates the French symbolist poet, Pierre Menard's, visible work, a disconnected list of dilettante literary and philosophical undertakings described as "de fácil y breve enumeración."[30] The narrator's main interest lies with Menard's invisible work, his "meramente asombroso" project of writing *the* Quixote, a text that corresponded word for word, line for line with Cervantes's novel (OC I: 533).[31] Upon beginning this task, Menard's first approach is essentially to become Cervantes: to know Spanish extremely well, take up the Catholic faith, fight the Arabs and the Turks and forget all the history that

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[30] For an analysis of the historical relevance of Menard's visible work, see Daniel Balderston's chapter "Menard and His Contemporaries: The Arms and Letters Debate" 18-38. For an examination of the role of translation in the visible work, see Sergio Waisman's "Issues of Translation in Menard's 'Obra Visible'" 95-102.

[31] Pierre Menard shares Borges's contempt for both the modernists who believe their time and their art to be unique among all other points in history, and for those "romantic" writers (or "literal" translators) who imagine all epochs and worldviews to remain the same. Menard abhors those books that place historical figures in other time periods: "sólo aptos…para ocasionar el plebeyo placer del anacronismo o (lo que es peor) para embelesarnos con la idea primaria de que todas las épocas son iguales o que son distintas" (533). Balderston suggests the "parasitic novel" to which Menard refers is Joyce's *Ulysses* (21).

transpired between 1602 and 1918. Yet Menard soon changes his course; "ser, de alguna manera, Cervantes y llegar al *Quijote* le parecía menos arduo —por consiguiente, menos interesante— que seguir siendo Pierre Menard y llegar al *Quijote* a través de las experiencias de Pierre Menard" (OC I: 534). To translate the novel ignoring all of the history that has passed between the time its publication and that of its translation would be facile. Attempting to recreate early modern Spain limits the richness his text could have when taking into account: "no en vano han transcurrido trescientos años, cargados de complejísimos hechos. Entre ellos, para mencionar uno solo: el mismo *Quijote*" (OC I: 535). Menard's own experiences enrich his version of *Don Quixote*, for the very fact that they are so difficult to reconcile with the original text.

Menard compares his arduous task to that of Cervantes, finding the Spaniard had a much easier time of it; chance, invention and the commonplaces of early seventeenth-century Spanish conspired to make a spontaneous work of art. The Frenchman, conversely, must negotiate all the possible formal and thematic variants, and the blueprint already established by the "original" text (Pierre Menard puts the word in quotes). Yet even though he composes the text word for word, the point of the story is that the conditions of both its composition and its reception have made it an entirely new text. Where Cervantes's language sounds affected, Menard's archaizing style sounds serious, even understated. Cervantes's rhetorical flourish, calling history the mother of time, becomes astonishing in Menard's version: "Menard, contemporáneo de William James, no define la historia como una indigación de la realidad sino como su origen. La verdad histórica, para él, no es lo que sucedió; es lo que juzgamos que sucedió" (OC I: 537). Menard has created (and I write "created" as opposed to "found") a latent meaning in the original, and given it an expression that could not have been conceived of at the time of its production in 1600.

If, within the same language, a text takes on such dramatically different meaning, how much greater must those transformations be when the recreation of a text is not only in a new time and place, but a new language. Borges locates such a record of mediation in the

text in “Los traductores de las 1001 noches” when he notes how Antoine Galland’s translation of the *Arabian Nights* have more of an eighteenth century than a ninth century feel to them: “Nosotros, meros lectores anacrónicos del xiglo XX, percibimos en ellos el sabor dulzarrón del siglo XVIII y no el desvanecido aroma oriental, que hace doscientos años determinó su *innovación* y su gloria” (OC I: 474, my emphasis). Again, in his satirical deprecation of “mere” twentieth century readers, Borges affirms the importance of history as it intervenes in the way a text is read. He makes clear that translation is mediation, the medieval Arabic, Persian and Hindustani supplanted by the eighteenth century French; innovation, a renewal of the original in which are inscribed the social determinations, “linguistic, literary, and historical materials” that fifty years after the publication of Borges’s essay would lead Venuti to reclaim the visibility of the translator (196).

Conclusion

“Los traductores de las 1001 noches” is most famous for Borges’s celebration of “creative infidelities” in translation (OC I: 490). His arrival at this point, of not merely considering a translation to be as good an original, or simply acknowledging the impossibility of creating in translation a mimetic copy of the original, but of advocating translation as a site of innovation and creativity, seems a culmination of the points his stories and essays have made thus far. “El escritor argentino y la tradición” invites writers and translators to approach universal themes and texts with irreverence, with no superstitions about their originality; they may be incorporated into a Latin American context without being “corrupted,” and European texts may be translated without fear of the transformations that translation inherently entail. Translators need not adhere to the impossible standards of a definitive text, but may treat the original as a version of the text they are about to create in translation.

In “La busca de Averroes” and “Las versiones homéricas” Borges foregrounds the inassimilable otherness that characterizes foreign texts and which make “literal” translations

necessarily false. Translators bring only their assumptions and second-hand knowledge to the original text; they may not know what was poetic language, or what was innovative about a text: "ignoramos infinitamente los énfasis" ("Las versiones" OC I: 282). He continues this line of thought in "Los traductores de las 1001 noches," asserting that what is exotic to readers of a foreign text may be banal to the original readership. Literal translation is impossible; and the creative freedom this affords translators should be celebrated rather than hidden by false presumptions of fidelity. And Pierre Menard reminds us of how both texts and translations accrue meaning as they pass through time, that one does not translate a text in its nascent state of original publication but in the context in which the translator currently exists, which includes the trajectory of the original up to that very point.

Consequently, when Borges celebrates a translator's creative infidelities, it is because all that is left of an original text when it makes it to a translator's hands is, what his contemporary Walter Benjamin would call, "information—hence, something inessential" (69). While Benjamin, in his "The Task of the Translator" (1923), claims that the transmission of information is "the hallmark of bad translations," and states that what must be transposed is "the unfathomable, the mysterious, the 'poetic,'" Borges would argue that these very qualities are not inherent to the original but created by the translator's relationship to it (69-70). The "information" a text holds is "inessential" not in the sense of being unnecessary, but in lacking that modernist concept of individual, irreproducible, essence. A translator may use the information an original text provides creatively, constructing a text that adheres to the original to the degree she or he sees aesthetically necessary. Whether one endeavors to be unfailingly faithful or not, it is the translator who determines what is unfathomable, mysterious or poetic about a text, based on her or his own social and historical context in relation to that of the text, and its legacy.

"El hombre en el umbral," may be the culmination of Borges's use of translation to destabilize his fiction, giving us a wink with his allusion to his most famous translation essay. The story, the narrator Borges explains, was recounted to him by his friend at the

British Council, Christopher Dewey, presumably in English. Setting the scene for this story, Borges begins with the satirical contradictions that often mark his work:

> De las historias que esa noche contó, me atrevo a reconstruir la que sigue.
>
> Mi texto será fiel: líbreme Alá de la tentación de añadir breves rasgos circunstanciales o de agravar, con interpolaciones de Kipling, el cariz exótico del relato. Éste, por lo demás, tiene un antiguo y simple sabor que sería una lástima perder, acaso el de *Las mil y una noches*. ("El hombre en el umbral" OC I: 737)

As soon as the narrator claims that his text will be faithful, we know it will be anything but. When he calls upon Allah to liberate him from the impulse to embellish his translation, the narrator has already fallen sway to the exoticism of local color, even as he is being ironic about even the possibility of ever recounting a story faithfully. The interpolations of Kipling the narrator promises to avoid recall Borges's assertion in "El escritor argentino y la traducción" that even *Don Segundo Sombra*, the most Argentine novel of all, is permeated with the British writer's influence.[32] Finally, the narrator writes, he must not add local color to his story because it would be a shame to lose the simple, ancient flavor of his text (which is, we must remember, a translation of an English story) which recalls *The Thousand and One Nights*—a text compiled from countless anonymous sources, augmented by stories interpolated by a French orientalist, to which he has access only through translation, any of which is a virtual repository of local color!

Numerous others of Borges's fictions involve protagonists whose direct speech and writing could not have been in Spanish, but are presented so, with no explanation for their translation. Among them are "El jardin de senderos que se bifurcan," "La lotería en

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[32] "*Don Segundo Sombra* abunda en metáforas de un tipo que nada tiene que ver con el habla de la campaña y sí con las metáforas de los cenáculos contemporáneos de Montmartre. En cuanto a la fábula, a la historia, es fácil comprobar en ella el influjo de *Kim* de Kipling, cuya acción está en la India, a su vez, bajo el influjo de *Huckleberry Finn* de Mark Twain… para que nosotros tuviéramos ese libro fue necesario que Güiraldes recordara la técnica poética de los cenáculos franceses de su tiempo y la obra de Kipling que había leído hacía muchos años… para que este libro que no es menos argentino, lo repito, por haber aceptado esas influencias" (OC I: 321).

Babilonia," "Tema del traidor y del héroe," "El milagro secreto," and "La escritura del Dios." Molloy writes that Borges's fictions "question their own originality, blur genealogy and obliterate their point of departure" (*Signs* 84). Borges's essays insist on translation's obscuring of origins, and his fictions bear the proof. There is no point of departure for Borges's "translated" fictions, only moments of intersection with the author, the translator, "el hombre que entreteje estos símbolos," and sends them out again into the world of letters ("El muerto" OC I: 657). With no origin, there can be no fixed identity; with no fixed identity, there can be no fidelity. While few critics consider Borges to be an especially rhetorical author, his concern with constantly revealing the artifice of literature has wider implications than for art alone. Through translation, Borges is displacing a mask, a mask placed on the other, to make her or him fit our desires, and a mask placed on reality, which hides humans' often deadly imposition of what they assert is the natural order.

In the chapters that follow, I will be exploring Borges's translation practice, placing it in relationship to his aesthetic theory. Like his critical work, Borges's translations evolve, often in contradictory directions. While many critics, expecting wild interpolations, have commented disappointedly on what they see as the literalness of Borges's translations, they miss how the "creative infidelities" Borges advocates are present in even the closest of his translations. From the hyperfidelity of "La última hoja del *Ulises*," to the "sanitization" (as he calls it in "Los traductores de las 1001 noches") of *Orlando*, the rhetorical subversion of *A Room of One's Own* to the transformations in gender and genre in *Bartleby* and *The Wild Palms*, literal is not a word to describe Borges's translation. But, by his own standards, this does not make him unique. For, as we have seen, *literal* is a term unfit for describing his translations, or those of anyone else.

CHAPTER II

SEX, GENDER, SEXUALITY AND THE NOTHINGNESS OF PERSONALITY: IDENTITY IN BORGES'S TRANSLATIONS OF "PENELOPE" AND *ORLANDO*

Aún, siquiera parcialmente, soy Borges.

Jorge Luis Borges, "El zahir"

In the mid 1920s, Borges published two texts in which lifelong elements of his literary aesthetic were established. The first, "La nadería de la personalidad" (1925), criticizes psychological literature and its efforts to represent a unified subject, claiming that in literature and life "no hay tal yo de conjunto." This sentiment would surface again and again in Borges's critical writings, such as "La postulación de la realidad" (1931) or "Las versiones homéricas" (1932), where he would side with (or at least lean towards) "los clásicos," who give primacy to a work of art, over "los románticos," who lend cultural supremacy to its author. Authorial intention, he finds, being an extension of an author's personality, is null. As Borges writes in "El escritor argentino y la tradición" (1951), "todas estas discusiones…sobre propósitos de ejecución literaria están basadas en el error de suponer que las intenciones y los proyectos importan mucho" (OC I: 324). One can immediately imagine the consequences for translation that stem from Borges's disinterest in an author's intentions, which may be stylistic, rhetorical or even ethical.

"Las dos maneras de traducir" (1926), reinforces the point that authorial intention matters little once a text is in circulation. In this essay, Borges argues that translation, even the translation of poetry, need not be accompanied by a sense of loss much less an accusation of treason. He acknowledges the absence of exact translations for certain words between languages, but points to the poetic language of nineteenth century with outmoded terms such as "azulino" or "lilial" to suggest that even intralingually, a word's relationship to other

words can change.[33] Even if the exact translation for a term could be found, it would not necessarily remain so over time. Also in the essay, though critical of the potential for a "classical" translator (one who values a work of art over the intentions of its author) to be overly domesticating, forcing the foreign piece of art into a national literary model, Borges's rejects the importance of the self given by "romantic" translators (those concerned with reproducing the intentions and context of the original author at the expense of the text). In the minds of such translators, "esa reverencia del yo, de la irreemplazable diferenciación humana que es cualquier yo, justifica la literalidad en las traducciones." Yet this reconstruction of an author's "yo" is impossible, because the past is irrecoverable: "El anunciado propósito de veracidad hace del traductor un falsario" (*Textos Recobrados*, 258). A translation that tries to recreate the life and times of the original author can only impose the translator's assumptions of what these must have been, filling the text with "local color," rather than exploiting the creative opportunities it presents for the translator's current literary environment.

The arguments of "La nadería de la personalidad" and "Las dos maneras de traducir" clearly relate in that just as words acquire new significations or become outmoded as time passes, so human beings have no transcendent identity; identity is instead a ceaseless stream of experiences, each of which is constantly modified by the next experience. Temporal and spatial displacements obscure the meaning of a text and and the so-called personality of the author, conferring new, culturally determined meanings or identities upon them the farther away they move from their origin in both time and space. Regarding identity Borges writes: "Ocurrióseme que nunca justificaría mi vida un instante pleno, absoluto, contenedor de los demás, que todos ellos serían etapas provisorias, aniquiladoras del pasado y encaradas al porvenir, y que fuera de lo episódico, de lo presente, de lo circunstancial, no éramos nadie"

[33] It is no coincidence that the insufferably bad poetry of Borges's literary rival in "El Aleph," Carlos Argentino Daneri, abounds with such outdated terms: "donde antes escribió azulado, ahora abundaba en azulino, azulenco y hasta azulillo" (OC I: 748, emphasis in the original).

(*Inquisiciones* 98-99). With no identity to preserve, translator has no duty to an original text, nothing to which she or he must be faithful.

The consequence this aesthetic had on Borges's criticism, fiction and his translation work is a skepticism of authorial intention and of mimetic representation of literary characters' personalities. For if authors have no "real" self, but are a contingent string of experiences, their intentions lose their value and applicability the moment they are inscribed in the text. Once a text has been published, the intentions, rhetoric, personality, even the historical and cultural moment of the author cease to be of importance. The text belongs to the world of letters and will fulfill whatever function is required by the literary system in which it exists. As extensions of authorial intent, and casualties themselves to the nothingness of personality, literary characters likewise have no essence, nothing to preserve in the translation process.

Taking into account the nothingness Borges ascribes to personal identity, and the lack of duty he feels towards preserving intended effects created by original authors, this chapter will examine how the identities of James Joyce's Molly Bloom and Virginia Woolf's Orlando are transformed in the translation process. In particular, using the areas of inquiry set out by Eve Kosofsky Sedwick in *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), I will consider Molly and Orlando in light of their anatomical sex, their gender, that is, the identification of being male or female, and their sexuality, or erotic desire, to determine how the modification of each aspect leads to the creation of new identities in Borges's Spanish versions. The translation of narrative is an incredibly rich site for the interrogation of gender and sexuality, and their culture-specific construction. I am especially interested in the light that translation analyses might shed on Judith Butler's concept of performativity, or the stylized repetition of mundane acts which reify gender as a natural attribute. The individual semantic and stylistic choices taken to represent masculinity, femininity and desire will reflect the translator's perception of the gestures that constitute (or could or should constitute) these elements in her or his culture. In translation, the gestures that, depending on one's approach, either create or

are conditioned by gender and sexuality must be taken apart, mapped onto the target culture's concepts of the same, and reassembled in the target language. Even without the concept of performativity, the possibility of an essential or transcendent masculinity or femininity would appear difficult to maintain because this reassembly never matches exactly (or very closely, as we will see) the representation of gender in the source text and culture.

Judith Butler argues that "[g]ender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (214). In this chapter, we will see how the stylized series of textual enactments that create a character's gender and sexuality, rather than the original, transcendent fact of his or her (fictional) biological sex prescribe characters' traits and mannerisms, and how through translation those imagined qualities, those stylized *verbal* repetitions of acts that constitute gender, come into relief by virtue of their variation from the source text. When comparing in source and target texts the constructs that enact gender, we find, as Butler argues, "gender requires a performance that is repeated. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation" (213). This chapter will demonstrate how powerfully those meanings "already socially established" in the target culture and translator's identity influence the representations of Molly and Orlando in translation.

Molly Bloom: Flor Serrana, Flor de la Montaña

Claiming himself to be "el primer aventurero hispánico que ha arribado al libro de Joyce," in 1925, Borges published a skeptical literary review, "El *Ulises* de Joyce," in the avant-garde journal, *Proa*. Following the article was his first translation of a major modernist writer, "La última hoja del *Ulises*," incidentally, the last *two* pages of Joyce's novel. The pages are taken from the internal monologue of Molly Bloom, a character long identified by

scholars for her coarseness, lack of education, physicality, and eroticism.[34] In their evaluations of his translation of the fragment, critics have categorically praised Borges for the way in which he so credibly transposed Molly's voice.[35] Perhaps what makes Borges's translation so surprising is how distant the text is from his own style of writing at the time (or, on most accounts, ever): a female voice, narrative prose (rather than poetry or expository writing in 1925), a lyrical tone, stream-of-consciousness style, colloquial language. These last elements all have significant bearing, however, on the first: the woman's voice Borges recreated in Spanish was constructed through and dependent upon them. To create the Spanish-language Molly Bloom, Borges, in what we might consider an act of gender impersonation, had to choose constructs he believed would enact a voice that was credibly gendered.

In Borges's introductory review of *Ulysses*, he finds Joyce to be "millonario de vocablos y estilos" (27). Borges also recalls that Joyce is Irish and that "[s]iempre los irlandeses fueron agitadores famosos de la literatura de Inglaterra… [m]enos sensibles al decoro verbal que sus aborrecidos señores" (23). These two observations, that Joyce managed to incorporate a host of different voices and literary styles and the fact that the author was Irish, manifest themselves in his translation in notable ways. Considering the eccentricities of *Ulysses*, Borges's translation is among his most experimental, simply because it so closely mimics Joyce to the point of what Waisman calls "hyperfidelity" (167). Borges seeks to demonstrate to Spanish readers the exact nature of Joyce's "pluma innumerable" by recreating the syntactic twists and turns of the original. This hyperfidelity is of particular importance, because as future chapters will show, Borges demonstrates almost a

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[34] There is serious division among critics regarding the representation of Molly Bloom. Though few would deny these identifiers, their significance, and their commentary upon women are hotly up for debate.

[35] Waisman finds that the cultural alterations Borges makes to the text "recreate Molly's voice surprisingly and incredibly well" (167). Likewise Willson notes: "Borges siempre encuentra el modo de preservar la oralidad del monólogo de Molly." (129). Jorge Schwartz suggests that at one point in the text, Borges's handling of Molly's eroticism even surpasses Joyce's (725).

compulsion to edit both his own texts and those he translated in a constant quest for concision. As a consequence, few of Borges's translations even approximate the closeness with which he followed Joyce's style in "Penelope." This is not to say, however, that he was hyperfaithful to the content of the fragment; as we will see, omissions and substitutions abound. In relation to Joyce's being Irish, the translator commits hyper*infidelity*: Borges erases almost every trace of "local color" from the text. Borges eliminates or Hispanicizes characters' names and place names, inserts topographical referents that draw on the Argentine landscape, and chooses terms and forms of address specific to the Río de la Plata.

In their commentary upon these two aspects of Borges's translation, critics have focused on semantics and syntax in Borges's reproduction of Molly's voice, but have not addressed his reconstruction of the narratives it recounts. Little consideration has been paid to the event (or memory of events) actually occurring in the text, much less to the thought-events leading up to and cut off by the fragmentation of the text in translation. The linguistic aspects of the text are certainly fascinating, yet the narrative aspects of the translation also yield much to consider. While "Penelope" is what Seymour Chatman would consider a non-narrated text because it is the immediate representation of Molly's thoughts, she is performing a narrator's disclosure function, as James Phelan would call it.[36] She discloses information about herself, about her thoughts and about past events. Thus the form and content of Molly's disclosure is of immediate importance. Before addressing either the linguistic or narrative features of Borges's translation, however, I should like to give an overview of the narrative that is unfolding in Joyce's English text. This is of particular relevance, for, as my analysis will demonstrate, the story will contrast greatly from the events narrated in Borges's translation fragment.

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[36] Phelan's ideas on character narration outlined in *Living to Tell About It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

Borges's fragment of *Ulysses* begins with Molly lying in bed, fantasizing about Stephen Dedalus, whom she just learned that her husband, Leopold, had brought home after finding the young man wounded in the street after a brawl. Dedalus politely refused the invitation to spend the night and Leopold summarily has crawled into bed, which he and Molly share with one's head at the other's foot. Upon being startled awake by a kiss on her buttocks, Molly has summed up in her head that it has been ten years, five months and eighteen days that Leopold has refused to make love—ever since their son died. That very afternoon and in that same bed, however, Molly broke this period of celibacy for the first time in an affair with her concert manager, Blazes Boylan. As she now lays awake, her sexual fantasizing active, she imagines an affair with Stephen, as she has just heard Leopold speak highly of the young "professor and author" (735). Hoping that Leopold might bring Dedalus home again, Molly imagines how she will clean the house, the clothes she will wear, the flowers she will use to decorate, and the food she will buy. Amidst these plans begins the fragment Borges selected: "…I shall wear a white rose or those fairy cakes in Liptons I love the smell of a rich big shop at 7 ½ d a lb or the other ones with cherries in them and the pinky sugar 11d a couple of lbs of course a nice plant for the middle of the table…" (781).

Molly goes on to recall "the day I got him [Leopold] to propose to me" (782). Throughout the fragment, the memory of her first erotic experience with Leopold is intertwined with those of her first erotic experience with Lieutenant Mulvey, years earlier in Gibraltar. Upon hearing the proposal, Molly recalls not answering Leopold at first, but looking out over the ocean and "thinking of so many things that he didn't know of Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors…" (782). She remembers her youth in Gibraltar (she grew up there as her father was stationed in Gibraltar for the military), the international atmosphere of the markets and "those handsome young Moors all in white and turbans like kings asking you to sit down in their little bit of a shop" (782). The memory of putting the rose Mulvey gave her in her hair, "yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls used," veers into her planning what to wear in her

fantasized meeting with Stephen Dedalus, “or shall I wear a red one” (783); this phrase being a follow-up to her intention at the opening of the fragment, “I shall wear a white rose” (781). Molly’s memory of how Mulvey “kissed me under the Moorish wall” leads into her recollection of Leopold proposing and their own erotic encounter, when “I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes” (783).

As mentioned earlier, in later texts Borges has a tendency, or perhaps compulsion, to edit style in translation. He splits up long sentences and paragraphs, adds punctuation, inserts relative pronouns, tightens up lengthy prose through nominalization and adjectivization, and omits portions with impunity. The Joyce fragment, however, has few such examples. Of course, in 1925 precision and economy as a writer had yet to become characteristic of Borges’s work. The chapter from which Borges’s translation fragment is taken, “Penelope,” differs from any other in the novel (as most of them do among themselves). It is written in a dense block of stream-of-consciousness that has no punctuation marks save a number of indents which break the text into eight long sentences. Molly’s thoughts are exceedingly fragmentary; they interrupt one another, sometimes to be taken up again later in the text, others to be abandoned completely. In his translation, Borges almost succeeded entirely in curbing his burgeoning impulse to edit; he added only one comma, most likely to avoid a list of nouns being confused for adjectives modifying the preceding noun: “…las casas rosadas y amarillas, y los rosales y jasmines y geranios…” (202).

Perhaps the true form of punctuation in the English text is the word “yes,” which Borges reproduces consistently. Fragmentary ideas are often separated by the term: “…that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the mountain,” “…ese largo beso casi pierdo el aliento sí me dijo que yo era una flor serrana”; “…the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth,” “…cuando yo lo hice declarárseme sí primero le di a comer de mi boca el trozito de torta con almendras”; “…the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him,” “…para vos brilla el sol sí por eso

me gustó" (782/201). Considering women's traditional place at the receiving end of binary oppositions, "yes" becomes precisely one of those stylized repetitions that genders Molly female. It signifies acceptance, reception, concession. At the same time, "yes" becomes more and more sexually charged when situated among her fragmented memories of erotic encounters, and especially towards the end of the fragment as the text moves towards its last climactic "Yes." The eroticism of Molly's sexual fantasizing is similarly charged in the Spanish. Borges maintains the frequency of Molly's *yeses* and *ohs*, allowing her disjointed interjections to stand uncorrected. In "Producing the Voice in Erotic Language," Peter Cryle notes:

> When the language of sex is allowed…to come spilling out, it is likely to be marked by sighs, cries and exclamations…. Indeed, there is a linguistic practice of 'inarticulacy,' in which talk keeps on coming, in discourse that is breathless and continually interrupted. This discourse is recognizable precisely as one that signifies, by its shape, the loss of shape and the loss of all reticence. (Cryle 101)

Molly Bloom's monologue, a chain of interruptions, shapeless but for constant punctuation of exclamations, is in both English and Spanish the veritable language of literary lovemaking. The sexual activity Molly is reported to have engaged in, however, differs on a number of levels.

The textual consequences of the interruptions comprising Molly's language can be quite awkward, for example: "…the sailors playing all birds fly and I say stoop and washing up the dishes they called it on the pier and the sentry in front of the governors house…" (782). Discourse with this little semantic meaning ceased to be recognizable for Borges, despite the inarticulacy that characterizes the language of sex. The line above became the simplified "…de los marineros en el muelle a los brincos y el centinela frente a la casa del gobernador" (201). All text between the sailors and sentry on the pier was simply omitted, eliminating at the same time the breathless spilling out of language which carries a certain sexual innuendo regarding these men. For this erotic discourse to remain recognizable, Borges seems to have required a semantic unit that included at least one coherent action or

thought. The opening lines of the fragment have a similar lack of cohesion, yet contain ideas substantial enough to make sense independently: "usaré una rosa blanca / o esas masas divinas de lo de Lipton / me gusta el olor de una tienda rica / salen a siete y medio la libra / o esas otras que traen cerezas adentro y con azúcar rosadita que salen a once el par de libras / claro una linda planta para poner en medio de la mesa…" (201).

In addition to Borges's hyperfaithful recreation of "Penelope's" style, there are three major translation strategies to be found in his rendering that have direct bearing on the identity of Molly Bloom. First, Borges moved the fragment of "Penelope" away from its loci in the English—indeterminately wavering between Dublin and Gibraltar—towards Argentina by inserting into the text thematic and linguistic elements that recall the Río de la Plata. Second, he eliminates place names as well as character names. Third, the translation's status as a fragment disassociated it from the rest of *Ulysses* and, perhaps more importantly, from the rest of the chapter.[37] Each strategy contributes to a radically different version of Joyce's text, though one which critics are anxious to demonstrate is a verisimilar representation of Molly Bloom's voice. Curiously, Willson, Waisman and Schwartz directly link the transposition of the fragment's context to Argentina to the credibility of Molly Bloom as a character.

Of course, that Borges recreated Molly Bloom's internal monologue "surprisingly and incredibly well," as Waisman states, does not mean that it was mimetically reproduced, but rather that the translator enacted a series of textual constructs that function convincingly to produce a female voice in Spanish. The traits Borges was bound to include (or at least consider) to modify this voice, however, were reduced by the translation's being a fragment, and thereby all the more open to his interpretation. In the performance of femininity, Waisman gives the examples of "pinky sugar" becoming "azúcar rosadita" and "my

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[37] Interestingly, Paul Shwaber notes that in English, "The soliloquy has often been anthologized hence, has been perceived as detachable" (11). Thus "Penelope" is often an isolated fragment of *Ulysses*, somewhat analogous to the Borges fragment.

mountain flower" into "mi flor serrana" as examples of Borges's rendering of "Molly's personal idiosyncratic modalities" (165). Willson finds the voice Borges employs to convincingly convey that of an uneducated woman, as she locates Molly's voice again when reading a passage by Dorothy Osborne, cited by Woolf, in his translation of *A Room of One's Own:* "el tono de la Molly Bloom de Borges reaparece en camafeo" (156). The technique that brings this heterogeneous voice to the fore, and which makes it so credible, she finds, is its Argentine inflection. Rather than reproduce the many orthographic mistakes of Osborne's English, Borges uses "el tono rioplatense [para] vincula[rse] a lo afectivo" (156). Referring to the choice of the expressions "campito" for "Common," "salir disparando" for "then they all run" and "animosa" for "nimble," she finds Borges to economically create a dynamic equivalent for Osborne's (aka Molly's) voice: "simplemente incluye el diminutivo de un sustantivo, un verbo y un adjetivo en los cuales condensa un género literario y un sociolecto" (Willson 157-58). Intensifying the effect rioplatense language has on the sense of Molly's voice is Borges's use of the *voseo*: "the sun shines for you" becomes "para vos brilla el sol." This choice is surely key to critics' linking of an Argentine sociolect to the affective tone of Molly's monologue. Well into the 1940s the pronoun *tú* was used in literary texts, despite its absence from actual usage in Argentina. Thus, while *tú* would be the standard informal address as opposed to *usted*, the use of *vos* implicates an intimacy that transgresses literary norms. This sense of transgression, even more than the cultural effect of using *vos*, gives Molly a set of traits—coarseness and vulgarity—which set her in closer relationship to her English language counterpart.

In addition to linguistic specificities, the omission and substitution of place names and topographical terms displace the indeterminate locations of Molly's memories towards a third location. Obscuring cultural and geographic specifics, Borges suppresses the name "Howth Head," the location of Molly's engagement to Leopold, and removes the "d" for denarius from the prices listed in the text; "7½d a lb," for example, becomes "siete y medio la libra." Moreover, terms dealing with nature are especially displaced. "Lakes" become

"bañados," "fields of oats and wheat" become "maizales trigales," "among the rhododendrons" becomes "en el pasto," and "primroses and violets" are eliminated. Such changes have led Willson to claim that "para traducir algunos de los elementos que sirven a la construcción de un locus, Borges elige términos que reponen el paisaje plano de la pampa" (130).

While Willson also includes the term "tuna" as a translation for "cactuses" in her list of terms that recall the Pampa, an important distinction should be made. All of the prior terms refer to Ireland, while "cactuses" appears in a section of the text in which Molly is remembering Gibraltar. In fact, none of the ecological/geographical terms from this set of memories is omitted or replaced with a rioplatense referent. "[T]he figtrees in the Alameda gardens yes and all the queer little streets and pink and blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the Jessamine and geraniums and the cactuses and Gibraltar" (783) is strikingly more accurate than Molly's prior nature-related memories: "las higueras en la Alameda sí y las callecitas rarísimas y las casas rosadas y amarillas y azules, y los rosales y jasmines y geranios y tunas y Gibraltar" (202). This is not to say, however, that Borges did not alter topographic specifics related to Gibraltar. "…Duke street and fowl market all clucking outside Larby Sharons and the poor donkeys slipping half asleep" loses its reference to specific streets and places of business, "el mercado cloqueando y los pobres burritos cayéndose de sueño," (782/202). Yet Borges leaves references such as "la Alameda," "las chicas españolas" (which was actually "Andalusian girls" in the English), "las castañuelas" and "paredón morisco" to make it clear that Gibraltar was the location of the action, even while discarding what must have seemed unnecessary specifics. Borges, then, did not try to displace the narrative entirely to Argentina, but only Molly's memories of Ireland. Even so, geographically, this can only be a partial displacement: "the wild mountains then the sea and

the waves rushing" translated as "las montañas después el mar y las olas que se vienen encima" does not particularly usher forth an image of the Argentine Pampa (781/201).[38]

The general sense of displacement in Borges's translation, the memories traveling back and forth from South America to southern Spain while still hinting at Ireland, is evidence of his approach to Joyce's own strategy of dislocation. Memories of Gibraltar punctuate Molly's recollections of her proposal to Leopold in Dublin, creating a destabilizing effect on the representation of Molly's sexuxality. Capitalizing on how one memory streams into the other, there are instances in which Joyce makes it nearly impossible to be sure which erotic encounter Molly is remembering. For example, three lines after Molly' memory of getting Leopold to propose to her in Ireland, she recalls "that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the mountain," implying that Leopold gave her this pet name (782). Yet on the following page she recalls "Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain," a name thus necessarily given to her by Mulvey (783). It is impossible to know where Molly's memory of Leopold ends and Mulvey begins, though her sexual stimulation is clearly a product of both.

Since Borges claimed to "no haber desabrozado las setecientas páginas" of *Ulysses*, he may indeed have had no sense of the tension existing in the text, as a result of Leopold's withholding sex while having numerous affairs, and its effects on Molly's sexuality (23). Regardless, this tension meets a response, whether intentional or not, in two different ways. On the one hand, Borges eliminates this dilemma almost completely by simply erasing Mulvey's name, as he does with the others from the list of characters from Molly's past. "Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors" become "fulano y zutano y de papá y de Ester y el capitán y de los marineros" (782/201). On the other hand, it is rather curious that those times when "flower of the mountain" (782) and "mountain flower" (783) are enunciated in proximity to Leopold, the proposal and the erotic

[38] We can also note that the word "wild" is nowhere to be found in the translation.

encounter, the term Borges chooses is “flor serrana.” When the memories are surrounded by the geography of Gibraltar, however, “Flower of the Mountain” becomes “Flor de la Montaña.” Potentially then, the employment of two separate terms, which correspond to separate locations, may indicate Borges’s awareness that the term was either being used by two different men or that the memory of one man was being closely interjected into the memory of another.

The elimination of the additional characters’ names is made possible, and for Borges necessitated by the translation being but a fragment. While each is mentioned previously in “Penelope,” they have no antecedent in the fragment. The estranging effect those names may have had clearly detracted from the aspects of the text Borges hoped to foreground. In context, Molly is stalling in answering Leopold in his proposal for marriage, and “thinking of so many things he didn’t know” (782). Molly’s stalling on such an important question, in combination with her memory of what in the fragment would appear to be a list of men’s names (and one woman), hints at a rather unchaste past. A reader of the whole chapter would know that among those companions of her past, only Mulvey had been her lover. Yet the question remains open, if not exacerbated, by the translation’s substitution of “fulano y zutano,” which would suggest such a quantity of men in her past that she cannot remember their names.[39]

The consequences of Borges’s translation being a fragment, and the freedom from context this allows, thus influence Molly’s character. Indeed, something critics have failed to note is the fact that in the fragment, Molly has no name. Borges provided no introduction or explanation of the text to establish for the reader where in the narration the fragment begins or who is speaking. Molly is, in effect, a disembodied voice. But a voice with a past. In the Spanish, the man who proposed to her and the man who kissed her under the Moorish wall

[39] Not that this would be entirely inaccurate. In recalling her first erotic experience, Molly thinks “what was his name Jack Joe Harry Mulvey was it yes I think a lieutenant” (761).

appear to be one in the same; Molly's erotic imagination is reined in—she does not experience the expansive desire that arouses one memory at the surge of another. Her conduct is another matter: she pauses in her acceptance of Leopold's proposal to think about fulano and zutano. Such a flattening out of her character is the natural consequence of her monologue being but a fragment. The reader, and supposedly the translator, have no knowledge of certain elements of Molly's character, hence they do not need to be represented in the translation.

