

INTERLIMINAL TONGUES: SELF-TRANSLATION IN CONTEMPORARY TRANSATLANTIC  
BILINGUAL POETRY

by

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I argue that self-translators embody a borderline sense of hybridity, both linguistically and culturally, and that the act of translation, along with its innate in-betweenness, is the context in which self-translators negotiate their fragmented identities and cultures. I use the poetry of Urayoán Noel, Juan Gelman, and Yolanda Castaño to demonstrate that they each uniquely use the process of self-translation, in conjunction with a bilingual presentation, to articulate their modern, hybrid identities. In addition, I argue that as a result, the act of self-translation establishes an interliminal space of enunciation that not only reflects an intercultural exchange consistent with hybridity, but fosters further cultural and linguistic interaction. As a manifestation of their hybrid sensibilities, each of these three poets employs the process of self-translation as an extension of their poetic themes, including a critique and parody of postmodern globalization, reappropriation of language to combat forces of oppression and deterritorialization, or a socio-linguistic representation of bilingual life in a stateless nation from the perspective of a minority language.

Self-translation highlights the interliminality between languages, establishing a “third space” of communication that transcends the incomplete communicative ability of each of the two languages. When presented bilingually, self-translation foregrounds the act of translation; the presence of both languages not only encourages interaction between the two languages, but also draws attention to the act of translation, instead of obscuring it in a layer of transparency. This brings the reader to ponder the act of translation and the relationship between languages, ultimately enabling the reader to more fully appreciate the generative qualities of translation.

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For Marci, *eris mi única avla*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Edith Grossman (2010) contends that a translator's primary responsibility is not to reproduce a semantically identical replica of an original text, but rather to focus on the context, "the implications and echoes of the first author's tone, intention, and level of discourse. Good translations are good because they are faithful to this contextual significance" (70-71). This idea directly contrasts to Lawrence Venuti's (2013) claim that "translation is radically decontextualizing: it dismantles the context that is constitutive of that text" (35). For a panel titled "Translation: Out of Context, Into the Wild" at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs 2017 Annual Convention, a group of translators and translation studies scholars convened by Professor Amalia Gladhart met to discuss Grossman's argument that translators translate context, reflecting on their own scholarship and practice as they navigated these seemingly contradictory stances.

I was invited to discuss the problem of context in regards to self-translators, and like everything concerning self-translation, this notion of translating context is complex and messily resists simple categorization. Rather than reflecting on the possibility of translating context or on its utter untranslatability, I argue in this dissertation that examining the question of context as it applies to self-translation requires a paradigmatic shift: the problem should not be if or how self-translators translate context, but instead a different viewpoint that understands translation as *the context* for self-translators. In other words, as writers who embody a borderline sense of hybridity, both linguistically and culturally, the act of translation, along with its innate in-

betweenness, is the context in which self-translators negotiate their fragmented identities and cultures. I will use the poetry of Urayoán Noel, Juan Gelman, and Yolanda Castaño to demonstrate that they each uniquely use the process of self-translation, in conjunction with a bilingual presentation, to articulate their modern, hybrid identities. In addition, I argue that as a result, the act of self-translation establishes an interliminal space of enunciation that not only reflects an intercultural exchange consistent with hybridity, but fosters further cultural and linguistic interaction.

As a linguistic tool and an agent of hybridity, translation plays an important role in articulating culture, to the extent that Brodzki (2007) argues that it impacts “all cultural transactions from the most benign to the most venal” (2). This conception of translation as a mediator of culture is in large part due to the “cultural turn” of translation studies. In *The Translator’s Turn* (1991), Douglas Robinson set out his theory of the somatics of translation, making the explicit connection between translation and culture, arguing that “the translator’s physical or intuitive response to a text is not (only) uniquely his or her own but is conditioned by the culture” (xiv). This “cultural turn,” helped to distance translation studies from residing solely in the scientific field of linguistics, with which it had been allied for the duration of the twentieth century, allowing it to instead align with literary and cultural studies. Following this critical shift, Nikolaou and Kyritsi (2008) document a successive shift in the early 2000s which they call the “inward turn.” This more recent development is characterized by

A synergy of 'creative', 'experiential', 'cognitive' and 'subjective' turns which consider how a whole sensibility is mobilized in translation, [...] We encounter more consistent attention to inner spaces and individualized mentalities, coupled with a sense of suspicion of earlier systematizing, a re-thinking of tendencies to jump from translating acts straight to theoretical/ideological agendas of rationalized actions and intents. We seem to engage more with kaleidoscopic, twilight occurrences in-between, with what translating incites in us, what takes place with and within it (7).

This "inward turn," especially its focus on the "occurrences in-between" and the foregrounding of what takes place within the individual through translation, has been instrumental for the increased critical attention given to self-translation. In this dissertation, I use the elements delineated by the "inward turn," namely the interliminal space of translation as well as the relationship between translation, translator, and reader to argue that self-translators occupy a fragmented space in modern society, a position they articulate through the act of self-translation. Although self-translation highlights the interliminal position of self-translators, modernity exerts a hybridizing effect on all cultures and an examination of self-translation can therefore illuminate the modern condition in a wider sense.

The most basic and straightforward definition of self-translation was first provided by Anton Popovič (1976): "The translation of a work into another language by the author himself. Due to its modeling relation to the original text, the autotranslation

cannot be regarded as a variant of the original text but as a true translation” (19). As direct as this definition is, it becomes clear that nothing dealing with self-translation is so straightforward or black-and-white. Nikolaou (2006) gives an indication of how self-translation muddies the waters of translation theory because it “is performed by the author of the original, treads an elusive epicentre between creative writing and what is translational, problematises age-old binary oppositions, and undermines the foundations of an originating language/text when we realise how often it explores its constitutive in-betweenness, the poetry *among* languages and identities” (65). It is precisely because of this tendency to overturn the conventional binaries of translation theory that it is frequently overlooked by both translation studies and literary theory. The inherent hybridity of self-translation is, however, one of its key characteristics as I will elaborate in this dissertation.

Additionally, the perception that self-translation is an aberration and rarity in the literary field is due much more to its difficulty in classification rather than the actual dearth of authors who translate their own work. Hokenson and Munson (2007) trace the path of self-translation, demonstrating its important position during most of western history, with its status and prestige only being displaced and obscured with the rise of nationalisms and their manifestation through an adherence to monolingualism in the nineteenth century. Santoyo echoes this history, adding that self-translation is still as vital and vibrant today as it was in the past, regardless of its relative omission from the theory: “la traducción de autor cuenta con una larga historia y es hoy en día uno de los fenómenos culturales, lingüísticos y literarios más frecuentes e importantes en

nuestra aldea global, y desde luego merecedora de mucho más atención de la que hasta ahora se le ha prestado” (2005, 866). Grutman supports this view of the prevalence of self-translators, noting that self-translation “has of late received considerable attention in the more culturally inclined provinces of translation studies” (2009, 257).

Keeping in line with the hybrid and difficult-to-define nature of self-translation, self-translators’ own views on the process run the entire gamut of possibilities. The negative aspects of self-translation for an author are often highlighted, seemingly justifying its oversight within the critical narrative. Labeling it the “self-imposed torture of self-translation,” Beaujour (1995) claims that “many writers who are bilinguals or polyglots find self-translation to be exquisitely painful” (719). She explains her stance by arguing that “Self-translation also has other drawbacks. Not only is it unpleasant, it is also dangerous, since it undermines the status of the L1 work” (Ibid.). Other writers regard self-translation as a derivative act, placing it into the same reductive category often attributed to translation in general. Thus the Galician novelist Suso de Toro comments that “Self-translation appears as a sort of wasting your time instead of writing something new” (quoted in Santoyo 2013, 30).<sup>1</sup> Whyte (2002), in the tellingly titled essay “Against Self-Translation,” directly juxtaposes it against translation, stating that “Self-translation for me has been an activity without content, voided of all the rich echoes and interchanges I have so far attributed to the practice of translation” (68), adding that a large part of his displeasure also has to deal with the time constraint of

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<sup>1</sup> See also Grutman 2013, 65.



the activity: “I would insist that self-translation has in my case always been done under duress. It has never been done with either pleasure or satisfaction” (67).

In her book *Translating Oneself* (2002), Mary Besemeres argues that self-translation is a form of “subtractive bilingualism” (162), in which the second tongue displaces the first tongue as the language of writing, representing a threat to the writer’s identity akin to schizophrenia. This view echoes the critical response to bilingualism for much of the twentieth century, where knowledge of more than one language was represented as a deficit that impeded a speaker from learning any one language well (Burck 2005, 15). Scientists now view bilingualism as a positive trait for emerging speakers, and Besemeres’ views on self-translation have followed suit; in her later book, she argues that self-translation is an “additive” process, because bilinguals have access to a greater range of experiences than monolinguals due to their “hybrid” nature (2007, *xviii-xix*). This notion of hybridity as addition, with the resulting possibility of creativity, is one of the most cited reasons for undertaking the act of self-translation.

In the same interview mentioned earlier where Suso de Toro bemoans self-translation as a waste of time, he goes on to admit that “translating oneself is also a new opportunity to recast and remake one’s work” (quoted in Santoyo 2013, 30). This ability of an author to remake her own work arises for a number of reasons. The act of self-translation allows the author to view her work critically: “porque me convertía en

una lectora crítica de mi propio texto, mucho más distanciada que cuando leía en mi propia lengua después de escribir” (Riera 2002, 12).<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most-cited and emphasized reason for associating self-translation with artistic renewal is the author’s liberty in the process of translation, granted to them by means of their authority as the author. Spanish writer Jorge Semprún declared in a 2009 interview about his own self-translation practices that “la libertad del autotraductor es total” (quoted in Grutman 2013, 66), an approach echoed by most self-translators (Todó 2002, 19; Marí 2002, 16; Parcerisas 2002, 13). This creative freedom, conceded by the author’s authority, as well as her direct insight into the writing process and meaning of the text, is the general focus of studies dedicated to well-known self-translators such as Beckett, Nabokov, and Nancy Huston (Fitch 1988, Connor 1989, Coates 1999, Danby 2003). Rather than solely focusing on the self-translators’ ability to use their translational process as a means of creative possibilities, my intention with this dissertation is to highlight how Noel, Gelman, and Castaño use all aspects of self-translation—including the creative facet—as an articulation of their positionality of hybridity and life on the borderline. I argue that through an epistemological analysis of hybridity by means of a stereoscopic reading of self-translation, an understanding of the centrality of translation to modern life, as well as the view of all translation as a creative

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<sup>2</sup> See also Marí 2002, 16, where he discusses how self-translation allows him to be a “lector modelo,” and Van Bolderen (2010), who states “My experiences in self-translation make me think of it as a practice that encourages self-reflexivity and fuels creative experimentation” (86).

process, better allows us to maneuver constant global confrontations in a postmodern world.

Empowering the translator with an authorial persona who has creative potential, while always central to self-translation, has only begun gaining traction in translation studies with the advent in the field of the cultural turn in the early 1990s (Van Bolderen 2010, 83). One of the primary reasons the creative potential of translators has been conventionally overlooked is due in part to an emphasis on an inherent and inescapable loss during the act of translation (Riera 2002, 11). Even Lawrence Venuti, one of the central minds in the field of translation studies, recognizes a propensity for loss, but he juxtaposes it with an addition that is just as intrinsic to the process: “Treating translation as an interpretive act in this more flexible approach led me to an ethical reflection that acknowledges the inevitable loss of source-cultural difference as well as the exorbitant gain of translating-cultural difference, a trade-off that exposes the creative possibilities of translation” (2013, 4). Understanding the gains available through translation instead of focusing only on the potential losses highlights its creative potential. It also exposes the power of translation as a tool of literary analysis, as the “exorbitant gain of translating-cultural difference” provides a new lens through which the original language and culture can be viewed in a novel way. By “rethinking of translation as poetry gained rather than literature lost” (Nikolaou 2006, 107)<sup>3</sup> and of the translator as more than

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<sup>3</sup> Translator Clive Scott asks “Do we use translation to get to our own creativity, or do we use our creativity to get to the source text’s best translational advantages? Either way, and both ways, translation, and the choices that go with it, begin to sound, as they surely should, like issues which engage the whole translator rather than the translator as mere linguistic facility” (2000, 251).

merely a linguistic day-laborer tasked with building a bridge between languages, the door to using translation as a tool of literary and cultural analysis is wide open, allowing readers to gain insight into the ubiquitous cross-cultural encounters and collisions of modernity. Furthermore, the cultural exchanges central to translation receive a particular position of prominence in self-translation because the very act of self-translation reflects a multilingual and multicultural positioning expressed through the act of the author translating her own work. In consequence, a stereoscopic reading of self-translation can help mitigate some of the perceived losses associated with translating, while still retaining the gains.

Venuti reiterates his view of the creative potential of translation, stating

Translation, like every cultural practice, involves the creation of values, linguistic and literary, religious and political, commercial and educational, as the particular case may be. What makes translation unique is that the value-creating process takes the form of an interpretation inscribed in a source text, whose own values inevitably undergo diminution and revision to accommodate those that appeal to cultural constituencies in the receiving situation. Translation is an inscription of the source text with intelligibilities and interests that are specific to the translating language and culture (2013, 96).

Whereas examining either a source text or its translation alone can result in the “diminution and revision” of the cultural content, reading both versions of a self-translation stereoscopically, viewing them as cultural artifacts of hybridity, reduces the

potential loss of source-culture. In other words, by viewing both sides of self-translation as crucial components of the same multicultural space, the damage to the source-culture is obviated, without also sacrificing the potential additive nature of translation. While there still are some elements involved in the process of self-translation traditionally associated with loss because the language itself is changed, a stereoscopic reading of self-translation takes into account both the linguistic and cultural context of the two versions, providing a more complete depiction of the hybrid culture than either one can provide on its own, demonstrating Lezra's "universal untranslatability" and its tendency to "add value universally" as a work of art is filled with the particulars of culture (2015, 178-79).

Translation is an "amplifying experience" as the various translators, and therefore various interpretations and readings, establish a dialogue with the source text (Scott 2000, 248). Analyzing both a source text and its translation in a stereoscopic reading allows for a "fuller" reading of the text as differing approaches offer new perspectives and new understandings (Rose 1997, 49; Li 2007, 27), providing insights not evident and therefore unavailable to the reader if she only read either the source text or its translation. Self-translations can directly benefit from a stereoscopic reading, because the fundamental interliminal space contained between versions is foregrounded in this process of using translation as a tool of literary analysis (Rose 1997, 73). In this way, a stereoscopic reading allows the reader to access new points of view to a self-translated text, in much the same way that the process of self-translation allows the

writer/translator to say more than is possible to say with only one language.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, a stereoscopic reading is especially relevant to the reading of the poetry I analyze here, poets who embody hybrid and marginalized positions, because this type of reading can begin to help “correct the deformations caused by unequal power relations” (Rose 1997, 75).

In addition to reinforcing the creative aspect of all translation, self-translation also serves to highlight the act of translation itself, an act often concealed in western tradition, as demonstrated by Venuti’s 1995 book *The Translator’s Invisibility*. Venuti argues that traditional translation is frequently presented in a way that obscures the fact that it is a translation, instead attempting to present it as an original work. Klimikiewicz (2013) maintains that self-translation makes translation more visible because its hybrid nature defies classical categorization:

Self-translation increases the visibility of the translation process and challenges a binary logic of translation by introducing new hybrid and heterogeneous categories into Translation Studies and literary practice, playing with notions of author and translator, source text and target text, monolingual and multilingual reader. Its hybrid nature resists classification within literary systems, as well as in

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<sup>4</sup> “Since we know that language is what gets us where we want to go but at the same time prevents us from getting there (I am paraphrasing Samuel Beckett here), then by using another language, the other language in us, we may have a better chance of saying what we wanted to say, or at least we have a second chance of succeeding” (Federman 1995, 67-68).

the professional field, where the subordination of the translator to the author, and the target text to the original, is not to be questioned (199).

When published in a bilingual format, self-translation foregrounds the act of translation through its presentation, which encourages an interaction between languages and invites the reader to actively consider the translation process involved. Drawing attention to the act translation reveals the power differentials of languages and literatures that have traditionally been exploited by translation and which conventionally are obscured through Venuti's notion of the translator's invisibility (Bhabha 2004, 245-46; Bassnett 2013, 14). The potential for translation to elide unequal balances of power between languages by making the process of translation opaque can extend to self-translation as well, reinforcing the need for a stereoscopic reading that privileges both languages and allows them to interact horizontally rather than subjecting one to the other in a vertical, hierarchical fashion.