While Waisman celebrates Borges's "surprising capacity to capture the full erotic expression of Molly's speech" (169), as we have seen, the text's status as a fragment limits how fully Molly's expression can be. Within the same "sentence," though not included in the fragment, Molly fantasizes of Stephen: "I wanted to kiss him all over also his lovely young cock there so simply I wouldn't mind taking him in my mouth if nobody was looking as if it was looking you to suck it so clean and white…" (776). Such expression varies in the extreme from the fragment Borges actually produces, in which Molly's eroticism is limited semantically to "I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume" (783) and syntactically to, as Waisman states, "the phrases swaying with growing desire as they build toward the climactic last 'yes I will Yes'" (168). Borges's translation fragment pushed Molly back into an acceptable sexuality; she has no desire, but has a string of lovers. She has not just had sex with Boylan, but is in bed with her husband. She is not currently fantasizing about 3 men, Stephen, Mulvey and Leopold, but only about her husband—and this is remembering, not fantasizing. Borges does give her a touch of vulgarity, which, adds dimension to her as a character, like the use of just a few rioplatense terms. When comparing only the fragmented sections of the English and Spanish, the fact that Molly says "me importa un pito" for what in English is rather mild, "I wouldn't give a snap of my two fingers," would seem rather incongruent. Perhaps it is Borges's attempt to reincorporate some of Molly's vulgarity, being unable (and most likely unwilling) to translate in *Proa* such full expression as: "if he wants to kiss my bottom Ill drag open my

drawers and bulge it right out in his face as large as life he can stick his tongue 7 miles up my hole" (780).

As we have seen, the fact of the text being a fragment eliminates the complexity of Molly's character. The reader of the translation fragment has no way to know that Molly grew up in Gibraltar; the fragment creates a character with an entirely different history, and consequently, an entirely different personality. It is perhaps this truncation that has led critics to focus exclusively on Borges's "aliviándo… [el texto joyceano] de particularidades irlandesas" and to overlook the fact that over half of the English version of the fragment occurs in Gibraltar (Schwartz 723). With no prior reference, the mentions of Spain appear to be the memory of holidays—one to "Gibraltar as a girl," and another with Leopold, the kiss under the Moorish wall necessarily being his, rather than Mulvey's, as he has been erased from the text. All other narration appears to occur in or be memory of Dublin.

Just before Borges's translation fragment begins, the English-language Molly remembers her youth while conjuring up plans to seduce Stephen Dedalus. Here, her scheming to appear intelligent so she may impress Dedalus, adds traits that vanish in the translation fragment: the awareness that she is uneducated and the anxiety not to appear so. Molly plots:

> I dont feel a day older than then I wonder could I get my tongue round any of the Spanish como esta usted muy bien gracias y usted see I havent forgotten it all I thought I had only for the grammar a noun is the name of any person place or thing pity I never tried to read that novel cantankerous Mrs Rubio lent me by Valera with the questions in it all upside down the two ways I always knew wed go away in the end I can tell him the Spanish and he tell me the Italian then hell see I'm not so ignorant (779)

Readers of the fragment do not know of Molly's bicultural background, that she once spoke Spanish, went to bullfights and knows from her Andalusian maid how not to get "left with a child embarazada" (760). Nor do they know of Molly's ambivalent sense of national belonging. Comparing the heat of her bedroom during her lovemaking with Boylan to that of her childhood home, she recalls the Rock of Gibraltar "like a big giant compared with their 3

Rock mountain they think is so great" (755). "They," of course, being the Irish, indicates Molly's sense of Otherness among her compatriots (much as Leopold feels apart on account of his being Jewish or Stephen for having lived so long on the Continent). In Gibraltar, however, she felt at odds with the Spanish who "never could get over the Atlantic fleet coming in half the ships of the world and the Union Jack flying with all her carabineros because 4 drunken English sailors took all the rock from them" (759). The translation fragment, both by truncating Molly's habits and traits and by eliminating topographical names, creates a character whose cultural identity is primarily ascertained through her association with Joyce, and Borges begins his review of *Ulysses* stating: "James Joyce es irlandés" (22). Yet, as a character, what would Borges's own Juan Dahlmann be without his ambiguous sense of Argentine cultural belonging? From her hesitation to respond to Leopold's marriage proposal, to her wavering between a white or red rose to wear the next time Dedalus comes for a visit, the English-language Molly's emotions and motivations are dictated by her psychic pull between her past in Gibraltar and her present in Ireland.

I would like to suggest one possible, if unintended, way Borges hints at Molly's cultural complexity: in a technique he almost categorically refused in all future translations, Borges included some orthographic variation in the representation of Molly's speech. The words "piece" and "put my arms around him" become "trozito" and "abrazé." The failure to abide by the orthographic rule of substituting 'c' for 'z' when placed before 'e' or 'i' is especially notable because a) it is repeated consistently, and is thus an intentional strategy, and b) the orthographic change draws attention to itself in the absence of any other such alteration. In the same year as his Joyce translation, 1925, Borges published his second book of poetry, *Luna de enfrente*, in which he employed a number of orthographic devices, including the aforementioned, that years later he would deprecatingly describe as:

> …un despliegue de falso color local. Entre sus tonterías se incluye la ortografía de mi primer nombre, a la manera chilena del siglo XIX, como 'Jorje' (era el intento a medias de utilizar una ortografía fonética); el uso del español 'y' como 'i' (nuestro mayor escritor, Sarmiento, había hecho lo mismo, tratando de ser tan no-español como

> pudiera); y la omisión de de la d en las palabras como autoridá y ciudá. (cited in *Autobiografía*, Monegal 200)

The question thus arises, why, in "La última página de Ulises," did Borges make only one among a variety of potential orthographic changes? If Borges were as concerned with domesticating *Ulysses* as critics have argued, in addition to using "vos," he might also have employed other phonetic spellings. I believe this particular instance of "z" for "c" was not used to add local color, or create a dehumanizing avant-garde effect, but rather to suggest a particular style of pronunciation on Molly's part. In many Latin American literary texts, the substitution of z for c is used to evoke the sense of a lisp, or of the Spanish pronunciation of /s/ as /Ɵ/, or "th." Consequently, just as Borges increases the vulgarity of Molly's speech—using "me importa un pito" for a much more benign expression—to correspond to an aspect that exists outside of the translation fragment but within the English "Penelope," he (or at least his translation) preserves Molly's background in Gibraltar by giving her a Spanish from Spain.[40]

Who is the Spanish Molly Bloom? She is, above all, a formal exercise, and I say this precisely because the "Penelope" translation is the most stylistically imitative of any Borges translation. In the *Proa* translation fragment, Molly has no name and next to no context, but is rather, as Sylvia Molloy says of other Borges characters, "little more than a prop, a deconstructed support" (*Signs* 57). She serves primarily as a vehicle for Borges to try his hand at a style of writing he would never have attempted in his own work. The mimetic consequence of this hyperfidelity to style, in combination with Borges growing penchant for omission, is a woman whose sexuality is curbed to fit in line with the translator's prescriptions for one who is gendered female: she remembers but does not desire.

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[40] In response to the question of why she uses the term "vos," I would point out that this is not Molly's direct thought, but her recollection of another's speech.

Orlando and the Interrogation of Gender

…gay is to straight not as copy is to original, but, rather, as copy is to copy.

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

Orlando: A Biography (1928) (*Orlando: una biografía,* 1937) is among the least representative of Virginia Woolf's novels, which, as we will see, may be the reason Borges could bring himself to translate the text, upon commission by Victoria Ocampo. Other Woolf novels, such as *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) or *The Waves* (1931), pursue a modernist aesthetic in which the narrator ideally "refines itself out of existence"—as Joyce, in the words of Stephen Dedalus, proposes (*Portrait* 248). To use Borges's own words, in Woolf's major novels "No hay argumento, no hay conversación, no hay acción" (OC IV: 263).[41] Highlighing this lack of traditional plot, Seymour Chatman aruges, "Joyce, Woolf, Ingmar Bergman, and other modernist artists do not treat plot as an intricate puzzle to be solved. It is not a change in the state of affairs, but simply the state of affairs itself" (192-93). For an author such as Borges—whose plots are always an intricate puzzle to be solved—the translation of Woolf novels such as these would likely have been out of the question.

The novel is the fictional biography of Orlando, a young noble and aspiring poet who lives three hundred years, in the middle of which he is transformed overnight from a man to a woman. The narrator/biographer is a parody of Victorian biographers who exalted singular men as moral examples and credible historical loci for understanding the spirit of an age (Burns 344-45). The biographer's language is hyperbolic in both praise and scorn; he directly addresses the reader, making sweeping definitive statements of opinion. Yet the narrator also openly admits, "it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to make use of the

[41] Published in *El Hogar*, November 30, 1936, in "Virginia Woolf: Biografía sintética."

imagination" when constructing Orlando's history, recalling the narrative technique of numerous Borges stories such as "El muerto," "Tema del traidor y del héroe" or "Funes el memorioso," in which the narrators claim to assemble the plots from faulty memory or making use of too few details to tell the tale accurately (119). Unlike other Woolf novels, *Orlando*'s biographer is visible and vocal, and (beating Borges to the punch) the first to complain when action is lacking in the novel.[42] The biographer's presentation of Orlando sets the ironic tone for the rest of the text: "Happy the mother who bears, happier still the biographer who records the life of such a one! Never need she vex herself, nor he invoke the help of a novelist or poet" (15). This satire is made more intense by the fact that the novelist's father, Leslie Stephen, was a famous biographer who denied his daughters higher education while sending his sons to university. Stephen's life and work made *Orlando* possible to conceive, but according to Woolf, his overpowering presence would have made the novel, or any other, impossible to write. On November 28, 1928, the day of her late father's 96th birthday, and in the midst of *Orlando*'s sensational success, Woolf mused in her diary that he "could have been 96, like other people one has known: but mercifully was not. His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books—inconceivable" (135).[43]

This dynamic was not lost on Borges, an admirer of Stephen, who used the situation to inject some irony of his own in his "Virginia Woolf: Biografía sintética" published in *El Hogar* October 30, 1936. The review quips: "Es hija de Mr. Leslie Stephen, compilador de biografías de Swift, de Jonson y de Hobbes, libros cuyo valor está en la buena claridad de la prosa y en la precisión de los datos, y que ensayan poco el análisis y *nunca la invención*"

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[42] "If then, the subject of one's biography will neither love nor kill, but will only think and imagine, we may conclude that he or she is no better than a corpse and so leave her" (*Orlando* 269).

[43] Her December 18, 1928 diary entry reads: "L. has just been in to consult about a 3rd edition of *Orlando*. This has been ordered; we have sold over 6,000 copies; and sales are still amazingly brisk—150 today, for instance; most days between 50 and 60; always to my surprise" (136-37).

(OC IV: 262, my emphasis). As he obliquely sheds doubt on value of *Orlando* for being precisely an invented biography, Borges goes on to throw Woolf's entire literary enterprise into question: "En 1912 Virginia Stephen se casa con Mr. Leonard Woolf, y adquieren una imprenta. Los atrae la tipografía, esa cómplice a veces traicionera de la literatura, y componen y editan sus propios textos" (122-23). The implication that, because their texts were self-published they may have little literary merit, is typical of the kinds of stinging comments Borges often included in his literary reviews.[44] Yet much like Borges's occasionally deprecating review of *Ulysses* in *Proa* in 1925, he also has laudatory observations about Woolf's work, especially *Orlando*, describing it as "una novela originalísima —sin duda la más intensa de Virginia Woolf y una de las más singulares y desesperantes de nuestra época" (OC IV: 263). Also like his review of *Ulysses*, Borges follows his biography with a one page translation: a fragment of *Orlando*, extracted several pages into the first chapter.

It is currently impossible to say whether this sample translation came from a draft of the book length translation of *Orlando*, which was released in July of 1937. Structurally, the fragment and the novel are almost identical. Borges begins the fragment with a contextualizing addition: "...En la cumbre," to compensate for the lines that precede the fragment that describe Orlando's standing upon a hill (*Borges en El Hogar*, 17). There is only one syntactical difference: an auxilary verb is split in the novel but kept together in the fragment (along with a change in demonstrative pronouns);[45] additionally, there are some

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[44] Borges's attitude not only toward women writers but toward women readers is clear in his essay in "La poesía gauchesca" (1932) in which he insinuates that literature preferred by women need not be printed, since it can be passed down orally, as done by "primitive" peoples. Discussing "El Fausto criollo" by Estanislao del Campo he writes, "Es un poema que, al igual de los primitivos, podría prescindir de la imprenta, porque vive en muchas memorias. En memorias de mujeres, singularmente. Ello no importa una censura; hay escritores de indudable valor —Marcel Proust, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf— que suelen agradar a las mujeres más que a los hombres…" (OC I: 216)

[45] In the novel: "Le gustaba, bajo toda esta fugacidad del verano, sentir el espinazo de la tierra bajo su cuerpo" (15); in the fragment: "Le gustaba sentir, bajo toda esa fugacidad del verano, el espinazo de la tierra bajo su cuerpo" (17). The English reads: "He loved, beneathe all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him" (19).

minor punctuations changes among colons, semi-colons, commas and dashes.[46] Semantically, there are few changes as well: "reposar" in the fragment becomes "descansar" in the novel; "pues" becomes "porque"; "agitación" becomes "actividad" (17/15). The exact dates of Victoria Ocampo's commissioning of *Orlando* to Borges are unknown. The timeframe between his October 30, 1936 "Biografía sintética" on Woolf, which included the translation fragment from the novel, and the announcement of novel's release in June 1937[47] suggest that the commission likely came before his review in *El Hogar*. As *Un cuarto propio*, which is only one-hundred pages long, was originally released in four monthly installments of *Sur*, from December 1935 to March 1936, it seems appropriate to assume that *Orlando*, which is three times longer, would have taken several additional months to translate.

Both Ocampo and Borges were knowledgeable of the biographical fact that *Orlando* is a caricature of Woolf's friend and lover Vita Sackville-West.[48] In an article entitled "Virginia Woolf, Orlando y Cía.," published in *Sur* one month after the translation's release,

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[46] In the fragment: "Esa era la casa de su padre; ésa la de su tío" (17); in the novel "...de su padre, ésa la de tu tío" (15); in the English "That was his father's house; that his uncles" (18). "[L]a cubierta de un barco dando tumbos; era de veras cualquier cosa" (17) in the fragment becomes "...dando tumbos—era, de veras, cualquier cosa" (15) while the English reads: "the deck of a tumbling ship—it was anything indeed" (19). The fragment also reads; "el tumulto a su alrededor se aquietó: las hojitas pendían" (17) while the novel has a semi-colon "...se aquietó; las hojitas..." (15); the English reads "gradually the flutter in and about him stilled itself; the little leaves hung" (19). It is noteworthy that in the Spanish versions, the "tumulto" only happens around Orlando, rather than inside of him as well.

[47] Advertisement in *Sur* volume 34.

[48] According to Quentin Bell, nephew and biographer of Virginia Woolf: "The book is interesting biographically, partly because it commemorates Virginia's love for Vita, and partly because we can trace so many of its elements to the incidents of Virginia's daily life in those years…Orlando was composed of materials she noted hurriedly in her diary: Vita at Knowl, showing her over the building—4 acres of it—stalking through it in a Turkish dress surrounded by dogs and children; a cart bringing in wood as carts had done for centuries to feed the great fires of the house; Vita hunting through her writing desk to find a letter from Dryden; Vita sailing through the Mediterranean in January 1926, with gold-laced captians off Trieste; Vita standing gorgeous in emeralds; a description of Vita and Violet Trefusis meeting for the first time upon the ice; Vita dressing her son as a Russian boy and his objection –'Don't,' he said, 'it makes me look like a girl'; Vita courted and caressed by the literary world; the homage of Sir Edmund Gosse, and indeed of Virginia herself" (132).

Ocampo stated: "*Orlando* es una novela de clave; es decir, una novela en que ciertos personajes, ciertos escenarios, ciertas intrigas han sido más o menos inspiradas en modelos naturales" (25)[49]. Several of these *clefs* were evident to Borges; in *El Hogar,* on December 24, 1937 he stated that one of the many virtues of Vita Sackville-West's biography of her grandmother, *Pepita*, "es la curiosa luz que proyecta sobre ciertas aparentes arbitrariedades —el pleito, por ejemplo— del 'Orlando' de Virginia Woolf" (87).[50] For Borges to call the legal case in *Orlando* "arbitrary" suggests that what he found meaningful in the text had little to do with issues such as the dispute over Orlando's gender, and the government's barring her from owning the home she had possessed when a man:

> The chief charges against her were (1) that she was dead, and therefore could not hold any property whatsoever; (2) that she was a woman, which amounts to much the same thing; (3) that she was an English Duke who had married one Rosina Pepita, a dancer; and had had by her three sons, which now declaring that their father was deceased, claimed that all his property descended to them. (168)

On a biographical account, this legal dispute is significant for it records Vita's own inability to inherit her family's castle, Knowl. As an element of the text, the dispute is highly significant; Woolf considers the distinction between men's and women's rights enforced by British law to be arbitrary. As Orlando, upon return from an ambassadorship in Turkey, is being denied the rights to property ownership s/he enjoyed when a man, we are to remember, "Orlando had become a woman—there was no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity" (138). In this context, the prohibition against

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[49] Ocampo's talk "Woolf, Orlando y Cia" was given at the Biblioteca del Consejo de Mujeres in June 1937, and published in *Sur* in August. Among the details she includes are the fact that an ancestor of Vita's was given a castle by Queen Elizabeth in which to fulfill his duties as Lord Treasurer; that in this castle there is a sixteenth century portrait that bears a striking resemblance to her; and that Orlando's poem *The Oak Tree*, was a reflection of Sackville-West's prize winning poem *The Land* (26). (As a matter of fact, the selection of *The Oak Tree* Woolf publishes as Orlando's is actually directly taken from Vita's poem).

[50] Much later, in his *Introducción a la literatura inglesa*, Borges would mention that Vita Sackville-West "perteneció a la noble familia que su amiga Virginia Woolf personificó en el *Orlando*" (OCC 853).

Orlando owning property or enjoying any rights reserved for men appears absurd, for during the last two hundred years she had been one. And at present, her genitalia has no effect on her identity as a man.

Yet calling Orlando's lawsuit "aribtrary" in his review of *Pepita* suggests Borges found this social commentary of little interest. In "Los traductores de las 1001 noches," published in 1936, likely while he was working on one of the Woolf translations, Borges does not censure translators Galland or Lane for "sanitizing" the *Thousand and One Nights* in their translations. Rather he states, "Eludir las oportunidades eróticas del original, no es culpa de las que el Señor no perdona, cuando lo primordial es destacar el ambiente mágico" (OC I: 478). Borges's assertion that a translator need not include every aspect of the source text, but may focus on whatever she or he considers most important about the text—here being the magical ambiance of the *Thousand and One Nights*—is the key to Borges's translation theory. Symptomatic of Borges regarding as arbitrary the stinging condemnation of women's economic marginalization Woolf makes through the lawsuit may be the fact that while the novel has become a cornerstone of Queer Studies and Women's Studies in English speaking countries, in Latin America it has been read primarily as foundational piece of fantastic literature.

When we consider the legacy of the *Orlando* translation in Latin America, Borges's influence on the text, through his choices of what was "important," comes into relief. In Emir Rodríguez Monegal's 1968 review of the newly published *Cien años de soledad,* he noted Woolf's influence on Gabriel García Márquez and other Boom writers as a result of Borges's translations: "*Orlando* fue traducido por Borges…y con una perfección tal que lo convierte en un libro capital de las letras latinoamericanas…Con *Orlando* se abre toda una compuerta a la narración fantástica" (14).[51] Likewise, Suzanne Jill Levine writes that although García

[51] Fantastic narrative has been present in Latin American literature long before 1937. Monegal's anachronistic overstatement might be attributed to his publicity campaign for *Cien años de soledad.*

Márquez always denied the influence of Latin American authors, including Borges and Carpentier, "he has often mentioned not only Faulkner but Virginia Woolf as a literary mentor (implying Borges' influence too, if only as the translator of *Orlando*)" (55). It is no accident that Woolf's revolutionary concept of narrative time, the renovating style of a mock biography, her intercalation into her novel of others' literary texts are the reason *Orlando* was so influential in Latin America, while its treatment of gender has received considerably less attention. For, as we shall see, Borges was practicing the same translation strategy as Galland and Lane: avoiding the (non-normative) erotic opportunities of the text to highlight instead its fantastic aspects.

For the translation of *Al faro* (*To the Lighthouse*), published by Sur in 1938, and *Tres guineas* (*Three Guineas*) published in 1941, Ocampo did not employ Borges, but two other men: Antonio Marichalar and Román J. Jimenez, respectively. In her collaboration with the Buenos Aires publishing house Sudamericana, she also published *La señora Dalloway* (1939) in a translation by Ernesto Palacio. The choice of four male translators provokes some questions as to Ocampo's aesthetic conception of translation. She was profoundly influenced by Virginia Woolf, professionally and aesthetically. On the one hand, as John King suggests, she took to heart Woolf's claim that women need money and a room of their own in order to write, and therefore used her magazine as a forum and showcase for women writers (82). On the other, she became desirous of a writing style that was entirely feminine. In her "Carta a Virginia Woolf," the opening essay in the first volume of her *Testimonios,* Ocampo wrote:

> Mi única ambición es llegar a escribir un día, más o menos bien, más o menos mal, pero como una mujer. Si a imagen de Aladino poseyese una lámpara maravillosa, y por su mediación me fuera dado el escribir en el estilo de un Shakespeare, de un Dante, de un Goethe, de un Cervantes, de un Dostoievsky, realmente no aprovecharía la ganga. Pues entiendo que una mujer no puede aliviarse de sus sentimientos y pensamientos en un estilo masculino, del mismo modo que no puede hablar con voz de hombre. (12)

Though she acknowledged her belief that women cannot express themselves as men do, Ocampo apparently did think it possible for men to express a woman's feelings and thoughts

in translation. Perhaps she found the very fact of those texts being translations made it impossible for them to transmit Woolf's "feminine" style. As Willson notes in her chapter "Victoria Ocampo, la traductora romántica," Ocampo had a radically different philosophy of translation than Borges; she believed translations always entailed loss and blocked access to the author and the essential originality of the source text. In a telling metaphor, Ocampo has written, "las traducciones son guantes que nos impiden tocar las palabras con las yemas desnudas de los dedos" (cited in Willson 81).

In direct relation to her reading of Woolf, in a 1946 lecture presented at the Asociación Argentina de la Cultura Inglesa, Ocampo expressed her gratitude for having learned English from her nanny as a child, without which, "no hubiera podido acercarme a ellos [Woolf and Huxley] sino indirectamente. No hubiera podido verlos sino a través de los vidrios transparentes, pero duros y fríos, de las traducciones" (cited in Lojo Rodríguez, 236) Thus, while Ocampo may simply have believed Borges and her other male translators of Woolf would do an excellent job translating a woman's voice, it may also be possible that her presumption of the inherent inferiority of translations led her to discount the need to commission the translation to a woman in order to let Woolf's texts "aliviarse de sus sentimientos y pensamientos" in a feminine style.[52]

It is unnecessary, though not uninteresting, to conjecture whether a woman having translated *Orlando* would have saved the text from the transformations this section will discuss. Indeed, the heteronormative impulse that guided Borges's translation may just as likely have been present had the text been translated by a woman. Rather, I would like to consider how the overt queerness of *Orlando* both withstands and succumbs to a heterosexist translation; how Orlando's identity changes in the Spanish version; and how the biographer's

[52] Here, of course, is not the place to discuss potential differences between male and female writing. In this instance, I am using Ocampo's own words to question her apparent dismissal of her own assertions when questions of voice pertain to translation.

identity is usurped by a hidden implied author who skews his worldview, particularly with regard to women.

The first scholar to publish a critique of the sexist/gender normative tendencies in Borges's translations of *Orlando* and *A Room of One's Own* was Mónica Ayuso, in her article "The Unlike[ly] Other: Borges and Woolf." In her assessment of his work, she finds:

> When Borges translates literally and accurately, his voice is that of a purveyor of high culture responsible for transmitting, as transparently as he can, the ideas he received and so greatly admired. In this instance he positioned himself vis-à-vis Woolf's text almost as an absence. His presence is more clearly felt in the rendering of gender…In his handling of gender he adopts a critical masculine presence which sabotages the texts. (249)

Ayuso's disappointment in the translation is double, for not only did Borges introduce an antagonistic presence in the text, but he appears to do none of the verbal acrobatics his translations essays such as "Los traductores de Las 1001 noches" seem to advance:

> [Borges's] daunting job was to provide a 'version' of [Woolf's] works so as to integrate them into the Spanish-American conception of life. But for someone so intent on championing the genre and liberating the translator from the pressure of producing a definitive text of the original in the new context, Borges translates quite literally. (246)

In matters of the overt acculturation of Woolf's work, Borges's intervention as a translator is fairly hard to see. Unlike "Penelope," there are relatively few geographical or toponymical changes. Familiar names were translated: el Canal de la Mancha (14); el Támesis (41); Londres (68); la Catedral de San Pablo; as were the names of Kings and Queens: Isabel, Jaime, Carlos, Jorge, Victoria (193). More specific locations, Wapping Old Stairs (21), Temple Bar (30); Arlington House (127); cities and persons without familiar Spanish translations such as Kent y Sussex (21), and figures such as Nell Gwyn (83) and Sir Adrain Scrope (86) were kept in English, which may have created a foreignizing effect for the reader. Despite the lack of largely noticeable rewritings, Argentine inventions or long omissions, I would argue that in his translation of *Orlando* (and *A Room of One's Own*), Borges did exactly as he states in his theoretical writings on translation. In his Spanish

translation, Borges performed his own sanitization, as he mentions in "Los traductores de las 1001 noches," and surely with the same justification: foregrounding the elements of *Orlando* he found most interesting. However, it is the absence Ayuso notes and the *appearance* of literalness that are so compelling about Borges's translation work, for they mask the fact that his words are translations, some of which are anything but literal. The "critical masculine presence" Ayuso notes *passes*, in the transgendered sense of the word, as a female voice. From his privileged position as the invisible translator, Borges participates in a sort of gender impersonation, allowing him to introduce his criticism under the guise of Woolf's now usurped voice.

Before delving into the examination of Borges's heteronormative translation practices, I should first like to establish how *Orlando* is a transgressive text, not only as a result of certain *events* (such as a sex change) but, as Chatman would say, among the *existents* (the setting and characters) (267). *Orlando* is structured around a series of relationships between Orlando and a sexually ambiguous cast of characters: Queen Elizabeth; Sasha, his first love; the Archduchess Harriet, later Archduke Harry; and Orlando's eventual husband, Bonthrop. As a young man, Orlando meets Queen Elizabeth, who is immediately attracted to him: "The long, curled hair, the dark head bent so reverently, so innocently before her, implied a pair of the finest legs that a young nobleman has ever stood upright upon; and violet eyes; and a heart of gold; and loyalty and manly charm—all qualities which the old woman loved the more the more they failed her" (23). With Elizabeth's desire to possess once again those masculine traits she attributes to Orlando (upon seeing nothing more than the top of his head), Woolf plays on the image of the Virgin Queen, insinuating alternative explanations for the fact that she "knew a man when she saw one, though not, it is said, in the usual way"(26). Her knowledge of what a man "was" was likely a direct result of her own efforts to govern an empire, among other things. The Queen's assumption of Orlando's masculinity, however, had been interrogated even in the opening line of the novel: "He—for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to

disguise it" (13). The gender dynamics between Orlando and the Queen, "The young man withst[anding] her gaze, blushing only a damask rose as became him" are set up in such a way that neither approaches the masculine ideal the Queen imagines (25).

During King James's reign, the River Thames freezes and a carnival is held on the ice. Orlando is distracted by an ice-skater, "a figure, which, whether a boy's or a woman's, for the…Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him with the highest curiosity"(37). Sasha's veiled sex recalls Orlando's same ambiguity described at the novel's opening. Indeed it is the impossibility of distinguishing the figure's sex that elicits Orlando's desire. The longer Orlando is unable to distinguish whether the skater is a man or a woman, the more his desire grows. For if the skater is a man, that desire cannot be satisfied: "Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question" (38). Yet as the figure draws near, he notes "Legs, hands, carriage, were a boy's, but no boy ever had a mouth like that; no boy had those breasts; no boy had those eyes" (38). Finally, the figure stops and curtseys gracefully before the King, and Orlando is relieved to discover she is a woman. Once he knows her sex, Orlando's moment of gender trouble is alleviated and he again accommodates himself into a male subjectivity. Woolf depicts him as plainly misogynist. As they become lovers, Orlando feels Sasha belongs to him, grows jealous. On the night they are to elope, Orlando sees *Othello* being performed on the ice, and as he watches the show, he anticipates Sasha abandoning him: "The frenzy of the Moor seemed to him his own frenzy, and when the Moor suffocated the woman in her bed it was Sasha he killed with his own hands" (57). Refusing the confinement imposed by Orlando's jealousy, Sasha does not appear that evening, leaving her former lover with nothing but bitter resentments.

It is only after Orlando becomes a woman that she truly comes to love Sasha; she now experiences the world as a woman and can identify with Sasha in ways impossible before (primarily through others' treatment of her, rather than through any innate knowledge of her own). The biographer explains, "if the consciousness of being the same sex had any effect at

all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had had as a man" (161). Much less overtly, and perhaps much more effectively than Radclyffe Hall, Woolf is demystifying lesbianism in a way that is truly poignant. With the obscurity between male and female removed, Orlando's "affection gained in beauty what was lost in falsity" (161). She now knows that women are not "obedient, chaste, scented and exquisitely appareled by nature," but that these appearances come about by "the most tedious discipline" (157). Orlando loves Sasha because she knows her as she is.

After his abandonment the night he was to elope, Orlando returns to his castle and locks himself away. Upon reentering society after a failed attempt to become a poet, Orlando is accosted in his home by the Archduchess Harriet, who behaves most unlike a woman: "Any other woman thus caught in a Lord's private grounds would have been afraid; any other woman with that face, headdress, and aspect would have thrown her mantilla across her face to hide it." But subverting this prescriptive formulation, the biographer explains the real reason this woman's immodesty was so shocking: "For this lady resembled nothing so much as a hare" (114). The Archduchess is so obdurate in her attempts to seduce Orlando that his home becomes "uninhabitable," thus he asks King Charles to send him as Ambassador to Constantinople, where Orlando's miraculous sex change later occurs. Well before the sex change, however, Orlando becomes quite popular among the Turkish people: "He spoke in his ordinary voice and echo beat a silver gong. Hence rumours gathered round him. He became the adored of many women and some men" (125).[53] His romantic power is such that "shepherds, gipsies, donkey drivers still sing songs about the English Lord" (125). Woolf's queer inference suggests his beauty held sway for both men and women. It certainly had for at least one British man. Upon his return to England as a woman, Orlando is soon assailed by visits from the Archduke Harry, who reveals that he had long been in love with Orlando, and

[53] In the same fashion as this section will later describe, Borges curbs the queerness of this passage by making Orlando an "idol," rather than the adored: "Llegó a ser **ídolo** de muchas mujeres, y de algunos hombres" (82).

had been thus compelled to disguise himself as the Archduchess Harriet. Upon seeing a portrait of Orlando, when s/he was a man, the Archduke had become so enamored that he had dressed up like a woman in order to win his love, since a relationship among two persons both gendered male is still "out of the question." Now that Orlando was a woman, the Archduke was pleased to perform his masculine role once again and ask for her hand in marriage, "For to him, the Archduke Harry, she was and would ever be the Pink, the Pearl, the Perfection of her sex" (179). The Archduke's condescending gesture, deigning to love Orlando *even though* she had once been a man, is complicated by the fact that the Archduke originally fell in love with Orlando while she was a man. Thus those same attributes, the same beauty that draws Harry to Orlando as a woman had been present long before her sex change.

This specific passage has not been widely treated in the literature on *Orlando*, though it bears much more consideration. Woolf is suggesting that, even when in drag, a man may still exert considerable power in his relationships. The Archduke, *passing* as the Archduchess Harriet, was still performing the subjectivity of a man. Not only had s/he "a knowledge of wines rare in a lady" and some clever "observations upon firearms and customs of sportsmen in her country"—s/he was desiring and pursuing Orlando as a love object (115). Women's clothes do not disguise the Archduke's grounding in a masculine position, entitling him to an aggressive pursuit persistent enough to make Orlando abandon his home. When the anatomical sex is reversed, Harry remains the pursuer, while Orlando is forced to endure his overbearing presence and boring stories; "she would have to marry him, she supposed; for how else to get rid of him she knew not" (181). Being a woman, Orlando is now unable to escape her home on an ambassadorial junket and so must sink to manipulation and scheming (and finally to putting a toad down his shirt) to rid herself of Harry.

Upon laboriously freeing herself from the Archduke, Orlando finally meets Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine, a sea captain. Their sexual ambiguity draws them toward one another, Bonthrop often asking her "Are you positive you aren't a man?" to which

Orlando would reply "Can it be possible you're not a woman?" (258).[54] As a rhetorical device, Woolf employs the couple's relationship to comment on marriage. As Nancy Cervetti notes, the spirit of the Victorian Age demands that Orlando have a husband and a wedding band to prove so, and she finds herself unable to write because she is out of step with this spirit (169). Yet, at the same time, Orlando finds marriage "distasteful… repugnant to her sense of decency and sanitation" (242). Woolf thus depicts marriage as a formality, required for a woman to succeed in Orlando's or Woolf's age, to enjoy a number of rights, including owning property. Orlando and Bonthrop marry the day after they meet, upon which they immediately part ways: he to sail around Cape Horn, and she, now respectable in the eyes of Victorian society, to finally write poetry. In parallel to Orlando's being divested of her property once she is a woman, here she is awarded respectability for a civil status that for Orlando is as arbitrary as her sex.

As the incident with the Archduke/duchess suggests, clothing is an important trope in the novel. The biographer often employs the question of clothing to lapse into long discussions of the arguments for or against constructivist and essentialist notions of gender. Certain philosophers find, he states, "much to support the view that it is the clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking" (188). Clearly at odds with the implied author's position, the pedantic biographer quickly dismisses such a notion, asserting: "Clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath. It was a change in Orlando herself that dictated her choice of a woman's dress and of a woman's sex" (188).[55] The biographer's

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[54] Borges is compelled though to eliminate such ambiguity if only in part, by omitting certain behaviors unbecoming of a man. When explaining why he must leave so soon after meeting and marrying Orlando, Bonthrop explains his destination: "'For the Horn,' he said, briefly, and blushed. (For a man had to blush as a woman had, only at rather different things.)" (252). The Spanish Bonthrop does no such thing, but simply states where he is going without the slightest compunction: "«Para el Cabo de Hornos," replicó brevemente," the biographers aside is omitted, for a man apparently has no need to blush, and Bonthrop definitively has not (162).

[55] I employ the term "implied author" to avoid making unverifiable claims about Woolf biographically. I understand the term as defined by James Phelan: "[*T*]*he implied author is a streamlined*

use of the word "choice" with regard to Orlando's sex reveals Woolf's subtle subversion of his discourse. Orlando had no choice in waking up a woman; the choice lies rather in opting to perform femininity, which is preceded by her opting to dress as a woman. The biographer goes on to support this point, offering a third option: "Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what is above" (188). Orlando's vacillation eventually happens to occur on a daily basis.

Orlando's own sense of identity derives much more from what s/he is wearing than from biological sex. The cultural lines which Butler suggests are responsible for shaping the body into male or female are drawn primarily in this exterior sense:

> The construction of stable bodily contours relies upon fixed sites of corporeal permeability and impermeability. Those sexual practices in both homosexual and heterosexual contexts that open surfaces and orifices to erotic signification or close down others effectively reinscribe the boundaries of the body along new cultural lines. (Butler 204)

As a young man, s/he went out disguised as a commoner to mingle in lower class pubs among poets and wenches who "guessing that something out of the common lay hid beneath his duffle cloak, were quite as eager to come at the truth of the matter as Orlando himself" (29). When living among the gypsies in Turkey, Orlando rarely thinks of her recent change of sex, the biographer explains, because men's and women's clothing are exactly alike. On her way back from England, "it was not until she felt the coil of her skirts about her legs and the Captain offered…to have an awning spread for her on deck that she realized, with a start the penalties and privileges of her position" (153). Seeing how her feminine clothing elicits

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version of the real author, an actual or purported subset of the real author's capacities, traits, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other properties that play an active role in the construction of the particular text" (Phelan 45, author's emphasis).

doting and flattery from the captain she never experienced as a man, Orlando is immediately stricken with the idea of throwing herself overboard. In her constricting attire, she would be unable to swim, requiring a sailor to save her. Thus, as Christy Burns notes, it is not a genital change that transforms Orlando's identity, but rather a change in gender, which is effected primarily by her choice of attire (351).

Not long after her return, Orlando finds herself disgusted with high society, particularly with misogynist poets such as Pope, Dryden and Addison. She tires of her attempts to perform the role of British noblewoman and the treatment she receives as payment. Subsequently, Orlando changes into the clothes she had worn as a man, and goes out on the town—her gender changing along with her. Supporting this effect, the biographer often refers to Orlando as "him." Performing masculinity creates the familiar experience of being a man, Orlando's anatomical sex notwithstanding. Upon approaching a prostitute, "feeling her hanging lightly yet like a suppliant on her arm, roused in Orlando all the feelings which become a man" (217). The power dynamics of gender are reified once Orlando puts on men's clothing. Dressed as a nobleman, Orlando embarks on adventures, such as those she pursued when a young man, arousing rumors of duels, serving as captain on the King's ship and running away with a woman to the Low Countries, her husband in hot pursuit. Orlando's clothes neither wear him/her nor function metonymically as the expression of a stable gender. Rather, as Cervetti argues, "Orlando codes his dress according to practicality or sexual desire" (166).[56]

As the above demonstrates, far from "a joke" (123), "a freak" (125) or "mere child's play" (145), as Woolf would call it in her diary, *Orlando* is a serious interrogation of gender and sexuality, anticipating critics such as Judith Butler by sixty years. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler notes: "The repetition of heterosexual constructs within sexual cultures both gay and

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[56] Notably, the donning of women's clothes did not preclude Orlando from having affairs with other women, nor is her donning that of a man prohibitive of her having affairs with other men: "from the probity of breeches she turned to the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally" (21).

straight may well be the inevitable site of the denaturalization and mobilization of gender categories" (76). Woolf's narrative, particularly her representations of Orlando's masculine exploits after her sex change, destabilizes not only essentialist views of anatomical sex equating gender, but the very idea of gender identity. One of the primary vehicles for Woolf's denaturalization of gender categories is the rhetorical dissonance between the implied author and biographer. Parodying the biographer as a pedantic Victorian intellectual, Woolf creates a sense of high irony as the biographer's objective statements of fact and his well-informed opinions clearly differ from the rhetorical notions the implied author is shown to hold by means of narrated events. I believe that it is not only the subversive representations of Orlando's sexuality that make Woolf's novel such an effective interrogation of gender norms, but the destabilizing effect of multiple discourses existing simultaneously in the same text, the biographer often clashing ideologically with the implied author. What happens then, when a translator intervenes in the narrative-communication situation? As Schiavi points out: "the narrator is no longer only the entity invented by an implied author, but also an entity re-processed by an implied translator who is *the only one* having the power, and the ability" to make the narrator to perform the ironic functions the original (implied) author intended (17, my emphasis). As a translator, Borges has, and often takes advantage of, the power to eliminate discord among implied author and narrator, foreclosing one of the most important rhetorical devices of Woolf's novel.

Orlando, the Abnormal

In Borges's translation, Orlando's identity, both as a man and a woman, undergoes some striking transformations. As the implied author in drag, Borges is able to invert the biographer's discourse around Orlando, and appears to do so almost as a literary exercise. On certain occasions, when the biographer is critical of Orlando, Borges tempers the criticism. At the same time, Borges takes every opportunity to belittle the noble(wo)man, through the biographer's description. In the first instance, the biographer ridicules Orlando for his

pathetic verbiage when poeticizing the skating Sasha, her sex still unknown, as "a melon, a pineapple, an olive tree, an emerald, and a fox in the snow all in the space of three seconds" (37). Simultaneously, with Orlando's list of metaphors, the implied author is critiquing an entire poetic tradition that objectifies women. In the English, the biographer makes an aside: "(…we may here hastily note that all his images at this time were **simple in the extreme to match his senses** and were mostly taken from things he had **liked the taste of** as a boy...) (38).[57] In the Spanish, Orlando's tastes are not simple; the string of images is a direct result of his sensual experience, not of having childish taste. Furthermore, by substituting the things Orlando had liked the taste of as a boy, with simply the things he had liked, the relation between Orlando's current senses and his childishness is diminished: "(…hay que apuntar aquí que todas sus imágenes de aquel tiempo **querían adecuarse a sus sentidos** y estaban derivadas de cosas que **le habían gustado** cuando era chico…) (27).

The translation also appears to let Orlando off the hook for certain misogynist attitudes the implied author reveals though the biographer's factual reporting. Having fallen in love with Sasha, Orlando is desperate to rid himself of his fiancé, Favila, and suddenly discovers dozens of unpleasant qualities of hers that had previously gone unnoticed. As the final straw: "Orlando, who was a passionate lover of animals, now noticed that her teeth were crooked, and the two front turned inward, which, he said, is a sure sign of a perverse and cruel disposition **in woman**, and so broke the engagement that very night for ever" (32-33). Whether or not Orlando truly believes this maxim is besides the point; the fact that he can so quickly come up with such an arbitrarily negative statement about women is the irony Woolf seeks to portray. Yet in Spanish, this cruel disposition associated with crooked teeth is a generality to Orlando, rather than a condition expressly reserved for women: "Orlando, que tenía pasión por los animales, advirtió entonces que Favila tenía los dientes torcidos, y los

[57] All bolding in the passages that follow are my emphasis and is intended to foreground those aspects that differ between the texts.

dos delanteros hacia atrás; indicio inequívoco, según él, de **un carácter cruel y perverso**. Esa misma noche rompió para siempre el compromiso" (24). Omitting Orlando's predisposition towards the denigration of women, is an example of how translation allows the minimizing of rhetorical opposition between the biographer and the implied author. Woolf sought to use the biographer's straight-forward reporting of the facts to make a critical point about women's inferior status in the opinions of men. By making inward-facing, crooked teeth a sign of cruelty and perversity among men and women alike, the irony is erased.

Another such example may be seen when Orlando is learning how to occupy the subjectivity a woman, something that did not occur simply because she became one biologically. The biographer makes an unqualified statement about women as if it were a natural fact: "She was becoming a little more modest, **as women are**, of her brains, and a little more vain, **as women are**, of her person" (187). The totalizing expression serves to highlight the unreliability of the biographer, and destabilize the ideology he represents. It is clear that the implied author finds such a statement absurd. But by tempering the biographer's hyperbole, Borges also removes this irony: "Se estaba poniendo algo más modesta, como **la mayoría** de las mujeres, de su inteligencia; un poco más vanidosa, como **la mayoría** de las mujeres, de su persona" (122). By limiting his description to "the majority of women," leaving room for exception, the biographer's statement remains matter of fact, but there is no ironic undercurrent which destabilizes his assertion.

Woolf also employs free-indirect discourse to make ironic statements through the voice of the biographer. When Orlando resorts to trickery to try to rid herself of the Archduke Harry, she cheats on a betting game, to Harry's great distress: "To love a woman who cheated at play was, he said, impossible. Here he broke down completely. Happily, he said, recovering slightly, there were no witnesses. She was, after all, **only** a woman" (183). The Archduke's condescension is laughable as the reader knows Orlando has cheated at play expressly to anger him enough to finally leave her alone. He withholds his anger because she is *only* a woman, and has few expectations of her because she is *only* a woman. In the Borges

translation, however, Harry's condescension is transformed into a simple statement of fact: women cheat by nature. "Imposible, dijo, amar una tramposa. Al llegar ahí se desarmó. Por suerte, dijo, recobrándose un poco, no había testigos. Al fin, **ella era una mujer**" (120). The assertion that women are naturally deceitful reads so strongly, that the implied author's ironic intention is again squelched.

Borges's sympathy for Orlando as a man or a woman seems to wane further in the novel. Interrupting the narration, the biographer takes a moment to point out how odd it was that a healthy young man such as Orlando should be laying under a tree thinking, rather than out pursuing adventure. He claims Orlando is "so subject to **the lethargy of thought**, and rendered so susceptible by it, that when it came to a question of poetry, or his own competence in it, he was as shy as a little girl behind her mother's cottage door" (102). Borges's translation of this passage makes Orlando not subject to the lethargy of thought, but rather, simply lethargic *of* thought: "[era] **de tan letárgico pensamiento**, y **tan avergonzado de ese letargo**, que en cuanto se trataba de poesía o de su capacidad poética, se cohibía como una niña detrás de la puerta de la choza" (68). In English, Orlando's embarrassment is the product of ego, of thinking too much about himself and about others' opinions of him and his poetry. In Spanish, however, Orlando is ashamed of his slow intelligence, and it is due to this mental lethargy that he dare not discuss his poetry with anyone else; his work is bad because he is unintelligent.

Borges added the term "avergonzado" to the translation above, where it had merely been implied in the original. He takes another angle on shame later in the text, when Orlando tries to impress the gypsy chief with her noble lineage: "**Then she was seized with a shame she had never felt before**. It was clear that Rustum and the other gypsies thought that a descendent of four or five hundred years only the meanest possible. Their own families went back at least two or three thousand years" (148).[58] In the English passage, Orlando

[58] The second part of the paragraph presents an interesting translation problem. It refers to well-known British surnames, which in Argentina would surely have meant little: "To the gipsy whose ancestors had built

experiences a particular kind of shame. Something of his/her character is revealed by the fact that any other time Orlando has set to compare distinguished ancestry with another, he came out ahead. Thus, the shame of a meager family tree, when one considers oneself a noble, is new to Orlando. This aspect of Orlando's background becomes magnified in the Spanish. Here, Orlando has never been so ashamed in his/her life: "**Orlando nunca había sentido tanta vergüenza.** Entendió que Rustem y los otros gitanos consideraban que una ascendencia de cuatrocientos o quinientos años era menos que modesta. La de ellos remontaba por lo menos a dos mil o tres mil" (96).

Borges also sabotages Orlando's accomplishments as a poet. After receiving two hundred guineas from her agent for her prize-winning poem "The Oak Tree," Orlando lies under the tree for which the poem was named and questions the validity of remunerating poetry, the writing of which for her is a necessity, not simply a vocation: "what has that [the prize] got to do with this [the tree], she had wondered? **What has praise and fame to do with poetry?** What has seven editions (the book had already gone into no less) got to do with the **value** of it?" (325). The Spanish, however, omits the praise and fame Orlando received, while at the same time eliminating her interrogation of commercial success conferring value on poetry: "¿qué tendrá eso que ver con esto?, se había preguntado. ¿Qué tendrán que ver siete ediciones? (Ya el libro las había alcanzado)" (207). The translation doubly slights Orlando: the words Borges omits regarding fame diminish her success as a poet, his omission of value diminishes her skill as one. As will be explored in Chapter 3, in his translation of Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, when referring to Shakespeare's sister, who was as naturally as talented as her brother, those words that point to the brilliance that compelled her to write

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the Pyramids centuries before Christ was born**, the genealogy of the Howards and the Plantagnets was no better and no worse than that of the Smiths and Joneses**: both were negligible" (147-48). As a solution, Borges eliminates the first two names, and suggests that Orlando's family tree is "ni mejor ni peor que la de los Smith y los Jones: ambas eran insignificantes" (96). Smith and Jones being last names likely to be recognized as common even in Argentina, Borges makes the comparison between them and Orlando, rather than the Howards or Plantagnets.

are similarly distorted: "gift" becomes "vocación" and "genius" becomes "inclinación." In both texts, the result is that great writers, who happen to be women, are driven to write by force of their genius without second thought of financial reward, dilettantishly become writers for pleasure.

The selection of "The Oak Tree," Orlando's prize-winning poem, presented in the novel is a extracted from Vita Sackville-West's poem, "The Land." The verse is employed to further Woolf's critique of the institution of marriage and of the long-held assumption that women "women have no desires…only affectations," especially for one another (219).[59] As mentioned previously, Orlando becomes unable to write until marrying Bonthrop, after which she loses her last hindrance to writing great poetry. As she writes, Orlando's inner critic speaks up, questioning her use of "girls" in her work, which in the Victorian literary establishment is unnecessary at best, and obscene at worst. The lines are as follows:

> And then I came to a field where the springing grass,
> Was dulled by the hanging cups of fritillaries,
> Sullen and foreign-looking, the snaky flower,
> Scarfed in dull purple, like Egyptian girls— (265)

Orlando's writing is interrupted by the Spirit of the Age's oppressive weight:

> At this point she felt that power (remember we are dealing with the most obscure manifestations of the human spirit) which had been reading over her shoulder, tell her to stop. Grass, the power seemed to say, going back with a ruler such as governesses use to the beginning, is alright; the hanging cups of fritillaries—admirable; the snaky flower—a thought strong from a lady's pen, perhaps, but Wordsworth, no doubt, sanctions it; but—girls? Are girls necessary? You have a husband at the Cape, you say? Ah, well, that'll do. (265)

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[59] Woolf writes about the scene where this quote of Ben Johnson appears in her journal. After meeting a prostitute and having her masculine feelings aroused by Nell's pliancy and flattery, Orlando reveals herself as a woman. As Woolf plans in her diary: "They will talk. This will lead to a diversion or two about women's love. This will bring in O.'s night life; and her clients (that's the word). Then she will see Dr. Johnson and perhaps write (I want somehow to quote it) To all you Ladies" (*Diary* 119). In the actual passage, she does not mention Dr. Johnson's name, but mentions him obliquely: "All they desire—but hist again—is that not a man's step on the stair? All they we were about to say when the gentleman took the very words out of our mouths. Women have no desires, says this gentleman, coming into Nell's parlour; only affectations. Without desires (she has served him and he is gone) their conversation cannot be of the slightest interest to anyone" (*Orlando* 219).

The inclusion of girls is suspect, but passes under the Spirit's critical gaze once it has been established that Orlando is married. Her heterosexual union immediately negates any suspicion of Sapphism on the part of the Spirit of the Age, again pointing to the absurd representation of marriage as a formality in which Orlando participates solely as a means to achieve independence. Respectable in the eyes of the law, Orlando is now free to write of and experience the love of other women. In Borges's translation, both of Woolf's critiques are obscured by the translation of "girls" as "egipcias":

> *Y entonces llegué a un campo en que al pasto vivo,*
> *lo oscurecían las copas colgantes de las fritilarias,*
> *hoscas y forasteras, de flor tortuosa,*
> *coronadas de oscura púrpura, como egipcias.* (170, emphasis in the original)

By employing the gender implicit in the noun, the Spirit of the Age seems not to critique the inclusion of girls, but rather the choice of something foreign. Indeed "egipcias" could read as a literal comparison, an Egyptian flower, eliminating any question of girls from the line. It is confusing why this choice in words, "egipcias," should become acceptable because Orlando is married:

> Al escribir sintió que una fuerza (recuerden que tratamos con las más oscuras manifestaciones de la mente humana) leía sobre un hombro, y cuando hubo escrito «como egipcias» la fuerza ordenó que se detuviera. «El pasto," parecía decir esa fuerza, midiendo con una regla como hacen el principio las maestras, está bien: las copas colgantes de las fritilarias —admirable; la flor tortuosa —una idea, quizá algo fuerte para la pluma de una dama, pero sin duda autorizada por Wordsworth; pero —¿**egipcias**? ¿Son necesarias las egipcias? ¿Usted dice tener un marido en el Cabo de Hornos? Muy bien, pueden pasar. (170)

Borges's obscuring of both the representation of desire between women and of Woolf's satirizing of its marginalization, leaves only a hint of irony. The Spanish-language reader knows that Orlando is married in name only and so any mention of a particular action being sanctioned by her marriage is ironic. Yet the full force of "girls" and all the term implies is counterbalanced by the confusing connection between marriage and "egipcias."

From his position as implied author in disguise, Borges is able to introduce sentiments that were not only lacking in the original, but which work against the rhetorical positioning of the original implied author toward the implied reader. The most widely deployed introduction he makes to *Orlando* is the concept of abnormality. “Anormal” is inserted where such an expression was absent from the English more frequently than any other semantic introduction. The unambiguousness of the word interferes with the discourse, making the term a natural part of the biographer’s vocabulary and foreclosing much of the ironic dissonance the implied author often intends. “Abnormal” is often used prescriptively, indicating in black and white terms what is and what is not acceptable behavior in a woman.

When contemplating throwing herself over board “for the pleasure of being rescued by a blue-jacket,” Orlando recalls a certain word he and his fellow sailors had for such a woman when she was man, but the biographer censors Orlando, interjecting, “But we must omit that Word; it was disrespectful in the extreme and passing strange on a lady’s lips” (156). Such a word becomes more than strange from the mouth of lady in the Spanish: “Pero debemos omitir ese nombre; era de lo más insolente y del todo **anormal** en labios de una dama” (103). Strange, which can connote odd, surprising, peculiar or unfamiliar, again becomes abnormal as Orlando, who has not yet learned the expectations of a woman, begins to feel uncomfortable with her expansive sexuality the closer she comes to the shores of England:

> “To refuse and to yield,” she murmured, “how delightful; to pursue and to conquer, how august; to perceive and to reason, how sublime.” Not one of these words coupled together seemed to her wrong; nevertheless, as the chalky cliffs loomed nearer, she felt culpable; dishonoured; unchaste; which, for **one** who had never given the matter a thought, was **strange**. (162)

In Spanish we read not a person who has never felt guilt about sex because as a man sex was a natural right, but a specifically a woman who has never thought of sex as a sin:

> «Rehusar y ceder», murmuró, «qué delicioso; perseguir y conquistar, qué augusto; comprender y razonar, qué sublime». Ninguna de esas palabras así apareadas le pareció mal; y sin embargo, al agrandarse los

> acantilados de tiza se sintió culpable, deshonrada, impura, lo que en una **mujer** que jamás pensó en el pecado era un poco **anormal**. (107)

In such a context, what seems odd is a woman who has never thought about sin or felt unchaste. Abnormal is such a strong term that it outweighs the very irony the paragraph contains: Orlando had never before felt those feelings because she had been a man, for whom an entirely different standard of conduct was expected.

The most telling use of the term comes in the biographer's description of Orlando's sex change:

> The change seemed to have been accomplished painlessly and completely in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it. **Many people**, taking this into account, and **holding that** such a change of sex is **against nature**, have been at great pains to prove (1) that Orlando had always been a woman (2) that Orlando is at this moment a man. (139)

In translation:

> El cambio se había operado sin dolor y minuciosamente y de manera tan perfecta que la misma Orlando no se extrañó. Muchas personas, en vista de lo anterior**, y de que** tales cambios de sexo son **anormales**, se han esforzado en demostrar (a) que Orlando había sido siempre una mujer (b) que Orlando es ahora un hombre. (91)

Parsing the English, those people who argue that Orlando was either always a woman, or has always been a man support their claim with two perceived pieces of evidence. The first is that the sex change was painless, the second that any such sex change was against nature. In the Spanish, however, it is not *many people* who hold that Orlando's change of sex was against nature, but rather, the very fact of such transformations being "abnormal" that convinces them to prove the change never occurred. The Spanish then parses: given the fact that the sex change was painless, and the fact that it was abnormal, Orlando had either always been a woman or was still a man. Knowing Borges's familiarity with philosophy and theology, it seems doubtful that he overlooked "against nature" being a referent to Thomas Aquinas's designation of non-heterosexual relations as "contra natura," which would have been the logical equivalent. Thus, even while Woolf's original text constantly works to

subvert the naturalness of gender, Borges's choice of "abnormal" inserts a heteronormative ideological stand that disrupts Woolf's disruption.

Borges's ascription of abnormality to gender transgression in *Orlando* is noticeable even without the word's use. Where he cannot insert his opinion by substituting the term, he uses other means to tone down those "abnormal" aspects of the text he finds distracting, if not offensive. At the point in the narrative where the biographer hesitantly reveals Orlando's sex change, the room is full of trumpeters who loudly blast their horns in an attempt to awaken Orlando as he has been asleep for a week. Finally, he awakens: "He stretched himself. He rose. He stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumpets pealed Truth! Truth! Truth! we have no choice left but to confess—**he** was a woman" (137). Woolf's use of "he" makes clear that Orlando's subjectivity is still masculine, his genitalia notwithstanding. It also, of course, serves as a shock factor to see the masculine pronoun used in reference to a woman. Taking advantage of Spanish's synthetic verb structure, Borges avoids cross-gender pronouns, and in doing so limits both the shock of *he* being a woman, and the numerous uses of the pronoun that anticipate this transgressive usage: "Y Orlando se despertó. Se estiró. Se paró. Se irguió con completa desnudez, ante nuestros ojos y mientras las trompetas rugían: ¡Verdad! ¡Verdad! ¡Verdad! Debemos confesarlo: era una mujer" (90). Frances Aparicio offers one explanation for Borges's choice to eliminate the masculine pronoun of the last line, and to place that line separate from the rest of the sentence. She claims it is likely that

> el énfasis visual producido por la oración-párrafo en español haya sido una estrategia para compensar la pérdida de la sorpresa lingüística que conlleva el uso del sujeto "he" en el texto inglés. Borges transforma "He was a woman" en "era una mujer," aprovechando del sujeto implícito en español, pero renunciando al efecto sorprendente del inglés en su traslado al español. Es decir, si hubiera utilizado el sujeto "Él," habría creado un doble efecto sorprendente ya que en español el empleo del pronombre, cuando no es necesario, expresa cierto énfasis. (121)

She does not venture why Borges might have found the placement of "era una mujer" on a separate line from the rest of the sentence was preferable to the "doubly shocking" effect of redundant pronoun use. But deducing from his other translation strategies, the most likely explanation is that it reduced the *abnormal* effect of a masculine pronoun referring to a feminine subject.[60]

Borges limits the proliferation of those pronouns which refer back to Orlando's sex change and the biographer continues with his narration: "His memory—but in the future we must, for convention's sake, say 'her' for 'his' and 'she' for 'he'—her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle" (138). Borges omits this vacillation altogether: "Su memoria podía remontar sin obstáculos el curso de su vida pasada" (91). Such a choice interferes with Woolf's rhetorical strategies in two ways: first, clearly, it eliminates one more reminder of the sex change that has just occurred, but secondly, it changes her representation of the biographer, whose pedantry is at its height, anxiously explaining why he is calling a person who up to the present has been man, *she*. What's more, as this pronoun is purely used for "convention's sake," the implication is that the biographer still views Orlando to be man, who just happens to have female genitalia. The constructedness of gender categories is foregrounded once more, as Orlando's identity necessarily has little to do with anatomical sex if the biographer must call Orlando *she* as an afterthought.

While Orlando's biographer was surely more preferable to Borges than many other of Woolf's (non-) narrators with his intrusiveness and irony, his style of relaying long sentences with numerous clauses, and of employing free-indirect discourse to let characters speak or think without his interruption were not to the translator's liking. Consequently, throughout

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[60] Ironically, in his "Los traductores de los 1001 noches," Borges pokes fun at Edward Lane for his puritanical translation that went so far as to omit a hermaphrodite fish: "En la noche 391, un pescador le presenta un pez al rey de los reyes y éste quiere saber si es macho o hembra y le dicen que es hermafrodita. Lane consigue aplacar ese improcedente coloquio, traduciendo que el rey ha preguntado de qué especie es el animal y que el astuto pescador le responde que es de una especie mixta" (OC I: 476).

the novel—and indeed in all of his book-length translations—Borges places the narrator's asides in parentheses (those that are not already, for the English narration already abounds in parenthetical asides), and characters' discourse in quotations marks. After returning home from court after his failed elopement with Sasha, Orlando's maid expresses her relief: "Mrs. Grimsditch, seeing the light in the window put the tankard from her lips and said Praise be to God, his Lordship was safe in his room again; for she had been thinking all this while that he was foully murdered" (72). Mrs. Grimsditch's discourse begins with a capital letter, thus distinguishing it from the previous text, yet the line is kept in the past (his Lordship *was* safe), the biographer's discourse thus subsuming hers. Borges translates the passage: "Mrs. Grimsditch, al ver la luz en la ventana, apartó el jarro de sus labios y dijo «Alabado sea Dios, su Señoría está sano y salvo en su cuarto»; pues ella había pensado todo ese tiempo que lo habían asesinado de un modo atroz" (50). By placing the maid's discourse in quotation marks, and using the present tense (su Señoría *está* sano y salvo), the translator makes a sharp distinction between the narrator's discourse and that of the character.

Rather than list the numerous other occasions Borges employs this strategy of isolating the narrator's and characters' discourse, let us also briefly examine his rendering of time—as it is a trend we will see in future chapters of this project. *Orlando*, we may recall spans over three hundred years, yet the biographer often writes as if the action were happening in the present, that is, at the same time it is being written or retold. Woolf uses these facets of her novel to employ chronological experimentation. Actually reminding us of irony implicit in Ireneo Funes requiring one day to reconstruct one day of his past in his memory, the biographer writes as if he can only take advantages of lulls in the action to make comments upon the events, lest he miss anything that needs reporting:

> And as she **drove**, we **may** seize the opportunity, since the landscape was of a simple English kind which needs no description, to draw the reader's attention more particularly than we could at the moment to one or two remarks which have slipped in here and there in the course of the narrative. (186-87)

Woolf employs the past tense (what would translate as the imperfect in Spanish) incongruently, as if somehow the ongoing activity of driving in the past allows time for commentary in the present, when the action is, of course, no longer taking place, allowing one, in reality, to take all the time one needs to clarify past situations. Woolf is thus superimposing the past onto the present, making them occur simultaneously. Borges simplifies the structure by eliminating the conflicting verb tenses: "Aprovecharemos su viaje —ya que el paisaje recorrido era un paisaje clásico inglés que no requiere descripción— para subrayar una o dos circunstancias de nuestro relato" (122). Here the narrative occurs entirely in the present, Orlando isn't driving at the present moment, but rather her trip provides a convenient point in the narrative to discuss past events. In another example, Woolf playfully renders the biographer too occupied to make further commentary on Orlando's gender, for the events of the past are interrupting him, even as he narrates in the present:

> Whether, then, Orlando was most man or woman, it is difficult to say and cannot now be decided. For her coach was now rattling over the cobbles. She had reached her home in the city. The steps were being let down; the iron gates being opened. She was entering her father's house at Blackfriar's…(190)

In this instance, Borges resolves the incongruence by articulating both the narration and the narrated events in the present tense:

> Imposible resolver por ahora si Orlando era más hombre o más mujer. Oímos el rodar de su carruaje en el empedrado. Llega a su casa en Londres. Bajan el estribo; abren los portones de hierro. Entra en la casa de su padre en Blackfriars... (124)

Borges occasionally handles Woolf's experimentation with time admirably, such as when Orlando is suffering the company of the misogynist poet Alexander Pope, whose arrogance is such that "the ladies may fidget a little, look out of the window a little, yawn a little, and so let the sugar fall with a great plop—as Orlando did now—into Mr. Pope's tea" (214). Here, Orlando's dropping the sugar carelessly into Pope's tea reads as if it has just happened over the course of the time the narrator has been expressing the preceding lines, the now giving

presence to the line even though it occurred in the past (Orlando *did* now). Borges renders the line nicely by using the present tense of "acabar," which means, roughly, "to just have." As we see: "las damas pueden ponerse un poco nerviosas, mirar un poco por la ventana, bostezar un poco, y dejar caer el terrón con un gran chapoteo —como Orlando **acaba** de hacerlo— en la taza de Mr. Pope" (138). In general, however, there is a consistent tendency on Borges's part to simplify the biographer's discourse through the elimination of discordant verb tenses.

Borges's most stunning manipulation of the biographer is his *outing* of Virginia Woolf as the biographical author of the text. Throughout the novel, the biographer never hesitates to refer to himself as "him" or "he"; furthermore, his typical, if exaggerated, Victorian style marks the text as a masculine enterprise, or at the very least, the parody of one. Yet Borges is sure to make clear that it is Virginia Woolf behind his words. When the biographer finds himself with nothing to write, as Orlando spends the entire year writing "The Oak Tree," he resorts to naming the months as they pass by. He apologizes, and duly blames Orlando for such a boring lull in the narrative:

> This method of writing biography, though it has its merits, is a little bare, perhaps, and the reader, if we could go on with it, may complain that he could recite the calendar for himself and so save his pocket whatever sum the publisher may think proper to charge for this book. But what can the biographer do when his subject has put him in the predicament in which Orlando has now put us? (266-67)

Quite deftly, in this passage, Borges makes the kind of narrative intrusion so common to his own fiction, puncturing it with autobiographical fact:

> A pesar de sus méritos, este procedimiento biográfico es tal vez un poco árido y, si lo adoptamos para siempre, el lector puede alegar que él es muy capaz de recitar el almanaque sin nuestra ayuda y de ahorrar el dinero que la **Hogarth Press** cobra por este libro. Pero, ¿qué otro recurso le queda al biógrafo abandonado por su héroe en el trance en que ahora Orlando nos abandona? (171)

The implied author, Virginia Woolf, co-owner of Hogarth Press, appears to be revealing herself, cutting through the veil of fiction to destabilize the mimetic effect of the biographer;

a level of narration that remains unbroken in the English is suddenly shattered in the Spanish. For if the narration of Orlando's life has frequently been interrupted by the biographer himself, bringing the possible veracity of any biography into question, the existence of the biographer has not received this same subversion. Outing Woolf seems to be the biographer's (translator's) revenge for those times he and the implied author so clearly clash in their discourse. If Orlando will not stay in the closet, Woolf will be outed as well.

Conclusion

Borges's corrective editing of those stylized repetitions which constitute gender occurred not only in his translations, but in his own fiction as well. Among the many revisions Borges would make to his published work are the successive efforts to toughen up his male characters. In *La prosa narrativa de Jorge Luis Borges*, Jaime Alazraki notes a series of revisions to Borges's story "Hombre de la esquina rosada" (1935), each successively making the dying protagonist more macho. "Hombre de la esquina rosada," which is, incidentally, a revision of an even earlier text, "Hombres pelearon" 1928, tells the tale of the night strongman Rosendo Juárez backs down from a knife fight, only to be stabbed by one of his gang—the narrator of the story—who refuses to be contaminated by his boss' disgrace. After dragging himself back to the saloon, Juárez lays on the barroom floor and waits to die. In the 1935 version, published in *Historia universal de la infamia* (Megáfono edition) the scene read:

> "Tápenme la cara," dijo despacio, cuando no pudo más. Sólo le quedaba el orgullo y *no quería que le curioseáramos todos las morisquetas de su muerte.* (172)

When the story was published in Emecé's 1951 edition of *La muerte y la brújula*, the term "morisquetas de su muerte," which has a disparaging tone, is modified to something with more diginity. At the same time, Borges deemphasizes the personal relationship the narrator has to man he killed, which would add to his shame, by making the first person plural (curioseáramos todos) into a generalized third person:

> "Tápenme la cara," dijo despacio, cuando no pudo más. Sólo le quedaba el orgullo y *no quería que le curioseara la gente los visajes de la agonía.*(172)

In 1954, and in all future reprinting of the story, Emecé's edition of *Historia universal de la infamia* was edited to make Juárez's request to cover his face into a demand, which as Alazraki asserts, "subraya el character autoritario y altanero del muribundo" (173).

> "Tápenme la cara," dijo despacio, cuando no pudo más. Sólo le quedaba el orgullo y *no iba a consentir que le curiosearan los visajes de la agonía.* (172)

It took three attempts to make Borges's protagonist into a man whose brawn he believed merited the kind of respect that inspired the young people of his neighborhood to imitate "hasta el modo de escupir" (389). Juárez moves from a coward whose painful winces he must hide from those very young men who used to worship him, to one who recovers his dignity enough to make one last exertion of power in his role as gang leader.