The relationships of power between languages should be considered with any translation, and self-translation is no exception: "No es lo mismo, ni mucho menos, autotraducirse entre dos lenguas de jerarquía equivalente que entre dos lenguas de distinto rango. No es comparable llevar a cabo una traducción de autor del inglés al francés, por ejemplo, que del gallego al español, o del catalán al español" (Dasilva 2011, 59). Much of the literature concerning self-translated poetry presented in bilingual format deals with Scottish and Irish Gaelic. The bulk of the criticism focused on this work argues that the format favors English to the detriment of Gaelic, rife with "the potential

appropriation of the minor by the major canonical system” (Kronfield 1996, 4). The perceived danger with the bilingual presentation of languages of unequal status is that “the practice of self-translation in a Gaelic context reinforces invisibility” (Krause 2013, 134), which results in “confirm[ing] the dominant position of the central/common language. By nature, indeed, bilingual editions have the unfortunate effect of creating a hierarchy between both versions, with one basically complementing the other, so that readers can end up concentrating on one page while more or less dispensing with the other” (Grutman 2013, 75).<sup>5</sup> Following this argument, self-translated poetry presented bilingually has a destabilizing effect on the original language, in this case Gaelic, which has led writers like Whyte to renounce self-translation completely.

Grutman (2011) finds that a similar unequal balance of linguistic power exists in Spain, where despite a great number of self-translators, all of the post-Franco self-translations are exclusively asymmetrical in the sense that the translators live in diglossic situations and they translate *from* the co-official languages *to* Spanish (83). Despite the potential for the *en face* presentation of self-translations to destabilize and undermine the status of minority languages,<sup>6</sup> I argue that Castaño, Gelman, and Noel incorporate specific strategies and elements into their poetry that encourage a stereoscopic reading of their work, even for monolingual readers, who, when faced with the bilingual format of self-translation, are motivated to contrast the oral and graphic

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<sup>5</sup> See also Krause 2008, 131; Grutman 2011, 84; and Whyte 2015, 70.

<sup>6</sup> See Castro 2011, who argues that any translation from a minority language to another, such as Galician in her case, is a “síntoma del estado saludable de una literatura” (28).



differences and similarities between languages. This in turn places the two languages in a nonhierarchical relationship and demonstrates the hybridity that in large part defines them as writers. Examples of these authorial strategies include the creative translation and interaction between languages in the work of Urayoán Noel, the manner which Juan Gelman loads the Ladino version of his bilingual poetry with his traditional tropes, imbuing the marginalized language with power, and Yolanda Castaño's incorporation of Galician linguistic and cultural traits into both versions of her poetry. These authors use the bilingual format of their self-translations to draw attention to their hybrid and marginal status rather than sweeping it under the rug to hide it.

Much of the critical focus on self-translation centers on Samuel Beckett, a writer who “embodies nearly all the ‘visible’ aspects” of self-translation: a man who writes and translates in two languages of power, English and French, in 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe (Van Bolderen 2010, 45). Compounding the fact that most critical attention has focused on Beckett or similar writers, Dasilva (2011) demonstrates that self-translation in minority languages and cultures tends to be opaque, meaning that it is presented in a way that obscures its status as a translation (64). Evoking the nature of hybridity in a largely postnational world, however, the linguistic aspect is just one of many characteristics that need to be considered when dealing with self-translators. Self-translation as a manifestation of a hybrid condition contributes to an awareness of the possibility of translation to conceal power differentials. Therefore, a focus on non-hegemonic self-translators outside of the traditional scope, such as Yolanda Castaño as a woman writing

in a minority language,<sup>7</sup> Urayoán Noel writing from the neocolonial situation between Puerto Rico and New York, or Juan Gelman’s adoption of a marginalized tongue to depict his exilic situation, will shed light on the possibilities of (post)modern self-translation.

In a globalized world where one can delight—or recoil—from the thought of being able to purchase the same combo meal from a franchised fast-food restaurant in countless countries around the world, hegemonic forces exert a powerful homogenizing impact on all societies and cultures. However, this push towards uniformity is “overtly counteracted by phenomena like fragmentation, hybridity or pluralism and has radically changed the criteria and agencies responsible for the construction of cultures in their multifaceted aspects” (Wolf 2008, 11). Thus, despite any intentions of certain multinational corporations, modern life is characterized more by a sense of hybridity than by homogenization, a force that Wolf views “as the product of contact moments of cultural spaces, thus resulting in the transformation of all subjects involved” (Ibid. 12),<sup>8</sup> where the increase in “contact moments of cultural spaces” results in an interliminal sense of hybridity, often manifested as a fragmentation of identity and culture that is a defining characteristic of modernity.

Due often to their socio-political situations, self-translators reside at the “cultural border, at the limits, in a reality where translation and cultural transfer are common”

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<sup>7</sup> See Romaine 1994, 100 for more about the importance of considering gender when examining any aspect of language.

<sup>8</sup> See also Delanty 2000, 145.

(Camps 2008, 80). Thus, self-translators are better positioned to “illuminate the shaping of a multilingual subjectivity and fragmented identity against a more fixed and rooted monolingual self” (Klimkiewicz 2013, 198). If hybridity is the consequence of the tensions between identities, roles, and statuses created by the modern, then self-translators are directly positioned as emissaries of this fragmentation stemming from contact between cultures because, as residents of the borderline, navigating these cultural exchanges is an essential component of their daily lives, manifested through the “social articulation of difference” (Bhabha 2004, 3).<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, instead of merely enunciating from a position of hybridity that they occupy, the work of self-translators in general, and specifically the self-translated bilingual poetry which I examine here, often centers on the theme of hybridity itself. In the introduction to his edited collection of essays on self-translation, Cordingley (2013) stresses that “the heterogeneity of this global practice renders each encounter site-specific, dependent upon myriad personal, political, linguistic and historical factors” (9). I echo the sentiment that although hybridity may be a global occurrence, each case is “site-specific.” For that reason, I do not set out in this dissertation to provide a definitive description of self-translation and how it is used contemporarily, but rather demonstrate how the three poets I discuss here each use the process of self-translation to articulate their sense of hybridity and their interliminal situation in dialogue with

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<sup>9</sup> See also Hokenson 2013, 55.

their poetic themes of globalization, colonization, diaspora, dictatorship, individual and national identity, and modern feminism.

The way in which these poets use self-translation and the bilingual format articulates what Cronin (2006) calls the “cosmopolitanism of multiple subjects.” He explains

Human subjects have a plurality of different loyalties, a multiplicity of different ways in which they can be described or defined. So, depending on the situation, people might find themselves primarily defined, for example, by their age or their gender or their social class or their ethnicity, or by the neighbourhood in which they live, or by a combination of these different forms of belonging. In this view, cosmopolitanism is a way of thinking through the complexity of a polyidentity rather than accepting single all-encompassing identities for human subjects based on one variable alone (9-10).

By enunciating their “polyidentity” through self-translation, these poets demonstrate how their hybridity places them in an interliminal space between “existing referential systems” (Camps 2008, 13), a third space from which translation and cultural exchange becomes possible due to its lack of fixity, and which fosters a sense of connectedness despite the fragmentation of modernity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> “For it is by living on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender, that we are in a position to translate the differences between them into a kind of solidarity” (Bhabha 2004, 244).

Homi Bhabha (2004) first defined the Third Space in *The Location of Culture* as an interliminal space, “based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*” (56), laying the foundation for a contemporary conception of the worldwide foundation of hybridity. In elaborating this third space, Bhabha demonstrates the integral relationship between this modern hybridity and translation, because it is “the ‘inter’—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Ibid.). The interliminality of this third space creates a gap between languages from which writers and translators can employ translation to enunciate, a space that belongs in a sense to both and neither language simultaneously.

Emily Apter (2006) calls the same concept the translation zone, describing it as “sites that are ‘in-translation,’ that is to say, belonging to no single, discrete language or single medium of communication” (6). Apter’s terminology foregrounds the hybrid nature of language occurring in this translation zone, supporting Bhabha’s notion that cultural meaning takes place in the site of translation as the languages interact with each other and both cultures come away from the situation changed. Evocative of Benjamin’s *pure language*, this interliminal space makes translation possible, and demonstrates what, according to Rose (1997), translation contributes to literary studies: “In between is the ‘interliminal text’, unwritten but paraphrasable. This interliminality is the gift translation gives to readers of literature [...] Put positively, translation studies points us to a sure way of participating in literature and adding to its richness” (7-8). This contribution is made possible as the third space opens an interaction by means of translation between

the languages, echoing the hybridity of modern culture.<sup>11</sup> Thus, through the concept of the third space there is not only a connection between translation and culture, but moreover, translation is the site where culture is produced, precisely because of translation's ability to create a dialogue between the self and the Other: "in the Third Space enunciations inevitably lose their univocality and are always contaminated by the Other. As a consequence, the borderlines between—already hybrid—cultures become the potential location for new cultural production, and the theorem of the Third Space is associated with a concept of translation seen both as *location* and as *production*" (Wolf 2008, 15). Regarding translation as both "location and production" in turn points directly at self-translators and the process of self-translation; an author who translates her own work does so from a location of hybridity as she works in the space between languages, cultures, and identities, resulting in the production of hybridity, which is the self-translated work itself. In this sense, hybridity is the context from which self-translators work, caught in a marginal locus of in-betweenness, but it is also their product, as their poetic output reinforces their interliminal positioning.

Although all translation occupies this interliminal space between languages and texts (Derrida 2012, 368), self-translation makes the third space explicit by highlighting the hybridity of the author, as well as the process of translation itself. Reflecting upon the authority that the author can take advantage of when self-translating, Li argues that "a greater space of in-betweenness is produced between the translated text and the self-

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<sup>11</sup> See also Evangelista 2013, 185.

translation because the self-translator enjoys the flexibility to travel freely in the liminal space between the two texts” (2007, 31). Building upon this argument, the enlarged space of interliminality between self-translated versions of a work is an indicator of the self-translator’s increased capacity to reflect her hybrid position, often through an explicit spotlight on the language of the work itself, creating a dialogue and interaction between versions (Van Bolderen 2010, 79). While certain that “self-translation connotes in-betweenness, regardless of the degree of linguistic hybridity both on the discourse-level and on the story-level” (Klinger 2013, 122),<sup>12</sup> the poetry of Gelman, Noel, and Castaño all exhibit a foregrounding of linguistic hybridity at the discourse-level of the works themselves, as well as at the level of the overarching themes and motifs in their work. Therefore, they choose not only to use self-translation as an expression of their liminality, but also as a means of continuing the sociopolitical commentary instigated in their poetry.

Considering self-translation as one aspect of an articulation of postmodern and postcolonial hybridity provokes an epistemological question regarding the relationship between fragmentation and translation. Nikolaou and Kyritsi (2008) phrase the question in this manner: “Does the practice of translation create further selves, or does it reflect a capacity for otherness already within?” (10). As with just about everything else regarding the intersection of hybridity and self-translation, there is no simple binary to solve this problem, and the solution lies in the interliminal space somewhere between

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<sup>12</sup> See also Hokenson 2013, 40.

the two options. I argue that translation demonstrates the capacity for otherness that already exists within *by* allowing the translating self to create more selves through a dialogue with the Other.<sup>13</sup>

Gibeau (2013) uses the term “self-othering” to discuss the self-translation strategies in Okinawan-Japanese poetry where the poet translates in a manner highlighting the mainland reader’s inability to understand the Okinawan version (149). This ability of self-translation to “self-other” as a means of obfuscating communication evokes Li’s conceit that self-translators have the ability to enlarge the inherent interliminality within their work, drawing the two languages together or pushing them away from each other as befits their conception of self and hybridity. This same ability can be seen in varying capacities in the work of the three poets whom I analyze in this dissertation. Juan Gelman self-others when he adopts<sup>14</sup> the marginalized tongue Ladino in order to create a separation between himself and the language of the military regime during the Dirty War. In this way, Gelman uses the process of self-translation to create new selves as he “others” himself in response to the way that the dictatorship first “othered” him. Yolanda Castaño self-others in her collection *A segunda lingua* as she places the Galician citizen into a postnational context of language learning and intercultural exchange,

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<sup>13</sup> “Thus translation takes place in a context where tradition and identity are no longer homogenizing, unifying forces and where the subjects operate in complex networks of symbols and meanings which call for permanent interaction. In such a context, translation is conceived as the reciprocal interpenetration of Self and Other where negotiation becomes a necessity” (Wolf 2008, 18).

<sup>14</sup> “In this way, the multilingual author will be able to inhabit multiple selves and speak and create in an adopted language in order to fully experience it as if it were his or her own, thus *transappropriating* linguistic access to the Other as an equal rather than *appropriating* it in a hierarchical sense” (Hazelton 2007, 227).



arguing for a non-monoglossic view of Galicia that incorporates the Other into the national dialogue. Urayoán Noel demonstrates that his Self is the Other by situating Puerto Rico at a hybridized nexus of traditional and postmodern values, resulting in a globalized Puerto Rico, whose characteristic hybridity is reinforced and foregrounded by the influences of modernity assailing it.

It is through this process of “othering” that self-translation is able to begin to articulate the concepts of modern hybridity and identity: “It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (Bhabha 2004, 2). As the Other is manifested through the interliminality of self-translation, it helps define that which it is not, leading to a better conception of the various facets of the self.

Cronin (2006) describes the role of opposition, and thus the Other, in establishing identity: “Though the notion of the autonomous self has been largely privileged in Western thought, it is difficult to see how we can define ourselves except in relationship to what we are not. If everything is the same, there is no difference and if there is no difference, there is no identity” (50). Parallel to identity’s inexistence without difference, self-translation only occurs in the interliminal space as Self and Other engage each other in an exchange that is part tug-of-war and part tango, resulting in the self-translated text, but also the representation of identity (Bhabha 2004, 66). Hall (2003) points to the instability of cultural identities, which is echoed in the third space

engendered by self-translation, where these cultural identities are “not an essence, but a *positioning*” (237). This fluid nature of identity and the interliminality of self-translation articulates the conditions and tensions that result in a ubiquity of hybridity in contemporary times, providing the framework for all cultural interactions. The notion of identity, on an individual as well as national level, is a central preoccupation for the three poets whom I analyze in this project. Although they all use very different approaches to engage the process of self-translation, in each case, their use of self-translation articulates their respective notions of hybridized identity.

Hybridity is underscored in Noel’s self-translated poems as the inter-linguistic influence of the bilingual poetry echoes the cross-cultural contamination of globalization and capitalism. Various transnational forces alter the cultural and physical landscape of Puerto Rico, resulting in a paradox: Puerto Rican marginality is reaffirmed, while it is simultaneously set at the center of the hybridizing forces of globalization. Gelman’s speaker consciously hybridizes himself as he places himself in the interliminal space between Ladino and Spanish. This self-hybridization allows him to seek refuge from the destruction of the Dirty War and reunite with his loved one. Galician culture and society is characterized by hybridity, set at a crossroads of various linguistic, political, and cultural forces. Castaño emphasizes this national character, using the act of self-translation to foreground the Galician elements of hybridity, such as heteroglossia, postnationalism, and *saudade*.

In addition to the current of hybridity running through the work of these three poets, they are also all connected by their sense of national identities as articulated by Transatlantic studies. Manning and Taylor (2007) explain that “Transatlantic studies draws attention to the ways in which [...] ideas of crossing and connection have helped to rethink the ways that national identity has been formulated” (4). More than a mere geographic positioning on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, the poetry of Noel, Gelman, and Castaño all denote a Transatlantic turn. Through their hybridity, which is a response to and product of modernity, they have “refram[ed] and redraw[n] the national landscape” (Enjuto Rangel 2015, 162) so that their sense of identity is not restricted to the traditional notion of nationhood (Kearney 2005, 37). National identity is still a central preoccupation throughout their work, but it is no longer bound by the political model of the nation-state (Pensky 2001, *xiii*). Instead, national identities are enunciated in correspondence to the framework of Transatlantic Studies. Therefore, Castaño’s Galician national identity manifests as postnational and heteroglossic, as the hybridity of Galicia breaks her country free from the confines of traditional nationalism. Gelman self-marginalizes to create a new space and a new identity to escape the oppressive national identity constructed by the military dictatorship. In Noel’s poetry, Puerto Rico is assailed by globalizing forces that change the traditional national character and what it means to be Puerto Rican in an interconnected, postmodern society. The use of the process of self-translation in the work of these three poets foregrounds the hybridity that characterizes them, a hybridization which is a “discursive, enunciatory, cultural, subjective process having to do with the struggle around authority, authorization,

deauthorization, and the revision of authority” (Bhabha, quoted in Olson and Worsham 1998, 391), and which leads to the destruction of former concepts of national identity, aligning them with a global Transatlantic.