In Borges's publication of "Tema del traidor y del héroe" in *Sur* (No.112, February 1944), Fergus Kilpatrick, accused of betraying an Irish rebellion against England "admitió su crimen." When the story was published in *Ficciones*, his disloyalty comes into question when he "firmó su propia sentencia," but never admits his guilt (Alazraki 143). Kilpatrick's honor remains intact, and indeed, the entire plot of the story takes on a new twist, as the possibility arises that he was set up by James Nolan, the man Kilpatrick charged with discovering who had been leaking information to the authorities. The last line of Borges's "Deutsches Requiem," published in *Sur* (No.136, February 1946) originally read: "Miro mi cara en el espejo para saber quién soy, para saber cómo me portaré dentro de unas horas cuando me enfrente con el fin." Otto Dietrich zur Linde, a Nazi prison director on death row after World War II, writes the epistle that comprises the story as a justification for his actions. In doing so, he unintentionally discloses the way his fear of cowardice led him to be ruthless in his torture of others. In *Ficciones*, Borges adds a line to the end of the story, playing up Zur Linde's courage and strange dignity: "Mi carne puede tener miedo; yo, no" (Alazraki 149).

Consequently, before judging Borges too harshly for the kinds of sexist and heteronormative edits he made to the texts he translated, we must consider how these transformations to his own fictions, each of which serve to heighten the masculinity of his characters, demonstrate that Borges at least played by his own rules. In essays such as "Las versiones homéricas" or "La supersticiosa ética del lector," Borges makes no exception for his own work when he claims there to be no such thing as a definitive text.

Borges's transformations of Molly Bloom and Orlando call into question the identities of all characters in translation. The gender (or the stylized repetitions that comprise it) and sexuality of Anna Karenina, Emma Bovary, or *The Immoralist*'s Michel, so frequently read in English as if originally written in the language, may be, as in Borges's translations, strikingly different characters in Russian or French. The techniques we have seen: omission, insertion of derogatory terms, addition of text and even redistribution of speech acts, are possibilities available to any translator. Particularly in texts containing transgressive characters, it is likely that normative approaches to the translation of gender and sexuality abound. As this study has shown, these translation practices can create not only new characters, but new plots and new ideological implications as well. Furthermore, as we have seen with *Orlando*, the identities of narrators and implied authors, as well as the relationship between them may also be altered. Interestingly, such transformations seem less likely in the translation of many of Borges's stories. His aesthetic of the "nothingness of personality" has created characters whose traits are most often nothing more than the actions they perform.

CHAPTER III

VOICE DISTORTION: CHARACTER NARRATION IN BORGES'S TRANSLATIONS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN* AND HERMAN MELVILLE'S *BARTLEBY*

Los actos son nuestro símbolo.

Borges, "Biografía de Tadeo Isodoro Cruz (1829-1874)"

In Borges's story "El muerto" (1946), the envious porteño-turned-gaucho, Benjamin Otálora, seeks to ruin and then replace his contrabandista boss, Azevedo Bandeira. He does not consciously covet his boss's power or the cult of personality that surrounds him, but focuses instead on the boss's woman, his saddle and his horse; they become "atributos o adjetivos de un hombre que [Otálora] aspira destruir" (OC I:659). That objects, rather than personality traits, be the adjectives describing Borges's characters is one logical aesthetic consequence of his aversion to psychological narration. On the one hand, Borges's rejection of psychological fiction reveals itself in the flatness of his third-person characters. Borges is sparing in his description of characters' feelings, often displacing their emotions onto the adjectives describing their environment—an economizing technique to keep focus on the action. As Jaime Alazraki notes, "el adjetivo no expresa cualidades que están contenidas en las cosas, sino airea, más bien, la reacción que esas cosas provocan en el personaje" (211).

On the other hand, Borges employs highly visible or intrusive character narrators for the same end of obliterating the psychological from his fiction. More than half of the stories from *Ficciones* and *El Aleph* contain narrators calling themselves, or narrating as abstractions, of Borges. The unreliability of these Borges characters may be taken for granted, not simply because they make such obvious claims as: "recuerdo (creo)" (OC I: 583); or "ignoro los detalles de su aventura; cuando me sean revelados, he de rectificar y

ampliar estas páginas" (OC I: 656). Borges's character narrators also enhance the sensation of unreliability through techniques such as disguising themselves as third person narrators; pages into the story they burst into the discourse, making it clear to the reader that the apparently objective relation of events has been subjectively mediated for the duration of the story. Unreliability also results when the character narrator surreptitiously translates someone else's discourse, as he does in "La forma de la espada" and "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan." Furthermore, in texts such as "Deutches Requiem" and "La casa de Asterión" the character narrator Borges insinuates his mediation in and commentary upon the story through editor's footnotes.

The conspicuousness of Borges's unreliable first-person narrators underscores his third-person characters' status as mere props, yet it masks those narrators' own limited functions. There is little ethical deliberation or manipulation involved in the author's very plain attempts to convince the reader that he is not to be trusted; it is not a technique for increasing the verisimilitude of his narrators. Rather, as we see in "Funes el memorioso," in which the character narrator (a version of Borges were he born mid-nineteenth century) clearly states his inability to accurately report his conversation with Ireneo Funes, the point is aesthetic, rather than ethical: his merely human memory, and his ironic remorse for sacrificing the efficacy of his story by telling only the most important points and suggestive details, make the narrator the inversion of Funes, who has become incapacitated by his monstrous memory. Like "los rusos y los discípulos de los rusos," who register every minor detail of a character's interior workings and exterior environment in an effort to evoke the highest degree of mimesis, Funes is unable to discern what merits his attention and what does not. Consequently, as Sergio Waisman notes, "the sacrifice of efficacy to which the narrator admits is no sacrifice at all" (190). To the contrary, unlike Funes and the authors his character satirizes, the narrator, unable (and perhaps unwilling) to recreate his dialogue with Ireneo word for word, seeks to include only those details from which readers can create "una

realidad más compleja que la declarada… y referir sus derivaciones y efectos" (Borges, "La postulación de la realidad" OC I: 256).

While it was nothing new in his day, Borges's novel deployment of unreliable narration subverted the technique's traditional form of subversion. As Seymour Chatman describes it,

> in 'unreliable narration' the narrator's account is at odds with the implied reader's surmises about the story's real intentions. The story undermines the discourse. We conclude, by 'reading out,' between the lines, that the events and existents could not have been 'like that,' and so we hold the narrator suspect. (Chatman 233)

Unreliable narration often serves to increase the verisimilitude of a narrative, to emotionally implicate readers in narrator's motivations for their unreliability and to enhance the "truth" from which the unreliable narrator appears to be departing. Yet the narrative communication between implied author and narrator in Borges rather reinforces that there are no "real intentions," no definitive events or existents against which readers may gauge the accuracy of the narrator's account. Instead, a multiplicity of possible versions unfold through the narration: in Borges's fiction, it is the discourse that undermines the story. Effectively, most representations of Borges as the character narrator have the primary rhetorical function of highlighting the verbal artifice of fiction, of reminding the reader that the text is a creation, not a reality. Their unreliability is the textual strategy through which this metafiction is accomplished; it is not, as may be found in other fictional texts, a means for revealing their complex psychological motives.

Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, and Herman Melville's *Bartleby* are the two major English translations Borges undertook of works containing character narrators. In line with his conclusion that translators must emphasize the parts of a text they find aesthetically relevant, even at the expense of other elements of the work, Borges simplifies the narrators of each text, alleviating the psychological aspects he so detested. He flattens out the ethical and rhetorical inconsistencies between what they narrate, and what they actually disclose (that is

what they say, as opposed to the motivation behind their saying it); and he transforms the discourse to make the focalization and voice occur either exclusively within their function as character or their function as narrator, even while past and present, vision and voice interchangeably intersect in the original. A major arena in which these transformations take place is the representation of gender and sexuality, whose socially prescriptive nature has everything to do with assumptions about ethics. Both character narrators move closer to their gender ideal and as a result, Woolf's feminist rhetoric is undercut, Melville's ethical questions displaced.

Character Narrators and Translation

By virtue of their dual points of enunciation, one in the narrative present and another in a past distant enough to merit narration, character narrators are able to complicate the discourse of a text in extraordinary ways. As characters, they are located within the story where they experience narrative events and communicate with other characters. Yet in the discourse, as narrators, temporal distance allows them new perspectives, room to reframe their relationship to those events. The most consequential feature of this distinction—especially for the study of translation—is the multilayered and polyvalent communication that arises as voice and focalization shift between the narrator as character, and the narrator in her or his role as reporter of narrative events. James Phelan, in *Living to Tell About: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (2005), notes that at different points in a fictional text, even within the same sentence, the discourse may contain the narrator's focalization and voice; the character's focalization and narrator's voice; the character's focalization and voice (as in stream of consciousness); blends of the character's focalization and voice with the narrator's focalization and voice (as in free-indirect discourse); or the narrator's focalization with the character's voice (117).

A few lines from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* with their corresponding translations by Borges provide some concrete illustrations of these intersections of vision and

voice, as well as their susceptibility to alteration in translation. In a first example, Woolf's character narrator, Mary,[61] recalls having been deep in thought; happening to walk onto the grass of the prestigious Oxbridge University, she was summarily admonished by the groundskeeper. The discourse consists of the narrator's voice but the character's focalization: "What idea it had been that had sent me so audaciously trespassing I could not now remember" (6). The deictic "now" locates the point of perception in the past, with Mary as character, while the past tense "could not" indicates that it is being recounted from the narrative present by Mary as narrator. Borges's translation of this same line offers a different point of intersection. In "No puedo recordar cuál fue la idea que me impulsó a esa violación" (9), Woolf's "now" ceases to be a present that occurred in the past, but is translated into the narrative present, making both the voice and the focalization belong to the narrator. The inability to remember occurs "now," at the time of narration, rather than the past. In another example, Woolf's character narrator's discourse is both the character's focalization and voice: "But let me turn the light of this observation on to real life, I thought" (35). Despite the lack of quote marks, we are clearly reading the character's thoughts as she perceived events in the narrative past. Borges's translation again turns the discourse into the narrator's focalization and voice: "Pero ahora permítanme aplicar la luz de esta observación a la vida real" (33). In this instance, the character narrator's suggestion to herself is played out on an entirely different track of communication, becoming a direct address to her narratees.

The formal techniques for distinguishing among character narrators' vision and voice can be quite subtle, which in suit allows translation to redirect character narrators' discourse in equally subtle, but substantial ways. Narrative theorists, however, have yet to consider the repercussions that translation may have for character narration. The cultural and ideological, not to mention linguistic interventions which are the inevitable consequence of translation

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[61] "call me Mary Beton, Mary Seton, Mary Carmichael or by any name you please—it is not a matter of any importance" (5).

would seem to have a serious impact on the intersections of focalization and voice, repositioning character narrators in relationship to the events, the author, the audience and themselves. Borges, with his irreverent approach to translation, could only heighten such transformations. But the exact chronotope of a character narrator's discourse, such as the movement from past to present in the examples provided above, is not, as we shall see, nearly as important as the rhetorical and ethical implications of a narrator's distance from her or his situation as a character.

Phelan provides an account of character narrators' functions which establishes two tracks of communication within the discourse. The first is between the narratee and the narrator, whose "narrator functions" consist of reporting, interpreting and evaluating the narrative for the narratee. The second track runs between the narrator and what Phelan calls the "authorial-audience," (implied reader) and consists of the "disclosure functions" the narrator performs by revealing information unwittingly, unaware such an audience exists. Both of these "telling functions" of narration and disclosure are distinct from what Phelan calls a character narrator's "character functions": the mimetic: "the ways in which characters work as representations of possible people"; the thematic "as representative of larger groups or ideas"; and the synthetic: "as artificial constructs within the larger construct of the work" (12-13).

It is through a character narrator's disclosure functions that readers intuit the motivations behind what a narrator reports; unreliable narration is the result of a gap between these two functions. For example, when zur Linde states, in "Deutsches Requiem": "a pesar de no carecer valor, me falta toda vocación de violencia" his narrating function is to inform the reader of his epistle of the difficulty he experienced fitting in with his Nazi comrades during military training (OC I: 694). His disclosure function, however, is to reveal both his hypocrisy—for his epistle is relating, among other things, his torture of "David Jerusalem"—and his intense fear of cowardice. Borges has been criticized for publishing a story written from the point of view of an assistant director of a Nazi concentration camp. This form of

character narration disconcertingly puts the reader in a position at least somewhat sympathetic to zur Linde by—as Phelan suggests—making the narrator's ethical position ambiguous, because the relationship maintained between the (implied) author and the narrator is obscured (58).

The ethical situation of a narrative can become even more complex when the narrator, from the discourse, reflects differing ethics from the character in the story. Narrators can be defensive or accusatory of themselves as characters. In *Bartleby*, for example, the narrator recalls his thoughts regarding the decision not to fire the scrivener, but to befriend him: "Yes. Here I can cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval. To befriend Bartleby, to humor him in his strange willfulness, will cost me little or nothing, while I lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience" (13). The voice is in the present tense with the character, but the words likening the effects of his good deed to gluttony, "delicious," "sweet morsel," not to mention that it is "cheaply purchase[d]" add a critical tone to the discourse creating what Phelan calls dual-focalization—the lawyer perceives his actions as benevolent as a character, while those same thoughts, perceived by the narrator seem shamelessly selfish (118).

Contrary to Phelan, narratologists such as Seymour Chatman have insisted that narrators cannot focalize because they exist solely in the discourse: "point of view is *in* the story (when it is the character's), but voice is always outside, in the discourse" (154). Narrators, according to Chatman, essentially divorce themselves from their character the moment they begin to narrate: "narrating can never be a character's central function without his thereby becoming a narrator, hence leaving the story and entering a secondary discourse" (165). I agree with Phelan however, that a narrator cannot narrate without disclosing a set of attitudes, beliefs and intentions, an angle on the story, that guide her or his discourse (115). The translation analyses presented in this chapter support Phelan's argument, because through the contrast in narrator focalization between the English and Spanish versions, its existence comes into sharp relief.

As an extra voice, or rather, an extra multiplicity of voices, translators have the ability to radically shift the ethical dynamics of a text by altering relationships within a narrative. In her article, "There is Always a Teller in a Tale," Giuliana Schiavi sets out to define a translator's role in the translation communication situation. She begins with Chatman's model which is:

real author…[implied author – narrator – narratee – implied reader]…real reader

Schiavi then proposes that, assuming a translator has the skills and cultural, historical and literary background to count her/himself among the implied readership of the original, she or he meets the source language as a "repository of cultural values," and recasts them for a new set of implied readers: those of the translation. The translator's awareness of the presuppositions that were attributed to the implied readership of the original, and her or his efforts to reproduce them within the norms of the target culture, become textual artifacts (15). In other words, the translator takes on a role much like that of the implied author. Chatman says of the implied author:

> He is 'implied,' that is, reconstructed by the reader from the narrative. He is not the narrator, but rather the principle that invented the narrator, along with everything else in the narrative, that stacked the cards in this particular way, had these things happen to these characters, in these words or images. Unlike the narrator, the implied author can tell us nothing… it has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn. (148)

Just as the implied author is a construct whose "silent guidance" instructing (original) implied readers how to read becomes a principle recorded in the text, inscribed in the translation is the construct who guides the implied readers of translation: what Schiavi calls the implied translator. Her redefinition of the narrative communication situation thus appears:

> *real author…|implied author –[–narrator – narratee – implied reader/real translator–]–implied translator – narrator – narratee – implied reader of translation|…real reader*

I agree with Schiavi's classification in all but one point: the implied translator *is* a principle recorded in the translated text, however, the textual artifacts she or he leaves—even those noticeable to monolingual readers—are a construction conceived as apart from the implied author, and can only fully be reconstructed through studies such as the present.[62] When something in a translated text obscures the transparent view readers believe they have, reminding them that they are indeed reading a translation, they blame the translator. All the while, the rest of the text is equally as mediated, yet readers still engage with an implied author who is considered separate from the translator. Schiavi argues, "a reader of translation will receive a… split message coming from two different addressers, both original although in two different senses: one originating from the author which is elaborated and mediated by the translator, and one (the language of the translation itself) originating directly from the translator" (14). However, the implied reader of translation does not typically reconstruct an implied translator, but an implied author. Yet as Schiavi says, this implied author is intercepted and mediated by the translator, and then retransmitted along with rest of the narration.

This is a point of particular importance, for the implied author is the source of unreliable narration—the narrator's disclosure functions only demonstrate unreliability in contrast to the "truth" the implied author silently suggests. Chatman argues: "if the communication is between the implied author and the implied reader at the expense of the narrator, we can say that the implied author is ironic and that the narrator is unreliable" (229). As we will see, because translators have the ability to alter not only narrators' relationships to implied authors, but the implied authors' relationships to narrators, one must account for this

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[62] I prefer Phelan's definition of implied author and find it an accurate description of the implied translator. Indeed we can simply substitute "translator" for "author": "[*T*]*he implied [*translator*] is a streamlined version of the real [*translator*], an actual or purported subset of the real author's [*translator's*] capacities, traits, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other properties that play an active role in the construction [*translation*]of the particular text*" (45, author's emphasis).

new implied author that the implied translator creates. Thus I would modify Schiavi's model in this way:

> *real author…|implied author –[–narrator – narratee – implied reader/real translator–](–implied translator–) implied author of translation – narrator – narratee –implied reader of translation|…real reader*

The implied author has been reinserted on the other side of the translator, as it too undergoes transformations that can make its "silent guidance" vary significantly from the original. I have the implied translator in parentheses because she/he is not always visible, as texts such as Venuti's *The Invisibility of the Translator* would attest. Thus the entire communication situation begins again, with the real translator taking the place of the real author. More important than this diagram, however, are the implications it has for our understanding of narratives work in translation.

In "Los traductores de las 1001 noches," noting the florid, French fin-de-siècle tone with which Scheherazade narrates her stories in one translation, Borges writes: "refiere Shahrazad-Madrus…" (OC I: 486). By attaching the translator's name to that of the narrator, Borges suggests that translators become narrators.[63] Yet as we will see, they become much more. In the following sections, we will explore those textual artifacts left by the implied translator, Borges, to examine not only how character narrators' intersections of voice and vision can be altered in translation, but how these alterations can change their characterization. We will also see the manners in which character narrators' relationships to the implied author and narratees (and vice versa) may be transformed as well.

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[63] Yet he has made very few comments about his own potential influence on the texts he translated. In a 1963 interview with María Esther Vázquez, in response to a question about *Orlando*, Borges said more about his translation strategy (apart from handing the texts over to his mother) than he has anywhere else: "He sentido lo que siempre siento cuando tengo que traducir o escribir. He tenido la convicción de mi incompetencia y al mismo tiempo, he sentido que de algún modo podría resolver esas dificultades aparentemente insolubles. En cuanto a la traducción de ese libro de Virginia Woolf, yo pensé al principio en simplificar el estilo. Pero luego me di cuenta de que eso sería falsearlo y opté por una traducción casi literal. Claro está que, a veces, por razones de eufonía, tuve que invertir el orden de las palabras o cambiar una palabra por otra. Pero en general creo que esta traducción es bastante fiel, en cuanto puede ser fiel una versión del inglés al español, ya que los dos idiomas difieren profundamente y tienen distintas virtudes y defectos" (81).

The Taming of the Text: Borges and *A Room of One's Own*

Borges's translation of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) was originally serialized in four issues of *Sur*, published from the end of 1935 to early 1936.[64] The text was later revised and published as a single volume in 1936 by the Sur publishing house. Woolf's first translation into the Spanish language was the second chapter of *Mrs Dalloway*, "Time Passes," which appeared in the Peninsular *Revista de Occidente* in 1931.[65] Virginia Woolf's introduction to Latin America, however, was not through one of her celebrated modernist novels, but through a text whose genre is difficult to discern—falling somewhere between fiction and an essay—and according to Borges, appearing as nothing so much as a feminist tract. While Woolf called it an essay,[66] as have many feminist critics, I agree with Kathleen Wall that inside the non-fictional frame of the text—that is, a talk being given at a women's college—there are competing narrative voices that render fiction at the service of a persuasive feminist rhetoric. One voice belongs to a somewhat naïve character narrator, "whose attempts to work out the complex relationships between politics and aesthetics are compromised by the problems of ascertaining truth, and who cannot reconcile the material circumstances of literary production and modernist aesthetics," and another critical voice belongs to a literary historian who points out countless examples of women's subjection in and through literature (Wall 200). In his "Biografía sintética" on Woolf, published in *El Hogar*, October 30, 1936, Borges's comments on *A Room of One's Own* suggest he found the text to be fictional: "es una música la que oímos en *A Room of One's Own* (1930),[67]

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[64] Issues 15-18.

[65] For an interesting initial investigation into the identity of this text's translator see Luis Alberto Lázaro Lafuente's "The First Spanish Translation of Virginia Woolf's 'Time Passes': Facts, Mysteries and Conjectures." *The Grove* 10 (2003): 71-83.

[66] In her journal she wrote, "About *Women and Fiction* I am not sure—a brilliant essay?" (138). It is difficult to discern if Woolf is questioning the text's being an essay or its being brilliant.

[67] The actual date of publication was 1929.

donde alternan el ensueño con la realidad y encuentran su equilibrio" (123). Woolf's text is indeed a mixture of daydream and reality, though the shift from one to the other is hardly as placid or as "musical" as Borges's first review seems to suggest. What is more, when publishing the text in book form, Borges omits nine of Woolf's twelve footnotes (the version in *Sur* had none whatsoever), conceivably to further push the text away from non-fiction.

At the time of *A Room of One's Own*'s publication, Woolf was concerned about her male modernist friends' reaction to the text: "[I] suspect that there is a shrill feminine tone in it which my intimate friends will dislike... the press will be kind and talk of its charm and sprightliness; also I shall be attacked for a feminist and hinted at for a Sapphist" (*Diary* 144). Borges's reported reaction to the text may have been precisely the kind of criticism Woolf feared.

In a late interview with Osvaldo Ferrari, while Borges heaped praise upon Woolf's *Orlando*, he confessed:

> *Un cuarto propio*, que me interesó menos... bueno, el tema, desde luego, es digamos, un mero alegato a favor de las mujeres y el feminismo. Pero, como yo soy feminista, no requiero alegatos para convencerme, ya que estoy convencido. Ahora, Virginia Woolf se convirtió en una misionera de ese propósito, pero como yo comparto ese propósito puedo prescindir de misioneras. (306)

In this same interview he claimed, as he had in other venues, that his mother, not he translated, *A Room of One's Own*. As a scholar, I do not put much credence into Borges's statements regarding his mother and translation, but believe this claim was simply to distance himself from a text he found unbecoming. In his autobiographical essay he claims his mother not only translated Woolf but also other important authors whose translations are attributed to him, such as Faulkner and Melville. Yet later in the autobiography he describes working on these same authors' translations during the weekends while on duty at the Biblioteca Municipal Miguel Cané (*Ensayo autobiográfico* 14, 77). Borges similarly contradicts himself in a public interview at NYU with his English translator Norman Thomas di Giovanni when he claims first that his mother did the translations while he revised them, and immediately

reverses and says he did the translations while she revised them (Christ 407). Emir Rodríguez Monegal might come closest to truth when he writes: "A lapse in memory, a friendly hoax, a filial accolade? It is hard to say. Probably Mother helped him with those translations. She may have even done the first draft. But the Spanish style is so unmistakably Borgesian that it would have taken Mother years of hard labor to be able to imitate it" (293). Rodríguez Monegal does not elaborate on what that "Borgesian" style is, or how it shows up in the translation, though there certainly are a number of translation techniques that would qualify *Un cuarto propio* as such: changes to the psychological aspects of the narrative, and subversion of its feminist rhetoric.

In Borges's translation, a first change to the narrative communication situation can be felt in the interaction that occurs between narrator and narratee. *A Room of One's Own* is based on two papers Woolf read at the women's colleges of Newnham and Girton in the fall of 1928. The text is written in the form of a lecture by Woolf as a frame narrator, within which lie stories and inquiries by a character narrator who variably calls herself Mary Beaton, Mary Seton or Mary Carmichael. The lecture is given to young women who are students at the fictional college, Fernham. *A Room of One's Own*'s famous opening line states: "But, you may say, we asked you to speak about women and fiction—what has that got to do with a room of one's own?" (1). In Spanish, the first person plural "we" is a gendered pronoun: it is "nosotras" if the members of the group are all women and "nosotros" if the members are all male or if the group is mixed. Despite clear indications from Mary's frequent interaction with her audience that it is comprised entirely of women, Borges translates: "Pero, dirán ustedes, *nosotros* le pedimos que hablara sobre las mujeres y la novela—¿qué tendrá eso que ver con un cuarto propio?" (7).[68] While the word "we" does

[68] It should be noted that Borges's use of a masculine default is in no way unusual for the time period in which this translation occurred. Indeed several retranslations of the text still use "nosotros" despite the opportunity to correct this masculine generalization. What matters here are the consequences of this common practice for a text like Woolf's.

not indicate gender, when Mary asks her audience in Chapter Two if they are aware that as women they are the most studied animal in the universe, it becomes fact in the English that the narratees are female (26). The same line in Spanish, however, given the antecedent "nosotros," gives the impression that the narrator is only addressing those members of the mixed assembly who happen to be women.

How does the narrator's ethical and rhetorical position change, even if the only difference in her lecture is the presence or absence of men in the audience? Her criticisms of men would seem to be considerably stronger, perhaps even aggressive, as they are directed at the very people they critique. In Chapter Five, the narrator refuses to continue her speech until she is sure there are no males present, thereby finally announcing their absence from the audience to readers of the Spanish. In the intervening time, however, a number of translation techniques attenuate her apparently aggressive tone: including making the narrator's assertions into rhetorical questions, secretly slighting women by either eliminating or mistranslating adjectives describing their positive attributes, and foremost, by edging out the irony of the narrator's discourse.

In addition to changing the narratees' gender, Borges transforms several other direct interactions between Woolf and her audience. Unable to find decent research on the reasons women have historically been poorer than men, she explains, "What one wants, I thought—and why does not some **brilliant** student at Newnham or Girton supply it?—is a mass of information" (45, my emphasis). In translating this sentences, Borges does make clear that the students of the colleges are women, with the feminine adjective "alguna": "Lo que se requiere, pensé — ¿y por qué no lo suministra **alguna** estudiante de Newnham o de Girton? — es un mundo de información" (42, my emphasis). However, Mary's adjective "brilliant" is quietly erased from the Spanish address. This omission is an example of the kind of textual artifact left by an implied translator that may forever pass unnoticed until a comparative analysis takes place. The Spanish does not appear to detract from Woolf's message at all, yet when placed next to the English, it clearly is missing a number of positive statements about

women, which does indeed take elements away from the text for which an equivalent or compensation could easily have been found: “alguna brillante estudiante” for example.

In the peroration, the most ironic part of Woolf’s text, the narrator states that, since according to most all literature she has read, women are hard on women, “that a paper read by a woman to women should end with something particularly disagreeable” (109). Reminding her narratees of the low opinion men hold of them she says: “In case any of you aspire to fiction, I have copied out for your benefit the advice of the critic about courageously acknowledging the limitations of **your** sex. I have referred to Professor X and given prominence to his statement that women are intellectually, morally and physically inferior to men” (110). In making it the limitations of “your sex,” Mary, “being hard on women,” as men claim they do, is somehow apart from this generalization (109). The irony lies both in the suggestion that the female sex has inherent limitations, and that the narrator is of such a different league that these limitations do not apply. The Spanish dissolves this barrier between the narrator and the audience, making the limitations of “your sex” the limitations of “our sex”: “Por si alguna de ustedes piensa en hacer novelas, he copiado para su gobierno aquella advertencia de un crítico sobre el convencimiento valeroso de las limitaciones de **nuestro** sexo” (98). In doing so, Borges not only eliminates the irony of Mary’s differentiating herself from the audience—this change to the first person plural, “our sex,” introduces a certain doubt as to whether Mary actually is acknowledging those limitations’ reality, and if she is candidly exhorting women to accept, rather than laugh at the thought of them.

It is often in a narrator’s disclosure functions that irony resides, where their slant on the events clearly contradicts that of the implied author. In the following passage, the narrator uses the term “feminist” as though it were something to be avoid, though the context suggests Woolf’s opinion is quite the opposite. Mary describes how shocking men found women’s disapproval, and how this disapproval was an immediate indicator of their feminism:

> Does it explain my astonishment of the other day when Z, most humane, most modest of men, taking up some book by Rebecca West and reading a passage in it exclaimed "The **arrant feminist**! She says that men are snobs!" The exclamation, to me so surprising—for why was Miss West an **arrant feminist** for making a possibly true if uncomplimentary statement about the other sex? (35).

The word feminist has a qualifier, which puts as much stress on the fact of Rebecca West being "arrant" as being feminist. In Borges's translation, the elimination of that qualifier gives the passage an entirely new connotation:

> '**¡Qué feminista!** ¡dice que todos los hombres son snobs¡' Esa exclamación sorprendente — ¿pues qué tenía **de feminista** Miss West al formular una declaración quizá verdadera, aunque algo descortés, sobre el otro sexo?" (33 my emphasis).

Rather than an "arrant feminist," Z says of Miss West: "What a feminist! (or, "how feminist!") She says all men are snobs!" while the narrator inquires, "What is so feminist about Miss West…?" In both versions, Z disparages feminists; without the qualifier, however, the irony of the remark is annulled. "Feminist" and the claim that all men are snobs become synonymous, and being feminist becomes inherently reprehensible. Later in the text, Mary refers back to her comment, "Men, of course, are not snobs, I continued, carefully eschewing the 'arrant feminism' of Miss Rebecca West" (57). This time, Borges does provide a qualifier—though not exactly accurate: "Los hombres, por supuesto, no son snobs, proseguí, evitando cuidadosamente 'el feminismo *notorio*' de Miss Rebecca West" (53, my emphasis). While "arrant" refers specifically to Miss West, "notorious" also brings in the opinion of the public who would apparently censure feminism without question. The consequence of eliminating the word "arrant" that Woolf's ironic distance is eliminated as well: Mary appears sincere in her intention to avoid feminist thought.

Questions of women writing and women writers are the elements of Woolf's texts that see the most deliberate transformations by Borges. His rhetorical stance apparently comes into conflict with Woolf's and this conflict plays out in the implied author of translation's worldview, through the words Borges put into Mary's mouth to describe

women. When considering all of the new books being published by women, the English narrator claims: "There are books on all sorts of subjects which a generation ago no woman **could** have touched" (78). In Spanish however, it becomes not a question of women being allowed to write on a certain subject ("pudiera haber tocado" or "hubiera podido tocar"), but rather, they were simply not motivated to write about traditionally non-feminine subjects—those that no woman "could have touched" become subjects that no woman "would have garnered the enthusiasm to take on": "Hay libros sobre todos los temas que ninguna mujer de la generación anterior se **hubiera animado a abordar**" (71). Woolf's allegory about Judith Shakespeare, who runs away from home to escape being married off that she may become a writer, and who is subsequently taken advantage of and abused by male writers, exemplifies her point that women were not permitted to write, despite their genuine interest or ability. As her miserable fate makes clear, contrary to the implications of the translation, Shakespeare's sister was indeed driven to write to the point of sacrificing her family and security.

Consistent with this transformation in the implied Woolf's worldview, Borges also employs phrasing that transforms women as gifted to merely aspiring to write. When describing Judith Shakespeare's choice to abandon her home, Mary indicates: "The force of her own **gift** alone drove her to it" (47). Gift refers to an innate quality, rather than one that entails labor to acquire. Yet instead of the word "don" which is the direct translation of "gift," Borges translated: "La fuerza de su **vocación** la impulsó" (44, my emphasis). "Vocation" implies a natural inclination, but not necessarily a successful fulfillment of that leaning. Borges does translate "gift" as "don" in other parts of the essay, suggesting this may have been a motivated decision on his part (40/37).[69] He makes a similar decision on the

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[69] See page 40 of the original, and 37 of the translation. Additionally, when discussing how many women's writing has suffered in quality to the authors' anger over their treatment by men, she writes, "Her gift is all grown about with weeds and bound with briars" (60). Borges translates "gift" and "don" but adds a negative tone not present in the original, "Su don se fue en **vicio**, entreverado en zarzas" (56). Rather than suggest women writers' gift to be restrained or hampered, "vicio" suggests it going to waste, or spoiling.

next page: “yet” the narrator adds “her **genius** was for fiction and lusted to feed abundantly upon the lives of men and women and the study of their ways” (48). Similar to “gift,” “genius” refers to a quality one is born with, rather than a characteristic one must work for; it connotes a near-perfect ability to use one’s gift. Borges once more divorces women writers from their natural talent: “Sin embargo, su **inclinación** era novelística y requería alimentarse infinitamente de vidas de hombres y de mujeres y del estudio de sus modos de ser” (44). Here, Judith’s “genius for fiction” has been transformed to her “novelistic inclination,” a choice of words which masks the crucial parallel of Woolf’s argument: that Judith’s talent was equal to that of her brother.

As indicated by the phrase, “su inclinación era novelística,” when Judith’s genius fiction, up for stakes in Woolf’s and Borges’s apparently conflicting approaches to women and writing is the value of the novel as a literary genre. Both writers interrogated the novel’s usefulness, Borges on the one hand, famously claiming in his introduction to *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* (1941): “Desvarío laborioso y empobrecedor el de componer vastos libros; el de explayar en quinientas páginas una idea cuya perfecta exposición oral cabe en pocos minutos” (511). Woolf, on the other hand, doubted that the novel was the genre best suited to women. Chapter Four of *A Room of One’s Own* is an inquiry into why almost all literature by women is written in the form of the novel. As they were forced to write without privacy in the common sitting-room, subject to frequent interruptions and often compelled to hide their work, Woolf finds that for women, “it would be easier to write prose and fiction there than to write poetry or a play” (66). She also determines that having little legacy of their own, writers such as Jane Austen found “the novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands” (76). But with a room and money of their own, Woolf questions whether even the novel will remain “rightly shaped” for women’s use. “No doubt we shall find her knocking that into shape for herself when she has the free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle, not necessarily in verse, for the poetry in her” (76). The authors’ conflict arises when, as in the opening sentence, Borges translates “fiction” as “novela,” reinforcing the

very notion Woolf seeks to explode with her text. Despite the existence of the Spanish cognate, "ficción," Borges translates the term as "literature," "the novel" and even "fable." It may be conceded that Woolf does primarily use the term "fiction" when talking about women and writing, rather than poetry or drama—though "women and fiction" was the subject of her talk. Yet, when we take into consideration the innovative format of *A Room of One's Own* itself, which is the fictionalization of two essays the real author gave in person, and which contains multiple narrative voices within a non-narrative frame, the specificity of Borges's "novela" still problematically limits Woolf's greater-encompassing "fiction."