The first chapter examines the bilingual, self-translated poetry of Urayoán Noel. The cross-pollination of languages in his work echoes Noel’s themes of globalization and transnationalism, as well as his critique of capitalism and consumerism as they collide in the linguistic and geo-political frontiers of the poems. Noel’s historical context and his biography as a Puerto Rican poet raised bilingually permeate his poetry. This perspective allows the speaker to become an observer and documentarian, as he critiques the rampant consumerism around him that forms a huge globalized web of the various world cultures. This idea of positioning astride multiple cultures echoes the poet’s homeland of Puerto Rico that is in a constant state of identity-formation as a Spanish speaking territory, a neocolony of the United States and a former colony of Spain. I contextualize Noel’s poetry by examining the socio-political background of Puerto Rico in order to illuminate its place in the 21st century to further illustrate how Noel uses self-translation as a metaphor for the globalizing forces that assail Puerto Rico in a postmodern world.

In chapter two, Juan Gelman’s use of self-translation in *dibaxu* creates a position from which to criticize an oppressive regime, as well as establishing an anachronistic space of solace where one can be reunited with lost loved ones. This bilingual Ladino-Spanish poetry collection is a direct response to the dictatorship and Dirty War in the

1970s and early 1980s of Argentina that lead to the deterritorialization of the author. As a diasporic language, Gelman's use of Ladino confronts the poetics of exile from the standpoint of a marginal language. He actively chooses to adopt this diasporic tongue, allowing him to critique the violence of the Dirty War on his own terms from exile. However, due to the bilingual format, the speaker does not cast off Spanish completely, but instead creates a dialogue between the two languages in constant flux that draws the reader into the discussion with the invitation to actively participate in the process of crafting a new space for love and longing.

In the final chapter, I examine the bilingual poetry of Galician poet Yolanda Castaño. I argue that she uses the bilingual format to articulate the postnational turn framing Galician studies in the last decade, demonstrating the heteroglossic reality of modern Galicia. Her feminist poetry also tries to reconcile two opposing positions through self-translation: the marginalized woman in a traditional patriarchal society and the liberated woman who has emerged since the post-Franco transition to democracy through the lens of second-language acquisition and the connections between language and identity. These themes are highlighted in the bilingual presentation of her poetry, where the multilingual character of her self-translations reflect the heteroglossic character of Galicia: as a speaker of a minority language, negotiating the challenges of living in translation is a daily occurrence. Thus, an examination of self-translation offers an insight into the process of identity formation for the author and her national literature.

These three poets are all connected by their decision to translate their own poetry and present it in a bilingual format, but this process binds them further as they collectively employ self-translation as a means to address the power struggles and differentials that they encounter in their various transnational positions. Gelman and Noel both use self-translation to criticize the hegemonic forces that have contributed to their diasporic and marginalized positions in order to reappropriate their control over their situations; the military regime of the Dirty War and the rampant capitalism of a globalized society, respectively. Castaño also uses self-translation to push against systems of power, employing her poetry to emphasize the postnational character of Galicia, deflating both the nationalist movement and the centralized power of the federal government.

Each poet utilizes self-translation in unique ways to highlight the idiosyncratic nature of their individual socio-cultural situation, while also demonstrating the generative ability of translation. In each case, these poets use the creative nature of translation within the interliminality of self-translation to establish a new space. Gelman's new space is formed out of time and language, a space which he uses to escape the tortures of war and exile. Castaño connects her tongue to the Galician landscape, which she then places in a transnational setting outside of Galicia. Noel uses the interliminal space of self-translation to overlay New York and Puerto Rico, creating a nexus that is an entirely new locus.

The hybridity that makes the work of each poet unique while also connecting them is both a manifestation of the cultural context that lead them to self-translate, as well as a result of the process itself. By analyzing these three poets who engage self-translation in very different ways, this project will help demonstrate that polyphonic, creative translation belongs at the center of translation studies and the humanities rather than pushed aside at the margins.

## CHAPTER II

### ***BUSCANDO LA IDENTIDAD-HOLOGRAMA: SELF-TRANSLATION AS A METAPHOR OF GLOBALIZATION IN THE BILINGUAL POETRY OF URAYOÁN NOEL***

As a Puerto Rican poet residing in New York over the last two decades, Urayoán Noel articulates the transcultural experience of modern Puerto Rico from the viewpoint of those on the island and the mainland, as well as those in transit and in between. His poetry is characterized by an inventive multilingualism that adopts many different forms, while highlighting the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural effects that globalized societies exert on each other. The multilingual aspect *par excellence* of Noel's poetry is his predilection for bilingually presented self-translation. Although his poetic process and approach constantly adapt and evolve along with his creative sensibilities, the ability of self-translation to reflect the speaker's vision of a globalized Puerto Rico at the center of the poetry remains constant. In each of the four poems examined here, the process of self-translation becomes an extension of the poetic themes, depicting a transcultural and polyphonic modern reality that places Puerto Rico in a distinctly hybrid position consistent with the impacts of the postmodern influences of globalization and capitalism. In this sense, Noel uses self-translation to show that he is "conscious of both the hybridity of the culture(s) [he] is writing within and of [his] own writing" (Cordingley 2013, 3).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See also Klimkiewicz 2013, 198 and Camps 2008, 79 for more on the relationship between the hybridity of modern culture and self-translation.



The approach of self-translation throughout Noel's poetic work provides insight into his view of translation as creative work and the evolution of his belief in poetry as process. The first two poems analyzed, "En los suburbios lejanos/ In the Faraway Suburbs" and "Kool Logic/ La lógica kool", both appear in Noel's second collection of poetry *Kool Logic/La lógica kool* (2005). In each case, the contact between languages of self-translation serves as a metaphor for contemporary Puerto Rico, demonstrating the Americanization of San Juan in the former, and Puerto Rico's position in a globalized world in the latter poem. Noel's collection *Hi-density Politics* (2010) demonstrates his changing style through creative attempts at confronting modernity, such as cross-linguistic homophonic translations, palindrome poems and found poems. Noel calls "sitibodis" from this book a "free-form self-translation", wherein the self-translation expresses the liminal condition of life in the post-modern city transformed by globalization. The final poem analyzed here is "Balada del exilio/ Exile Ballad" from the collection *Los días porosos* (2012). Self-translation in this poem is used to articulate the book's themes of exile or immigrant experience from a third position that is neither fully integrated into the new society nor withdrawn from the land left behind. Although Noel's approach to all aspects of his poetry continually adapts, the common factor in these poems is the use of self-translation to reinforce the sociopolitical critiques that he establishes in each poem through linguistic and cultural contact and contamination. The social commentary emanating from Noel's work is heir to a long line of writers anxious to help create a Puerto Rican national identity. Situating him within this context is

crucial to understanding how his critique is in dialogue with his contemporaries and echoes those who have come before.

National identity formation in a postmodern, global society is an issue addressed by writers throughout the world. It is however viewed as particularly germane to the Puerto Rican literary tradition as a country without sovereign status; a colony in postcolonial times. López-Baralt (2004) argues that the lack of and need for a national identity has in itself become a major part of “la puertorriqueñidad” or inherent Puerto Rican character that colors all literature from the island and the mainland. She views the Puerto Rican case as exceeding the typical desire to assert a national identity, stating that “toda literatura expresa necesariamente una identidad colectiva, quiéralo o no. Claro que sí. Pero aun así el caso de Puerto Rico es distinto. Cuando no hay soberanía, el problema se hace obsesivo, a veces explícito: se convierte en imperativo el decir cómo somos, o aun el decir que, sencillamente, SOMOS” (61). It is therefore the lack of sovereignty that ensures that “esa obsesión con la llamada identidad siempre estará ahí como la loca de la casa” (Rodríguez Juliá 1998, 8), permeating all Puerto Rican discourse since the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico in 1898.

The need to create a national identity is inseparably connected to the desire for nationhood burning in the Boricua psyche.<sup>16</sup> There has been a constant manifestation of this yearning for nation and identity throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the

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<sup>16</sup> “En el espacio cultural puertorriqueño esa búsqueda crítica de sentido de la identidad puertorriqueña se enfocó con reiterada testarudez en el intento de narrar la nación. Esta actitud responde a la noción y la creencia de que la identidad está íntimamente vinculada a una nación o nacionalidad propias” (Myrna García Calderón 1998, 23)

approaches and arguments have shifted over time. These changes are most evident in the cultural models that Puerto Rican writers use to delineate their own nascent national identity by juxtaposing it against other cultures and societies with which they come into contact.

Unsurprisingly, the complicated relationship that Puerto Rico has with the United States is viewed by many as the obstacle to asserting Puerto Rican identity as well as the primary force against which advocates of national identity need to push so that *puertorriqueñidad* can stand on its own without being consumed by North American culture. With the Treaty of Paris in December 1898, Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States, where “the substance of colonialism was preserved, although the semantics changed. Puerto Rico was not called a ‘colony,’ but a ‘dependency’ or ‘possession,’ juridically defined as an ‘unincorporated Territory’” (Morales Carrión 1983, 152), igniting the enduring quest for identity. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought changes to Puerto Rican status and consequent challenges for the authors of national identity, such as the Jones Act in 1917 that granted Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship (Ibid., 187-98), and increased unemployment due to the shift from coffee haciendas to the sugar industry following pressure from U.S. corporations, followed by the subsequent collapse of King Sugar (Ibid., 242; Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 57). Throughout all these changes, the one constant was the wave of anti-Americanization that permeated the national discourse.

Most Puerto Ricans viewed U.S. influence as an imminent threat to their culture, nowhere more evident than with the question of language. The U.S. embarked on a plan to Americanize their new pseudo-colonial possession from the very beginning in 1898, deeming the acquisition of North American values necessary for Puerto Rico to improve its socioeconomic position (Marzán, 1980, p. *xvi*). The most controversial Americanization strategies focused on language, such as policies making English the official language on the island and using the school system to simultaneously inculcate North American values while undermining the Spanish language (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 40). Babín (1983) calls the U.S. language policy “the core of the cultural struggle throughout the twentieth century” (321), second only to the political status question in terms of importance to the formation of a national identity (Morales Carrión 1983, 272).

Facing the systematic weakening of the Spanish language, Puerto Rican writers of the first half of the century responded by “aggressively reaffirm[ing] Puerto Rico’s Hispanic heritage and, in some cases, look[ing] back to Spain for a cultural model” (Marzán 1980, *xi*). The renewed sense of Hispanism was an attempt to preserve the humanistic values inherited from Spain acting as a “bastión de defensa y afirmación social y cultural” (Rodríguez Castro 1998, 287), while attenuating the damaging effects of the materialism that is associated with Americanization (Marzán 1980, *xvii*). Ríos Ávila (1995) views the metaphors of defense as particularly suitable, stating that “la metáfora bélica que define a la palabra como bastión es muy apropiada. En Puerto Rico la defensa del idioma y de la cultura ante lo que se ha entendido como la penetración peligrosa de

lo norteamericano se ha convertido en nuestro único escenario de guerra” (329).

Defending the battle lines against the infiltration of Americanization was central to the creation of a national identity throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second half of the century, however, brought about a shift in the interpretation of Puerto Rican identity as defined by the Spanish language.

Throughout the 1960s, Puerto Rican poets continued to identify *puertorriqueñidad* closely with the Spanish language, but there was an active move away from the cultural support for Hispanism that came before (López Adorno 2006, 12). These writers became even more politicized while promoting traditional Puerto Rican poetic forms such as the *décima*, but they also distanced themselves from the previous generation’s ardor for Hispanism and poetic purism, which was viewed as “tacit collaboration with United States domination of Puerto Rico” (Marzán 1980, *xxii-xxiii*). The increased politicization of this era was at the core of important new literary magazines that evoked a sense of national sovereignty and decolonization (López-Adorno 2006, 13).

Continuing the tradition of small-press style literary magazines, poets in the 1970s moved away from the politicization of the previous decade and adopted a more individualized approach as opposed to the previous nationalistic stance. They became disillusioned with the search for national identity that had guided the literary field since the 1930s, advocating instead for an anti-elitist, anti-canonical approach to national literature (Díaz 2008, 18-21; López Adorno 2006, 13). The shift away from the pressing need to establish a national identity, what had been the defining point of Puerto Rican

literature for the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, resulted in an emphasis on the margins of Boricua society that echoes into the present. Another trend from this period with contemporary ramifications is the increased acceptance on the mainland of Puerto Rican poetry written in English.

The support for the Spanish language in the quest for national identity also created a “linguistic chauvinism” that marginalized or ignored altogether the Puerto Rican literary production in English from the mainland through the 1960s (López Adorno 2006, 9). However, with the shift from nationalism to individualism in the 1970s, Spanish-only was no longer a valid point of exclusion against U.S. mainland authors who never defined *puertorriqueñidad* in terms of language.<sup>17</sup> The emergence of the Nuyorican movement in New York in this period paradoxically helped to refocus the national discussion on the question of identity. Diverging from the previous tendency to battle Americanization, the new threat to Puerto Rican cultural sovereignty began to be perceived by those on the island as “una nueva invasión socio-cultural que anuncia una sociedad mucho más sometida y con ataduras ideológicas menos visibles, pues se trata de una infraestructura de poder aliada al postfordismo y la globalización” (Díaz 2008, 191).<sup>18</sup> This new postmodern menace to Puerto Rican identity has unified writers since the 1970s in much the same way that Americanization provided a common target in the

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<sup>17</sup> “Contrario a lo que sucede en Puerto Rico (donde resulta simbólicamente fundamental la defensa del español como lengua nacional), en Nueva York ser puertorriqueño no es, de ninguna manera, una cuestión de idioma” (Francisco José Ramos, 1997), quoted in Centeno 2007, 89.

<sup>18</sup> See Hall 1988, 24 for an analysis of post-Fordism, which he identifies with specialization of occupations and products, the rise of new information technologies, and the rise of the service sector and white-collar workers.

first half of the century, beginning with the Nuyorican poets who became disillusioned with the crass commercialization that they saw as they returned to San Juan (Mohr 1982, 96), contrasting with the 'pure' vision of Puerto Rico that they held in their memories.

The criticism of the effects of postmodernity and globalization on Puerto Rico connects Boricua writers from the last forty years, regardless of their location on the island or the mainland. In the process, as this temporal and especially geographic gap is bridged, the classic existential theme of identity in relation to language once again becomes relevant to Puerto Rican poets. Sotomayor Miletti (2009) describes how this connection complicates the question of national identity stating "no es posible soslayar, sin embargo, la compleja relación de algunos poetas contemporáneos con la tradición de la poesía nuyorican producida en los Estados Unidos desde mediados del siglo XX, lo cual tampoco impide estudiar la gran mayoría de la poesía puertorriqueña contemporánea en la tradición lingüística (el español) que le es afín" (1039). Despite the cultural impact of new literary traditions and influences from the Nuyorican poets on contemporary island writers, language gaps between the two groups reawaken the century-long push for a national identity, now in the face of rampant globalization. Mainland Puerto Rican writers have been able to reframe this discussion from a new perspective, bringing clarity to the dialogue on both sides. According to Centeno (2007),

el elemento más significativo de todos los que han suscitado un nuevo tipo de discusión ha sido el del surgimiento de una diáspora puertorriqueña que ha

desempeñado un importante papel en la redefinición de lo que es la identidad o de lo que es el imaginario social y cultural de la Isla, puesto que su apropiación del inglés y el hecho de que un gran número de la tercera generación de emigrantes posea este idioma como lengua vernácula ha provocado diversas posiciones sobre la situación del español en Puerto Rico (87).

By articulating *puertorriqueñidad* with English as well as Spanish, mainland writers demonstrate that Puerto Rican national identity in a postmodern world should be articulated multilingually, leaving behind the “bastión” of Spanish-only. Pabón (2003) explains the shift to polyphony, arguing that contemporary culture is a globalized, hybrid culture “debido a la transformación de las fronteras culturales gracias a las telecomunicaciones y la informática. La puertorriqueñidad, concebida como una construcción unívoca y como invención se convirtió, destaca, en discurso domesticador de consenso social” (42). Thus, the entire contemporary world has changed, and Puerto Rico with its characteristic hybridity becomes a symbol of the effect of globalization on a country and its culture. Furthermore, demonstrating that Puerto Rico’s hybridity is a modern condition that dispels false dichotomies, such as the need to define *puertorriqueñidad* through Spanish and in opposition to English, evokes Cronin’s (2006) notion of *multiple subjects* which allows identity to be viewed as a “complexity of polyidentity” rather than a single binary option (9). This in turn connects the vision of national identity of Puerto Rico with that of Galicia and the concept of postnationalism that I will examine in connection to the work of Yolanda Castaño in chapter 3.



I argue that Puerto Rico's hybridity applies to all Puerto Ricans, regardless of what language they speak. This hybridity stems in part from the massive division of the Puerto Rican population, with almost half of all Puerto Ricans living on the mainland, and the "circular migration" patterns between the two population centers connecting them. However, more than merely a geographic separation, the "in-betweenness" that sums up Boricuas is also the result of Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States and its political status, or lack thereof. Puerto Rican theorist Rubén Ríos Ávila (2002) concludes that "all Puerto Ricans are today, in one way or another, inhabitants of some other island of Puerto Rico" (314). An additional layer of complexity is added to this idea considering that it is in English, despite coming from *La raza cómica del sujeto en Puerto Rico*, a book written in Spanish and itself an obvious play on Vasconcelos' *La raza cómica*. It becomes then a metatextual comment on the position of the modern Puerto Rican, always astride multiple cultures.

It is in this milieu that Urayoán Noel becomes the model contemporary Puerto Rican poet. Cognizant of the influence of the generation of poets from the 1970s on his work that characterizes current Puerto Rican poetics (Sotomayor Miletti 2009, 1042), he also acknowledges his connection to poets of his own generation. Even more, he is a voice for postmodern Puerto Rico because of his unique upbringing: "Puerto Rican-ness is not located in one place anymore [...] and I think that's where I am, as I'm discovering. Having a gringo dad, speaking English in Puerto Rico, my own experience is not necessarily typical. Not that anything is typical about Puerto Rico; we're not typical. With that caveat, maybe my experience was less-typical than the not typical" (Noel

2013, interview). As he lives in New York and frequently returns to La isla, Noel's life is a microcosm for Puerto Rico, especially the resulting atypical-ness born of his innate hybridity. The perpetual state of being between cultures that also typifies the Puerto Rican experience is manifest through Noel's use of self-translation, where the interaction between tongues depicts the languages in contact that one would expect in a "borderland state" (Soto-Crespo 2009, 13). Through the constant interplay between languages in his self-translated bilingual poems, Noel describes a Puerto Rico buffeted by waves of globalization, and does so from a marginal position (Noel 2013, interview), which may be the most Puerto Rican trait of all.

### **Lost Between the Suburbs and Los Suburbios**

The bilingual poem "En los suburbios lejanos/ In the Faraway Suburbs" (20-29)<sup>19</sup> appears in Urayoán Noel's primarily English-language collection *Kool Logic/ La lógica kool* (2005), demonstrating the possibility of translation to delineate and then overcome the limits of language and sociopolitical borders. The poem chronicles the Americanization of San Juan and the linguistic interplay of self-translation acts as a stand-in for this globalizing process. Cross-linguistic contamination marches throughout the poem, paralleling the North American impact on Puerto Rico in the 21st century, as the process of self-translation demonstrates the hybridity of Puerto Rico characterized by postmodernity.

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<sup>19</sup> Appendix 1: Poetry of Urayoán Noel.

The bilingual nature of the poem helps to establish a connection between languages, forming the foundation of the poem. Rather than choose the most direct or obvious translations in his bilingual poetry, Noel often values other poetic elements over meaning: “So often I will err on the side of music over meaning. Or mystery over meaning, an evocative power over declarative power...So actually, I don’t want to declare, I want to de-clear, to make less clear” (Noel 2013, interview). This approach may seem to contradict the preponderance of translation theory that speaks of the dichotomy of “identical” vs. “derailing” strategies (Foucault 1964, 21), or “direct and oblique translations” (Vinay and Darbelnet 2000, 84) that focus on the transmission of a specific meaning. However, in the influential essay “The Task of the Translator,” Benjamin (2012) dismisses this view of translations as ineffectual because “any translation which intends to perform a transmitting function cannot transmit anything but information – hence, something inessential” (75). Eliminating the need to view translation as strictly a transference of ideas through opens the gates to view translation as a creative process. Haroldo de Campos’ (2000) theory of “transcreation” expands on Benjamin’s concession that it is impossible to translate creative texts, which conversely “engendra el corolario de la posibilidad, también en principio, de la recreación de estos textos” (188-89). Clarifying de Campos’ poetics of transcreation, Pires Vieira states (1999) “we can say that translation is no longer a one-way flow from the source to the target culture, but a two-way transcultural enterprise” (106). This explanation is exemplified by Noel’s self-translations, where the bilingualism and creative translation in the poem allow the poet to evoke a multilingual and multicultural world, within which

many languages (e.g., Spanish, English, French, Spanglish, etc.) are constantly interacting and changing each other.

The title of the poem holds the first example of language interaction, found in the calques *suburbios*-*suburbs*. Instead of a literal translation, this pair points toward the varying cultural perspectives of the expressions, with two nuanced and distinct connotations between the two words. In both English and Spanish, these words refer to an area at the periphery of the city. However, the Real Academia Española adds that the *suburbio* is “especialmente [un barrio] que constituye una zona pobre aneja a la ciudad” (Real Academia Española), while the *suburbs* in English are defined as “the residential area on the outskirts of a city or large town” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary), typically viewed as a haven for the upper-middle class.

Noel admits having distinct visions of *el suburbio* and *the suburb* in this poem. “En cuanto a ‘suburbio,’ estoy pensando en la suburbanización (en el sentido estadounidense de los ‘burbs) de Puerto Rico...De seguro estoy evocando el suburbio moderno/modernista latinoamericano. Suburbio en ese sentido es más como ‘outskirts’ o incluso a veces ‘slums,’ entonces lo que me interesa es colapsar ese suburbio proletario que ironizan los modernistas con los ‘burbs más contemporáneos y de clase media (o wannabe-middle-class, en el caso de partes de San Juan)” (Noel 2012, personal correspondence). Even though the poem isn’t based on two completely contradictory concepts, the principal idea stems from the influence of the United States *suburbs* on the Puerto Rican *suburbio*.

In addition to establishing the tone of the poem by placing this quasi-equivalent pair in the title, the poetic voice finishes each stanza repeating the title, like a refrain. The prominence of the false cognates that begin the poem and close each stanza in epistrophe privileges these words and highlights their connection, despite their semantic divergence. This problematic pair is the first of many examples establishing the tendency of the speaker to call attention to the specific language used and the differences between versions, drawing attention to the process of translation.

By reiterating the title at the end of the verses, the speaker sets a poetic course, creating a sense of inevitable fate. The repetition of the title at the end of each stanza, instead of merely once or twice, directs the reader to the destination established in the title. In other words, by using the title as a refrain, the reader is constantly reminded that all of the action takes place in the *suburbio-suburb*, and there is no way to step away from this path. Although the bilingual presentation appears to represent two identical versions, this poem is based on linguistic variations that create a forking path between languages. While superficially similar, the differences in connotation between *suburbios* and *suburbs* mirror the socio-cultural differences between Puerto Rico and the United States. As the languages interact and displace each other semantically, there is a corresponding displacement of the physical spaces with the Americanization of the Puerto Rican *suburbios*. Thus, just as the two languages become inseparably connected through the constant presence of translation in bilingual poetry, there is also a coupling between the signifier and the signified where both are mutually changed. The divergent final destinations of the two versions foreground the limits of language and the

communicative function of the space between languages where the “univocality” of languages is “always contaminated by the Other” (Wolf 2008, 15).

According to Ortega y Gasset (1937), language only allows us to express a small fraction of what we think and wish to say. In fact, he claims that language use creates a barrier between speaker and listener: “Digamos, pues, que el hombre, cuando se pone a hablar lo hace *porque* cree que va a poder decir lo que piensa. Pues bien; esto es ilusorio. El lenguaje no da para tanto. Dice, poco más o menos, una parte de lo que decimos y pone una valla infranqueable a la transfusión del resto” (145). For that reason, although languages are typically regarded as instruments of communication, the Spanish philosopher states that the act of speaking impedes the act of communication rather than facilitating it. These impediments arise from language use; every language user can attest to the frustrating inability to express exactly the desired idea. Adding that translation exacerbates the natural inability of language to express itself adequately, he states that “Cada pueblo calla unas cosas *para* decir otras. Porque *todo* sería indecible. De aquí la enorme dificultad de la traducción: en ella se trata de decir en un idioma precisamente lo que este idioma tiende a silenciar” (Ibid.). This manner of thinking reveals the paradox to understanding self-translation and bilingual writing. Speaking impedes us from saying what we wish to say, while translation attempts to express not what the original said, but what it wanted to say according to the translator. Through the interaction between languages made possible by self-translated bilingual poetry, the author/poet’s intentions can be better approximated, shedding light on the

limits of language while also transcending in part the conventional obstacles of communication created by language (Guldin 2013, 97).

The structure of a poem will typically highlight different aspects of the language to make certain themes and tropes more salient, such as rhyme, alliteration, or enjambment. This poem follows this pattern, emphasizing the cross-linguistic influence that the languages exert on each other, although the side-by-side presentation also creates ambiguity concerning which is the source and which is the target language, if that distinction should still apply.<sup>20</sup> The Spanish<sup>21</sup> version follows the rigid structure of the archetypal Puerto Rican form of the *décima* with a set meter and rhyme scheme, whereas the poem only rhymes intermittently in English. The combination of the formal poetic elements and the position of the Spanish version on the left-hand side seem to indicate that it is the original and the English version is a translation.

Notwithstanding, the Spanish version is replete with loan-words from English such as *downtown*, *neighborhood committee*, and *window-shopping*. Through self-translation, the poet demonstrates the ability of language to echo the geo-political forces that shape the postmodern world. These words from the other language reflect the cross-cultural contamination of a global society. All of the terms borrowed from English have equivalents in Spanish that, while probably not as concise, are adequate

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<sup>20</sup> See Perloff 1987, 47, where she argues that “both and neither” versions of Beckett’s self-translations are the more ‘real’ or ‘better,’ obviating the discussion over the ‘original.’

<sup>21</sup> Throughout this chapter I refer to the Spanish and English versions, sides or columns. These terms are used for the sake of simplicity, because there is frequent mixing and comingling of languages in all of Noel’s poetry.

enough that the poetic voice could have avoided using the loan-words at all. Despite the availability of suitable alternatives, the English words creep into the Spanish version to reflect the Americanization of Puerto Rico that Noel wishes to portray. Using *downtown* instead of *el centro* shows that the Puerto Rican concept for the physical spaces has changed, while similar ideological shifts are reflected through the use of the other loan-words. The English terms figure prominently in the Spanish version, with the seventh stanza composed almost entirely of loans from English, foregrounding the linguistic and cultural interdependence within the poem and in Puerto Rico. Complicating the process even more, the loan-words and names in English become an integral part of the Spanish rhyme scheme, entwining the two languages in a way that makes it impossible to disconnect them.

The language entanglement that stems from Americanization is particularly polemical because it belies the cultural resistance to colonial assimilation that has identified Puerto Ricans throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the war of 1898, Puerto Rico has resisted U.S. colonial policies, “which were based on patronizing and disparaging views of the Puerto Rican people and of their former Spanish rulers, aimed at Americanizing the island and manufacturing the necessary consent among the population to justify North American control” (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 39). The most controversial of these practices revolved around language and language use, stemming from the “transculturation zone” between the U.S. and Puerto Rico based



upon “unequal exchanges and power struggles” (Laó-Montes and Dávila 2001, 12) that have come to identify Puerto Rican writers on both the island and the mainland.<sup>22</sup>

The interaction between languages creates a tension as each have claim to being both source text and target text, placed in a non-hierarchical, equal position. Some view the uncertainty over source and target text as a destabilization<sup>23</sup> of the two languages, highlighting the subaltern role that translation has traditionally played. Chamberlain (2004) classifies the devaluation of translation in terms of gender, adding that this gendered view causes it to be seen as “something qualitatively different from the original act of writing” (307). Noel’s bilingual poetry recognizes the traditional distinction between creation and translation, but chooses to reject the dichotomy in favor of a point of view that combines the creative process with translation until they reach a point where they have become inseparable (Fitch 1988, 19, and Van Bolderen 2010, 84).

Noel admits his desire to transcend conventional translation when citing the influences for this poem: “Pienso en ‘In the Faraway Suburbs’ como un performative

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<sup>22</sup> Acosta-Belén and Santiago point towards a rift between island and mainland Puerto Ricans during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because “US Puerto Ricans incarnated some of the worst apprehensions about the Americanization process that island Puerto Ricans had so much resisted in their own country since the US takeover” (2006, 185). Conversely, mainland writers criticize the same tendencies from different viewpoints. For example, Tato Laviera criticizes island Puerto Ricans for assimilating to forces of Americanization (Soto-Crespo 2009, 133) and Pedro Pietri’s emphasis on Puerto Rican identity is a way to resist Americanization (Mohr 1982, 95).

<sup>23</sup> See Chatzidimitriou 2009, 39, for a discussion on the implication of the ambiguity over source and target text. The author concludes that when neither is explicitly identified, “the text is thus minorized both linguistically and performatively; it refuses to speak either tongue authoritatively and performs only as a destabilizing agent in the book’s editorial futures.” Rather than destabilize the text, I argue that placing each text on equal footing has the opposite effect; the languages support each other rather than erode the other’s position.

self-translation; es el término que he estado usando. Quise traducir ‘En los suburbios lejanos’ y los otros poemas en español que aparecen en *Kool Logic*...Aún no había leído a Haroldo de Campos en esa época, pero hoy me identifico mucho con su noción de ‘transcrição’ como una praxis de índole crítica entre la creación y la traducción” (Noel 2012, personal correspondence). De Campo’s concept of transcreation is based on the privileging of the aesthetic component of a work, giving it the artistic value it merits. Mata (2000), in the introduction to his translation of de Campo’s essays, argues that transcreation should “buscarse conservar la información estética de una manera *icónica*, es decir, dar preeminencia a la materialidad del lenguaje y rozar solamente el significado del ‘original’ para *reimaginarlo* y conseguir otorgarle la dignidad de creación” (xvi). By emphasizing the aesthetic, the translator or transcreator is able to remove the onus of translation to reproduce the semantic equivalent, freeing it to focus on the artistic nature of the work, prioritizing the “evocative” over the “declarative sense.” It is worth mentioning that this focus on translating the evocative elements of a work by no means reduces the difficulty of translation, with the transfer of aesthetic aspects of one culture to another being every bit as complex as translating meaning and language. Rather it is an opportunity to foreground another type of meaning.

The speaker begins “En los suburbios lejanos/ In the Faraway Suburbs” in a way that exploits the relation between language and translation, beginning with the first half of the first stanza:

“Mi negrita se me ha ido  
Por Dios Santo, no la encuentro-

Who knows why my baby left me?  
Who knows where she could have gone?

será que se ha ido pal centro  
de un downtown desconocido?

Is she hiding in the center  
Of some little-known downtown?"

These translations appear to be fairly direct, or at least as direct as they can be while maintaining the poetic structure and form. Despite their similarities, these verses reveal a gap between languages expressing different accounts, and evoking Bhabha's concept of the third space.