In this same vein, Borges's and Woolf's competing views become principles recorded in the translation when the translator flat out contradicts Woolf on the value of literary mimesis. Her narrator values an author's integrity, by which she means: "in the case of the novelist, is the conviction that he gives one that this is the truth" she is reading (71). As he forcefully states in his introduction to Adolfo Bioy Casares's *La invención de Morel*, in which he berates those authors who forget that all literature is but verbal artifice, Borges finds this pretension of "truth" to be not only tedious, but absurd. Integrity on the part of the author, as far as Borges is concerned, is constantly reminding the reader that what she or he is reading is *not* the truth. And his subtle addition of the word "no" to Mary's statement certainly says as much. "La que **no** se entiende por integridad, en el caso del novelista, es la convicción de que él nos da de que esa es la verdad" (65).

In her quest for a feminine literary legacy, the narrator in her role as literary historian finds that her masculine forbears cannot help her write as a woman. In the following example, what she discloses is her enjoyment of the great male writers, even though she finds them unsuitable for her purposes. "It is useless to go to the great *men* writers for help, however much one may go to them for pleasure" (75, my emphasis). The adjective "men" suggests that she believes great women writers exist as well—even if they are fewer in number, largely unpublished, or forced to remain as merely potential authors, as did Judith Shakespeare. With the omission of "men," great writers' being male is taken for granted: "Es

inútil pedir ayuda a los grandes escritores, por más que uno les pida solaz" (68). This moment in the text has no ironic gap between the implied author and the narrator; there is nothing to indicate that readers should not take the Spanish language narrator's claim seriously. Rather, through Mary's narration disclosure function, readers of the translation simply see that both the narrator and the implied author unproblematically believe that all great writers are necessarily men.

In her critique of a female author's debut novel, Mary is surprised at new novelist's formal experimentation: "She had broken up Jane Austen's sentence… Then she had gone further and broken the sequence—the expected order. Perhaps she had done this unconsciously, **merely giving things their natural order**, as a woman would, if she wrote like a woman" (90). According to the narrator, the natural order or at least the natural order women experience in the world is not necessarily logic-driven or chronological; writing as a woman meant writing with this experience as a guiding formal principle. Omitting this phrase about "merely giving things their natural order," rather reinstates the traditional view of women being irrational, and suggests that they cannot make conscious decisions about their writing: "Había quebrado la oración de Jane Austen… Además había ido más lejos, y había roto la ilación — el orden esperado. Tal vez lo había hecho sin darse cuenta, como lo haría una mujer si escribiera como una mujer" (81). In Spanish, Mary is disclosing her belief that women who write as women are naturally incoherent.

Upon returning to a novel written by a man, the narrator—despite ironically finding the text delightful in its directness, after reading the broken sequences of women—notices a major obstacle to her reading: a dark bar, shaped like the letter "I" (98). This phallic shadow makes it impossible to see anything in the novel clearly except the male protagonist; the female character is almost indistinguishable from a tree and "has not a bone in her body" (99). The narrator notes that since the women's movement had begun, men's writing had shown an increasing impulse to demarcate territory, creating contrasts by which to set up distinctions between themselves and women. This reassertion of masculine dominance

revealed itself not only in the overemphasis of men at the expense of women, but even in sexual violence. Reading A's novel she notes:

> Then Alan got up and the shadow of Alan at once obliterated Phoebe. For Alan had his views and Phoebe was quenched in the flood of those views. And then Alan, I thought, has his passions; and here I turned page after page very fast, feeling that the crisis was approaching, and so it was. It took place on the beach under the sun. It was done very openly. It was done very vigorously. Nothing could have been more indecent…" (99).

The "it" here is not just sex, but the terms "passions" and "crisis" indicate that Alan is "openly" and "vigorously" raping Phoebe. And while this act of aggression is merely alluded to, something about the scene made Borges uncomfortable enough to convert the assault into the act of writing: "Sucedió, al sol, en la playa. Estaba *escrito* con toda libertad. Estaba *escrito* con todo vigor. Nada pudo haber sido más indecente…" (89). Being produced on paper openly and vigorously, what becomes indecent is not the rape, but the act of writing it. Borges thus takes Woolf's argument a step further. Not only had men's reaction to women's increasing visibility and rights "made them lay an emphasis upon their own sex and its characteristics which they would not have troubled to think about had they not been challenged," e.g. their phallic "I" and their power to wield it at will (98). Their style of doing so was "indecent," a claim whose shrill prudishness give the implied Woolf in translation more of that "missionary" edge of which Borges later complained.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this project, *A Room of One's Own* influenced Victoria Ocampo, director of *Sur*, to the point that she would declare in a 1937 talk on Woolf that her only ambition was to write like a woman, after having come to understand that just as women cannot speak with a man's voice, they also cannot write with a man's style (12). Ironically, in his study on *Sur*, John King states, "on a purely literary level, Woolf was a consummate artist and Ocampo was lucky to find Borges as a translator"—for Ocampo (and King) seems to have disregarded the possibility that a male translator might be unable to give credible voice to that feminine "consummate artist" (81). Whether indeed the changes produced here are a

result of Borges's being male is impossible to say; a female translator may have done the same, or worse. Regardless, Ocampo's choice seems to be a contradiction, one whose consequence is, in Woolf's terms, Borges's "I" casting a long shadow across the text. In *Un cuarto propio*, one is presented with narratees who are (at first) of mixed gender, among whom there are no brilliant scholars and whose limitations as potential writers are directly attributable to their sex, rather than the conditions which are placed upon them as a result of it. The narrator is represented as a strident feminist stereotype, criticizing the purported men in her audience, as through her discourse feminism becomes linked to a necessary disapproval of men. Men do not simply "have nothing to give me" once one has money and a room of her own to write, they have "**absolutamente** nada que darme," lest there be any ambiguity (38/35). By suspending the ironic distance between the narrator and Woolf as implied author, it becomes difficult to distinguish if the author does indeed support feminism or if she scorns it in favor of a more mild form of women's activism. The elimination of nine of the author's thirteen footnotes also limits Spanish readers' view of Woolf's extensive scholarship and forecloses their ability to look up those quotes to which she refers throughout the text.[70] Finally, the subterfuge through which Woolf's words in praise of women are toned down to more neutral description hides the tone of the original.

And yet *Un cuarto propio* has been influential and inspirational to generations of Spanish writers. In her prologue to UNAM's edition of Borges's translation, Raquel Serur writes:

> *Un cuarto propio* se ha convertido en un referente obligado para toda mujer que tenga la necesidad de expresarse por escrito. Sería imposible no omitir nombres si enumeráramos a todas las escritoras que se han nutrido de este texto fundacional tanto para el pensamiento feminista como para la escritura de ficción. (18)

[70] This may likely have been a strategy to reinforce the fictionality of *A Room of One's Own* and remove it from its complicated status as narrative non-fiction.

Borges did not destroy the text, or even make Woolf's message unrecognizable. Despite his obvious tampering, no reader would argue that *Un cuarto propio* is not a feminist text. This is due in large part to the fact that there is an implied author of the translation, and it is she that readers believe they are communicating with, rather than the implied translator. Indeed, because readers do not see him, or realize their reading is so significantly mediated by the implied translator, Borges's countless secret slights against not just Woolf and the text, but the readers themselves have passed entirely without notice until quite recently with Ayuso's "The Unlike[ly] Other: Borges and Woolf," (2004). In this article, she establishes the implied translator Borges to be a critical masculine presence in text, but finds him to be disappointingly transparent in the rest of the translation. Yet it is precisely this false transparency purporting itself to be literal and accurate which cloaks both the sabotage of the text, and the critical masculine presence behind it. It is for this reason I argue that when considering the narrative communication situation in translation, the implied author must be recast to the right of the implied translator, for indeed, in the communication that follows among narrator, narratee, implied and real reader, the translator hides behind the image of the implied author of translation.

Borges's *Bartleby*: From Ethical Debate to Fantastic Narrative

As one of the twentieth century's major innovators of unreliable narration in fiction, and a champion for irreverent translation practices that privilege translators' own artistic sensibilities, the last translation strategy one would expect of Borges is to make a narrator *more* reliable. Yet in his translation of Herman Melville's "Bartleby" (1853, translated 1943), he did precisely this. Melville's self-deluding, self-justifying lawyer becomes straightforward and sincere in Borges's translation, free from the ironic treatment he received in the English. Rather than confound or falsely lead the reader on, in Spanish, the lawyer is divested of tools of persuasion he would otherwise employ to sway the reader to his side and detract from the 'truth' of narrated events. It would thus seem that Borges is not only moving the character

narrator away from Melville's narrative style, but away from his own as well. Yet the motivation for Borges's innovative deployment of unreliable narrators and his editorial impulse to transform the lawyer into a narrator that readers may trust stem from the same aesthetic inclination we have seen heretofore: an intense dislike of psychological narrative.

As an narrator whose unreliability increases the verisimilitude of the narrative, the lawyer's inconsistency, sentimentality and cowardice make him more human, even as his (self)-deception is made ever clearer. Ethics, rather than artifice, are the motivating factor for the lawyer's unreliable discourse, riddling the English version with the psychological mimesis Borges so carefully sought to avoid. By making the character narrator more reliable—through the elimination of complex intersections of character/narrator focalization and voice; the minimization of the narrator's disclosure functions; and the substitution of a more masculine discourse—Borges was able to rid the text of those details he found so cumbersome.

The project of rewriting "Bartleby" was so far-reaching that the translator began with paratext surrounding the story. Though Gérard Genette has not commented on the functions of translators' notes, his claim regarding original prefaces describes Borges's prologue accurately: their "chief function [is] to *ensure that the text is read properly*" (197, emphasis in the original). With his prologue, Borges establishes the narrator as a strong-willed, upright gentleman, thus making his "nihilistic contamination" by Bartleby all the more surprising: "el cándido nihilismo de Bartleby contamina a sus compañeros *y aun al estólido señor* que refiere su historia y que le abona sus imaginarias tareas" (11, my emphasis). Before Spanish language readers begin "Bartleby," its narrator is described for them, reifying a series of traits that transpose themselves onto the translated text through the readers' newly created expectations. Borges is thereby ensuring that the story be read "properly" as a fantastic narrative, not a "moral allegory" as per the Dover edition's back cover.

The Wall Street lawyer who narrates "Bartleby" recounts his employment of the strange, pale scrivener who begins diligently working in his busy law office, but gradually

begins to refuse to work until he does nothing but stare out the window all day. Bartleby's firm but passive demeanor renders the lawyer incapable of dismissing him, even after he discovers Bartleby has made the law office his place of residence. Whether asked to work, to leave, or to simply reveal anything about himself, Bartleby's usual reply is: "I would prefer not to." As the copyist will neither move out nor work, the lawyer, rather than call the police, moves his office to another part of town. He even invites Bartleby to come live in his home, though only after being harassed by the police and the new tenants when the unemployed copyist still hangs about the building. Bartleby refuses this offer as well, and is taken to jail where he refuses to eat until finally starving to death.

Melville's story originally appeared in two sequential issues of *Putnam's Monthly* magazine, whose stated mission was to consolidate an American literature and with it, an American culture. Notably, the tale bore the original subtitle, "A Story of Wall-Street." Critics have frequently read "Bartleby" as a capitalist critique, associating Bartleby with Marx's alienated worker. At the center of the story are assumed to lie ethical questions regarding the New York financial community's moral indifference to the alienation and poverty brought on by waves of immigration and mechanical industry (Barnett, Guillen, Kuebrich, Zeinich). Others have turned this Marxist reading toward a biographical connection they make between Melville and his character, equating Bartleby's refusal to write as a rejection of the commercial demands of popular fiction (Marx). Critics have also treated "Bartleby" as a depiction of mental illness, suggesting he suffers from schizophrenia (Beja), while still others have read the story as a parable of Christian values (Zlogar, Davis) or as philosophical response to Jonathan Edwards's *Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will* (Leyda, Arsic), Joseph Priestley's *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity* (Patrick), or Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and *Heroes and Hero Worship* (D'Avanzo).

In each of these readings, ethics are central to the text. The lawyer tends to come under fire, for even when he does deign to charity, it is admittedly the cheap purchase of "a delicious self-approval" or "a sweet morsel for my conscience" (13). The lawyer's "profound

conviction that the easiest way of life is the best" (3) condemns him in any reading for his failure to act even in his own interest when it comes to dealing with conflict. In addition to framing the narrator through his prologue to the translation (1943), Borges conclusively reestablish's the story's genre: "*Bartleby*, en un idioma tranquilo y hasta jocoso cuya deliberada aplicación a una materia atroz, parece prefigurar a Franz Kafka... yo observaría que la obra de Kafka proyecta sobre *Bartleby* una curiosa luz ulterior" (10). By making *Bartleby* another of Kafka's precursors, Borges moves the story from the realm of ethics to the realm of the bizarre, where the former are meaningless. As a fantastic narrative, what is at stake is not the rightness of the lawyer's actions, but the strangeness of Bartleby's actions and of a world in which rightness is impossible, for nothing "reasonable" will appease the scrivener. Borges indicates his awareness of the psychological motives inherent in the text: "Bartleby define ya un género que hacia 1919 reinventaría y profundizaría Franz Kafka: el de las fantasías de la conducta y del sentimiento o, como ahora malamente se dice, psicológicas," yet through his introduction, the translator is carefully manipulating the original into something more palatable (11). As we will see, to foment the environment of strangeness, Borges made the narrator more reliable to emphasize the lawyer's reasonability and thereby play down the psychological complexities while enhancing the fantastic. The narrator's ethics no longer the driving force of the narrative, he transforms the lawyer to create a more ethical character; for the less selfish, cowardly and delusional the lawyer appears, Bartleby is inversely stranger. The character narrator thereby comes closer to a masculine ideal, while at the same time the story loses the psychological aspect of ethical debate, as the lawyer's disclosure and narration functions come closer in line.

The narrator has a wry sense of humor that is often overlooked; while Melville frequently presents the lawyer in ironic terms, the narrator is not without an ironic tone of his own. Describing his office, and in doing so, the sordidness of New York City itself, he writes: "...my windows commanded an unobstructed view of a lofty brick wall, black by age and everlasting shade, which wall required no spyglass to bring out its lurking beauties, but,

for the benefit of all nearsighted spectators, was pushed up to within ten feet of my windowpanes" (4). The city's stark contrast between rich and poor, between optimism and despair plays out in the lawyer's withering description. The Big City's limitless possibilities, represented by windows that command "unobstructed views" are undercut by that view being of not the city skyline but a of brick wall; "lurking beauties," the ironic bright side of having said wall block one's view, are cheerfully revealed to all by the fact that it is but ten feet away from the lawyer's window.

Yet to show that the lawyer need not always be taken at face value, despite his critical insights, Melville makes a number of disclosures at the narrator's expense. Bartleby was taken on once the lawyer received the position of Master in Chancery, a court of equity where natural rights were protected from overly literal application of the written law, where negotiations involving alternatives to fines or compensation to both parties were administered. The lawyer's position, like much of New York's legal system in the nineteenth century, required quick (and potentially dirty) legal decisions, and held significant potential for abuse (Guillen 35). All of the new cases he now saw required an additional scrivener in his office, while the extra cash made "the easiest way" even easier. The entire Chancery court system was abolished in 1846 with New York State's new constitution, the only situation for which the lawyer admits to letting anger get the best of him in the entire story:

> I seldom lose my temper, much more seldom indulge in dangerous indignation at wrongs and outrages, but I must be permitted to be rash here and declare that I consider the sudden and violent abrogation of the office of Mastery in Chancery, by the new Constitution, as a —— premature act, inasmuch as I had counted upon a life lease of the profits. (4)

The lawyer's outrage has expressly to do with the profits he will no longer see as Master in Chancery—which were in addition to the income he already received with his law practice—not with concern that the Chancery might serve justice better than the new Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. More damaging to his credibility is his admitted reluctance to indulgence in "dangerous indignation" at true injustices, situations in which wrongs are being

committed against others, and not just deflating his pocketbook. In the epilogue, when it is rumored that Bartleby formerly worked in the Dead Letter Office, the lawyer's emotion is roused solely by the thought of working amongst dead letters, as if these missives were corpses, not by the fact that Bartleby had been unduly fired during a change in the administration.

Melville makes the lawyer more compelling by bringing him close to realizations of the world outside himself, of moving past mere self-interest to genuine concern for the poor among the streets, factories and offices of New York. After discovering that Bartleby had been residing in the law office the lawyer is startled to discover: "For the first time in my life a feeling of overpowering stinging melancholy seized me. Before, I had never experienced aught but a not unpleasing sadness. The bond of common humanity now drew me irresistibly to gloom. A fraternal melancholy! For both I and Bartleby were sons of Adam..." (17). The lawyer, as character, is at the point of recognizing the other as himself; the sight of Bartleby so forlornly without a home initiates a change in his ethical orientation, a recognition of "wrongs and outrages" that do indeed merit a "dangerous indignation"—dangerous, for he risks questioning the naturalness of his privilege and his "easiest way of life" (3-4). Yet at the time of narration, these realizations have clearly failed to take hold. The narrator interjects in the character's melancholy meditation: "These sad fancyings—chimeras, doubtless, of a sick and silly brain—led on to other and more special thoughts concerning the eccentricities of Bartleby" (17). The lawyer's stark realizations have been reduced to fancy, produced by a brain whose concern for others and question of privilege could be nothing more than infirm and inane.[71] Thus while he has the ability to be dynamic, the lawyer chooses to remain

[71] As will be argued later in this chapter, the lawyer's retrospective "sickness" may have been his sexual desire for Bartleby. The "fraternal melancholy" the lawyer and scrivener shared as "sons of Adam," expelled from Eden for their sinful nature, may be the mutual recognition of the impossibility of their desire. By ultimately disavowing himself of the scrivener, and the scrivener subsequently dying, the lawyer can finally be free of the "chimera" of a world in which he may love Bartleby. It may be noteworthy that Melville later employs a second reference to Adam: "When this old Adam of resentment rose in me and tempted me concerning Bartleby, I grappled him and threw him" (25). The term "old Adam" has long been a euphemism for homosexuality, dating as far back as Shakespeare (Rubinstein 89). The statement is followed by the lawyer's

static; such discrepancies between the lawyer's narrator functions and disclosure functions occur throughout Melville's story, making him ever less respectable in the eyes of the reader. To the degree possible, however, Borges brings these two functions closer in line; the narrator in both his actions and their telling is either less contradictory, or as narrator he is more scornful of his weak or selfish behavior as a character, as opposed to defending such behavior as the lawyer often does in the English.

The predominant ambit in which the lawyer's disclosure contradicts his narration is his law office, where the descriptions of his behavior at work are naively hypocritical. Recounting the moment Bartleby "appeared to him," the lawyer describes how busy he had become after being appointed Master of Chancery: "There was now great work for scriveners. Not only must I push the clerks already with me, but I must have additional help" (8). The lawyer is recalling this event from the narrative present, yet viewing it as a character, unable to see the inconsistency of his remark. The verb "must" suggests that the imperative to push his clerks is beyond is control; the sympathy he expects from the narratee is for how busy he is, not for the clerks who are being pushed. To make congruent the lawyer's rhetoric and ethics, Borges eliminates the sense of obligation from the text, "Ahora había mucho trabajo, para el que no bastaban mis escribientes: requerí un nuevo empleado" (26). The lawyer's perception and recounting of the events is located in the narrative present, aided by the preterit form of "requerir," which gives an immediacy to the need for a scrivener, but leaves it squarely in the past. The contradiction is thereby eliminated on two fronts: extracting the hypocritical concept of obligation to shove additional work on his employees, and removing the possibility for the lawyer's functions as narrator and as character to conflict with one another.

(temporary) surrender to the fact that Bartleby will remain in his care, and his admission that "I never felt so private as when I know you are here. At last I see it, I feel it: I penetrate to the predestined purpose of my life. I am content" (26). Yet public pressure eventually makes this private union untenable.

Through his unreliable narration, the lawyer's expectations of "immediate compliance" by his employees are to be overshadowed by his largesse in tolerating the quirks of his scriveners: the one, Turkey, an alcoholic who is drunk every day after lunch ; the other, Nippers, dyspeptic every morning and mixed up in questionable business dealings on the side. The lawyer seeks to evoke a sense of his generosity when he states, "now and then, in the haste of business, it had been my habit to assist in comparing some brief document myself" (9). The haste of business being the motivating factor for this generosity discloses once more the lawyer's convenience-based ethics. Again seeking to improve the narrator's image, and to foreground the strangeness of Bartleby's refusal to work, Borges omits a few words from the text, putting the lawyer in the habit of helping his copyists whenever the task was fairly small: "Yo ayudaba en persona a confrontar algún documento breve" (35).

The change in the narrator's discourse corresponds to a transformation of his attitude. In the Spanish he is less put out by inconveniences, and has a more optimistic outlook in general. Bartleby's industriousness immediately after his hire is overshadowed for the lawyer by the scrivener's lack of cheer. Unable to content himself with the scrivener's good work, the lawyer, again thinking of his own comfort (or perhaps his own desire for requited attentions), writes: "I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically" (9). In Spanish, the lawyer appears less egocentric as he is already delighted with the copyist's work, and would have only been more so, were Bartleby a cheerful worker: "Yo, encantado con su aplicación, me hubiera encantado aún más si él hubiera sido un trabajador alegre. Pero escribía silenciosa, pálida, mecánicamente" (27). This attitude of self-importance is attenuated again when the lawyer asks the scrivener to take some letters to the post office, hoping Bartleby may have changed his mind about consistently preferring not to run a single errand. Met with the usual reply, the lawyer huffs, "so, much to my inconvenience, I went by myself" (21). While the lawyer is eliciting a sympathetic response, the importance he places on his own convenience has the opposite effect. In Spanish he says more straightforwardly: "aunque me

resultaba molesto, tuve que llevarlas yo mismo" (53). While the task was bothersome, it lacks the melodrama attached to the English; the "tuve que" places the emphasis on the lawyer taking care of his own responsibility—which indeed it was, for as copyist, Bartleby is paid per word, not per errand run as a favor to his employer.

As Bartleby begins "preferring" not to work, the lawyer, whose benevolence is moved primarily by convenience or cowardice, continually puts off firing the scrivener, hoping that he will return to the industrious copying with which he began his employment. Disclosing his own tendency toward self-deception, upon yet another of Bartleby's refusals to proof his work, the lawyer recalls: "Instantly it occurred to me that his unexampled diligence in copying by this dull window for the first few weeks of his stay with me might have **temporarily** impaired his vision" (21, my emphasis). First, the poor quality of Bartleby's working conditions is revealed, yet they remain apart from the lawyer's consciousness, as if it were Bartleby's choice to have only the dull window for light. Secondly, if the scrivener were to have suffered vision impairment, the likelihood of its being "temporary" seems considerably small. Rather, it appears to be a case of magical thinking on the lawyer's part, his interest being better served by Bartleby improving his work ethic than by firing him. Consistent in his efforts to remove the lawyer from ethical inconsistencies, Borges removes the term "temporary" from the sentence, making the lawyer sound at least partially interested in Bartleby's wellbeing: "Enseguida se me ocurrió que su ejemplar diligencia junto a esa pálida ventana, durante las primeras semanas, había dañado su vista" (53). The indifference to the working conditions remains, but the elimination of the lawyer's self-deception with his contrived medical diagnosis keeps his character more in line with the honest man Borges would have him be. The lawyer's added humanity thereby contrasts even more with Bartleby's "cadaverously gentlemanly nonchalance" (16).[72]

[72] "[S]u cadavérica indiferencia caballeresca" (42)

After finally mustering the courage to tell Bartleby to leave, the lawyer prides himself on the commanding way he dealt with the situation. He *assumes* that when he returns to the office the following day, the scrivener will be gone. Though doubt begins to creep in, when he realizes his assumptions do not have the power to transform reality. After all, Bartleby "was more a man of preferences than assumptions" (23). The lawyer's vision and voice come from his place as character, these tentative suggestions still debating with his hopeful assumptions. Yet with just a few minor changes, the focalization and voice move over to the lawyer as narrator, his tone now firm with a certain disdain for the himself as character and his naive assumptions: "era un hombre de preferencias, no de presunciones" (57). By eliminating the lawyer's diffidence, the Spanish narrator is effectively scolding himself as character for such naive wishful thinking.

In Borges's hands, the filter through which the narrator sees his former self as character is frequently critical in those places where incongruence or unbecoming traits cannot be eliminated. Upon returning to work the next day, and seeing that Bartleby indeed has not left as instructed, the lawyer points to the money he had left the scrivener: either to bribe him to leave, or at least settle his conscience for demanding Bartleby do so. Seeing it untouched, he recalls: "'Why,' I added, **unaffectedly starting**, 'you have not even touched that money yet'" (24, my emphasis). The lawyer's unfeigned surprise that Bartleby has not touched the money does not quite sound like a condemnation of his character, but rather an astonishment at Bartleby's. In the Spanish, however, the lawyer takes on a more critical tone in reference to himself: "¡Cómo! –agregué, **naturalmente asombrado**--. ¿ni siquiera ha tocado ese dinero? –Estaba en el preciso lugar donde yo lo había dejado la víspera" (60, my emphasis). That he be "naturally shocked" that Bartleby did not touch the money is a harsh statement of the lawyer's connatural avarice; he cannot conceive of doing the same in the scrivener's place.

While being stern with the lawyer as character, when it comes to recalling unflattering behavior or attitudes in the past, Borges also continues to look for ways to

improve his person. When first met with Bartleby's refusal to check his copy, the lawyer explains how he turns to Turkey and Nippers to ask what they think of this unheard of behavior, "for some reinforcement for his own faltering mind" (11). The term "faltering mind," whether coming from his view as character or as narrator suggests an unwillingness to take responsibility for one's reaction, a hope that one is insane rather than that reality be what it is, giving the lawyer an appearance of weakness in his dealings with the world. In rectification, Borges translates, "si hay testigos imparciales, se vuelve a ellos para que de algún modo lo refuercen" (33). Here it is not his faltering mind that needs backing up, but his position, which is the demand that Bartleby check his work, even though he is not paid to do so. Borges often seeks to toughen the sentimental lawyer up—especially because his melodramatic sentiments frequently fall as censure to his character for their inextricable tie to his own self-interest. Considering pity, the lawyer suggests that it is not selfish to refuse to entertain thoughts of unpleasant circumstances which invoke sympathy, but that, "to a sensitive being, pity is not seldom pain. And when at last it is perceived that such pity cannot lead to effectual succor, common sense bids the soul be rid of it" (18). When one realizes that the situations for which such painful sympathy is felt cannot be resolved, it is to eliminate the pain than one abandons their cause. Whether Borges took issue with the lawyer as a "sensitive being," or that he feel pity and be caused pain by it, the line was unsuitable enough to be completely omitted. Thus, in the Spanish, it is not because pity causes the lawyer pain that he must be rid of the feeling, but because in a practical manner pitying Bartleby cannot help the situation.

Borges's impulse to deemphasize the lawyer's sentimentality is symptomatic of a greater concern, which the translator must have sensed as early as 1943, though critics have only recently begun exploring it: homosexual desire within the text. A number of studies have treated homosexual and homosocial desire in other of Melville's writings, such as Eve Kofosky Sedwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990/2008), which devotes an entire chapter to *Billy Budd,* Robert K. Martin's *Hero, Captain, and Stranger: Male Friendship, Social*

Critique and Literary Form in the Sea Novels of Herman Melville (1986) and James Creech's book, *Closet Writing/Gay Reading: The Case of Melville's* Pierre (1993). With his article, "'Dead Letters!... Dead Men?'": The Rhetoric of the Office in Melville's 'Bartleby, the Scrivener'" (2000),[73] Graham Thompson is the first to address similar issues in "Bartleby." Thompson suggests that the story's entire plot is a "tense, desire-ridden tale," constructed around the developing emotional attachment between Bartleby and lawyer (397). Analyzing the office as a discursive space where, during the nineteenth cenutry, male identity was coming into definition through homosexual and heterosexual distinction, Thompson argues that the narrator's surveillance of Bartleby—they share an office, separated by a screen—and his continual need to restructure and rename the space of their relationship, ultimately guides the lawyer to the recognition of both his sexual desire and its impossibility, leading to his final rejection of Bartleby and the scrivener's subsequent demise.[74] *Hombría*, and homosocial desire are tropes never lacking in Borges's writing—"Hombre de la esquina rosada," "El muerto," "El Sur" and "La intrusa" are just a few of his stories whose plots are driven by shows of masculine dominance or the lack thereof. These concerns appear to have been as influential in Borges's translation style as his distaste for psychological narrative, as Borges carefully edited the text to make the lawyer not only more reliable, but more masculine.

A problem the translator faced was that in his conflicts with Bartleby, the lawyer always capitulates, requiring some serious changes to the story to make this be otherwise. In compensation, Borges alters the discourse in such a way as to make his concessions at least dignified. Upon surprising Bartleby, asleep in the law office on a Sunday morning—and according to Thompson, thereby feminizing the space by eliminating the work/home, public/private distinction—the lawyer, locked out of his own premises, is told to go away and

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[73] Later published in *Male Sexuality Under Surveillance: The Office in American Literature* (2003).

[74] Thompson convincingly cites Robert K. Martin, who claims that Melville was unable "to imagine what it might have been like for two men to love each other and survive" (411).

come back later (406). He reports: “incontinently I slunk away from my own door and did as desired” (16). The disparaging terms with which the lawyer narrates his reaction suggest the focalization is angled from his position of narrator, harshly judging his actions as a character, “incontinently” and “slunk” being particularly withering descriptions. In the translation, however, this critique is eliminated, as the lawyer recalls simply, “de inmediato me retiré de mi puerta y cumplí con sus deseos” (42) dignity still somewhat intact.

Continuing his reflection on this exchange between himself and Bartleby, the lawyer occasionally seeks to exonerate himself amid the protracted condemnation he gives his actions at the time of narrative events: “Indeed, it was his wonderful mildness, chiefly, which not only disarmed me but unmanned me, as it were. For I consider that one, **for the time**, is sort of unmanned when he tranquilly permits his hired clerk to dictate to him and order him away from his own premises” (16, my emphasis). The emphatic “indeed” conveys the lawyer’s surprise at Bartleby’s mildness having been the force that moved him to obey the scrivener’s wishes, making a clear distinction between his subjectivity at the time and his position now at the telling. His statement “for I consider” also positions the lawyer as someone other than the man who let his clerk order him away. The lawyer lets his former self off the hook somewhat, however, by adding that one was unmanned “for the time,” making clear that this emasculation was temporary.[75] Fortunately for Borges, there is no good translation of “unmanned” in Spanish that is fit for print; the term becomes “made a coward of.” “Su maravillosa mansedumbre no sólo me desarmaba, me acobardaba. Porque considero que es una especie de cobarde el que tranquilamente permite a su dependiente asalariado que le dé órdenes y lo expulse de sus dominios” (42). While the lawyer as character could not be tough, in Spanish, the verdict from his point of view as narrator can be. His callous stance makes no exceptions: one is not a coward for the time, but simply a coward.

[75] This temporary state of being unmanned may be seen as corollary to the “sick and silly brain,” whose fancies were captive of that “wondrous ascendancy which the inscrutable scrivener had over me, and from which ascendancy, for all my chafing, I could not completely escape” (24).

Having avoided the potential ramifications of the lawyer being unmanned, Borges must also edge out the desire that saturates the dealings between the lawyer and Bartleby, such as when as the narrator pleads that the scrivener either return to work or leave the office:

> "Will you, or will you not, quit me?" I now demanded in a sudden passion, advancing close to him.
>
> "I would prefer *not* to quit you," he replied gently emphasizing the *not*. (24)[76]

The lawyer's passion, and his moving toward Bartleby, lends a sexually suggestive tone to a conversation that could otherwise be interpreted as aggressive. The lawyer does not want Bartleby to leave, but the scrivener's inscrutability frustrates his efforts to keep him in his company.[77] The copyist similarly desires to be close to the lawyer, but refusing to be "read," revealing neither why he chooses to stay nor why he refuses to work, the nature of this desire cannot be classified. The lawyer cannot tolerate this ambiguity for, as Thompson writes, "his identity as a man in the masculine and public world of work and patriarchy cannot permit the desire he has for Bartleby or other men to be vectored through sex" (401). While to himself he admits "I never feel so private as when I know you are here," in the eyes of the lawyer's fellows it is unacceptable to have a man share the intimacy of his office without a public purpose. The Spanish forecloses these questions of desire by making the issue of leaving or staying not between Bartleby and the lawyer, but between the scrivener and the entire law office staff:

> -¿Quiere usted dejarnos, sí o no? –pregunté en un arranque, avanzando hasta acercarme a él.

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[76] While I will not venture there necessarily being a link, it will not escape readers that the phrase "I wish I knew how to quit you," was one of the most memorable of Annie Proulx's screenplay (2005) and novella (1998) *Brokeback Mountain*.

[77] "But again obeying that wondrous ascendancy which the *inscrutable scrivener* had over me, and from which ascendancy, for all my chafing, I could not completely escape, I slowly went downstairs and out into the street" (*Bartleby* 24, my emphasis).

> -Preferiría *no* dejarlos –replicó suavemente acentuando el *no*. (60)

"Quiere usted dejarme" must have had an uncomfortably suggestive tone. By pluralizing the first person singular, Borges inserts space between the lawyer and Bartleby; the former's desire inherent in not wanting to quit the lawyer is washed out as he now prefers not to leave all his colleagues including his employer.

As rumors begin to spread, the lawyer, who had acquiesced in the previous confrontation, and admittedly taken comfort in the scrivener's presence on the other side of the screen, tries once more to rid himself of his "millstone" (21). The combination of cowardice and reluctance make the aging lawyer stammer as he confronts Bartleby:

> "If you do not go away from these premises before night, I shall feel bound—indeed, I *am* bound—to—to—to quit the premises myself!" I rather absurdly concluded, knowing not with what possible threat to try to frighten his immobility into compliance. (30)

In Spanish, the threat is issued unwaveringly:

> ¡Si usted no se va de aquí antes del anochecer, me veré obligado—en verdad, estoy obligado—a irme yo mismo!— dije, un poco absurdamente, sin saber con qué amenaza atemorizarlo para trocar en obediencia su inmovilidad. (72)

There are no italics emphasizing the lawyer's forced-sounding assertion; he does not stumble in his indication that he will leave if Bartleby will not.

The following day, upon finding the scrivener still residing in his office, the lawyer keeps his word and moves. Yet he misses Bartleby and must fight the impulse to return and visit him in his former offices. He resists, "though I often felt a charitable prompting to call at the place and see poor Bartleby, yet a certain squeamishness, or I know not what, withheld me" (28). The lawyer cannot name the feeling that prevents him from visiting the scrivener; it appears to be a visceral reaction to the ramifications of such an indulgence, for no professional purpose could be assigned to this visit. The lawyer is physically repulsed—or perhaps dangerously excited—by the thought of giving into his desire. In Spanish, by contrast, it is not repulsion, but decency that keeps the lawyer from calling upon Bartleby:

"aunque a menudo sentía un caritativo impulso de visitar el lugar y ver al pobre Bartleby, un cierto escrúpulo, de no sé qué, me detenía" (69). The lawyer is unable to define the exact ethical scruple that impedes him, he cannot say precisely why it is wrong to visit, but he knows such an act is inappropriate. It would be more like giving in to a spoiled child, the risk of not keeping his word. Even as all of Melville's allegories of love between men end in death and disaster, Borges precluded any need for such cautionary warning. Bartleby's death came not at the expense of the lawyer's love for him, but was the product of the scrivener's unwavering negation of life.

Translation theorist Anthony Pym has noted that translation paratexts do not intend an exchangeable value between the original and the translation, but function as "instruction[s] for use" (53). Yet Borges's prologue to "Bartleby," in casting the story as a fantastic narrative, and the narrator as reliable, crosses over that "border region between the material and the semiotic" to become "ideally equivalent," that is, a signifying aspect of the translation itself (54). In the prologue, Borges suggests that it is Bartleby who contaminates the office with his nihilism, that he brings strangeness upon a group of men who heretofore were well balanced and hardworking. The English makes plain, however, that each man was subject to uncommon behavior prior to Bartleby's appearance, whether it is Turkey's being drunk every afternoon and daily refusing to change his clothes, Nipper's morning orneriness and shady dealings, or the lawyer's own "easy" business practices. While Borges employs the preface to frame the narrator as an "estólido señor," in English, he proves to be nothing of the sort. In transforming the narrator into a man who is neither soft nor selfish, Borges tries to uphold the picture he paints in the prologue. In the preface he adds, "es como si Melville hubiera escrito: 'Basta que sea irracional un solo hombre para que otros lo sean y para que lo sea el universo.' La historia universal abunda en confirmaciones de ese tenor" ("Prólogo" 11). Borges's own stories abound in such confirmations. As *el Inglés* states in "La forma de la espada": "lo que hace un hombre es como si lo hicieran todos los hombres" (OC I: 594). If this is indeed true, then what one man must not do is desire another.

Borges's translation of "Bartleby" is a keen example of how a translator may be as Hermans suggests, "constantly co-producing the discourse, shadowing, mimicking and, as it were, counterfeiting the [n]arrator's words" (Hermans 43). While the recognition of translation as an activity that transforms an original text has become widely accepted, the degree to which Borges alters the story and discourse of Melville's story indicates that much more is at stake than isolated phrases or specific formal features.[78] By usurping the voice of the lawyer, and moving him toward the image of his own character narrators, who rarely possess such psychological and sentimental depth, Borges consequently alters the narrator's relationship to every other participant in the narrative communication situation (as Chatman calls it). The implied author treats him with less irony; the dynamics between the narrator and his person as character are either eliminated or made to emphasize the lawyer's masculinity and rationality; the narratee who reads the lawyer's "history" has increased reason to take his narrative at face value; while the implied reader is privy to significantly less disclosure on the part of the narrator and consequently is less inclined to judge his contradictory ethics as so many critics of the English original have. While lacking an unreliable narrator, the translation's new narrative communication situation, free from the sentimental excesses of psychological narration, make the Spanish version of "Bartleby" much more a Borges story than anyone may heretofore have imagined.

Conclusion

The ethical positioning of a narrator is determined as much by a reader's values as by those of the implied author. As the initial point location for this position is established solely by Borges's personal intersection with the original, readers of the Spanish *Bartleby* are

[78] Patricia Willson is among the very few who look at the narratological aspects of Borges's translation. In her book, *La constelación del sur, tradutores y traducciones en la literatura argentina del siglo XX*, she notes that in his translation of *Orlando*, in order to resolve his distaste for psychological narration, Borges moved the biographer/narrator from intra- to extradiegetic by making clear distinctions between the narrator's personal interjections and the narrated action.

positioned a priori to meet the novella's lawyer with credulity, and to question Bartleby's actions, rather than the lawyer's. Borges met the English text on his own terms as its sole implied reader, and recast it on the terms he chose from his position as implied translator, but under the guise of the implied author of translation. Thus the novella became a fantastic narrative and Bartleby became an even stranger figure.

Enrique Vila-Matas's *Bartleby y Compañía* is narrated by a man who does a literary genealogy of "Bartlebys," people who could have written, but have preferred not to. This take omits the lawyer from the text completely, looking instead at Bartleby's obdurate refusal to write, and taking him to be a character akin to Joyce's blustering scrivener Farmington in "Counterparts." Whether or not Vila-Matas read Borges's translation of the text, his approach is suggestive of a reading that meets the text with a similar set of expectations, and an ethical positioning that has differed from the English language criticism. By the same token, readers of *Un cuarto propio* would never argue that it is not a feminist text. The values and expectations readers have brought to the translation have positioned them in such a way that they could access—and in a way invent—Woolf's rhetoric, despite its being cloaked in sexism. I do not believe the same can be said of *Orlando*.

My intention with this chapter was not to explore Borges's treatment of gender and sexuality—but in dealing with the way characters narrate and thereby reveal their rhetorical and ethical positioning, these questions have proven to be inextricably linked to each. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf's rhetoric is whittled down by Borges's seizing upon every possible instance to demean or detract from women. The lawyer of Bartleby's ethical standing is removed from scrutiny by making him more masculine. My intention to analyze vision and voice in the translation of character narration, and their tie to ethics and rhetoric took me to questions of gender and sexuality, though, with "Bartleby" in particular, had I not done a full length analysis, the extent of the lawyer's affectation may never have come into relief. This speaks to the importance of full-length, line by line, comparative analyses, as they

are bound to reveal issues scholars might not realize to be issues until seeing the contrasts between source and target texts.

Yet issues of gender are not all that is to be discovered through the process of narrative-oriented translation analysis. Character narration in particular is an area that bears significant potential for translation analysis because it is so linked to both the story and the discourse. The axis inhabited by the character narrator allows for unimaginable transformations to characterization, to the implied author, to the placement and constitution of the narratee, and above all to the rhetorical and ethical position not only of that character narrator, but of the author her or himself.

CHAPTER IV

SOME HAPPY ACCIDENTS:

BORGES AND WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE WILD PALMS*

Propendemos a tomar por necesidades las que no son más que repeticiones.

Jorge Luis Borges, "Las versiones homéricas"

Few translations, celebrated independently of the original author, have achieved the mythical status of Jorge Luis Borges's rendering of William Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* (1939, translated 1940). That one of South America's most celebrated and influential authors would translate a North American author of equal prestige is substantial enough to capture the imagination of readers of both the English and the Spanish. In addition, Borges's translation is widely reported to have had a profound impact on a number of authors forming part of the Latin American "Boom." *The Wild Palms* was only the second of Faulkner's novels to be translated into Spanish—the first being *Sanctuary*, translated by Cuban author Lino Novás Calvo—and the majority of those "Boom" authors who have not personally claimed influence by Borges's translation have had it attributed to them later by their critics. In his literary biography, Emir Rodríguez Monegal asserts that Borges "created a writing style that was the equivalent of the original's English," providing young Latin American writers with a new narrative model (373). Accordingly, Gabriel García Márquez has written

> El método 'faulkneriano' es muy eficaz para contar la realidad latinoamericana. Inconscientemente fue eso lo que descubrimos en Faulkner. Es decir, nosotros estábamos viendo esta realidad y queríamos contarla y sabíamos que el método de los europeos no servía, ni el método tradicional español; y de pronto encontramos el método faulkneriano adecuadísimo para contar esta realidad. (52-53)

Las palmeras salvajes is thus legendary for introducing a new style of writing that resonated with young writers and served as a literary precursor of some of the twentieth century's most important novels.

In letters to Peruvian poet Manuel Moreno Jimeno, José María Arguedas wrote, "Empecé a leer *Palmeras salvajes*, es hermoso y de lo más original que he leído" and "[E]s una maravilla… todo el ambiente del libro tan nuevo, tan moderno y raro" (cited in González Vigil 89). Ricardo González Vigil, in his prologue to the Cátedra edition of *Los ríos profundos,* suggests that the novel's alternating narrative voices may be Arguedas's replication of Faulkner's technique of intercalating two novels. He also proposes that the first chapter title of *Los ríos profundos*, "El viejo" is a nod to *Old Man* (translated as *El viejo*)—one of the two novels comprising Faulkner's text. In this same vein, Jacques Pothier notes an affinity between Faulkner and Mario Vargas Llosa: "in Vargas Llosa's novels, as in *The Wild Palms* or *The Hamlet*, narrators alternate at telling stories which belong to widely different genres: comic and tragic, mythic or political" (105). In a letter he wrote to Julio Payró while reading *Las palmeras salvajes*, Juan Carlos Onetti, stated "no olvido que Faulkner no es santo de su devoción, aun que yo vea en él a mi enemigo" (106). The correspondence's editor, Hugo Verani, suggests this claim was likely made because Faulkner had the written the novel that Onetti himself would have wanted to write (29). Guillermo Cabrera Infante remarked on the influence Faulkner had on his writing, specifically through Borges's translation: "I read *The Wild Palms* before I could spell Yoknapathapha [sic]. Here it was Borges who made me do it. Or rather his translation of *The Wild Palms* with a better title, *Les*[sic] *palmeras salvajes*, and a better prose" (online).

Cabrera Infante's claim that Borges actually improved the Faulkner's prose has been echoed by critics and writers alike. Rodríguez Monegal affirmed: "[Borges's] translation of *The Wild Palms* has been considered as good as or even better than the original. The style is perhaps tighter than Faulkner's, and the hardness and intensity of the novel's best passages... indicate how much he put into the translation" (373). Agreeing with his claim, Frances

Aparicio says of the translator: “mientras que obedece sustancialmente al original, logra a la vez mejorar el estilo de la obra con su manejo cuidadoso del español” (118). As we have seen, the radical claim that a translation may surpass an original is made frequently in Borges’s critical and fictional writings; such attributions to his own translation work makes for excellent criticism, though, as we will see, in this particular case such an attribution seems gravely unfounded. Ilan Stavans disagrees that the Spanish version is superior to the English, though he does find “the resemblance—in syntax, in spirit—is startling: Borges builds his text almost word by word... reproducing the cadence of the English version... the autonomy is in it: silent, unobtrusive, unsettling the target tongue” (503).

Numerous critics have praised the “musicality” of Borges’s translation, admiring this alleged transposition of English cadence into Spanish. María Elena Bravo, one of the first to comment on the translation, writes:

> Hay en la novela muchos ejemplos en los que se percibe la identidad melódica de los dos lenguajes como un objetivo buscado por el traductor. La cualidad casi musical de algunos fragmentos fortalece y mantiene su significado... el original y la traducción poseen un mismo ritmo que viene producido por la combinación acentual de las sílabas. (11)

Douglas Day also finds the translation to be painstaking in its attention to sound and structure: “The translation is precise, conscientious, and decorous” (online). Tanya Fayen goes so far as to suggest that Borges was so conscientious as a translator that he “appears to have studied and categorized Faulkner’s [stylistic] practices” (47) to the point that “he introduced it in those places where Faulkner ‘forgot’ to apply his own technique” (51).

Fayen takes the minute detail she attributes to the translation to be the definitive proof that Borges translated *The Wild Palms*—the text, like those by Woolf and Melville, being on the list of those Borges claimed to have left to his mother. She argues that the autonomy the translator of *Las palmeras salvajes* had to have felt to be able to render the text in a style so like Faulkner’s and so far from Latin American literary norms, and to even extend that style to the places Faulkner did not, could only belong to such an original writer as Borges (47).

Day is especially puzzled by Borges's attribution of the translation to his mother: "if Borges later chose to attribute all or part of the work on *The Wild Palms* to Señora Leonor Acevedo de Borges, he could not have done so because he thought ill of the translation. It is good, very good" (online).

Additional attention to the translation was generated by the "discovery" that Borges had censored the text, eliminating curse words and sex scenes. In an article about various translations of Faulkner into Spanish, Onetti chides Borges's prudishness in rendering the last line of *The Wild Palms* "mujeres" while the original reads "Women shit!" (353). Efraín Kristal states in his book-length study of Borges and translation: "in *The Wild Palms* he removes the scenes pertaining to an abortion, which may have offended his sensibilities or those of his mother, with whom he often collaborated in his longer translations" (41). Both of these alterations, however, were not the product of Borges's prudishness, but that of the text's British editors. Rather than the American text published by Random House, Borges translated a British version of *The Wild Palms* (likely the only version available to him in Buenos Aires), edited—and censored—by Chatto and Windus. In this censored version, the word "shit" and certain scenes (though they were generally those related to sex and not to abortion) were simply absent; Borges was translating the text he had to work with. Numerous critics, however, have been using the American version as they compare Borges's translation to the "original," unaware that there existed a censored British text or that this version was perhaps all the translator had available for use. Marian Babirecki McMaster provides a catalogue of all the differences between the American and British versions of the novel, among which are the elimination of dialogue with sexual innuendo, sex scenes, and a crucial point in the novel: Charlotte's douche bag bursting (which in 1939 served to explain how she had become pregnant). Accordingly, a number of additional articles were published about the

translation, such as Day's "Borges, Faulkner and *The Wild Palms*," refuting those previous accusations of excessive propriety on the part of the translator.[79]

Before conducting the analysis of Borges's translation of *The Wild Palms*, I expected to find appropriations similar to those discussed in the other chapters of this project: the elimination of free-indirect discourse, a polarization of characters' gender, clearer distinctions between the narrator's personal discourse and the narrated actions—and of course, the concise and conscientious style reported by so many scholars before me. Yet, as the process unfolded, I found myself baffled by critics' claims that the translation was "good," much less "better" than the original. Rather, I had the suspicion that Borges translated this novel as fast as he could: the text is riddled with inconsistencies and mistranslations, dramatic chronological changes, misattribution of dialogue, and numerous omissions. Like McMaster—who conducted a full-length, computer-generated study of the American, British, and Spanish-language versions of the text—I had the distinct feeling that Borges worked with such haste that he translated word for word, oblivious to overarching themes in the novel and tropes that would require consistent translation. As McMaster suggests, he appears rarely to have consulted a dictionary, but rather "traducía con el primer equivalente que le venía a la mente, sin prestar atención al propósito o significado de que cada palabra podría tener dentro de la obra" (70).

Considering that the translation came out within a year of its publication in English—Sudamericana eager to put out the very latest Faulkner—it is entirely likely that Borges had a quick deadline to meet (Willson 168). Doing a rush job is nothing unheard of for a translator. In the same article in which he censures Borges for his alleged censorship of *Las palmeras salvajes*, Onetti notes of his own translation practice: "cuando se acercaba la fecha en que me

[79] During the first 10 years of its publication, the American version stirred no controversy, despite its mildly graphic sexuality and references to abortion. In 1948, however, *The Wild Palms* became one of nine books investigated for obscenity in Philadelphia court proceedings. What is more, in Ireland, the already censored version was banned entirely in 1954 and was not released from blacklist until 1967 (Sova 267-68).

había comprometido a entregar la traducción... como hacen muchos estudiantes en el día anterior al terror del examen, se imponía un día con su noche y la ayuda de la bencedrina" (349). Regardless of the speed with which the translation was produced, Beatriz Vegh rightly notes that it appears to have had no proofreading or editor's revision before publication; many of its mistranslations are simply the result of "editorial carelessness" (177). McMaster's findings provide a detailed list of lexical, grammatical, and idiomatic errors, as well as omissions, misspellings and alterations to the tone of the novel. My findings, in combination with McMaster's list, make it difficult to attribute those felicitous renderings of English syntax and cadence as noted by Day, Bravo, Stavans and Aparicio to anything more than luck. For it seems highly unlikely that a translator who makes such careless errors as those listed by McMaster and confirmed in my own analysis would have been painstaking in his reproduction of the phonic qualities of the original.

Yet a list of poor translations does not lend itself to particularly interesting or critical reading. Considering the careful translations Borges made of Woolf, Joyce and Melville, in which he thoughtfully transposed each text to a style and tone befitting his personal aesthetics, it seems impossible that *Las palmeras salvajes* was translated without *any* such considerations. In their more charitable review of the translation, Earl and Ezra Fitz state that Borges's translation of *The Wild Palms* "reflects not a series of isolated translation decisions but a coherent creative vision, one that must have verified for Borges his growing belief that the discerning reader's mind is the true site of a text's flowering" (30). Since it is impossible to determine the nature of every questionable translation, to designate which are attributable to carelessness and which to Borges's creative vision, this chapter will focus on those translations that show themselves to be part of a pattern, and conjecture that these be evidence of Borges's aesthetics at work. Furthermore, the textual consequences of Borges's

translation strategies, what the translated text actually does, are of interest here; the motivation for them is secondary.[80]

Attesting to readers' fascination with Borges's treatment of Faulkner, substantially more research has been done on *The Wild Palms*/*Las palmeras salvajes* than any other of his translations. To avoid redundancy, and in recognition of their useful scholarship, I will, for the most part, avoid those issues and textual passages already treated by scholars before me. Those readers interested in a comprehensive list of differences between the American and British versions of *The Wild Palms* and a substantial list of translation errors in *Las palmeras salvajes*, may refer to McMaster's thesis. For analysis of paratext in the translation, including footnotes and English transpositions, one may refer to Willson's chapter on Borges. In her article "*The Wild Palms* and *Las palmeras salvajes*: The Southern Counterpoint Borges/Faulkner," Vegh analyzes the narrative innovation Borges imported to Latin America through his translation and his own contrapuntal treatment of Faulkner's counterpointing stories, and also deals with cultural aspects of Borges's paratext. Readers may refer to Day, Stavans, Bravo and Aparicio for discussions of the phonic qualities of the translation. Finally, readers may refer to Fitz and Fitz regarding the place of *The Wild Palms* within Borges's evolving narrative strategy. In the present analysis, I will examine the consequences of Borges's translation for the plot, characterization and narrative voice of *The Wild Palms*.

The Wild Palms: "None of Us Are Androgynous…"

Faulkner's original title for the text, *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*, a quote from the Book of Psalms (137:5), was rejected by his editor at Random House, who instead chose *The Wild Palms*. This editorial choice had the effect of making *The Wild Palms* the main story of the novel, with *Old Man* functioning secondarily as a counterpoint. *The Wild Palms* recounts

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[80] Though if one were to speculate, she or he might consider that many years later in a survey by *Sur*, "El oficio de traducir," Borges would write: "Traduje a Kafka y a Faulkner porque me había comprometido a hacerlo, no por placer. Traducir un cuento de un idioma u otro no produce gran satisfacción" (*Borges en* Sur *1931-1980*, 324).

the illicit love affair between the timid, sexually uninitiated medical student Harry Wilbourne and the coarse, bold artist Charlotte Rittenmeyer. Charlotte, obsessed with fantasies of wild, passionate love, abandons her husband and children in New Orleans to run away with Harry. Life confirms all the love stories she has internalized—the desperate love she longs for is confirmed by the poverty and the discrimination they face as an unwed couple, both of which force them to be constantly on the move across the United States. Soon after performing an abortion for the couple who manage the Utah mine, to which he has been sent as an unlicensed company physician, Harry, who left his residency just months before graduation to flee with his lover, must choose whether or not to perform the same procedure on Charlotte. Convinced that the passion of their affair cannot withstand the exigencies of a child, Harry performs but botches the abortion. After weeks of avoiding medical attention for fear Harry will be arrested, Charlotte dies of toxemia and Harry is condemned to life in prison.

Willson has pointed out that this story is an actual example of characters killing for love, the psychological nonsense Borges decries in his prologue to *La invención de Morel*. Borges indicates as much when discussing *The Wild Palms* section in his 1939 review of the novel in *El Hogar*. He describes the story as "la de un hombre aniquilado por la carnalidad" whose "penoso curso" finds a welcome interruption in *Old Man*, which, unlike *The Wild Palms*, can at least be deemed "admirable a veces" (OC IV: 527). Perhaps the most disturbing psychological aspect of the text are the thoughts Harry has about women—the narrator is partially omniscient, making the reader privy his thoughts alone—and about Charlotte in particular, which jarringly conflict with what her actions and speech actually demonstrate.

On their first and "abortive" attempt to make love, Harry approaches Charlotte in the hotel room, imagining she waits for him

> with a quality profoundly tragic which he knew (he was learning fast) was not peculiar to her but was an attribute of all women at this instant in their lives, which would invest them with a dignity, almost a

> modesty, to be carried over and clothe even the last prone and slightly comic attitude of ultimate surrender. (41)

Yet Charlotte refuses to taint their lovemaking with false pretensions of modesty or with guilt for sneaking around behind her husband's back, and subsequently leaves the hotel, forgoing the illicit sex. Her shame is not in cheating on her husband with another, but in needing to hide it. Moreover, far from "a slightly comic attitude of ultimate surrender," their every sexual encounter in the novel is initiated by Charlotte with "restrained savage impatience" (100).[81] Her lovemaking is not clothed with tragedy or modesty but is fuelled by unbridled and unashamed desire.

As they move about the country, it is Charlotte who actively seeks and finds work and secures the couple a place to live. Returning to the Chicago hotel, and aggressively shaking Wilbourne awake by the face, Charlotte informs him that she has found an apartment for them. Harry then incongruously muses on the efficiency of women's domiciling tendencies, and how they manipulate their male counterparts, "using both the presence and absence of jewel [sic] or checking account as pawns in a chess game whose prize was not security at all but respectability within the milieu in which they lived, even the love-nest under the rose to follow a rule and a pattern" (74-75). Yet within weeks of their moving into the apartment she had found, Charlotte falls in with a Bohemian crowd: "Wilbourne never knew just whom he would find when he reached home, except that it would not be Charlotte alone and, regardless of who was there… [she] still worked in a cheap coverall already filthy as that of any house painter" (81). Thus, while Harry projects onto Charlotte the "ability of women to adapt the illicit, even the criminal, to a bourgeois standard of respectability," she is drinking rum in artists' circles, making art or going out and working, Harry's feelings on any such matter never crossing her mind (96).

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[81] In the translation, illustrating a trend that will impose itself on the entire story, it was Harry who felt the sexual desire: "se levantó contra ella con salvaje impaciencia contenida" (97), while in English it was Charlotte who was "wrestling him against her with restrained savage impatience" (100).

The narrator of *The Wild Palms* is almost always unironic about Harry's perception of his lover and makes no comment on the incongruence between Wilbourne's "musings" on women and Charlotte's independence—which is not fierce, for it has no need to be. Charlotte takes her autonomy for granted and wears it with the same indiscriminate indifference with which she wears her soiled coveralls. The story's events and dialogue, contrasting with his thoughts, thus subvert Harry's point of view. Contrary to his attributions of domesticity and bourgeois respectability, everything Charlotte says and does discloses the opposite. Revealing that Harry has been projecting his own character onto Charlotte, when he tries assuage insults against her honor, she "grasped [Harry's] hair and shook his head with savage impatience. ' My God, I never in my life saw anybody try as hard to be a husband as you do... If it was just a successful husband and food and a bed I wanted, why the hell do you think I am here instead of back there where I had them?' (107). Harry even recognizes the incongruence when pointed out. Explaining why he has decided they must move to Utah, he explains to his friend:

> "I had become as completely thrall and slave to respectability as any—"
>
> "But not her," McCord said.
>
> "No. But she's a better man than I am." (123)

His admission, in contrast to his thoughts as described throughout the novel, destabilize the narrative, making it hard to decide which to believe, or to establish the point at which Harry might actually have changed his thinking about the bourgeois sense of decency he projects onto his lover.

In addition to the physical violence Faulkner often portrays as she shakes, shoves and beats upon Harry,[82] Charlotte's language is anything but modest or feminine, "bloody ass"

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[82] In the hotel incident, Borges creates a particularly strange image, making Charlotte appear somewhat mad, even if less violent against others. In the English, she attacks Harry: "'Oh, God, Harry,' she said. She beat her clenched fists on his chest. 'Not like this. Jesus, not like this.'… He caught her wrists and

and "bastard" being common epithets for him. Despite her obsession with love, Charlotte's behavior can often be described as indifferent. After they are left alone at the lake in the North Woods, Harry's sentimentalism is at odds with Charlotte's practicality:

> "Well, Adam," she said. But they had always been alone, he told her.
>
> "Ever since that first night. That picture. We couldn't be any more alone, no matter who went away."
>
> "I know it. I mean, I can go swimming now." (100-01)

While Harry revels in the intensity of their romance, Charlotte is nonchalant about their metaphorical isolation, merely acknowledging that she may now swim naked since everyone else has abandoned their cottages for the winter. Like few others of Faulkner's female protagonists, Charlotte is exceptional in her swaggering independence, and her moderate success as an artist. The disconnect between Harry's traditionally masculine vision, and his feminized dependence on Charlotte, compounded by Charlotte's masculinization through her coarseness and autonomy, create a strange psychological undercurrent. For in contrast to what the narrator reports as Harry's thoughts, there is nothing particularly feminine about Charlotte, and indeed, she seems particularly difficult to love. Yet it is hard to determine if this sincere representation of Harry's perception is actually at odds with the implied author's take on narrative events, especially given the numerous times maxims are made about "all women." Is this incongruence an innovative technique for subtly undercutting the reliability of the narrator, or might it be attributed to Faulkner's own difficulty in verisimilarly representing an independent female artist?

In her book *Robbing the Mother: Women in Faulkner,* Deborah Clarke suggests that "Faulkner consistently questions cultural definitions of gender, and in this novel [*The Wild*

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held them... while she still wrenched at them to free them to strike his chest again" (41). But in the Spanish, Charlotte beats her own chest: "¡Dios mío, Harry! —**se** golpeó el pecho con los puños apretados—. ¡Dios mío! ¡Así no!... Le agarró y sujetó las muñecas… mientras ella forcejaba por liberarlas para volver a golpear**se** el pecho" (44). That the same error is committed twice, "golpearse" instead of "golpearle," suggests this was not an accident but a specific strategy to tame Charlotte's anger and turn it inward.

Palms], in particular, reveals their tenuous nature" (112).[83] There is one line in the novel whose irony seems to definitively indicate that Faulkner is indeed making a technically challenging foray into the representation of alternative sexualities. As Charlotte and Harry are taking leave of their friend McCord, to take the train out to Utah, "[t]he manager shook hands with all three of them and expressed regret at the dissolution of mutually pleasant domestic bonds. 'Just two of us,' Wilbourne said. 'None of us are androgynous'" (119). While Harry is trying to make clear that he, McCord and Charlotte are not an erotic unit, "androgynous" being the only term he can think of to designate sexual deviance, Wilbourne's limited vocabulary is not lost on the reader. For quite to the contrary, in both their characterization and their speech, Harry and Charlotte certainly are androgynous, if not farther toward the opposite ends of the gender spectrum. Indeed, just moments before, Harry had confessed to McCord that Charlotte was a "better man" and a "better gentleman" than he (123/129).

Thus were created two untenable situations for Borges as translator: first, characters who, in addition to being "asesinos por benevolencia," display such non-normative sexuality that they lack, for Borges, all sense of verisimilitude (and perhaps decency); second, a disturbing psychological narrative with jarring contrasts between the narration and the narrated events. Borges's solution: to turn the tragic love story into detective fiction. Wherever possible, Borges introduced danger and suspense into the narrative, and entirely switched the gender traits ascribed to each protagonist, projecting Charlotte's attributes onto Harry and vice versa. In an example of the former, when Harry goes to visit Callahan, the mine owner who illegally hires Harry as mine physician, Faulkner describes the huge man's fancy clothes as looking shabby, purely as a result of Callahan's crookedness. He had "the

[83] That does not mean, however, that this revelation yields a change in Faulkner's own expectations. For Charlotte, like all of Faulkner's assertive, sexually desiring women, must pay for her independence (Clarke 102). Charlotte is ultimately forced back into a model of traditional femininity by sacrificing herself in refusing to seek medical attention for her toxemia lest Harry be arrested.

body of a two-hundred-and-twenty-pound college fullback gone to fat, a suit of expensive tweed which nevertheless looked on him as if he had taken it from a fire sale at the point of a pistol" (117). Callahan's criminality, his treatment of workers in his mine and illegal cooking of the books are evoked by his suit looking as if it were stolen. In the Spanish, however, in addition to the red face and cold stare, Callahan had "el cuerpo de un jugador de fútbol de 220 libras de peso, en un traje de tela cara, que sin embargo parecía haber obtenido en un saldo**, con la pistola al pecho**" (113, my emphasis). Callahan maintains the imposing body of a football player that has not "gone to fat," but what's more, rather than looking as if he got his suit at gunpoint, in Borges's version, the mine owner is wearing a gun. Callahan's toughness, and the danger in dealing with him thus increase, as he is now armed and in possession of a quicker, leaner body.

Many instances of increased suspense and danger in the text are carried out through Borges's exchanging of roles between Charlotte and Harry, suggesting a fundamental relationship the translator makes between gender and genre. When abandoning her family in New Orleans for Chicago, Charlotte's husband accompanies the couple to the train, and stays on board for several stops, giving his wife one last chance to change her mind. One stop before the station at which Rittenmeyer (nicknamed Rat) intends to depart the train, Charlotte asks Harry if she may go speak with him. Harry is confused by the question, finding it absurd that she should ask permission to speak to her own husband. He imagines Charlotte may be thinking of going back to him, and that if she turns to look at him, she is actually saying goodbye:

> "Can I go back and speak to him a minute?"
>
> "Can you go?—"
>
> "Hammond is the next station."
>
> Why, he's your husband, he was about to say but caught himself… But she had already risen and passed him; he thought, If she stops and looks back at me it will mean she is thinking, 'Later I can always know that at least I told him good-bye' and she did stop and they

> looked at each other, then she went on. (52)

In the Spanish version, a very different scene occurs. When Charlotte asks permission to see her husband, Harry coldly grants it, but, in a displacement of Charlotte's words to his mouth, reminds her that the next station is the one at which Rittenmeyer will be leaving the train, as if warning her not to get off the train with him. When Charlotte walks away, Harry does not imagine *what* she is thinking, but only that she is thinking:

> —¿Puedo ir un momento a hablarle, un minuto?
>
> —Puedes… Hammond es la próxima estación.
>
> *Pero es tu marido*, estuvo a punto de decir, pero se contuvo… Pero Carlota se había levantado y seguía adelante; él pensó: *Si se para y me mira querrá decir que está pensando. Más tarde sabré que al menos le dije adiós*, y se detuvo y se miraron y ella siguió. (54, emphasis in the original)

In the Spanish, Harry holds back his anger rather than his confusion by not stating "pero es tu marido." Borges splits the last sentence into two; what Harry imagined Charlotte might be thinking has become his own thoughts in the Spanish. He nonchalantly notes that at least *he* said goodbye, staunchly bracing himself for Charlotte not to return.

Charlotte does not get off the train with Rat but follows through with her intention of running away with Harry. When she comes back to her seat, she is worried Rat may get back on the train, completely wearing away her defenses. Determined to leave him, she says to Harry that her relationship with her husband must be severed—she and Harry must immediately make love for the first time, dissolving her tie to Rat once and for all; she subsequently orders him to change their seats to a private cabin.

> "So you came back," he said.
>
> "You didn't think I was. Neither did I."
>
> "But you did."
>
> "Only it's not finished. If he were to get back on the train, with a ticket to Slidell—" She turned, staring at him though she did not touch him. "It's not finished. It will have to be cut." (53)

Again, in Spanish, Harry takes on an air of authority and coldness more appropriate to detective fiction. His "so you came back" takes on an ironic tone when his sentimental rejoinder, "but you did" is removed. Usurping Charlotte's words, and consequently the dominant role in the relationship, Harry takes the lead and demands Charlotte's relationship with her husband end:

> —Así que has vuelto —dijo él.
>
> —Tú no lo creías, ni yo tampoco.
>
> —Pero no hemos concluido. Si vuelve al tren con un billete hasta Slidell.
>
> Se dio vuelta mirándolo pero sin tocarlo.
>
> —No hemos concluido. Hay que darle un corte. (54)

There is no indication of who says the last line, but as it is he who contends "no hemos concluido," all evidence points to Harry demanding the "corte" with Rittenmeyer. Furthermore, Harry's concern that Rat get back on the train suggests male competition, a potential duel, which is a necessary element of the detective genre Borges seeks to evoke.

In the following lines of the Spanish, Charlotte still demands that Harry get them a private cabin, but since it is no longer she who says the relationship with Rittenmeyer must be cut, readers of the Spanish cannot make the connection that Charlotte's demand is related to her need to forget her husband, sexuality being a practical, if dramatic, solution for emotional closure. Rather, Charlotte appears uncontrollably randy—more in line with a woman who would willfully give up her husband and children for another man. The tone here also takes on an air of suspense absent from the English. The "corte" Harry demands in the Spanish alludes to action much more drastic than lovemaking, potentially even to murdering Rittenmeyer. This possibility is enhanced by a suggestion issuing from an earlier translation in the Spanish, when Charlotte and Harry are deciding how to proceed with their love affair:

> "Can't you get the divorce?"

> "On what grounds? He would fight it. And it would have to be here—a Catholic judge. So there's just one other thing. And it seems I can't do that."
>
> "Yes," he said. "Your children."
>
> For a moment she looked at him, smoking. "I wasn't thinking of them. I mean, I have already thought of them." (42)

The "just one other thing" that Charlotte cannot do is have an illicit affair, as demonstrated by the incident in the hotel. Harry naively understands her to be suggesting running away, and that she could not do this because of her children. Contrasting Harry's sentimentalism against Charlotte's cynicism, she corrects him, and makes clear that her children have ceased to be a factor in her decision making. To rectify these non-normative gender traits and heighten the suspense, in the Spanish, Borges again reverses the roles:

> —¿Y tú no puedes pedir el divorcio?
>
> —¿Con qué motivos? Él pleitearía. Y tendría que ser aquí, con un juez católico.
>
> —Sólo queda una solución. Y para ésa parece que yo no sirvo.
>
> —¿Qué no sirves?
>
> —Sí –dijo él–. Tus hijos.
>
> Lo miró, por un momento, fumando.
>
> —No pensaba en ellos. Quiero decir que ya he pensado en ellos. (45)

Borges invents Charlotte's line "¿Qué no sirves?" after cutting off her last sentences and making them Harry's. In the translation, Harry, boldly and fatalistically states that only one other solution remains, implying homicide. Yet, though manly enough to murder Charlotte's husband, he is sufficiently benevolent not to do so for the sake of her children (who incidentally are two girls).