Although the pronominal verb *irse* is used twice to refer to the *negrita* on the Spanish side, the construction of the phrases pushes it beyond a simple reflexive verb, endowing it with characteristics missing in English. By adding the pronoun *me* on the first line, the verb phrase shifts from a pronominal verb to the *se accidental* construction, wherein an indirect object pronoun is added to describe accidental or unplanned incidents; the agent who performs the action is de-emphasized, implying that he or she does not have direct responsibility for the action. This language use removes the fault from the speaker for the departure of the *negrita*, but it also de-emphasizes the blame on the woman. In contrast, the same lines in English begin with a rhetorical question where the subject of the verb *to leave* is the woman, and the speaker is the direct object affected by this action. Therefore, while the actions of the woman are de-emphasized on the Spanish side, in English she has fled seemingly voluntarily, leaving the speaker alone. The ambiguity regarding which is the original and which the translation, or whether they each partly fulfill both roles leads to uncertainty as to which version is closer to the presumed position of accuracy or truth, if such a thing can

exist poetically. The solution is one of two possibilities: either both versions describe an aspect of the woman's flight with the full picture a composite of the two, reinforcing Ortega y Gasset's argument that language cannot adequately express what we wish to say. Or, both versions are inaccurate and reveal the speaker to be undependable, which would also seem to reinforce the idea that language is unfaithful to our desires.

In explaining his own method for self-translation, Todó (2002) comments on the importance of translations being relevant to the readers, saying "No pueden decir exactamente lo mismo [las distintas voces dentro de la escritura], porque no hablan el mismo idioma, pero procuro que, cuando me traduzco, ambas digan cosas equivalentes, cada una a su modo, y procuro que sus palabras tienda a producir un efecto parecido en el lector, que es lo que, en definitiva, cuenta realmente" (19) reinforcing the translator's paradox of communicating something, if not the same, then equivalent. The uses of the grammatical concepts examined here support the argument that translation must be relevant for the reader. The use of *se accidental* is the most appropriate verb construction to express this idea in Spanish, while the woman as subject and agent of the sentence makes the most sense for a reader in English. Nevertheless, this argument is predicated on a reader who only reads one of the versions and I argue that bilingually-formatted poetry creates a third space, only existing between the other two versions wherein the reader is pushed to assimilate both accounts. This strengthens the position that each version is both an original and a translation.

The gap and simultaneous union between Spanish and English is solidified with the word *downtown* in the fourth line. In Spanish, *el downtown* is modified by the term *desconocido*, while the equivalent phrase in English is “little-known.” These adjectives are certainly related to each other, but they also foreground the cultural baggage that each word brings with it. *Desconocido* gives the impression of an area to be feared because it is unknown, and it is human nature to fear what we don’t understand. In contrast, *little-known* doesn’t inspire the same fear. It evokes a place that is simply not prominent and perhaps it merely deserves to be explored more. These two *downtowns* point towards the distinct final destination of the two verses; the faraway suburbs in English paint a picture of a utopian zone that is the goal of all city-dwellers while los suburbios lejanos in Spanish suffer a process of “suburbanización.”

The final lines of the second stanza continue this thread of alternate destinations and the possible space between el suburbio and the suburb:

“y los buenos ciudadanos  
trabajan para el gobierno  
pegando loseta y cuerno  
en los suburbios lejanos

Meanwhile, the good citizens  
Are all working for the government,  
Cheating on taxes and spouses  
Down in the faraway suburbs.”

The idiomatic phrase *pegar cuerno* reflects the same infidelity in Spanish as the people commit in English and each account gives the impression that this is a positive characteristic of “the good citizens.” Although there is an overlap of promiscuity in each version, the accompanying actions indicate the gap between poetic places. In Spanish, the citizens work for the government “pegando loseta,” a low-status and poorly

remunerated job, helping to build up the country that is under construction in its continual search for national identity, while their counterparts are “cheating on taxes.” While construction workers could also cheat on taxes, this crime seems to imply that the citizens in English are employed in administrative positions and that the cheating is a national undertaking of the upper-middle and upper classes, far from the physical labor of working in construction. The poetic voice doesn’t argue that the different behavior of the two groups is necessarily the result of their respective *suburbs* or *suburbio*. Instead, these examples serve to foreground the gap between these two locations while also highlighting similarities, because cheating, whether on a spouse or at work, is ingrained in the cultural logic of each society, regardless of language or social class.

The linguistic entanglement continues in the sixth stanza. In these lines, the underlying similarities and differences of the languages give way to the formation of cross-cultural connections.

“y ese temblar de las manos  
que se sirven su ginebra  
hasta que el vaso se quiebra  
en los suburbios lejanos.

And the trembling of the hands  
That are serving themselves gin  
And the shot glass shattering  
Down in the faraway suburbs.”

In this scene, the synecdoche of hands reflexively serving themselves gin happens in each version, followed by the breaking of the shot glass that occurs more or less the same across the page. This linguistic similarity is in contrast to the earlier cited example where separate constructions resulted in completely different viewpoints. The current resemblance underscores the cultural connection of the two groups. In each case, the

vacuous revelers are drinking gin, as opposed to drinks more closely associate to the lower middle class in the United States and the Caribbean, such as beer or rum, respectively. The same effects that lead to linguistic borrowing and cross-contamination have led to cultural globalization and homogenization. Gin in both places is socially associated with the upper-middle class, or at least those who aspire to join this group, and drinking Gin over more traditionally popular local drinks is an example of the taint of consumerism on all places made uniform in a postmodern, global world.

The last two verses hold a final example of linguistic mixture spilling over to alter the cultural realm and illuminate the process of transcreation.

busco tu ojo engominado en la costa del Pacífico -----	I search for your embalmed eye On the coast of the Pacific. -----
que el downtown y la gomina y la mugre de tus manos son hologramas arcanos?	That the downtown and the eye balm And the grime that coats your hands Are all arcane holograms?

There is a clear connection between *engominado-embalmed* and *gomina-balm* in these verses, but it's not immediately evident what type of relationship they share because they aren't translations per se, but transcreations. The words *engominado* and *gomina* seem to imply an aesthetic function in the poem, while the corresponding words across the page have a more practical value related to health. Nevertheless, whatever semantic relationship the words may have, the structural connections between them is prioritized over the meaning. In the Spanish version, the two words derive from the same root, and even though the former has an additional prefix, it preserves the same

context or general meaning as the latter term. In contrast, the English words possibly come from a common root, but the addition of the prefix to the first word changes its meaning drastically, disconnecting it from the second word. The formal connection between the words brings with it a disconnect in content, causing what Piombino calls an “aural ellipsis,” or “semantic indeterminacies in a poetic work that prompt a listener to subjectively fill in gaps in meaning or understanding. In struggling to find logic in something nonsensical, the reader effectively becomes an active participant in the creation of the poem” (quoted in Bayers 2011, 116). The invitation to participate in the poem through the illogical gap is an example of the communicative power of the space between the two versions. Just as the *negrita/baby* left in two different ways in the beginning, the speaker’s message here has more to do with the relationship between *engominado-embalmed* and *gominado-balm* than the meaning of the words themselves. Parcerisas (2002) views this as a central function of self-translation: “La autotraducción, ejercida a conciencia, nos permite calibrar al detalle no ya las ‘equivalencias lingüísticas’, sino la valoración cultural, psicológica e incluso emotiva que el autor da a sus palabras” (13). Therefore, self-translation appears to be especially adept at falling in line with Noel’s view of translation, evoking rather than declaring.

Presenting a poem in two languages in an *en face* presentation is a strategy to mitigate one of the fundamental concerns of translation: the impossibility of preserving all the characteristics of the original; in other words, viewing translation as a loss. Levý explains this dilemma, saying “In translation there are situations which do not allow one to capture all values of the original. Then the translator has to decide which ones one



could miss out” (quoted in Gutt 2000, 382). Thus, a traditional view of translation leads the translator to compromise and choose the best of the options, knowing that at least part of the message will have to be abandoned. Even some self-translators talk about the loss of translation: “La traducción supone siempre una carencia. Por muy buena que sea, por mucho que intente conservar el color, el sabor, el olor del original, el resultado nunca será el mismo, aunque sea bueno siempre será otra cosa” (Riera 2002, 11). I feel it necessary to point out that this notion of overall loss, because the act of translation creates “something else,” is misplaced, and instead, the new thing that arises via translation should be seen as contributing a net gain.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, the bilingual poet who practices transcreation doesn’t have to conceive of translation only in terms of loss. The link between languages makes it possible to say more than a solitary language and the subsequent translation could say when read independent of each other. This process overcomes the limits of individual languages and establishes a synergistic effect that allows for a fuller and richer communication.

Another consequence of bilingual self-translated poetry is the reflexive focus on the act of translation (Cordingley 2013, 1; Klimkiewicz 2013, 199). This emphasis contradicts the prevailing tendency of translation theory in the twentieth century, before the

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<sup>24</sup> Venuti (2013) speaks of loss, but accompanied by a subsequent expansion that results in a creative net gain as he views translation as: “an ethical reflection that acknowledges the inevitable loss of source-cultural difference as well as the exorbitant gain of translating-cultural difference, a trade-off that exposes the creative possibilities of translation [...] The translation that sets going an event introduces a linguistic and cultural difference in the institution, initiating new ways of thinking inspired by an interpretation of the source text”(4).

cultural turn of translation studies, which states that “the best translation is not one that keeps forever before the reader’s mind the fact that this is a translation...but one that makes the reader forget that it is a translation at all” (Nida 2000, 133). This desire to sweep translation under the rug comes from the attitude that translation is a derivative and subordinate chore. In contrast, bilingual self-translated poetry places translation at the center of the equation necessary to understand the poem. Instead of trying to hide translation, this form of writing elevates it to a position of honor, giving meaning to the poem. The prominence of self-translation creates a “privileged space where double linguistic and cultural palimpsests create an intricate relational model operating along the lines of mutual silencing,” where “silence as operative model permits in [the author’s] text the voicing of the language not in use...Silence is then presented as a viable alternative” (Chatzidimitriou 2009, 25-26). The reprioritization of translation makes visible the communicative function of the silence between poems, an in-between space where “the idea of something incompatible, concealed, unconscious” (Hárs 2002, quoted in Wolf 2008, 13) is exposed and allowed to display its potential for communication and meaning. This poem reinforces many principles of translation theory, while disarming and contradicting others. The final product is a broader view of translation as creation wherein it is possible for the *negrita* to be lost somewhere in the *los suburbios* at the same time that the *baby* has wandered off somewhere else in the *suburbs*.

At the core of “En los suburbios lejanos/ In the Faraway Suburbs” is the act of self-translation, creating the abundant opportunities for language interaction and influence.

This interplay in turn extends the themes of the Americanization of Puerto Rico that dominate the poem by demonstrating the linguistic impact of the sociopolitical relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. The reinforcement of the subject of Puerto Rico's role and place in the current of globalization through the process of self-translation connects this poem with the next, also from the same collection. In each case, poetic themes of globalization and modernity are reflected in the linguistic structures of the poems.

### **Late Capitalism in the Global Shantytown**

In the poem "Kool Logic/La lógica kool" (52-58),<sup>25</sup> Noel uses self-translation and a bilingual format to demonstrate cross-linguistic interaction that acts as a metaphor of Puerto Rico as a "borderland state" always in flux, extending the poetic themes of globalization and consumerism. Instead of merely a means of poetic construction, the bilingual, self-translated format of the poem is the linchpin uniting the various structural, stylistic, and thematic elements as they navigate back and forth across the chasm of translation. In this way, self-translation reflects the dynamic, multilingual nature of our globalized modern world. Highlighting the theme of globalization through self-translation provides insight into the name of the entire collection, borrowed from this poem. The idea of globalization's worldwide impacts, as well as the local in Puerto Rico, is the uniting current throughout the book, and the bilingual presentation of the

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<sup>25</sup> Appendix 1: Poetry of Urayoán Noel.

self-translated poetry reinforces the global influence of capitalism and consumerism prevalent through the book.

This poem plays with the conventions of poetic meter and structure as a way to show how languages in contact alter each other, resulting in the creation of a new third space.<sup>26</sup> The first stylistic choice that the reader observes when reading this poem is the order and structure of the two versions. Contrary to the other bilingual poems in the collection, the English version is presented first on the left side, which would seem to endow it with a higher status.<sup>27</sup> However, as with the other bilingual poetry featured in the collection, the structural aspects of this poem create an ambiguity over which is the “original,” which in turn establishes a tension between the linguistic versions.<sup>28</sup> Noel accomplishes that structurally in this poem with the use of the refrain. Every section of the poem is followed by the refrain repeating the title, except for the first section in English. This gives the sense that this first section is unfinished and only completed by reading the first section in Spanish. The inconsistency of structure in the poem is mirrored in the last English section that is twice as long as all the other English parts and ends by itself on the next page of the book, giving a sense of finality and conclusion to

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<sup>26</sup> The third space is in reference to Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (2004). See Evangelista (2013), who refers to self-translation's ability to create a “‘third language,’ [...] a voice speaking from an in-between space, where one is allowed to go deeper, to find something new, something that is more, created from a distance, although with what feels like a much lighter language” (185).

<sup>27</sup> In reference to bilingual Quechua-Spanish poetry, Bayers states: “The oral undercurrent of the poem is conveyed through Argueda's privileging of Quechua as the original language of the poem and that which appears on the left-hand side of the dual-language presentation” (2011, 114).

<sup>28</sup> “Self-translation typically produces another 'version' or a new 'original' of a text. What is being negotiated is therefore not only an 'original' text, and perhaps the self which wrote it, but the vexatious notion of 'originality' itself” (Cordingley 2013, 2)

the poem. Thus the reader is presented with the destabilizing challenge of both starting and ending the poem with the English versions and how to incorporate the Spanish version. As I argue that simply reading one language version and then the other ignores the parallel yet distinct translations and how they intermingle, I propose that one possible<sup>29</sup> way to read the poem is to start in English, and then read two sections in Spanish, followed by two more sections in English and so on, finishing with the sixth section in English. Although the reader has the power to recreate the poem and read it however she decides, this reading highlights the reciprocal influence that the two versions exercise on each other, reinforcing the notion that they are two divergent facets of the same poem instead of two similar but ultimately different poems.

A similar, mutual effect on the corresponding version of the poem is also present in the meter and rhyme. The sections of the Spanish version of the poem consist of eight octosyllabic lines in the style of the *octavilla*, an important stanza form composed of two sets of four-line *redondillas*. The rhyme for these sections is the typical *rima abrazada* form of abba, with the exception of the final line of each section forming a rhyme that corresponds to the end lines of the other sections.

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<sup>29</sup> Noel describes his bilingual poetry as “performative self-translation,” and so it would be counterintuitive to assume that each poem has a specific and prescribed way to be read. Youtube features videos of the poet’s performances of both Spanish (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHYjo70ZunU>) and English (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fczkS6UnM88>) versions of this poem. While I have argued that both versions of the poem should be read in conjunction, which doesn’t happen in either of these performances, it should be noted that the musical aspects of this poem are emphasized in these videos. Due to very divergent metric forms, it would be prohibitively difficult to perform both versions together as songs.

The rhyme and meter of the English version consists of two quatrains with the rhyme scheme of *abab*, evoking the heroic stanza popularized by Shakespeare and Dryden. Even though this version once again pays homage to its respective literary canon, evidence of the interlingual influence on the form of the poem arises with examination of the syllabification. Instead of iambic pentameter, the English version also consists of lines of eight syllables. However, this syllabification is only consistent if the reader uses the Spanish system to count the meter, counting all the syllables until arriving at the final accented syllable, and then adding one more. Just as the Spanish rhyme scheme of the previous poem at one point was comprised entirely of loans from English, in this poem, its metric and rhythmic qualities are constructed in relation to the Spanish version, even though the English version may have the position of priority on the left side of the page.

The first line of each version gives a preview of the complimentary but separate approaches that the two languages take while tackling the subject of global capitalism. This indication of various perspectives suggests that although the effects of capitalism may be portrayed differently, the impact on modern society is felt throughout the world. The divergent points of view are built upon the address of the speaker to the recipient, and while they are semantically equivalent, the linguistic gap between them emphasizes the perceived distances separating the speakers of the two versions.

The English stanza begins “I hope this finds you in good health/ (or at least gainfully employed).” Present throughout the English version, this apostrophic approach to the

reader is missing from the Spanish and allows the English side to adopt a meta-poetic viewpoint of the effects of capitalism from outside rather than from within the poem.<sup>30</sup> In this way, the poetic voice describes the impacts of late capitalism, punctuating these impacts by referring the reader directly back to them. The second half of the first stanza demonstrates this process, beginning with the argument that “modern man is hollow,” updating for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Eliot’s views of western culture following the First World War, then continuing with the claim “Others say it’s a condition/ called ‘postmodern.’ Do you follow?” This instance of apostrophe acts as a comprehension check, inviting the reader to consider again the assertions on the modern condition. A similar follow-up question ends the poem, after the speaker states that “This kool logic ain’t too logical/ But it’s still ‘kool.’ Do you get it?!” In each case, the apostrophe breaches the fourth wall and uses direct address to refocus the reader’s attention on the notion that capitalism has unalterably changed modern man.

The approach to the reader on the Spanish side is much different, lacking any true apostrophe. Instead of directly acknowledging the addressee, the poem begins “*Cantémosle al día mítico/ de identidad-holograma,*” implicitly referring to the recipient with a first person plural imperative form of the verb. Just as the apostrophe in the English column determines the connection between the poetic voice and recipient, the verb form in Spanish defines both the speaker-addressee relationship as well as the way

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<sup>30</sup> Noonan (2013) calls self-translation “a type of reflexive metacommentary in which the self-translated work reflects on the prior version of the text, and by doing so foregrounds the workings of both source and target languages” (165). See also Rose (1997, 2-13) who argues that all translation provides a meta-literary viewpoint, by helping the reader get “inside literature.”

the addressee is integrated into the poem. By beginning with a first person plural conjugation, the Spanish side doesn't give the recipient the chance to be identified without the speaker, only implying, but never directly referring to the addressee. In addition, the command form of the verb takes away any volition that the recipient may have had before. Therefore, without a proper identity or will, the recipient is forced to examine the topic of the modern condition from within the text, elaborating the subject matter with the speaker. This directly contrasts with the English side, where the addressee is urged to place herself outside of the poem to view capitalism's outcomes.

The only other allusion to the addressee on the Spanish side of the poem is also found in the first stanza, where the poetic voice qualifies the Warholesque phrase "quince minutos de fama" with the line "(veinte si eres político)." Rather than an example of apostrophe acknowledging the recipient, the second person *eres* is utilized here in a hypothetical, impersonal manner that reinforces the idea that the implied addressee has no identity or choice without the speaker. The conjectural nature of the phrase implies that if someone is being addressed, he or she is most likely not a politician and the utterance underscores what he or she is not,<sup>31</sup> further undermining any attempt to create an identity.

The next use of apostrophe in the English version serves the same function of drawing the reader's attention to the consequences of capitalism on the world. The

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<sup>31</sup> See Scheiner (2000) who uses Vološinov's theory of dialogism, which states that "language can only be grasped in terms of its inevitable orientation toward another" to conceive of a way to read self-translation as the self-translator's two versions are oriented towards each other.



second stanzas in each language are comprised of a series of images depicting an interconnected, global world, such as “common graves/ rotting in the ancient cities,” “porous borders,” and “wars of chemical roses.” Despite disparate images in other parts of the poem, the two lists in the second stanza are almost identical. However, the stanzas diverge prominently through the presentation of the images. On the Spanish page, the descriptions are listed asyndetically, an approach that immerses the reader within the imagery. Conversely, the images in English come in a series of rhetorical questions wherein the poetic voice asks if the addressee can “see” them. By setting up these rhetorical questions, the speaker in English again takes a meta-literary stance that encourages the reader to consider the images from a position outside the poem, a contrasting view to the simple list in Spanish, highlighting the impact of modernity. Apostrophe as metafiction echoes Culler’s (2002) assertion that “to read apostrophe as sign of a fiction which knows its own fictive nature is to stress its optative character” (146), a character which in this case wishes to articulate the impact of modernity on Puerto Rico. Metafictive devices have maintained a lengthy association with modernist and postmodernist literature, so it is fitting that this technique is used to directly show the effects of capitalism on a modern, multilingual world.

The last use of apostrophe in English comes from the fourth stanza which focuses on music. Both of the opening lines of the two quatrains invoke the addressee; the first states that “You can consume what you please” and the second affirms that “You can sing your songs of peace.” Each of these statements of the choices afforded by capitalism and modernity are followed by possible musical varieties from which to

choose. In translating the first line in English, the Spanish version takes a different approach as it states “Cada cual lo que le plazca.” Instead of directly addressing the reader, the poetic voice in Spanish is much less specific through the use of the subjunctive and the phrase “cada cual.” As the possibility in Spanish is available to anyone, it becomes generalized and less intimate. In contrast, the apostrophe of the English side involves the reader in the decisions and possibilities of the poem in a much more personal manner.

This use of apostrophe has the opposite effect as the earlier uses. The first examples meta-literarily employ rhetorical questions and comprehension checks to redirect the reader’s focus to the subject matter, stepping outside the poem in the process. This latter instance however firmly situates the reader in the poem by stating the possible avenues of action available, and then providing examples. While from a seemingly contrary viewpoint as the previous examples, the direct address of the fourth stanza still demonstrates how capitalism entangles modern cultures and customs, in this case creating a hodgepodge of musical styles such as “queer punk” and “flamenco tribal.” Perhaps the most important function of this apostrophe to the poem, both thematically and structurally, is that like the previous examples, it contrapuntally provides a different vantage point from the Spanish version.

The non-specificity of the Spanish version, emphasized by the hypothetical nature of the subjunctive phrase “lo que le plazca,” disassociates any potential addressee from identification, making this version’s approach to capitalist-tinged music more

impersonal and open. The result, similar to the contradictory examples in the first set of stanzas, is that the same phenomenon is portrayed from two very different viewpoints. The ability to simultaneously show varying perspectives is one of the hallmarks of self-translated poetry presented in bilingual format. I argue that the tendency of this form of poetry should be viewed as a type of poetic cubism.<sup>32</sup> The side-by-side presentation of two different languages to express the same idea mirrors cubists' attempts to portray the subject from multiple vantage points in order to represent the subject in a greater context. Just as cubism strives to represent multiple facets on the same plane and can be viewed as the result of the fractured identity that accompanies modernity, self-translated bilingual poetry is an attempt to represent the plurality of viewpoints that arise from the polyphony of a world where living in multiple languages is the norm.

This tendency of self-translation to portray two alternate views at the same time is an apt metaphor for the Puerto Rican experience, where living in and belonging to more than one culture is the societal norm, for both island and mainland Puerto Ricans. Soto-Crespo (2009) argues that the fractured identity and hybridity of Puerto Rico is the result of political processes and colonial policies "that [give] shape to an unconventional

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<sup>32</sup> I have intentionally referred to this phenomenon as poetic cubism so as not to conflate it with the cubist poets of the early 20th century. In his introduction to his translations of the poetry of Pierre Reverdy, Rexroth (1969) states "But what is Cubism in poetry? It is the conscious, deliberate dissociation and recombination of elements into a new artistic entity made self-sufficient by its rigorous architecture. This is quite different from the free association of the Surrealists and the combination of unconscious utterance and political nihilism of Dada" (*ii*). This is different from the approach that I try to set forth here wherein self-translation allows a plurality of viewpoints similar to cubist visual art. In other words, rather than the recombination and juxtaposition of ideas that have been wrenched from each other found in cubist poetry, I envision poetic cubism as highlighting the varying perspectives that is a hallmark of the cubist plastic arts.

form of government: the borderland state. As such, its structures duplicate exactly neither the federated state nor the independent national state, but rather strive to mediate between these conventional formulas" (2). The very political structure of Puerto Rico is based upon a self-schism as it tries to assert its position between independence and colonial subjugation. Contributing further to a doubled perspective are the circular migration patterns that are central to Puerto Rico:

This uninterrupted '*ir y venir*' that Puerto Ricans have with their homeland has introduced a new model of immigrant assimilation and relationship to Anglo-American society that differs from the traditional 'melting pot' ideology.

Currently, a more flexible multicultural perspective is taking hold; it is based on an individual's capacity to function in more than one culture and language and a sense of identity that straddles different cultural spaces '*aquí y allá*' (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 70).

Thus, straddling various cultures is a coping mechanism for survival,<sup>33</sup> but it is also a means of resisting the cultural homogenization of hegemonic forces,<sup>34</sup> a strategy reflected by self-translation's propensity to resist assimilation (Klimkiewicz 2013, 194).

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<sup>33</sup> "It is my contention that today's migrant is a hybrid, not a divided self. A divided self is a torn, tragic disruption of an identity that envisages itself as a whole, but is either doomed or forced to lose its true image. A hybrid is made up of different, sometimes clashing identities that become available, necessary or possible at different or alternative times or places, according to need and desire" (Ríos Ávila 2002, 59-60).

<sup>34</sup> "US Puerto Rican writers and artists view their cultural straddling as a sign of resistance to assimilation into Anglo-American society and a way of denouncing its racial and social problems through their personal experiences and of reaffirming their sense of Puerto Rican identity" (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 188).

The preceding cases of poetic cubism stem from the varying approaches taken by the poetic voice towards the reader in the separate languages, but there are many other examples of multifaceted viewpoints that are a result of the structural differences between languages, especially where the formal constraints so heavily dictate the construction of both versions of this poem. The end of the second set of stanzas demonstrates the ability of the two languages to act in concert to amplify the image portrayed. After a list of the side effects of capitalism, both versions conclude with an image of money flowing in the form of a river. The English version, stating that “Cash flows from Utopian rivers/ and the market never closes,” establishes the unstoppable nature of the capitalist machine. The Spanish version describes the same event in a less favorable light, arguing that “la utopia es un río/ que vomita capital,” alluding to Lorca’s *Poeta en Nueva York*. Although the two accounts parallel and support each other, only by considering both the violent sickness of the Spanish river and the ceaselessness of the English river together are the impacts of capitalism displayed in their proper depth and breadth, much like the benefits of stereopsis that come from binocular vision, and foregrounding Rose’s (1997) assertion that translation should be used as a tool of literary analysis.

The fourth set of stanzas follow the same pattern established in the second stanzas, listing the results of globalization, followed by a pronouncement on the effect of all this on modern society. In this case, the image is a criticism of the hate that springs forth as modern people become more integrated into a global community but less attached to the people around them. Similar to the second stanza, the English side relates the

relentless march of this consequence of capitalism, stating that “the violence will not cease,/ hate’s fetus can’t be aborted!” The Spanish version provides more background information, as the poetic voice expresses the desire that “el feto del odio nazca/ de la hojarasca de hastío,” illuminating hate’s origins and nature. As before, these descriptions provide insight into each other and provide a stereoscopic image with depth that is somewhere between the two versions and wouldn’t exist if viewed from only one of the vantage points.

The speaker deftly demonstrates that the propensity for self-translated bilingual poetry to provide a multi-perspective view of an image can come from a single creative translation or transcreative choice of words. The fifth stanzas are made up a paratactic list of juxtapositions that describe a stream-of-consciousness, paralleling life in a postmodern, surreal world. Examples include “macrobiotic-cybernetic-/ fiber-optic folderol” and the Spanish equivalent “cibernéticoestrambótico,/ macrobióticonformáticas.” Even though the terms “folderol” and “estrambótico” aren’t necessarily equivalents and wouldn’t be considered translations of each other, they correspond in the sense that they each describe different aspects of the same phenomenon, namely the landscape of a capitalist influenced modernity. The English term hints at the nonsensical nature of the ideas from the list such as “neo-gothic supermodels” and “Vegan power lunch grand slams” and the Spanish term comments on the outlandishness of these same images. When viewed together, the speaker’s playful parody of the postmodern condition is more nuanced and textured.

Following the list of absurdities, the fifth stanza ends with a final transcreative poetic cubism, capping off the commentary on the lunacy of globalized capitalism. After the surreal list in each language, the poetic voice cites where these seemingly paradoxical situations occur; in English they take place in a “global shantytown,” while in Spanish they happen “en el chinchorro global.” These are two very diverse concepts and places, but they again each provide insight into the effects of late capitalism from different angles. The global shantytown in English implies that capitalism has an impoverishing influence as it spreads around the world. The Spanish version, set in the *chinchorro global*, suggests that no one can escape the effects of capitalism as it scoops up the entire world in its global net. If either of these terms were omitted, or if only one of the versions of the poem were to be read, the overall impression of the effects of capitalism would be less dynamic and complete.

Cultural amalgamation is frequently present in Noel’s work, and the format of bilingual self-translated poetry is especially well positioned to portray the modern mixing of languages and cultures, demonstrating that the hybridization of modernity impacts all aspects of society and culture in a globalized world. Many of the specific images and strange juxtapositions in this poem echo these themes and show how seemingly paradoxical juxtapositions are strangely suitable.

In the fourth stanza centered on music, both versions state that Ricky Martin and John Cage are on tour together in Spain. The stylistic and chronological inconsistencies between these musicians highlight the often random results of the globalizing influence

of capitalism; Ricky Martin is largely credited with introducing the Latin pop explosion of the late nineties and John Cage is best remembered for the work 4'33", a composition where the performer is merely present for the duration of the piece and ambient noises are the focal point. Despite their differences, the joint tour of these two artists strengthens the argument that "you can consume what you please" for there is sure to be something that will catch the reader's attention. Thus, the combination of kitschy pop and avant-garde experimentation reinforces the unpredictability of capitalism that the speaker articulates throughout the poem.

The final stanza provides another example of contrasting and arbitrary images that unite to parody and critique late capitalism. In an example of prosodic code-switching, Noel uses images that proceed from other languages, but are essential for the rhyme scheme. In the Spanish version only, the speaker cites the French philosophers "Baudrillard y Lipovetsky," setting up a rhyme with such English-named objects as "el sports utility, el jet ski." Like the musical examples, the incompatibility between these images holds the key to their relationship, foregrounding the ramifications of capitalism. The French writers focus on postmodernism and consumerism, and consequently, the juxtaposition with the very trophies of hyper-consumerism on the following line, invokes the connection between capitalism and the postmodern condition of humankind. The added fact that all of these are integrated into the Spanish rhyme scheme further highlights modernity's propensity for globalization and cultural mishmash.



The structural and metrical reciprocities of “Kool Logic/La lógica kool” reflect the thematic qualities that surface in the poem. The poem illustrates the effects of capitalism and consumerism on the modern world, establishing a scene that spirals more and more out of control. The bilingual presentation, along with the formal connections, depicts a world that is equally challenged and changed by Post-Fordism, regardless of the language or country of birth. The tension created between the two versions reaches an apex in the final sections, where the reverberations of consumerism extend from North America into Brazil (“la favela” and “Río”) and the rest of South America (“Mercosur”), then to Europe (“comunidad europea” and “Euro-Disney”) and Asia (“Bollywood”), filling the world. Just as the constant contact between languages has affected the poetic structure, so too has the spread of capitalism changed the socio-cultural landscape of not just English- and Spanish-speaking countries, but the entire global community.

The act of self-translation gives insight into the interconnectedness of the modern world by depicting the linguistic entanglement that occurs in this poem, despite the physical separation of the two languages into two different versions. It is precisely the inability to keep the two languages separate throughout the poem that best articulates the unparalleled global reach of capitalism that Fredric Jameson expounds, documented throughout this poem, including the epigraph by Jameson, “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” Despite the language mixing in the rest of the poem, this epigraph is in English on both sides, giving the impression that the logic of late capitalism is positioned above other cultural factors such as language and political policies, in order to more

readily influence these processes. Therefore, as the languages and poetic structures intertwine afterwards, the poem demonstrates that the resulting linguistic and cultural amalgamation that occurs in Puerto Rico is a microcosm for the worldwide globalization brought about by late capitalism.

Both of these poems from *Kool Logic/ La lógica kool* use self-translation to critique and parody globalization's power in and over a Puerto Rico characterized by hybridity, with the former focusing on the Americanization of San Juan and the resulting shift in cultural ideals that accompanies this process, and the latter chronicling Puerto Rico's role in the expansion of capitalism and consumerism throughout the world. The next poem continues to look at the modern city, but from the new perspective of the city after it has been ravaged by the effects of postmodernity, and globalization has made everyone more hybridized and marginalized without necessarily having brought them closer together.