In both events, the train ride and the plotting of their escape from New Orleans, Borges's inversions and inventions of Harry's and Charlotte's speech are directly tied to a transformation in the dynamics of the plot. In Butler's terms, the stylized set of repetitions

Borges deploys to comprise male and female in translation generate a plot reminiscent of the detective novels he preferred. While his attempt to masculinize Harry and feminize Charlotte are impossible to maintain for the length of the novel, Borges uses individual passages from the text to create fragments of the sort of novel he would have chosen to write. Like Molly Bloom and Orlando, Charlotte is pushed back into a role of stereotypical sexuality; the transgression of leaving her husband is equated with a monstrous sexual desire. The depth of her need for immediate sexual intimacy with Harry is flattened out in translation, making her more the racy broad of detective novels, than a woman who is fighting the urge to call off her love affair. The dominance Charlotte holds in the relationship is not only unladylike but adds too much dimension to her character to fit the part of the detective novel's dame. The words stolen from her mouth and put into Harry's make him, like *Orlando*'s Bonthrop or Melville's lawyer, more of a *man*, one better fit for the role of renegade lover and potential murderer. Rather than pliant and pleading as he is in the English, Harry becomes dominant, calculating and cold. With Charlotte feminized, questions around the narrator's reliability subside. It becomes less puzzling (to the reader accustomed to traditional gender roles) why Harry should adore such a violent, cynical woman as Charlotte and why Harry should mentally ascribe so many traits to his lover that in the English are entirely lacking. For in the Spanish, Charlotte *is* more domestic, weak and dependent, making her into the woman Harry only imagines her to be in the English.

The misattribution of Harry and Charlotte's dialogue in scenes dealing with abortion not only restores the protagonists to traditional gender roles, but allows Borges to imprint onto the text an alternative ideology. When Buckner, the manager of the mine, asks him to give his wife an abortion, Harry initially refuses. Charlotte, who wishes to convince Harry to perform the procedure, cannot avoid sarcasm as he tries to explain his decision:

> "And you said no," she said. "Why? Was it the hundred dollars?"
>
> "You know better than that. It was a hundred and fifty, incidentally."
>
> **"Low I may be, but not that low?"**

> "No. It was because I—" (176)

This last phrase is repeated several instances more in their discussion and again later when all three, Buckner, Billie and Charlotte, gang up on Harry pressuring him until he gives in and performs the abortion. Yet each time he is cut off by Charlotte, and thus never actually states why he does not want to perform the abortion. With her ironic "low I may be, but not that low?," Charlotte mocks Harry's morals—for they were loose enough for him to run off with a married woman. Implicit in Charlotte's irony, however, is Faulkner's own ambiguity on the subject of abortion; Daniel Singal writes that while Faulkner's Victorian upbringing likely attached a stigma to abortion, novels such as *The Wild Palms* suggest that "he saw the resort to it as one of those extraordinarily tough choices that people are sometimes required to make" (237). Dewey Dell Bundren, of *As I Lay Dying*, is another female protagonist in Faulkner with whose desperate quest for an abortion readers instinctively sympathize, suggesting a certain leaning in its favor on the part of the author. With his Victorian morals (or those of his collaborator, Borges's mother, as Kristal, Day and Rodríguez Monegal have suggested) more firmly intact, Borges minimizes the implied author's advocacy of abortion, by turning Charlotte's sarcastic question into Wilbourne's deprecating admission:

> —Y dijiste que no —dijo—. ¿Por qué? ¿Eran los cien dólares?
>
> —Tú sabes que no es eso. Y eran ciento cincuenta. **Habré descendido pero no tanto**. No, es porque yo… (165, my emphasis)

The translation suggests that Harry truly believes he has sunk morally, having run off with another man's wife, but that he is still morally upright enough to refuse an abortion, which has now become unethical. In a clear instance of the translator usurping not just the voice of the narrator but the ideology of the implied author, the Spanish-language Harry indicates—counter to the English—that he harbors guilt and shame for his adultery, and that abortion is inherently wrong. At the same time, Harry's statement is forceful, increasing the confidence he so sorely lacks in the English, while Charlotte loses her sarcastic tone, bringing her closer to the feminine ideal both Borges and Harry imagine for her.

While Borges's misattribution of dialogue exacts the most significant impact both on the characterization of *The Wild Palms* and its plot, a number of other changes—some clearly mistakes, others whose provenance is more difficult to discern—add small twists or deviations to the plot. Some cases serve to maintain the polarized gender roles and homosocial triangulation we have seen. When a neighbor leaving his cabin in the woods for the winter brings his leftover food to them, he can tell the couple is not married, making Charlotte a whore in his eyes, and thus his open objectification of her acceptable. "Bradley looked at **her** and now Wilbourne for the first time saw the eyebrows and the mouth in accord, quizzical, sardonic, ruthless, the whole man emanating a sort of crass and insolent confidence" (99, my emphasis). Yet in Spanish, rather than eye Charlotte, he subtly challenges Harry: "Bradley **lo** miró y Wilbourne vio por primera vez las cejas y la boca de acuerdo, burlón, sardónico, implacable, todo él emanando una especie de crasa e insolente suficiencia" (96, my emphasis). Once again, Borges tries to bring in the male competition for a woman so fundamental to traditional notions of masculinity.

In two instances, Borges seems to have misunderstood slang terms for pregnant, enacting confusing shifts in the plot. When Charlotte and Billie Buckner are alone cooking dinner, Billie urges Charlotte to make Wilbourne marry her:

> "Maybe I will," Charlotte said.
>
> "You make him. It's better that way. Especially if you get jammed."
>
> "Are you jammed?"
>
> "Yes. About a month." (165)

While readers of the English can refer back to this conversation when Buckner later approaches Wilbourne and asks him for an abortion, Spanish-language readers have no prior notice of Billie's condition, making the manager's request shocking. When Billie tells Charlotte to get Wilbourne to marry her, the Spanish conversation proceeds as follows:

> —Puede ser que lo haga —dijo Carlota.

> —Hágalo. Es mejor así. Especialmente cuando estén peleados.
>
> —¿Y ustedes están peleados?
>
> —Sí. Hace como un mes. (155)

Rather than one month pregnant, Billie has been fighting with her husband for a month. The term makes sense conceptually: it is better to be married when she fights with her partner, as the couple will be less inclined to separate as a result. Borges reasserts the notion later in the translation, when Charlotte tries to convince Harry to perform the abortion. In the English, she is ever faithful to the ideal of love, telling him "we have thrown a lot away, threw it away for love and we're not sorry" (178). Therefore, he should operate because "This is for love too. **Not ours** maybe. But love" (178). In the translation, Charlotte makes a distinction between her and Harry's love and that of Buck and Billie, for their month long fighting would indicate the Buckners' love could never be like theirs: "Eso también es por amor. **No como el nuestro**, quizás. Pero por amor" (167).

After Charlotte becomes pregnant, Harry desperately tries every alternative to performing an abortion that he can think of. He is violently ejected from a brothel after asking its madam for something to terminate Charlotte's pregnancy. With his blackened eye, he heads to a pharmacy to request the same. The clerk asks:

> "What happened to your face, mister?"
>
> "Fight," he said. "I knocked up my girl. I want something for it" (197)

Harry's answer "fight" is an afterthought, stated with little interest. He immediately moves on to his real concern, an abortion-inducing pill. Yet "knocked up," like "jammed," seems out of Borges's vocabulary as well. He takes the mention of the fight to be the main point of the dialogue:

> —¿Qué le pasó con la cara, señor?
>
> —Una pelea. Le pegué a mi mujer. La he embarazado. Quiero algo para eso. (184)

Since he added the sentence, “la he embarazado,” Borges understands that the “thing” Harry wants something for is the pregnancy, but no connection can apparently be made between it and the phrase “knocked up.” He is concerned about literally translating the words before him, even if he must supplement the meaning with what he understands to be the true context. While in the case with the Buckner’s, Borges’s mistranslation functions in part, here not only has Harry never hit Charlotte in the narrative plot, nothing about their relationship suggests he ever would. Moreover, since he is being asked about his black eye, that fight with his woman included her punching back. If anything, Harry’s statement functions as a lie, covering up his ejection from a house of ill repute.

These two instances appear to be cases, as McMaster noted, where Borges translated whatever came to mind with little regard for a word’s implication in the rest of the text. If he could find no dictionary entry or native informant to explain the figurative meanings of “jammed” and “knocked up,” there is ample contextual information to make it clear. With the former, when Buckner tells Harry, some ten pages after Billie tells Charlotte she is “jammed,” that, “now Bill turns up a month gone with a kid and we can’t afford a kid” it might have registered that when Billie said she’d been jammed for about a month, she and Buckner were referring to the same thing (175). Likewise, if Borges was compelled to invent the line “la he embarazado” context might have suggested that “knocked up” be a colloquial form to express “gotten pregnant.” A number of other such cases abound in the translation, which suggest a certain amount of speed on the part of the translator, and the lack of linguistic resources close at hand.

Mention should be made of the stylistic changes Borges made to *The Wild Palms*. Most notably, in the scenes approximating Charlotte’s death, Faulkner gives the text a trancelike tone by repeating phrases as a means to suggest characters’ awakening to the truth of a situation, the reality they had previously known proving to be but a dream. In his 1975 study on the novel Thomas L. McHaney finds the “veil of Maya,” or the physical and intellectual reality that obscures the transcendent spiritual reality behind it, to be a significant

trope in the novel. Thus the Louisiana doctor, who is awakened in the night to try to save Charlotte, has "that sense of imminence, of being just beyond a veil from something, of groping just without the veil and even touching but not quite, almost seeing but not quite, the shape of the truth" (10). The doctor had seen Charlotte sitting on the beach for days on end, looking sickly and enraged. He imagines there is something wrong with her liver; he has a feeling he refuses to recognize that she and Harry are not legitimate spouses, but he remains just beyond that veil behind which lies the awful truth: that not only is Harry not Charlotte's husband, but that, without a license and against state law, he has performed an abortion on her from which she is bound to die. Borges eliminates Faulkner's repetition of "but not quite" and economizes the passage with parentheses, which is a common technique Faulkner uses in other parts of the novel, but one that, here, jars the reading rather than issue forth a dreamlike quality: "y él de nuevo con ese sentido de inminencia, de estar más allá de un velo, de andar a tientas justo dentro del velo y de tocar y de ver (pero no del todo) la forma de la verdad" (15).

As the doctor prepares his bag, Faulkner writes "the veil was going now, dissolving now, it was about to part now and now he did not want to see what was behind it" (13). The four uses of the word "now" suggest the doctor coming very close to awakening to the truth, the dream fading behind him and a culminating point arising; Borges, avoiding the repetition he finds likely found tedious, eliminates all but one "ahora": "el velo se descorría disolviéndose, estaba a punto de partirse ahora y él no quería ver lo que había detrás" (18). It is difficult to say whether the alliteration and rhyming of the line was accidental, or if it was Borges's technique for compensating the omission of Faulkner's repetitiveness in the English. The formal changes we will examine in the following section are often equally as felicitous, thought just as frequently not. While *The Wild Palms* does display a number of other formal transformations, we will move on to a discussion of *Old Man* to review the consequences of Borges's concern with linguistic and stylistic simplification in translation.

Old Man: The Narrative of a Narration

In the *El Hogar* review of *The Wild Palms*, Borges described the plot of *Old Man* as "la de un muchacho de ojos descoloridos que trata de asaltar un tren, y a quien, después de muchos y borrosos años de cárcel, el Mississippi desbordado confiere una libertad inútil y atroz" (125-26). His appreciation of *Old Man* cutting through the "penoso curso" of *The Wild Palms* was echoed even by one of the few critics in 1939 who favorably reviewed the book. Edwin Berry Burgum, though he wrote that, "in his distinguished career, Mr. Faulkner has not written a more thoroughly enjoyable book than *The Wild Palms*" (230), concedes that the interpolations of *Old Man* "restore to the reader the pleasure and the confidence of certain elemental qualities which seem to have retreated from higher levels of society" to which Harry and Charlotte belong (232). Borges surely preferred the text in part because its protagonist was strong and persistent (even if he was persistently trying to get himself back into prison), where Harry seemed weak and ineffectual. Furthermore, rather than tragic love story, *Old Man* much more closely resembled "la novela de aventuras."

Perhaps unknown to Borges, *Old Man* is the fictionalization of the Great Mississippi Flood, in which heavy rains over 1926 and 1927 flooded the Mississippi River and its tributaries in seven states, tearing through more than one hundred levees along the length of the river and turning 80 square miles of the state of Mississippi into an inland sea. *Old Man*'s protagonist is a tall, nameless convict, who has been imprisoned for trying to rob a train, convinced by dime store paperbacks that it would be simple to pull off. As the flood breaks the levees in Mississippi, the tall convict is evacuated from the State Penal Farm, taken to dry land, and then sent in a rowboat to rescue people stranded in trees and on barn rooftops. He manages to rescue a pregnant woman, but the brutal force of the Mississippi—which changes the course of its flow three times during the novel—drags them over a hundred miles down to the Louisiana bayou. Rather than use this an opportunity to escape, the tall convict's "hillbilly" sense of honor, as Faulkner puts it, dictates that he return to the authorities both the woman and the row boat in which he was sent to find her, while the psychological

debilitation he has incurred through years of incarceration leave him unable to consider any option but to turn himself in to the nearest law-enforcement agent and return to the safe, predictable world of the State Farm.

While trying to rob a train, being hurtled across the country in the United States's most powerful flood in recorded history, and catching crocodiles among Louisiana Cajuns make for an exciting adventure story, as Borges's review suggests, the plot of *Old Man* actually centers around the tall convict's process of narrating these adventures once he is safely back in prison. The psychological dimensions of Faulkner's novel takes precedence over the adventure, the convict's feelings about the events receiving more attention than the events themselves. For example, as the flood is about to wash over the convict for the third time in six weeks, he thinks about the repetitiveness of "his present fate, how not only the most seminal crises recurred with a certain monotony, but the very physical circumstances followed a stupidly unimaginative pattern," that stupidly unimaginative pattern, of course, being of the author's own creation (or at least his choice to represent that historical event in his novel) (249).

Mikhail Bakhtin, in his essay on chronotrope in the novel, writes:

> Moments of adventuristic time occur at those points when the normal course of events, the normal, intended or purposeful sequence of life's events is interrupted. These points provide an opening for the intrusion of nonhuman forces… and it is precisely these forces, and not the heroes, who in adventure-time take all the initiative. (95)

The Mississippi River is a nonhuman force that dictates the convict's life for the length of the novel: when it is not plunging over him in a tidal wave, capsizing his boat or dragging him downstream for miles, it is the humanitarian and law enforcement agents the flood has caused to be out on the water that forcibly extract him from the purposeful sequence of his life's events. Yet the convict's taking time before the impending crisis to ascribe the River's intrusion into his life as repetitive, monotonous and stupidly unimaginative, undercuts the chronotrope of adventure, which Bakhtin describes as replete with the immediacy of

"suddenly" and "at just that moment" (92). Moreover, as we will see, these adventures during the flood receive constant interruption.

While it is chronologically the last thing to happen to him, in the second chapter of *Old Man* the tall convict is returned to prison and given an extra sentence for attempted escape (after the state had already declared him dead); the rest of the novel is the convict's recounting of what happened to him in the weeks he was at large, impressing fellow inmates with stories of braving the Great Flood. The novel becomes, in part, a character study—Faulkner exploring the convict's ability to narrate his adventures: which events he keeps to himself, which he exaggerates, and which motives, thoughts or feelings he is unable to articulate or even conceive of, as an uneducated man from rural Mississippi. This exercise is carried out through unique formal experimentation, for which Borges had little praise: "En las obras capitales de Faulkner —en *Luz de agosto*, en *El sonido y la furia*, en *Santuario*—las novedades técnicas parecen necesarias, inevitables. En *The Wild Palms* son menos atractivas que incómodas, menos justificables que exasperantes" (125).

Let us briefly lay out the kinds of "exasperating technical innovations" Borges faced with *The Wild Palms*. The novel is told in third person, even after the convict returns to prison in Chapter Two and begins telling his story; as a means to maintain the convict as the primary narrating subject, much of the novel is narrated through direct tagged thought or indirect discourse. Described by Seymour Chatman as "direct quotation" of the mind, direct tagged thought is written in the present tense, self-referential, stated with no presumptive audience and no motive to explain, and produced in the voice (idiom, diction, sociolect and syntax) of the character whose thoughts are being reported (183). This representation of thought is tagged when appearing in quotes and/or being preceded or followed by a tag such as "he thought." Faulkner's reporting of thought can be significantly complex, going far beyond simple tags: "the words *It does look big* stood for just a second, unemphatic and trivial, somewhere some fragment of his attention could see them and vanished" (237).

Furthermore, while direct thought is typically rendered in the character's voice, Faulkner narrates the convict's thought in a register that is impossibly high.

Rather than report the convict's tale mimetically in direct quotation, a third person narrator in *Old Man* moves the story along by indirectly stating what the convict tells his fellow inmates. This has the consequence of giving the narration an educated, formal tone, employing words and figurative language that the uneducated, hillbilly convict would have been unable to produce: "Because now, he told them, he began to notice for the first time that the other people, the other refugees who crowded the deck, who had gathered in a quiet circle about the upturned skiff on which he and the woman sat, … were not white people" (219). While indirect discourse is often used to minimize a narrator's intrusion, Faulkner uses it in such a way as to break up the reading; "he said" is interjected into the smooth third person dialogue, reminding the reader that the convict, rather than the narrator, is telling the story: "it was here *he said* that he first noticed the goats' beards of moss in the trees, though it could have been there for several days so far as he knew" (153, my emphasis). Moreover, the narrator frequently interrupts his own narration, to interject explanations of certain events or omnisciently detail the convict's thoughts and motives:

> …that moment, thinking, *What? What is it he is trying to tell me?* thinking (this is a flash too, since he could not even have expressed this, and hence did not even know that he had ever thought it) that though his life had been cast here, circumscribed by this environment, accepted by this environment and accepting it in turn (and he had done well here—this quietly, soberly indeed, if he had been able to phrase it, think it instead of merely knowing it—better than he had ever done, who had not even known until now how good work, making money could be) yet it was not his life, he still and would ever be no more than the water bug upon the surface of the pond. (243-44, emphasis in the original)[84]

[84] In a trend we will see is common, Borges often omits overly "psychological" discourse. In this passage, the interjection: "—this quietly, soberly indeed, if he had been able to phrase it, think it instead of merely knowing it—" has been excised from the translation.

The narrative present is often interjected into the convict's recounting of past events, as his story is frequently interrupted by his jail mates asking for clarification or stating their disbelief. The settings in the novel, are extremely complex, with different temporal and spatial points frequently represented within the same sentence, and with indirect discourse intermingling with third person narration (84). Close and sustained attention on the part of the reader is required to distinguish among what was said and done during the flood, what occurred during the storytelling at the prison, and what are the third person narrator's comments about the convict's unspoken thoughts and about his act of narration. As daring as Faulkner was in his experimentation, Borges was equally as audacious in his rectification of *Old Man*'s technical innovations.

Initiating his dissolution and reconstruction of the novel's complex representations of time and space, Borges refuses to surrender the act of narration to the convict. Faulkner makes a clear indication in Chapter 2 that the novel has essentially been turned over to the convict, when he includes a colon at the end of the line: "This is how he told about it seven weeks later, sitting in new bedticking garments, shaved and with his hair cut again, on his bed in the barracks:" (146). While Borges favors unreliable narration in his own fiction, a first person narrator almost always barging into a third person narrative at some point in the text, his characters are never given the power to direct the narrative. The Spanish translation reverses the direction of the the telling: "Así lo contó siete semanas después, sentado en nuevas ropas de cama, afeitado y con pelo rapado de nuevo, en su arcón de las barracas." (139). The sentence lacks the colon at the end, which would indicate the rest of the novel being the convict's telling. Rather, the term "así" seems to refer to the anteceding statement: "the skiff made one long bounding lunge as the convict's native state, in a final paroxysm, regurgitated him on to the wild bosom of the Father of Waters" (146). What the convict told in the Spanish, then, was simply these last lines, whose incredibly high register is a

considerable contrast.[85] For the remainder of the novel, Borges counteracts many of the devices Faulkner employed to render this complex narrative act, in which the convict's narration and narrator's omniscient reporting intercalate almost in the way *Old Man* is interspersed with *The Wild Palms*. Many of these transformations are very clever, and suggest themselves to be the kind of thoughtful product of a creative vision that Fitz and Fitz claim Borges's translation to be. Others, however, seem the result of either confusion or incompetent handling.

Let us first examine some careful translations in which Borges successfully reconstructs the overlapping settings of time and place without leaving any debris. In the following passage, the convict recounts the Mississippi changing its course with a violent tidal wave, and his trying to steer the boat to somewhere dry to rid himself of the woman, whose pregnancy he found contemptible. His story is spliced with the third person narrator's supplementary narration regarding those thoughts or events the convict cannot or will not state aloud. Borges employs techniques such as turning direct thought and indirect discourse into direct speech, even into the speech of characters other than those to whom the mediated thought or discourse actually belonged. He eliminates interruptions, and interrupts narrative continuities, all in an attempt to make the narrative easier to follow and the psychological aspects of the text less pronounced. Below I will address the individual aspects I have highlighted in bold.

> He wanted nothing for himself. He just wanted to get rid of the woman, the belly, and he was trying to do that in the right way, not for himself, but for her. **He could have put her back into another tree at any time—**

---

[85] This contrast, while not accurate at this point in the novel, is not at all out of place with the style of *Old Man*. As a means to destabilize the narration—or perhaps to give the nameless convict the dignity he merits through means that are otherwise impossible—Faulkner often writes direct thought in a register inconceivable for the convict: "he even looked out over the lake... thinking, *This is a greater immensity of water, of waste and desolation, than I have ever seen before*; perhaps not; thinking... *These are more boats than I believed existed, a maritime race of which I also had no cognizance* or perhaps not thinking it but just watching" as the launch entered the canal (251).

> "Or you could have jumped out of the boat and let her and it drown," the plump convict said. "Then they could have given you the ten years for escaping and then hung you for the murder and charged the boat to your folks."
>
> "Yah," the tall convict said.—But **he** had not done that. He wanted to do it the right way, find somebody, anybody he could surrender her to, something solid he could set her down on and then jump back into the river, if that would please anyone. That was all he wanted—just to come to something, anything. That didn't seem like a great deal to ask. And he couldn't do it. **He** told how the skiff fled on—
>
> "Didn't you pass nobody?" the plump convict said. "No steamboat, nothing?"
>
> "I don't know," the tall one said—while he tried merely to keep it afloat, until the darkness thinned and lifted and revealed—
>
> "Darkness?" the plump convict said. "I thought you said it was already daylight."
>
> "Yah," the tall one said. He was rolling a cigarette, pouring the tobacco carefully from a new sack into the creased paper. "This was another one. They had several while I was gone." —the skiff to be moving still rapidly up a winding corridor bordered by drowned trees which the convict recognised again to be a river running again in the direction that, until two days ago, had been upstream. (148-49)

The Spanish reads as follow:

> No necesitaba nada para él. Sólo quería verse libre de la mujer, la panza, y trataba de hacerlo de la mejor manera, no por él sino por ella.
>
> **—Podías ponerla sobre otro árbol en cualquier momento.** O podías haber saltado del bote y dejarla ahogarse —dijo el penado gordo.
>
> **—Entonces** te hubieran condenado a diez años por fuga y luego te hubieran ahorcado por asesinato y hubieran hecho pagar el bote a tu familia.
>
> —Sí —dijo el penado. Pero no lo había hecho. Quería hacer bien las cosas, encontrar a alguien, cualquiera a quien pudiera entregarla, algo sólido donde depositarla y luego volver a saltar al río, si eso pudiera agradar a alguien. Era todo lo que necesitaba, sólo llegar a algo, a cualquier cosa. No era mucho pedir. Y no lo **pude** hacer.
>
> **Contó cómo el esquife seguía…**
>
> —¿No encontraste a nadie? —dijo el penado gordo—. ¿Ni un vapor, nada?
>
> —No sé —dijo el alto—, trataba sólo de mantener**me** a flote hasta que la oscuridad disminuyera y se levantara y revelara…
>
> —¿Oscuridad? —dijo el penado gordo—. Creí que habías dicho que era de día.
>
> —Sí —dijo el alto. Estaba arrollando un cigarrillo, echando el tabaco cuidadosamente de un paquete nuevo dentro del papel plegado—. Éste era otro. Pasaron varios mientras yo estaba fuera.

> El esquife aún andaba rápido por un sinuoso corredor bordeado de árboles ahogados que el penado volvió a reconocer como un río que volvía a correr en la dirección que, hasta dos días antes, era aguas arriba (141)

It is worthwhile to reconstruct the third person narrator's recounting of the event, to foreground the continuity of the underlying narration. Without the interruptions by the tall and plump convicts, the text would have read as follows:

> He wanted nothing for himself. He just wanted to get rid of the woman, the belly, and he was trying to do that in the right way, not for himself, but for her. He could have put her back into another tree at any time. But he had not done that. He wanted to do it the right way, find somebody, anybody he could surrender her to, something solid he could set her down on and then jump back into the river, if that would please anyone. That was all he wanted—just to come to something, anything. That didn't seem like a great deal to ask. And he couldn't do it. He told how the skiff fled on while he tried merely to keep it afloat, until the darkness thinned and lifted and revealed the skiff to be moving still rapidly up a winding corridor bordered by drowned trees which the convict recognised again to be a river running again in the direction that, until two days ago, had been upstream. (148-49)

The story is not only well written and cohesive, but exciting. The interruptions have the effect of slowing the narration down, and eliminating the suspense typical of adventure stories.

In conveying the convict's narrative, Faulkner uses no textual marker to distinguish between the third person omniscient representation of the convict's thoughts (or what he would have thought were he capable of thinking) and the free-indirect discourse which pertains solely to the story the convict is telling the other convicts back in prison. The first three sentences of the first paragraph are the narrator's, peering into the mind of the convict. Yet the fourth, which is interrupted by the plump convict, is the indirect representation of his storytelling, lines the tall convict actually would have said. Noting this difference, Borges makes this line into direct speech—but the speech of another character:

> No necesitaba nada para él. Sólo quería verse libre de la mujer, la panza, y trataba de hacerlo de la mejor manera, no por él sino por ella.

> **—Podías ponerla sobre otro árbol en cualquier momento.** O podías haber saltado del bote y dejarla ahogarse —dijo el penado gordo.
>
> —Entonces te hubieran condenado a diez años por fuga y luego te hubieran ahorcado por asesinato y hubieran hecho pagar el bote a tu familia. (140-41)

Not only has Borges transferred the tall convict's (indirect) words to the plump convict, he inserts another interlocutor. The placement of the plump convict's following line, "—Entonces" in an indented paragraph below would indicate that this line belongs to yet another convict listening to the story. For, in following Spanish quotation norms, were those lines to have belonged to the plump convict, they simply would have followed the dialogue marker "dijo el penado gordo," on the same line.[86]

In response to the suggestion that he should have let the woman drown and the boat sink, the story continues: "'Yah,' the tall convict said.—But **he** had not done that." The third person narration continues, discussing the convict's internal motivations for wanting to do the right thing, information that is presumably not actually reported to his narratees, as the convict himself was likely unaware of them. In Spanish, the synthetic verb structures makes it impossible to tell whether the following lines are in first or third person, until the verb "poder," referring to the convicts inability to find a safe and honorable way to rid himself of the woman, is conjugated in the "yo" form, thereby making the entire preceding paragraph the convict's direct speech. Unlike his English counterpart, the convict has no difficulty recognizing and no shame admitting his impulse to do the right thing.

In the Spanish, "Contó cómo el esquife seguía…" becomes a single line of third person narration, interrupted again by the plump convict. In English, the underlying third person reporting resumes after the convict reponds to his question: "I don't know," the tall one said—while he tried merely to keep it afloat, until the darkness thinned and lifted and

---

[86] An example we will see below: "—¿A medias? —dijo el penado gordo—. ¿Cómo podías arreglar negocios con un hombre con el que según dices no podías ni hablar?" (217).

revealed—." Yet Borges makes that third person narration into a continuation of tall convict's response: "—No sé —dijo el alto—, trataba sólo de mantener**me** a flote hasta que la oscuridad disminuyera y se levantara y revelara…" Borges is careful and consistent in transforming the narrative account. While in the original it takes close attention to the text to distinguish which dashes are prosodic and which indicate an interruption or continuation of the narrative, Borges consistently employs an ellipsis to indicate the tall convict's speech being interrupted, thereby making it clear that the dashes in his translation function solely as quotation marks. The translator ultimately puts the last lines of the third person into a new paragraph, rather than precede with a dash to indicate that it is a continuation of interrupted discourse.

On a number of other occasions, Borges simplifies the narration by transforming the convict's indirect speech into third person narration, and in doing so transporting the narrative exclusively to the setting of the flood. After coming upon a group of outlaw flood refugees who offer to take the pregnant woman, he realizes he cannot in good faith surrender her to them, and that he condemned to be stuck with her:

> "Don't you see that I can't?" the convict cried. "Can't you see that?"
>
> Now, he said, he gave up. He was doomed. (155)

While the lines in quotation marks belong to his story, the following sentences are the indirect report of his telling the story to his cellmates. By placing both lines in quotation marks, the second (indirect) speech act is attributed to one of the men on the other boat:

> —¿No ve que no puedo? —gritó el penado—. ¿No lo ve?
>
> —Ahora, —dijo— no hay nada que hacer.
>
> Estaba condenado. (146)

Just prior to the exchange above, the man had said, "Well?," referring to whether or not the convict was going to put the woman on their boat. The newly invented dialogue, "Ahora no hay nada que hacer," becomes the man's response to the convict: he may as well hand the

pregnant woman over because the convict, still dressed in his prison uniform, was not going to get far. The last sentence of the English, "he was doomed," ceases to be the tall convict's report to the other prisoners about being stuck with the pregnant woman, but becomes instead an emphatic declaration by the third person narrator, strangely out of keeping with the narrator's style in the rest of the text.

Borges does an amiable job of deconstructing what is perhaps Faulkner's most complicated narrative experiment in the novel, while maintaining a credible setting and leaving no telltale signs of mediation. After finally ending up in the bayou, the convict, the woman and her newborn baby are taken in by a Cajun, with whom the convict soon begins working. As the convict reports this part of the story to the other prisoners, the third person narrator, were he not interrupted, would report: "he and his partner departed at dawn each day." With the combined interruptions of the tall convict's indirect discourse and plump convict's directly spoken question, the story reads as follows:

> …he and his partner (he was in partnership now with his host, hunting alligators on shares, on halvers he called it—"Halvers?" the plump convict said. "How could you make a business deal with a man you claim you couldn't even talk to?"
>
> "I never had to talk to him," the tall one said. "Money ain't got but one language") departed at dawn each day (233-34)

In the English, the parentheses enclose the convict's explanatory intervention into the third person narrator's discourse; the plump convict's question, "Halvers?," is an interruption of the interruption. In the translation, Borges creates two separate disruptions to the narrative, but never reassumes the third person narrator's discourse:

> …que él y su socio (se había asociado ahora con su huésped, cazando caimanes a medias)…
>
> —¿A medias? —dijo el penado gordo—. ¿Cómo podías arreglar negocios con un hombre con el que según dices no podías ni hablar?
>
> —Nunca tuve que hablar con él —dijo el alto—; (El dinero no tiene más que un idioma) partíamos al alba cada día. (217)

Borges closes the parentheses immediately after the first mention of going in halves with a business partner and eliminates "he called it" (in reference to the term "halvers"), making this a clarification on the part of the third person narrator, similar to many others made throughout the novel. Closing the parentheses after this clarification creates a new interruption on the part of the plump convict, rather than maintaining it embedded within the convict's clarifying statement. His placement of "el dinero no tiene más que un idioma" within new parentheses approximates the English statement formally (that is, at least one of the parentheses was present in the original). No inconsistency is created, despite all these changes, since Borges turns the following line into "**we** departed each day at dawn," converting the naration into the tall convict's direct speech. Without leaving any gaps in his newly created scene, Borges simplifies Faulkner's complex technique of interweaving three levels of narrative to two, clearly identified voices and temporal points.

There are, however, some less successful attempts at modifying Faulkner's experimental narration. Having found dry land, the convict's new concern is the wild fauna who share that land with them: "So, he drew her back from the water and went to hunt wood dry enough to burn, thinking this time, *It's just another snake,* only, he said, he should have thought *ten thousand other snakes"* (211). The first lines in italics are the convict's thoughts at the time of narrative events, and the words separating them from what "he should have thought" are indirect discourse, his telling fellow inmates what he had been, and should have been, thinking at the time. Borges tries to make the italicized words closer to direct speech, by removing the indirect discourse: "Cuando la alejó del agua fue a juntar un poco de leña seca para quemar, pensando esta vez: *Es otra serpiente, pero,* dijo, *hubiera debido pensar diez mil serpientes más"* (197). Two forms of discourse are being evoked at the same time: what the convict was thinking, and what the convict said become conflated. The lines of indirect discourse, "he should have thought," become direct thought in the translation. Yet Borges appears also to have confused the lines in italics as direct speech, the word "pero" engendering a sense of orality, despite being among the italicized words; the tag, "pensando

otra vez:" indicates those same words to be thoughts. Without the intrusion of the tag "dijo," in the Spanish, the convict's thought at the time of the flood would strangely read: "It's another snake, but, I should have thought of ten thousand other snakes." Rather than a rectification of Faulkner's style, this translation could be read as an example of the kind of editorial error Vegh mentions in her article, which could easily have been remedied with more careful reading of the original and thoughtful application of italics.

In another such example, Borges leaves more noticeable evidence of mismanagement in his corrective translation agenda. When urged by the outlaws in the boat to give them the pregnant woman and then flee, the third person narrator lists a number of possible reasons for his decision and follows it with the most important factor:

> But most of all, his own character (Two years ago they had offered to make a trusty of him. He would no longer need to plough or feed stock, he would only follow those who did with a loaded gun, but he declined. "I reckon I'll stick to ploughing," he said, absolutely without humor. "I done already tried to use a gun one time too many."), his good name, his responsibility not only towards those who were responsible towards him, but to himself, his own honour in the doing of what was asked of him, his pride in being able to do it, no matter what it was. (153)[87]

The narrator interjects the anecdote about the convict refusing the trusty position as an illustration of his character (though one detects a certain irony on the narrator's part, that were he not an uneducated hillbilly, his sense of honor would not revolve around loyalty to those holding him captive or giving him orders). By closing the parentheses before the anecdote is complete, Borges reduces the sense of intromission on the part of the narrator, and cuts the original interrupted sentence in two:

> Pero ante todo, su propia reputación (hacía dos años le habían ofrecido ser capataz. Ya no tendría que arar o alimentar el ganado, sólo seguir a los que lo hacían con un fusil cargado; pero rehusó).

[87] This comparison was conducted employing the British version of The Wild Palms, thus the spelling of the word "honor" is "honour."