### **The Silencing of the Postmodern Hybrid City**

The collection *Hi-Density Politics* (2010) illustrates Noel's proclivity for increased experimentation and creativity. As with the previous poems, "sitibodis" (54-56) uses self-translation as an extension of the poetic theme of globalization. This poem specifically addresses globalization by demonstrating the liminality of the modern person as he or she participates in more and more cultures, without ever fully belonging to any of them. Self-translation contributes to this critique with the intermingling of languages that leads to hybridized languages such as Spanglish, providing a linguistic

metaphor of Puerto Ricans that live either literally or figuratively in transit between Puerto Rico and the U.S.

The subtitle of “sitibodis” is “outtakes from a post-collapse siti,” setting the stage for a critique of the effects of capitalism and consumerism on the modern city. There is a connection between the punctuation and typesetting choices in the first stanza that foreshadows the adroit cross-linguistic interaction throughout the poem. These stylistic choices point toward the socio-political position of the speaker, introducing the poem’s themes of identity formation in a space between cultures, a position foregrounded by self-translation, which “as a multilingual exchange with the self, can illuminate the shaping of a multilingual subjectivity and fragmented identity” (Klimkiewicz 2013, 198).<sup>35</sup> In this way, the quotation marks and italics of the first stanza serve as a type of legend, clarifying the interactions between Spanish, English, and Spanglish in the poem.

Towards the end of the first stanza, the poetic voice criticizes the financial institutions for their role in the recent economic crisis. For two lines, the languages of the two columns are swapped, with an accompanying change to italic font. Puican (2011) claims that these linguistic exchanges “underscore [a] shift in tone,” stating that “the English column gives the Spanish version and the Spanish column shows a rough English translation” (1). While these two-line units certainly mark a divergence from the rest of the stanza, labeling them as a marker of a shift in tone omits the fact that this technique of placing the other language in italics has already occurred multiple times in

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<sup>35</sup> See also Hokenson 2013, 40 and Wolf 2008, 12-13).

this same stanza with varying effects. The assertion that the Spanish version is countered by a “rough English translation” also fails to grasp how the two languages depend on each other to express a fuller image, resulting in a geographic and ideological confluence of people and places. Examination of the previous italicized portions of this stanza is instrumental to clarify the linguistic connections found in these couplets that serve as anchor points between languages, cultures and places.

The first use of italics in the poem appears as a single word from the other column’s language, a preliminary effort to try out the language swap before committing to a complete phrase a few lines later or the pair of verses towards the end of the stanza. As a brief foray into the opposite language, this first example establishes the setting of the poem, a world where Spanish and English reside together; sometimes combining to form Spanglish, sometimes code-switching back and forth between the two, but always in a way that makes it clear that these two languages inhabit the common space of the “post-collapse siti.”

The first examples of italics, “*sitizen* sin estatuto” and “a statuteless *siudadano*,” are significant beyond their function as a preview of what is yet to come in the stanza; they also serve as a graphic representation of the link between languages that is central to the theme and tone of the poem. These corresponding lines finish the first part of the stanza which is rife with consonance and assonance in each language, such as *sitúa*, *tatuaje*, *estatus*, *estatuas*, and *estatuto* in Spanish, and *sits*, *tats*, *status*, *statueless*, and *statuteless* in English. The heavy use of sonic elements in both columns establishes

parity between languages as they each contribute to the rhythm and cadence of the poem, with the result that one language or version cannot be favored over the other and each language's column is given equal status. In contrast, another bilingual poem of the collection has disparate dates for the two language versions of the poem, establishing a hierarchy between the poems,<sup>36</sup> whereas in "sitibodis," each column is treated as an equal and part of the same whole, allowing them to intertwine and influence each other more as they act as two parts of the same poem instead of two separate versions.

Besides factoring directly into the audible connection between languages, the italicized terms *sitizen* and *siudadino* also point to the effect the languages exert on each other graphically and visually. On the Spanish side of the poem, the phrase "*sitizen sin estatuto*" progresses subject, preposition, object. This order is essentially reversed in the English column line "a statuteless *siudadano*," albeit with different parts of speech, going from article, to object-with-adjective-suffix and subject. These two phrases employ differing lexical categories to express the same thought, doing so in a way that they reflect each other visually. The italicized words act as bookends for the line flowing across the two columns, a sort of graphic mirroring of the two languages. In this way, these italicized words, which in theory belong in the opposite column, show that they occupy an appropriate place precisely where they are. This strengthens the argument

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<sup>36</sup> See the final poem of the collection "consignas para el fin del mundo/ slogans for the end of the world," where the Spanish version is dated 2006, and the English version 2009. The incongruence of dates in this poem demonstrates that Noel has written and published certain poems in both a monolingual and bilingual format. This reinforces the need to view his poems presented bilingually as a separate text, reading both versions together.

that the poetic voice speaks from a place where the two languages reside together in harmony, free to adapt and alter each other without compunction.

Setting the stage for further wordplay and experimentation in the same vein as the previously mentioned qualities, the first example of language swapping underscored by italics also signals one of the central themes of the poem: the plight of modern Puerto Rican citizens who are unsure of their status and position in a globalized world, belonging to a country and culture that is no longer a colony, but which is not fully independent either, fitting the definition perfectly of the neocolony.<sup>37</sup> This idea acts as a leitmotif throughout the poem, and it is fitting that the poetic voice uses the opposite language and italics to broach the subject in the first stanza. I will return to this theme and connect it with the other occurrences in the poem after first analyzing the other uses of italics.

The next occurrence of italics comes two lines later, although it differs markedly from the previous example. Rather than replacing the word at hand with a simple translation, the next italicized phrases are superficially related by the idea of real estate. However, each of these phrases anticipates another phrase in its own column, reinforcing the sense of appropriateness of not only the line, but also the language

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<sup>37</sup> “Puerto Ricans frequently find themselves in the odd position of being treated by the US Congress—site of the ultimate decision making power regarding island affairs—as an entity that is ‘foreign to the United States in a domestic sense.’ What this paradoxical and ambiguous statement really means is that island Puerto Ricans are often treated like colonial subjects who happen to be the holders of US citizenship and who should be grateful for all the benevolence bestowed upon their nation by the United States but who are, in the end culturally different foreigners and thus not considered ‘real’ Americans” (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 4).

choice. On the English side, "*¿Bienes o raíces?*," which separates the compound form of the Spanish phrase for real estate into separate, disjointed words, acts as a homophonic foreshadowing for the follow-up line "be still and chill," while "*disquiet estate!*" in the Spanish column is almost perfectly mirrored visually in the line "estate quieto." In each case, the semi-related italicized lines are validated by the later lines that correspond to each other through translation. The relationship between languages is reinforced as the disparate lines are connected at first orally and heteronymously within their own columns, and then across columns through translation. The foray into the other column's language marked by italics is therefore not a shift into a foreign language, but a recognition that both languages belong together, cohabiting each column.

Although the languages reside together and readily affect each other, there is still an inherent asymmetry present between languages. However, this distinctness does not act as a negating force whereby the two languages cancel each out. Instead, the two linguistic systems work together in a polyphonous fashion, each expressing either two facets of the same idea, or even two different ideas to create a fuller image. One such result of this polyphony is a phenomenon I term poetic chirality. A term for asymmetry important in various scientific fields, an object is said to be chiral when it cannot be superimposed over its mirror image. Human hands are one of the most recognized examples of chirality, and the term is derived from the Greek word for hand. Though they are mirror images of each other, there is no way to orient the left hand so that it coincides with the right. A key principle of chirality, especially in chemistry, is that although two compounds may be mirror images, they have vastly different chemical

properties that can lead to differing reactions. The notion of poetic chirality then is the concept of different phrases that are united, whether visually, orally, or semantically, but which produce divergent effects.

The phrase "*disquiet estate!*" echoed subsequently by "estate quieto" is visually chiral. The two utterances are almost perfect heteronyms; they mirror each other nearly exactly, but they do not coincide because their meanings are radically different.

Compare this with the earlier example of the phrases connected by *sitizen/siudadano*. The syntactical structures are very different, but they evoke similar meanings. This earlier example reflects most translations, where the unique grammatical framework of each language is used distinctively to express a common idea. The chiral phrase seems to proceed in the opposite direction. Instead of using distinct tools to reach a comparable conclusion, the poetic voice instead embarks from a visually similar position to express divergent meanings. Although these phrases seem to resist the goal of traditional translation to express a common idea, poetic chirality is still able to contribute to the idea that all translation should be viewed as a summative process instead of involving an inherent loss (Venuti 2013, 4, 37). This example deals with a visual translation instead of a semantic one, but the two languages express more together than they could individually, demonstrating a synergistic approach to translation rather than a reductive one.

The next italicized section is unique to the English column, and like the previous example, it is based on a cross-linguistic heteronym. With "*a dime? jno me digas!*" the



poetic voice once again favors visual resemblance over semantic similarity. However, the English-Spanish heteronymous pair this time of *dime/dime* is only implicitly referenced. Although a coin in English, “dime” in Spanish is the second-person informal command to say something. The meaning in Spanish is alluded to as the response to the question, “*¡no me digas!*” means both literally “don’t tell me”, and more colloquially, “you don’t say” or “no way!” This visual pun serves two functions that contribute to the poem’s theme of linguistic liminality. The link between the two phrases of the verse demonstrates that the languages, instead of acting as tongues foreign to each other, reside together naturally and play off each other’s sensibilities. Additionally, by basing the connection on a heteronym, the reader is forced to return to the phrase and reread it in the other language. In other words, the link between the two phrases is built on a graphic representation that is visually identical, but audibly distinct, directing the reader to read the phrase with both an English and a Spanish pronunciation. The result of reading the word in both languages is metonymic of the entire bilingual poem; the reader who has accepted the invitation to step into the interliminal space between poems goes constantly back and forth between the two languages and finally settles in a space somewhere in between the two. This in turn becomes a linguistic metaphor for the Puerto Rican *sitizen* that lives a life in transit between the island and the mainland.

Having examined the other examples of the creative use of italics, the reader arrives back at the point of departure for this analysis: the italicized two lines in the facing column’s language that tie the rest of the stanza together structurally and thematically. Each of these sections censures financial institutions, holding them responsible for the

financial meltdown and condemning the bank bailouts that they received. In the Spanish column, *“no shoutouts for the wall st. crews/ no bailouts no more,”* and *“tírale al corillo milla de oro/ me late que no hay rescate ya”* on the English side demonstrates that far from being only a “rough [...] translation” (Puican 2011, 1) of each other, these two phrases work together to reinforce their shared themes from different perspectives. Following the pattern established by the earlier italicized examples, these lines create a connection between the two languages through the word choice and poetic devices, as well as reinforcing the cultural connection between the U.S. and Puerto Rico with a shared criticism of global capitalism.

Comparable to the beginning of the stanza, these sections are characterized by a strong presence of assonance and consonance in both languages. Similarly, this equal appraisal of the word choice in each language creates a sense of parity between languages; it also lends a musicality and flow to the sections. Furthermore, each section prominently features colloquial language, such as the double negative of *“no bailouts no more”* and the idiomatic use of *“tírale”* to connote disrespect towards another group. The combination of informal speech and musicality resembles pop music, with these two sections echoing a refrain or chorus to a popular song. The presence of these lines in their respective columns reflects the likelihood that a person in Puerto Rico will hear a song in English on the radio, at the same moment that someone in the United States is listening to reggaeton. Thus, these sections reinforce the link between languages and cultures that the other italicized segments have emphasized, while also providing a commentary on the globalized nature of the modern world.

Beyond the semantic ties that these two sections share, the cultural connections in these segments signal the larger themes of globalization and an increasing sense of statelessness for Puerto Ricans. Each column asserts that transnational financial firms are undeserving of further support from the public. However, in addition to the similar message, these institutions are united geographically, even though they reside 1,600 miles apart. The names of the two locations mentioned, Wall St. and la milla de oro, are both rooted in imperialistic periods that are reflected by the current global capitalism that Noel critiques throughout his poetry. Evocation of these two places thus connects the argument to the colonial-imperial past that they each share, implying that this past is in part to blame for the financial collapse, contributing to the current mindset that triggered the crisis.

La milla de oro is the nickname given to a one-mile section of Ponce de León Avenue in the Hato Rey district of Puerto Rico's capital San Juan. Literally meaning the golden mile, la milla de oro is the headquarters of many national and international banks and other financial institutions, leading it to also be designated as the "Wall Street of the Caribbean." More than merely the Puerto Rican equivalent to the financial capital of Wall Street in New York, there are significant cultural connections between these two streets that stem from their eerily similar imperial origins, reinforcing Noel's critique of global capitalism and consumerism.

As stated, la milla de oro is a section of Ponce de León Avenue in San Juan. As one of the most infamous conquistadors of the Spanish empire, Juan Ponce de León was

instrumental in expanding Isabella and Ferdinand's power and wealth through brutal repression of the native population. He was rewarded for his role in the Higüey massacre on the island of Hispaniola by being appointed provincial governor, which then led to his governorship of Puerto Rico. As Puerto Rico's first governor, he furthered the interest of the crown by subjecting the local taínos to the forced-labor *encomienda* system and quelling a subsequent rebellion with ruthless severity (Van Middeldyk 1903, 11-29). It might seem surprising that such a prominent avenue in the island's capital would be named after an explorer with such a reputation for brutality. It serves as a reminder that the victors are allowed to dictate the narrative of history, a fact reflected in the various Columbus Day celebrations in the Americas, despite Columbus' well-documented atrocities in the New World.

In Manhattan, a parallel pattern of imperial viciousness emerges. When New York was still New Amsterdam, the Dutch residing in present day New Jersey signed a peace accord with the native tribe living on Manhattan. A short time later, despite the peace treaty, the colonial governor sent his troops to the island and slaughtered the entire tribe, save a few survivors who escaped and spread word of the treachery to neighboring natives. Enraged by the betrayal of trust, the remaining tribes became increasingly hostile toward the white settlers, necessitating the construction of a defensive palisade, for which Wall Street is said to be named (Sidis 2009, chapter 7). In each case, these major streets with their important financial institutions are linked to an imperial past in which the victorious control everything, including the way history is remembered. The poetic voice condemns the "crews" from each of these locations for

the avarice that prompted the subprime mortgage collapse, linking it with the insatiable greed of the imperial colonizers. This geo-historical connection makes it clear that global capitalism is the modern imperial urge reincarnate, and the effects of its associated avariciousness are every bit as destructive as the massacres of the conquistadors.

An unfortunate link that these streets share is the income inequality of the two areas. Manhattan is a place where the distribution gap is uncomfortably easy to observe, while in addition to la milla de oro, Hato Rey in San Juan is also home to some of the poorest areas of the city. Compounding the frustration with the financial sector, seen as responsible for the terrible economic climate, the poetic voice argues that the richest segment of society is unworthy of the bailouts, which should instead be distributed among the poor. The relief that there won't be any more bailouts voiced by *"me late que no hay rescate ya"* invokes a demand for justice and accountability, not only for the recent economic crisis, but for the centuries of colonialism and imperialism that have shaped the world into the current global capitalist market that propagates inequality and makes the rich richer.<sup>38</sup>

The mention of these two financial headquarters in the opposing language column creates a bond between the two geographic locations by portraying the anger that

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<sup>38</sup> "Mas hoy día, especialmente a partir de los años 80, tanto las demandas del proyecto liberal estadolibrista, como las de sus opositores nacionales y socialistas, implosionan frente a los aconteceres postcoloniales y los mandatos tecnoglobalizadores que se nos vienen encima y que nos interpelan y construyen de una manera muy distinta. Se impone, en esta ocasión, los mandatos de una sociedad tecnoinformática e hiperconsumista que, sin dejar de mantener los viejos anclajes coloniales, se ve sometida a la globalización y sus nuevos y agresivos agenciamientos del capitalismo tardío y sus distintas maneras de territorializar la cultura (Díaz 2008, 19). See also Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 148.

citizens everywhere feel toward not only their own greedy financial institutions, but those abroad as well. In a worldwide capitalist market, all global participants are complicit in the graft that sent ripples throughout economies during the financial meltdown. By siting these two streets in their respective columns, the speaker also connects them through the experiences of the modern transnational Puerto Rican citizen, who is frequently engaged in a circular migration between Puerto Rico and the United States, and back again.<sup>39</sup> This system of return migration leads the migrant to be forever stuck somewhere between the two places, “still in transit” as Noel remarks elsewhere in the poetry collection, because the postmodern condition prevents them from ever fully arriving and belonging to one culture or one country. The connection between these two places foreshadows the poem “You are now entering Bronx Piedras” from Noel’s next collection, where the back-and-forth fluctuations of the migrant have caused the two places to come together, creating a new space where New York and Puerto Rico flow together in a linguistic and cultural confluence. As life in the modern world makes everything and everyone interconnected and interdependent, financial ruin causes a disastrous domino effect whose impacts are felt everywhere.