> —Prefiero seguir arando —dijo, sin pizca de humorismo—. Ya una vez usé de un arma de fuego.
>
> Su buen nombre, su responsabilidad no solamente ante quienes eran responsables de él, sino consigo mismo, su propio honor en hacer lo que le pedían, su orgullo en poder hacerlo, fuera lo que fuese. (145)

While Faulkner's original sentence is actually a fragment with no verb, it is a continuation of the narrator's list of reasons the convict would not escape. By eliminating the formal technique of a large, midsentence interruption, Borges leaves a sentence fragment hanging uncomfortably. The parentheses' closure before the convict's dialogue, likely made to keep the interjection within one paragraph, cut the "Su buen nombre" line off from the text that sequentially precedes it to such a degree that readers might not recognize it to be a continuation of previous narration.

In *The Wild Palms*, the failure to resume narration after interruptions is equally, if not more prevalent. Through the example that follows, we can see a pattern in Borges's dealing with extensive narrative interruptions that bring in alternate temporal points:

> They reached the cabin just after dawn—a hundred odd acres of water surrounded by second growth spruce, four clearings with a cabin in each (from the chimney of one of them smoke stood. "That's Bradley," McCord said. "I thought he'd be out by now") and a short pier into the water. (91)

This particular interjection is interesting because its discourse is taking place at the same time as the narration it interrupts, as if giving two angles to view the same event. Like the example shown above, Borges refuses to include dialogue within parentheses, and instead makes it part of the narrative into which those lines of speech had originally incurred:

> Llegaron a la casita justo al amanecer —cien acres perdidos de agua rodeados por una plantación de abetos, cuatro claros con una cabaña en cada uno (una de las chimeneas humeaba todavía).
>
> —Ese es Bradley —dijo Mc Cord—, pensé que ya se había ido.
>
> Un corto muelle en el agua. (89)

In the translation, the parentheses seem to isolate part of the description in order to indicate that it is to *these* lines that McCord's dialogue refers. The truncated "un corto muelle en el agua," placed in a new paragraph, a sentence lacking any verb or any reference to anything else, is simply awkward. And perplexing. For it make so little sense, this strange sentence fragment, that one cannot but wonder if this is a careless mistake. For unlike other instances where Borges alters the narrative surrounding interrupted discourse to make his interventions correspond logically, here he makes no attempt to transform the sentence into something coherent. At the same time, the consistency in keeping dialogue out of parenthetical interjections suggests some type of strategy—but one that fails to account for the truncated fragments it leaves behind.

As part of his formal experimentation, Faulkner included no apostrophes in the original American version of his novel; McMaster notes such examples as "cant," "aint" and "wont" (28). As part of the British revision of the text, which in addition to censorship included Anglicized spelling and terminology, this technique was eliminated. Other such graphic experiments fared better, such as Faulkner's list of headlines with no punctuation to distinguish among them:

> But listen they did and presently it was May and the wardens' newspaper began to talk in headlines two inches tall—those black staccato slashes of ink which, it would almost seem, even the illiterate should be able to read: *Crest Passes Memphis at Midnight 4,000 Homeless in White River Basin Governor Calls out National Guard Martial Law Declared in Following Counties Red Cross Train with President Hoover Leaves Washington Tonight* (25)[88]

Without the punctuation, Faulkner ironically reinforces the narrator's statement about the large headlines by making them a mass of words an illiterate person might see, but be

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[88] This is an anachronism, as Hoover was not yet president, but Secretary of Commerce, sent by President Calvin Coolidge to lead humanitarian efforts in the flood zone.

It should be noted that "wardens'" has an apostrophe because it is taken from the British version of *The Wild Palms*.

incapable of stringing together as semantic units. Such must have been too illegible for Borges, as he put each headline in quotes and duly punctuated them:

> Pero seguían escuchando y llegó mayo y los periódicos del capataz dieron en hablar con titulares de dos pulgadas de alto — esos palotes de tinta negra que, juraríamos, hasta los analfabetos pueden leer: "La ola pasa por Menfis a medianoche. El gobernador llama la Guardia Nacional". "Se declara el estado de sitio en los siguientes distritos". "Tren de la Cruz Roja sale de Washington esta noche con el presidente Hoover". (29)

In their individualized semantic units, the headlines lose that quality of a flood of words Faulkner employs to evoke the flooding the convicts are about to experience and the formal irony regarding the illiterate. Simply following Spanish capitalization rules, in which only the first word of a title is capitalized unless it is a proper noun, the text also loses the sense of big, two inch tall letters. Additionally, Borges's translation of the impersonal expression "it would almost seem" with the first person plural "juraríamos," introduces a conflicting voice in the text—even if this use be the antiquated literary device for third person narration in Spanish—for no other such reference exists in the translation.

Old Man contains far fewer direct changes to textual semantics than *The Wild Palms*, apart from those that result from changes in form and setting. The few instances worth noting have effects on the plot and on characterization. In the opening chapter of *Old Man*, both the plump and tall convicts are introduced in considerable detail, making it appear as if both would be leading protagonists in the novel (while it comes to center around the tall convict in Chapter 2). Describing his court case, in which the district attorneys know the plump convict is innocent of murder but try him anyway, the narrator explains:

> …anyone could have looked once at the convict (as the two attorneys did) and known that he would not even have had the synthetic courage of alcohol to pull trigger on anyone. (22)

Faulkner later describes the plump convict as being so incompetent in the fields and blacksmith shop of the state penal farm, that "now, in a long apron like a woman, he cooked and swept and dusted in the deputy wardens' barracks" (23). His feminized characterization

is initiated by the lawyers' knowledge that the plump convict was so cowardly (clearly a female trait), that even drunk he would not really have had the courage to commit murder. Changing this slightly, rather than unable to muster the courage to shoot someone, even if inebriated, Borges has the plump convict incapable of drunken (or blind) rage:

> …bastaba mirar una sola vez al penado (como lo hicieron los dos fiscales) para saber que era definitivamente incapaz del **coraje borracho** de disparar sobre alguien. (27)

One cannot say whether this was a more simple, if inaccurate, way to render Faulkner's somewhat convoluted sentence, or a misunderstanding of the text. The translation does add a flavor of danger by describing what it takes to commit murder, the guts to shoot someone requiring uncontrollable ire.

As the guards evacuate the shackled prisoners in trucks, the road soon disappears; the guards get out to walk before the truck with shovels to make sure there are no drop offs. One prisoner believes the guards are abandoning the convicts, leaving them chained to the back of the truck:

> "God damn it, unlock us! Unlock us! Son of a bitch" he screamed, addressing no one. "They're going to drown us! Unlock the chain!" (58)

In the translation, Borges alters the prisoner's sinister suspicion of the guards, and changes his outburst solely to a plea:

> —¡Dios mío! suéltenos, suéltenos! ¡Hijos de puta! —chillaba sin dirigirse a nadie en particular: — ¡Nos vamos a ahogar, abran las cadenas! (59)

The prisoner's belief that the guards would drown them "ejerce la invención cirunstancial," as Borges would call it in "La postulación de la realidad" (OC I: 257). It codifies the complex relationships that exist between the prisoners and the guards, and evokes numerous implications regarding the Mississippi state penal system in the late 1920s. By transforming

"they are going to drown us" to "we are going to drown" erases the "larga proyección" of that laconic detail (OC I: 258).

The kinds of changes Borges makes to *Old Man*, as opposed to those in *The Wild Palms*, evidence his preference for the story of the convict. While his alterations create considerable differences between the style and plot of English and the Spanish, they are generally consistent and coherent, suggesting a true engagement with the text. Borges appears to have enough concern with the text to actually attempt to recreate it in a style closer to his own. The translator's vision is certainly present in *Las palmeras salvajes,* though it appears to be more ideological than aesthetic.

Conclusion

Theo Hermans's article "The Translator's Voice in Translated Narrative" provides a useful framework for identifying ways that the voice of the (implied) translator becomes visible in translation, making it clearly distinguishable from either the implied author or the original narrator. First, as the discourse of a translation operates in a different pragmatic context than the original—that is, its meaning is not just linguistically but culturally determined—the implied reader of the translation may have conflicting interpretive requirements with the implied reader of the original. Hermans suggests, "this can lead to hybrid situations in which the discourse offers manifestly redundant or inadequate information, or appears attuned to one type of Reader here and another there, showing the Translator's presence in and through the discordances" (29). Such an example can be seen when Borges translates "…one of them a deputy sheriff canvassing for votes to beat his superior (who had given him his job) in the August primary" as "…uno de ellos suplente del comisario, solicitando votos para derrotar a su superior (que le había dado el empleo) a principios de agosto" (255/236). Most Spanish language readers do not vote for their heads of law enforcement, thus making this solicitation of votes culturally different, pertaining solely to the United States. Furthermore, Borges either failed to understand "the August

primary," or thought his readers would, and thus changed it to the beginning of August—superfluous information that nonetheless has a strong deictic pull on the reader toward the narrative present, as if "a principios de agosto" referred to a time both the reader and the deputy sheriff would experience simultaneously.

In the second form of visibility, the self-reflexive or self-referential nature of literature can expose the voice of the translator, or at least foreground the Otherness of the original language. When a text affirms its being written in a specific language, drawing attention to itself with strategies such as word-play, polysemy, and puns, the translator often has difficulty rendering this in such a way as to overcome the linguistic specificity of the original. Such is evident when Faulkner refers to the English language as a natural default. When catching alligators with his host, who speaks only Creole, the Cajun speaks to him, "…the convict understanding this too as though it had been English" (240). In translation, the line reads: "...comprendiéndolo tan bien el penado como si hablara en inglés" (223). The Spanish language reader is reminded that the text was originally written in English, when the narrator refers to it as the language the convict would naturally expect to hear.

On some occasions, the cultural references of a text may be so foreign as to require the third kind of translator visibility Hermans discusses. "Contextual overdetermination" occurs when translators makes themselves visible in order to explain the self-referential or cultural aspect of the original, often in the form of footnotes (30). Borges contextually overdetermines self-reflexive word play; when McCord says: "Set, ye armourous sons, in a sea of hemingwaves" (89), Borges leaves the phrase in English. He adds this note, however, explaining the puns: "*Retruécanos* más bien intraducibles a la manera de James Joyce. *Amorous = Armour + amorous; hemmingwaves = waves + Hemingway*" (87). To explain cultural specificities, when the convict blames: "the uncorporeal names attached the stories, the paper novels—the Diamond Dicks and Jesse Jameses and such—whom he believed had led him into his present predicament" (19), Borges adds this footnote: "Léase los *Juan*

Moreira, los *Hormiga Negra* etc." making a cultural equivalent for the River Plate reader (24). On all three levels Hermans names, Borges makes himself visible in his translation.

Yet Borges's translation demonstrates that there is perhaps one more way the translator shows up in the translated text: through failed attempts at rendering (or altering) form. On many occasions, Borges successfully, that is, transparently in Venuti's terms, reconstructs the narrative. A Spanish-language reader would never know that Charlotte and Harry's dialogue had been switched or that the plump convict was saying the tall convict's unspoken lines. Nor would they imagine anything to be missing in those instances when Borges changes the temporal and spatial settings or the degree of narratorial intrusion but creates a new, coherent scene. As we have seen, however, there are instances where in tearing down innovative formal constructions, Borges leaves textual debris—pieces he fails to cohesively reincorporate. Dangling fragments, such as the lines about the dock or the convict's honor, are one example of these visible casualties of form.

In the conclusion to his review of *The Wild Palms*, Borges bluntly states, "es verosímil la afirmación que William Faulkner es el primer novelista de nuestro tiempo. Para trabar conocimiento con él, la menos apta de sus libros me parece *The Wild Palms*" (OC IV: 528). The choice of "verosímil" to describe the statement that Faulkner was the first novelist of their time, has a certain irony recalling Borges's "Arte de injuriar." It appears true, but he will not go so far as to concede that it is. Yet he is willing to admit that the novel, "incluye (como todos los libros de Faulkner) páginas de una intensidad que notoriamente excede las posibilidades de cualquier otro autor" (OC IV: 528). I would like to imagine that those places where Borges makes his most ingenious translations are what were for him those "notoriously intense" pages.

CONCLUSION

My dissertation is entitled *Displacing the Mask* in recognition of Borges's conception of literature as artifice. For Borges, a translation is not a mask upon the face of the original, but rather it reveals the original to be a mask as well, a semblance of authenticity covering up the "laberinto inestimable de proyectos pretéritos" that comprise all texts (OC I: 280). By hinting at an abundance of alternative versions, of which the original is but one, translation is a key tool Borges employs, in both his criticism and his fiction, to illustrate the ways that the sacred texts of science, religion and especially art are all merely possible variations of the story they tell.[89] Literature, of which translation is simply another genre, thus reveals itself to be the Library of Babel, versions of versions of other texts—but with consequences both aesthetic and political. This approach to literature legitimizes translation as a valid and valuable art form, a creative process that enhances the original, while it delegitimizes the notion of definitive texts, perfect ensembles of symbols upon which no improvement, much less variation, could be made. With this in hand, translation then demystifies the texts of the global literary elite, which are imagined to be definitive and naturally superior to texts of the cultural periphery. The doors are thus thrust open upon literature from the cultural center, allowing writers and translators from the periphery to incorporate its themes and translate its texts without superstitions about hierarchical relationships that demand careful, reverent handling of works rendered fragile by their perfection. Translation accordingly may use the source text as a pretext for literary creation, varying upon and even improving the original.

But does this theory truly play out in Borges's translation practice? Yes. But, as we have seen, with an ideological remainder he would be unlikely to have advertised. Critics who have complained that Borges's translations were overly literal for one who so advocated

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[89] The Chinese Encyclopedia in "El idioma analítico de John Wilkins," the impossibly cumbersome 1:1 map in "Del rigor en la ciencia," and the fact that metaphysics is a branch of fantastic narrative in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" are all indicative of Borges's belief that "no hay clasificación del universo que no sea arbitraria y conjectural" ("John Wilkins" OC II: 105).

creative infidelity fail to see that *Historia universal de la infamia*, Borges's first book of fiction comprised primarily of stories based on historical texts and a handful of citations from the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, is the very picture of translation outlined in Borges's theoretical work. History, like a literary text, is an "hecho móvil"; for as Pierre Menard finds, "la verdad histórica... no es lo que sucedió; es lo que juzgamos que sucedió" (OC I: 537). These stories are creative interpretations taken from diverse perspectives of these moveable events.

What is more, in less commonly studied translations, such as those that comprise much of the *Revista multicolor de los sábados*, co-edited by Borges and Ulises Petit de Murat in 1933 and 1934, Borges had free reign to alter texts as he wished. Consequently, in his translation of Lacfadio Hearn's Japanese myth, "Rokuro-Kubi" Borges added some of the same orientalist color for which he later chides J. C. Mardrus in his translation of the *Arabian Nights*: "with a full moon shining overhead" (86), for example, becomes "profusamente alumbrado por la rutilante claridad de una luna blanquísima y cegadora" (243); while "the glimmer of a cascade, pouring from some loftier height, and swaying in the moonshine like a long white robe" (87) becomes "el luciente rielar de una cascada, que se despeñaba desde elevadísima altura, haciendo formidable ruido. Sus aguas, al caer, ondulaban y brillaban a la luz de la luna con los movimientos de un enorme vestido blanco que fuera agitado por las ledas brisas de una noche oriental" ("Los duendes" 243). At the same time, in his translation of May Sinclair's "The Finding of the Absolute," Borges's interest in the metaphysical premise of the story led him to eliminate all aspects not specifically related to it. Accordingly, entire paragraphs are eliminated, while all names apart from those of the three protagonists are omitted. The following passage, for example, is cut by half in translation:

> In calm, philosophic moments he couldn't conceive how they had ever happened at all, how, for example, he could have endured Connie Larkins. The episodes has been brief, because in each case boredom and disgust had supervened to put asunder what Mr. Spalding owned should never had been joined. Brief, insignificant as they were, Mr. Spalding, in his dying state, was worried when he looked back on.

> (333)

In translation:

> En sus momentos de filosófica calma, no podía concebir cómo había soportado tantos y ciertos episodios terminados siempre en aburrimiento y disgusto. Breves, insignificantes, como eran, Mr. Spalding se afligía retromirándolos. (400)

Given the time period, and the fact that he chose the stories himself, with the *Revista multicolor* Borges likely had no issues of copyright or other agreements that might restrict his process of creation through translation (indeed, it is doubtful that he even acquired the rights for reproduction). To have in mind, then, are the constraints put upon Borges's ideal translation practice by the fact of each book-length project being translated upon commission.

Regardless, we have seen many revisions in Borges's translation of novels and novellas that are consistent with a personal aesthetic project, and that, upon close examination, are remarkable in their ingenuity and their influence on the target text despite their often limited visibility.[90] With his dual practices of emphasizing action over description, deeds over thoughts, and of imposing heteronormative standards, Borges clearly brought his own writing style to the translation process, even as he tried on the styles of other authors. For example, with the exception of "Penelope" (which is essentially not narrated), across the board we have seen a continuous effort on Borges's part to make a clear distinction between narrators' personal discourse, the narrated action, and characters' discourse. Techniques such as free-indirect discourse and direct thought serve to minimize the intrusion of the narrator into the conveyance of characters' thoughts and speech, and

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[90] It would be a worthwhile project to analyze all of the translations Borges made of the foreign texts he includes in *Revista multicolor*, for it is here that we will surely see some of his most daring and innovative translation practices. My current project has the limitation of analyzing translations with external constraints placed upon them. However, since these are book-length translations, and the most frequently studied, they merit the kind of consideration I have given them here, as I take into consideration not only his innovative translation techniques but the ideological interference that proves itself to be a consistent pattern in Borges's translation of long fiction.

thereby preserve the psychological mimesis of the narration by occluding its mediation by a third party. Borges, whose own fiction flaunts its artifice and takes the fact of mediation to be one of literature's most inspired features, frequently breaks up this literary device. By placing narrators' remarks in parentheses to separate them from the narrated action and placing indirect speech and direct thought within quotation marks, Borges makes a consistent effort to distinguish among narrator and character discourse, taking a particularly modernist writing style (these changes prevail with Woolf and Faulkner) and reinstating traditional forms of narration.[91]

In the expression of chronotrope in the novel, we also see a movement toward simplification. Just as Borges isolates narrators' discourse from that thought and spoken by characters, he also reinstates traditional narrative techniques by placing narrators and characters (whether they are one in the same or different persons) in squarely different temporal points. Where there is experimental simultaneity between narrated events and their being recounted by the narrator, as we saw in *Orlando*, Borges tends to introduce a distinction. At times this serves merely to avoid strange collocations of past and present verb tenses, while leaving the sensation of simultaneous action occurring between the events and their narration. At others, Borges purposefully edits the text to introduce clear demarcations between past and present. When the narration is saturated with temporal layering, as we saw in *Old Man*, where as many as three different chronological points of enunciation might exist within the same sentence, Borges goes so far as to alter the plot in order to avoid such a complicated accumulation. We have also seen that where narrators' parenthetical asides extend to include character dialogue, Borges closes the parentheses after the narrator's remarks, and often incorporates the dialogue into the surrounding action, even if it occurred at a different temporal point in the English. These adjustments to discourse and to chronotrope are both techniques Borges employs to bring the focus back to the action. The

[91] Free-indirect discourse is not a modernist invention, but its experimental use is a common feature.

translator also avoids these and other psychological distractions, as he would call them, by simply omitting narrators' descriptions of what characters thought and felt, as we saw in *Bartleby* and *The Wild Palms*.

Borges would likely have described the techniques he employed to foreground action over description as the kinds of creative infidelities he encouraged in his translation essays. They improved, to his mind, the style and even the plots of the texts he translated. The remainder, as I mentioned above, the aspect of his creative treatment of Joyce, Woolf, Melville and Faulkner in translation that he likely would not openly advocate, is his treatment of gender and sexuality. These translation strategies introduce or reinforce heteronormative character traits for men and women; traditional standards for character behavior, such as male competition; and impose heterosexist ideologies on implied authors, through a revised relationship between them and their narrators.

Borges's claim to be a feminist (as we may recall he called himself one when asked about his translation of *A Room of One's Own*), in contrast with his critical writings and his fiction seem doubtful at best.[92] We may also consider accounts such as Estela Canto's *Borges a contraluz*, where Canto describes in detail Borges's wholehearted subscription to the feminine mystique, and his refusal to see women's writing as anything but second rate; or Bioy Casares's recently published diary in which he reports Borges's agreement with Samuel Johnson, that if a woman preached (or wrote), she should not be praised for doing it well, but for doing it at all, as one would a dog that walks on its hind legs (1256). Borges's conception of women may also be revealed through the female characters of his fictions, such as la Lujanera in "Hombre de la esquina rosada," Beatriz Viterbo in "El Aleph," the redhead of

[92] In his critical writings, we may recall his discussion of "El Fausto criollo" by Estanislao del Campo of which he writes, "Es un poema que, al igual de los primitivos, podría prescindir de la imprenta, porque vive en muchas memorias. En memorias de mujeres, singularmente. Ello no importa una censura; hay escritores de indudable valor —Marcel Proust, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf— que suelen agradar a las mujeres más que a los hombres" (OC I: 216). In his story, "Ulrica," the protagonist's calling herself a feminist is a deprecating point, which the character narrator is happy to report is merely an act.

"El muerto" or Juliana in "La intrusa," who serve almost exclusively as a point of homosocial triangulation among men. Accordingly, men's actions in Borges's fiction are essentially dictated by the compulsion to make competing shows of their masculinity, as can be found in each of the stories mentioned above. The ideological worldview thus demonstrated in Borges's writings, and in friends' writings about him, clearly saturates his translations.[93]

In consequence, Molly Bloom becomes at once promiscuous and sexually repressed; she is given a string of past lovers, but in the present is permitted only sensual recollections of Leopold, rather than the erotic fantasizing about Dedalus or Mulvey she displays in the English. In *Orlando*, we see countless judgments on the part of the narrator, and consequently on that of the implied author as well, which indicate the eponymous character's sex change to be not an ingenious way to challenge patriarchal privilege, but an abnormal affair—a fantastic element, rather than a political statement. In *A Room of One's Own*, feminism is suggested to be excessively strident, an overly bold route to which women writers need not ascribe. And in both of Woolf's texts, women, especially women writers, are slighted time and again through mistranslations that negate their abilities and their intelligence. The unreliable narrator of *Bartleby* is made reliable in Borges's translation, as the translator endeavors to increase the lawyer's masculinity by making him more forceful, decisive and ethical, while at the same time he takes precautions to eliminate any hint of homosexual desire between the lawyer and Bartleby. In *The Wild Palms*, Borges's desire for more traditional characterizations of gender led him to exchange the protagonists' dialogue, making Harry say all of the aggressive assertions made by Charlotte, and she to say the ineffectual and sentimental discourse belonging to her lover.

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[93] My intention here is not to criticize Borges for a worldview that was most certainly held by the majority of men and many women born around the turn of the twentieth century. I list the following hetero-normative translation practices that scholars may understand how pervasive any ideology may be in the process of translation. It is also my hope that the textual evidence of heterosexism provided here will encourage literary translators to interrogate the ideologies that may permeate their own work.

To summarize Borges's practice of translating long fiction, there is a an overall effort to clarify meaning and at the same time to eliminate psychological mimesis by breaking up long sentences and paragraphs; eliminating repetition; adding parenthetical asides; making clear distinctions among participants in the discourse through added formal markers such as italics or the introduction of direct speech or direct tagged thought; inserting clear demarcations of the chronotrope created through this disambiguation between narrators' and characters' discourse; and simplifying character narration to eliminate discordance between disclosure and reporting functions. Concurrently, there exists the misattribution of dialogue, intentional mistranslation, the elimination of irony and the neutralization of gender difference, each created out of the impulse to reassert Borges's conceptions of gender norms and to accentuate the action-oriented aspects of the text he sought to foreground. Efraín Kristal has concluded: "In lesser hands Borges's methods might produce dire results. His approach to translation depends on a powerful literary mind able to see the latencies and potentialities of a text, and to go beyond it" (Kristal 136). Yet Borges's methods are not uniquely limited to him, or even just a small handful of "powerful literary minds," regardless of whether these methods are practiced in the absence, or in the name of, other stated translation theories.

While it would be worthwhile to compare Borges's translations to those of others, as Tanya Fayen has attempted, the bases for his methods do not stray from translation studies' well established list of translation universals, or practices that are found in translation across languages, and which long have been successfully executed by "lesser hands." These include simplification, explicitation, elimination of repetition, normalization of stylistic features to fit the target culture's literary standards, and discourse transfer and interference (in other words literally translating the source language without regard for standard conventions for expressing its meaning in the target language) (Laviosa-Braithwaite 288).[94] As regards

[94] An example of discourse interference, in *Las palmeras salvajes*, is when Borges translates the line "Maybe I can read," meaning that reading would be a way to pass the time, to "Acaso yo sé leer," meaning,

creative infidelities in translations, it was the multiple, radically adaptive translations of the *Arabian Nights* that led Borges to coin the phrase "infidelidad creadora" in the first place (OC I: 490). Creative translation strategies have long been in place, and were surely more pervasive and more experimental before the advent of copyright. Furthermore, it would be preposterous to claim that Borges's ideological treatment of his translations was in any way unique. What distinguishes Borges is the extent to which he carried his translation methods out, but even more so, his uncanny ability to articulate an understanding of translation in which these methods were not a detriment but a boon to the original. I have not performed sufficient comparative analyses of other translators to say with certainty how vastly Borges's style differs from others.[95] But Borges's prominence as a writer and translator in combination with his exceptional translation theories make the translation practices I have demonstrated here foundational examples that open up the field for others to investigate how similar problems have been addressed in translation, how similar practices have been used and in what circumstances, and simply, what possibilities translation offers to the study of literature.

The ties Borges made between gender and genre invite future research into how the translation of *either* demonstrates transformations that are linked to the other. For feminist

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strangely, "maybe I know how to read" (46/49). He is translating the source language discourse without consideration of target language norms for conveying what the original is actually signifying. Gideon Toury says that discourse interference is greatly reduced as a translator becomes more experienced. In the case of *The Wild Palms*, it was not experience that was lacking, but care.

[95] I do not find Tanya Fayen's analyses of Borges's translation of *The Wild Palms*, which formed part of her analyses of some thirty five Spanish and Portuguese translations of Faulkner, to be a reliable source of comparison. Her fascination with Borges as a literary figure, with interesting theories of reading and of translation, obscures the fact that many of the places she argues Borges applied Faulkner's technique to the places he "forgot" are a) mistranslated b) inconsistent and c) inappropriate for the discourse being conveyed. If the application of italics and the insertion of text into parentheses are the only thing that distinguish him from other translators of Faulkner in the same era—for Fayen is patently incorrect in her assertion that "Borges presented Faulkner's sentences with almost no organizational intervention through punctuation"—then as per her own analysis, *Las palmeras salvajes* is "only a slightly freer translation than others of the early period [of translation], for its overall policy remains within the constraints of the norms of the Spanish-speaking Latin American literary polysystem" (47). The use of italics and parenthetical asides is so carelessly applied in Borges's translation that it hardly seems appropriate to call it a "strategy."

and queer studies, translation can provide tremendous insight into the cultural constructions of gender and sexuality by comparing how these vary among translations within a single language or across languages. It is also an important political tool for revealing how culturally dominant ideologies may impose themselves on non-normative representations of gender and sexuality as they move across linguistic and regional borders, pushing controversial texts closer in line with heteronormative values—as Borges does with all of the texts discussed in this project, or as H. M. Parshley, for example, did with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. A question worth entertaining, if difficult to prove, is how normative representations of gender and sexuality in translation affect a text's reception. Would *Orlando* and *Las palmeras salvajes* for example, have been so influential in Latin American letters had the full expression of their gender subversion been permitted?

The study of the influence of translation upon the literatures of other nations, especially those whose literary tradition is not fully formed or is undergoing major transformations, has been described by Itmar Evan-Zohar's polysystem theory, which was transposed into Gideon Toury's concept of translation norms and taken in new directions in Theo Hermans's edited volume *The Manipulation of Literature*. At the same time, as we saw in Chapter Four, many scholars of Latin American literature have already written about Borges's influence on Latin American letters through his translation of Faulkner and Woolf. To both general theories and specific studies of influence through translation, this project adds useful examples and convincing evidence. What has not been adequately taken into consideration, however, is the way the name of a famous author/translator confers added value upon a translation in the eyes of the reading public. *Las palmeras salvajes*, for example, is much more frequently read and much more highly regarded among Hispanic readers than is *The Wild Palms* among Anglophones. Indeed, Borges's name alone has caused critics and writers alike to claim his translation excellent, better than the original, even when plagued with errors. Borges's celebrated status as a translator is considerably different from the marginalization the majority of literary translators' experience. And it

sells. When Spain's widely read newspaper, *El País*, released its own edition of *Orlando* for a marketing promotion in 2002, for example, the ad claimed, "La edición en español tiene a un traductor de lujo: Jorge Luis Borges" (online).

Since its full-length publication in 1936, the Borges translation of *A Room of One's Own* has been reprinted numerous times, and remains the primary source through which Spanish language readers access Woolf's foundational feminist text. The 2003 reprint under Alianza Editorial of Madrid—one of the world's largest Spanish language publishers—is currently the most widely accessible edition, distributed both in Spain and the Americas. While some have picked up on problems of sexism in the translation, despite the presence of four alternative translations, two of which claim to be explicitly feminist, Borges's translation remains by far the most affordable and available, and of course, the most widely read. In Borges's case, we might say that the visibility of the translator is so great, it obscures the translations themselves. This kind of influence on a text's reception, due to the celebrity of its translator, is just one angle to consider. Paratext in translation has received significant attention within translation studies, but has yet to become a common point of inquiry in comparative literature (a 2010 edition of the comparative literature journal *Neohelicon* [37.1] dedicated to paratext in translation appears to be an important incursion into the field). As we have seen with Borges's introduction to *Bartleby*, a translator's note may be enough to shift the genre of a text, simply by orienting reader expectations.

Scholars of translation have been surprisingly reluctant to make full-length, line by line studies of literary texts and their translation. In her important article on narrative shifts in translation, Kitty van Leuven-Zwart states, "in most cases it is neither possible nor indeed necessary compare the two texts in their entirety" (115). Another scholar who has taken significant narratological interest in translation, Charlotte Bosseaux, uses computerized corpus-processing tools to analyze the "feel of texts" in her book, *How does it feel?: Point of view in translation: The case of Virginia Woolf into French* (2007), examining multiple translations of individual words. Other scholars simply choose the passages in a source text

that they believe may produce interesting translations and compare these sections alone with the target text. Yet this project has shown that many substantial translation shifts may occur where one least expects them; one may not know to look for potential changes until they reveal themselves in line by line analysis. Indeed, many passages of the original take on new, suggestive meanings once they are contrasted in translation, confirming Borges's assertion that translation enriches the original. This, I hope, may be one significant contribution to translation studies: manual analysis of entire texts is both possible and desirable, and will produce exciting and unanticipated results. Furthermore, this project demonstrates how the empirical aspects of translation analysis may be taken beyond mere description to form the basis for critical analysis. And critical analysis is necessary if we are to provoke interest on the part of other disciplines.

A branch of study I believe can strongly benefit from an interest in translation is narrative theory, in which translation may function both as tool for investigation and a target of research as well. James Phelan's assertion that narrators can focalize is upheld by translation as it reveals different representations of narrators' vision and voice than the source text. It becomes clear that *Bartleby*'s lawyer, for example, castigates himself through narration at the same time he is experiencing actions as a character by the fact that Borges was able to alter this situation, and make the narrator both regard and narrate his experiences from *either* the narrative present *or* the time of the events. This use of translation—whether or not scholars agree with its conclusions—demonstrates the way translation may be used as a tool for narratological analysis. But at the same time, the fact that the narratological structures of a translation can diverge so greatly from the source text, and introduce entirely new systems of relationships, should indicate that translations as literary texts are worth investigating. Comparative analysis demonstrates the perhaps unthought-of ways narrative structures may be transformed in translation; indeed, it may even reveal narrative devices not yet considered because they only become apparent by contrast.

In Chapter Three I proposed the following model for understanding the role of translation in the narrative communication situation:

> *real author…|implied author –[–narrator – narratee – implied reader/real translator–](–implied translator–) implied author of translation – narrator – narratee – implied reader of translation|…real reader*

The elements this model adds to Schiavi's already useful layout are placing the implied translator in parentheses and adding an implied author of translation. In the model above, the implied translator is in parentheses because it is frequently not visible, and only truly reveals itself in analyses such as this project, where we are reading specifically for its presence rather than trying to suspend our disbelief and engage with an implied author. When readers are not distracted by the implied translator, who becomes apparent to them in moments their discursive presence is revealed (in situations such as those outlined by Hermans in Chapter Four), they engage with the implied author of the original. This is why I have placed the implied author of translation to the right of the implied translator, and in communicative relation to the other participants of the narrative communication situation. The invisibility of the implied translator lends it considerable power, for the implied translator is able to surreptitiously undermine the implied author of the original, and consequently alter all of the narrative relationships in the translation. Moreover the implied translator can impose ideologies on the implied author of translation that differ significantly from those espoused by the implied author of the original. Implied authors' attitudes toward their narrators, their narrators' attitude toward a story's characters, the characters' attitudes toward other characters and themselves all stand to be reformulated and realigned by the implied translator. The implications of this model are significant both for narrative theory and translation studies, and I would like to think they could be the bridge that brings them into contact.

In her 2009 talk at the Modern Language Association Convention's Presidential Forum, later collected as an essay in *Profession*, Emily Apter claimed,

> During a period of economic downturn in which there has been much handwringing about the vulnerability of the humanities to accusations that it lacks unifying paradigms or a clear, consensual vision of what it studies, translation studies, or what I think of as the translational paradigm, has emerged as a viable rallying point. (50)

Displacing the Mask: Jorge Luis Borges and the Translation of Narrative may be an example of what said rallying point looks like. Translation has provided the lens through which to examine an author's writing style. Gender performance has taken on new meaning in its application to a male translator imitating the voice of a female character or narrator. Translation has revealed cultural constructions of gender through contrast between source and target language representations of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. And translation has proven itself to be an exciting tool for and object of narratological inquiry. My particular use of translation, reading the narrative consequences it has for translated texts also provides new directions for linguistics-based and descriptive-oriented translation studies, which have yet to develop a meaningful relationship with other areas of literary study. These contributions confirm that as a brilliant writer, ingenious translator and astutely forward-thinking literary critic, Borges has provided important evidence for his assertion made as far back as 1926: "la traducción… parece destinada a ilustrar la discusión estética" (OC I: 280).

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