Although distinct from the use of italics in the two versions, the use of quotation marks in the first stanza is similar in that it also emphasizes the common space that the two languages occupy, reflecting on status and position through the language choices that speakers make. The main distinction that these phrases have with the previous

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<sup>39</sup> See Flores’ (2009) discussion of circular migration and diasporization in the book *The Diaspora Strikes Back*.

examples is that instead of portraying the appropriateness of the other language in its current location, they reflect a new amalgamation, influenced by, but separate from the original languages. The quotation marks in the first stanza represent an ongoing Spanglish-ization throughout the poem, the result of the juxtaposition of the two languages together to produce something new in the third space; a cultural and linguistic offspring of the parent languages. This particular use of punctuation at the beginning of the poem notifies the reader of a transition into a Spanglish accent, before language-mixing and code-switching become more widespread throughout the poem. An example from the opening poem in the collection provides the context to understand the quotation marks as a sign of a cultural combination.

In the poem “Hi Then (salutation),” the speaker ends the first page with the phrase “O, say, can juicy?” As in “sitibodies,” the quotation marks suggest a language shift of sorts, revealing that this seemingly unintelligible statement is in fact the opening line of the Star Spangled Banner uttered in a Spanglish accent. This blending of languages, this not-quite-English-but-not-quite-Spanish example is facilitated by the rhyme scheme. “O, say, can juicy?” completes the terza rima rhyme pattern of “*lo que nunca se traduce*” and “up for a loosy—.” Therefore, the linguistic hybrid is only able to maintain the structure and finish the rhyme after the input from the other two languages. Furthermore, the proclamation is a view of life in the United States from a perspective in transition; it is the American dream as embodied by an immigrant whose cultural identity is informed by both languages.

Following the same pattern, the words in quotation marks in “sitibodis” point toward a shift from the languages of the two columns into a third option, which is then related back to Spanish and English. The clearest sign that these encapsulated phrases are distinct from the rest of the language in the poem is their uniformity on both sides of the page. The phrases are identical in each column because, as a form of Spanglish, they can’t be readily translated into the other languages. Following the pattern of reinterpreting the beginning of the U.S. national anthem, the words “estates” and “unite” form the name of the United States as pronounced in Spanglish. These words directly prompt the phrase “*disquiet estate*,” which in turn triggers the phrase “*estate quieto*.” Thus, the Spanglish words act as a stimulus for the subsequent interlingual wordplay that stands out in the poem.

The line following the diatribe against the financial workers features the next example of code-switching. The Spanish side states “la siti owns these bancos” while the English column says “these benches are siti-owned.” These lines demonstrate a transition from the earlier examples; they are no longer identified as Spanglish or code-switching by quotation marks in the poem. The speaker appears to tacitly declare that the quotation marks are unnecessary because Spanglish is universally understood in a globalized world. These lines also demonstrate the overlapping space of communication that the languages share as they are presented together.<sup>40</sup> The Spanglish from these lines riffs on the fact that *bancos* can mean both banks and benches in Spanish, but the

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<sup>40</sup> See Fitch 1988, 158, where he argues that self-translators live in a state of constant awareness of the existence of this multiplicity of tongues and overlapping spaces.



pun only works with both languages together. The Spanish side suggests banks, clearly evoking the corporation Citibank, while the English side chooses benches.

By supporting each other, the two columns provide different takes on the same phenomenon; the comforting notion that the city owns the benches for our use, and the much more sinister idea that Citibank owns all the banks. These views in turn comment on the ideals and pitfalls of capitalism and globalization. On one hand, both of these forces are lauded as ways of benefitting the entire world and lifting the lower classes out of poverty. However, in practice, they widen income disparities and bolster existing power differentials.

Citibank has a very large presence on both Wall Street and la milla de oro. As one of the biggest players in the global financial industry, Citibank is the quintessential capitalist corporation that bears much of the responsibility for the global downturn. By using Citibank and similar historical backgrounds to link these two locations, the speaker reflects the language mixture that is ubiquitous in “sitibodis,” which in turn evokes the fallout of living in a globally connected society.

The three poems examined so far all use self-translation to elucidate globalization’s hold on modern civilization, whether through the cultural contamination of Puerto Rico in the first two, or by the linguistic in-between-ness found in “sitibodis”. The final poem also uses self-translation to deal with postmodernity’s impact on Puerto Rico, but rather than emphasizing the capitalistic and consumerism aspects of globalization, it focuses

on the sociopolitical deterritorialization and marginalization that has accompanied the globalization of Puerto Rico.

### **Interstitial Immigrants between the Lands of Many and Few**

The work of Urayoán Noel is characterized by inventive wordplay that manipulates languages and structure to reflect modern life in a globalized world through the often jarring juxtaposition of traditional poetic forms with 21<sup>st</sup> century themes of capitalism, consumerism, and globalization. The unifying trait of his poetry is the innovation and creativity that mordantly examines the result of cultural contact. By constantly engaging in different poetic styles and techniques, Noel echoes the changing modern landscape that seems to be always chasing after the next fad. This knack for novelty and experimentation is especially evident in the poet's bilingual poetry. There is a progression of innovation, from the relatively traditional take on bilingual poetry in *Kool Logic*, to the code-switching dense example of "sitibodis." The poem "Balada del exilio/*Exile Ballad*" (2012, 13-14)<sup>41</sup> takes the experimentation a step further by using self-translation and separate traditional poetic forms from each language to create a single song-like poem that articulates the exile experience for many immigrants in the postmodern world. The ordeal of the immigrant as impacted by globalization, especially the return migration patterns of the Puerto Rican migrant/exile is the connecting theme in all the poetry in the poetry collection *Los días porosos*. Although Noel shifts away from the parody of crass consumerism prevalent in his previous works, the link between

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<sup>41</sup> Appendix 1: Poetry of Urayoán Noel.

globalization and Puerto Rico in this book, as well as the in-betweenness of hybridity, still forms the cornerstone of his poetry.

I have argued previously that the two languages of the bilingual poems from *Kool Logic* initially parallel each other while remaining separate. As each poem progresses however, the versions begin to interact and exert a mutual pull on the neighboring column. The same cannot be said regarding “Balada del exilio/ *Exile Ballad*,” where from the beginning the “translation” of poetic meter helps to create a unifying rhythm that flows throughout the poem and across languages.

Isochrony refers to the theoretical rhythm of each language, where the language is divided into equal units of time. It has been postulated that languages form their inherent rhythm in three different ways, with Spanish and English belonging to separate categories. Spanish is a syllable-timed language, which means that each syllable is approximately equal in duration. English on the other hand is a stress-timed language, meaning that there is an equal amount of time between stressed syllables. While empirical studies have failed to validate these distinctions and the theory lacks academic consensus, the perception of inherent differences between languages has contributed to the metric foundations of the two languages (Pamies Bertrán 1999). Thus, as syllabic verse that has a fixed number of syllables per line, Spanish poetry is markedly different from English accentual verse, which places the emphasis on the number of stresses per line, disregarding the syllables to instead focus on the prosodic “feet.” These divergent metric systems reflect the different rhythmic qualities of the two languages, a fact that

is emphasized when poetry is presented in a bilingual format. For that reason, the structural integration of this poem from *Los días porosos*, wherein the distinct poetic traditions complement each other, is just one of various ways that the languages interact to provide insight into the experience of an immigrant or exile.

As a self-styled “performalist,” Noel values poetic forms that resonate with historic traditions, and he is constantly adapting his take on “translating” these poetic forms in his bilingual poetry. The two poems analyzed from *Kool Logic* demonstrate this evolution of formal choices. The poetic voice from “En los suburbios lejanos/ In the Faraway Suburbs” uses the *décima* in the Spanish column, and a ten-line verse with intermittent rhyming on the English side. In “Kool Logic/ La lógica kool,” *octavillas* on the Spanish side are the analogues to heroic quatrains in the English column. In each case, forms culturally relevant to the respective languages determine the structure of the poem, resulting in two parallel or echoing versions of the same poem. In contrast, “Balada del exilio/*Exile Ballad*” features a formal similarity between the two languages despite their different metric foundations, which surpasses the structural ties of the previous poetry books. This connection between languages in this last poem is predicated on the poetic voice’s ability to bridge the gap between syllabic and accentual verse traditions by overlaying both languages with a trochaic rhythm.

Each column of the poem stays true to the underlying language rhythm; the Spanish lines are organized around a set number of syllables and the English verses are based on an established number of stressed feet. Despite these separate foundations, the

stressed syllables in each language are organized in a way that creates a shared rhythm. The English column is written in trochaic trimeter, where the three feet of each line consist of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one. Spanish poetry isn't generally divided into feet, but the six-syllable lines found here generally begin with a prosodic accent, giving it a similar trochaic rhythm. Whereas the traditional rhythmic tendencies from each language stem from completely separate backgrounds, the poetic voice here manages to create a single unified rhythm. Furthermore, both columns have an ABAB rhyme scheme. The rhyme and rhythm of these two languages create a common current throughout the poem, converting it from two parallel versions into one interlocking poem. Integrating the two columns into one coherent work lends it a song-like quality that helps to portray the heritage and cultural legacy of the speaker.<sup>42</sup>

In tandem with the rhyme scheme and rhythm, the typeset presentation of this poem also creates the impression of a single poem instead of two side-by-side versions. This is accomplished through the spacing and orientation of the two language columns. Traditionally, bilingual poetry is clearly separated into two different columns, with each column on its own page and directly across from the corresponding stanza. The structure of "*Balada del exilio/Exile Ballad*" lacks this clear-cut separation between languages. In this poem, the two languages share the same page and instead of appearing across from each other, the stanzas are staggered, overlapping the vertical

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<sup>42</sup> The concept of the two columns working together to form one song-like poem is reminiscent of Hokenson and Munson's argument that the source of meaning in bilingual literature is found in a liminal space, between the two versions. See their introduction to *The Bilingual Text* (2007) 1-16.

center of the page slightly. This format helps to create the impression and appearance of a single poem instead of merely side-by-side parallel versions. This in turn encourages the reader to progress through both languages of the poem together, rather than reading through one completely and then the other.

While many of the traditional formatting choices that isolate the languages from each other have been altered, the languages are still not completely integrated stylistically on the page; the Spanish is typeset in standard font and the English in italics. However, instead of a wedge driving the two languages apart, the different fonts can be read in a way that reinforces the union between languages by creating a back and forth reminiscent of important musical patterns in the Caribbean. In music, call and response features a solo singing section followed by choral section that acts as a commentary or answer to the first section (Orovio 2004, 191). A central characteristic of Caribbean music, this pattern displays the long-lasting influence of African culture brought to the region through the slave trade. In Sub-Saharan Africa, call and response is a form of democratic participation found in all aspects of society, including religious ceremonies, public gatherings and musical expression. That these patterns have so ingrained themselves in Caribbean music, especially Latino Caribbean music, is evidence of the cultural connection that Caribbean Latinos feel to their African heritage. Often, this focus on African culture is highlighted when Puerto Ricans immigrate to the United States, as they find themselves marginalized from mainstream culture and begin to

more readily identify with African-American culture.<sup>43</sup> By echoing African influences that become more prominent in diaspora, the speaker is able to represent structurally the thematic content of the poem: the song of the immigrant exiled from the homeland.

The structure of the poem further reinforces the thematic basis of the poem as the parallel accounts given in the call and response format diverge, reflecting the fracturing of identity and perspective that immigrants undergo when they leave their home country. The poem is composed of a series of declarations in Spanish, followed by answers in English that are part echo and part illumination of the previous stanzas. This format allows the speaker to demonstrate the effect of living abroad, where life between languages and cultures splinters the perception of the self and the world by portraying the same experience from different perspectives, often with insights that are unique to each language. Thus, it is in the interaction between languages, or through what is said implicitly in one and explicitly in another, that the poetic voice provides a panorama of the diaspora and insight into the mind of the exile.

The first stanzas establish the approach of the poem, demonstrating that both languages are necessary to accurately perceive the situation. The Spanish stanza finishes with “quedan los apodos/ que ayer nos llamamos,” while the English stanza states “*you*

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<sup>43</sup> “The Cuban-Puerto Rican continuum, which has formed the crux of Caribbean Latino cultural history, is a field of blackness in the U.S. context. The shared African moorings of their national and popular cultures carry over strongly to the diasporic context, such that if they share language culture with other Spanish speakers, they at the same time share with fellow Caribbeans and other African-descendant peoples those deep cultural heritages, and of course deeply racialized social histories” (Soto-Crespo 2009, 64). Laó-Montes and Dávila (2001) further entwines these two groups by stating they share a “respective long historical relationships as colonial/racial subjects within the U.S. empire and their subordinated location in the reproduction of those hierarchies today” (104).

*and I are left over/ with the names we won't call/ one another when sober.*" Each language holds a piece of the puzzle and the reader would be left with an incomplete account of the events if she were privy to just one of the stanzas. Through the English column, the reader learns that the names that the poetic voice and the addressee call each other are malicious enough that they only use them when they are intoxicated. The Spanish side illuminates this exchange by stating that they the only thing left from the past are the "apodos, que ayer nos llamamos." Thus, only through the subtext that emerges from the interaction of languages can the reader see that yesterday the speaker and recipient were inebriated and called each other names that they regret.

The next set of stanzas continues the themes established in the opening section. These stanzas begin and end with a fairly traditional translation of the facing column as it opens "En tierra de algunos" on the left side, and "*In the land of some*" on the right. However, the center lines of each column once again depict the breach between languages as they represent experiences. The English side continues the idea of inebriation from the first stanza with the lines "*full of light and liquor/ we were forced to hum.*" Now the speaker comments that the consequence of the drunkenness is an inability to do anything useful, instead resorting to humming. The Spanish stanza doesn't mention intoxication, but it disapproves of the events, stating "éramos aquellos/ dos inoportunos." The judgment cast in this section intensifies the sentiment from the first stanzas where things were said that would never have surfaced if the speaker were in full control of himself and his situation. Although from a different semantic viewpoint, this connects with the notion on the English side that the speaker



and his companion had nothing left to do in their condition except hum. In each case, the characters that inhabit the poem are more like objects being acted upon, rather than subjects performing the action. On the Spanish side, they are “dos inoportunos” in the wrong place, and the English statement that they “*were forced to hum*” removes from them the choice and the responsibility for their actions.

The interaction of languages in the penultimate stanzas emphasizes another prominent theme found throughout the poem, which is the isolation and solitude felt by immigrants. Each stanza of the poem begins with a line that situates the speaker amid a group of people, such as “*In the land of all*” and “*In the land of some.*” Despite the allusions to other people, the speaker and the addressee interact with only each other in the poem. The fourth set of stanzas highlights the seclusion in a populated area, beginning with the line “*In the land of many.*” Both language versions obliquely refer to other people, only to reinforce the fact that the poetic voice and his companion only have each other. On the Spanish side, the poetic voice states “*éramos de los que/ alquilan cuartuchos/ en medio del bosque.*” A lodging arrangement based on renting implies both others who rent out the dingy rooms where the speaker stays as well as those who own the rooms. Despite this implication, the poetic voice and the addressee remain alone.

On the English side of the poem, a similar scene of isolation amid others is played out. Instead of referring to others to whom the speaker must pay rent, the English column infers more people through the comparative phrase “*We were not the poorest,*”

hinting that others are poorer. However, the true economic situation of the speaker is revealed as the speaker ends the stanza “*down to our last penny,/ camped out in the forest.*” The focus of these stanzas remains on the poetic voice and his companion, while placing them in the context of others in similar situations. Once again, from the interplay of languages arises a commentary on the hardships of the immigrant experience.

Both languages provide different viewpoints demonstrating feelings of loneliness and oppression in a foreign land. In the Spanish stanza, the poetic voice and the addressee are at the mercy of others to give them accommodations, as they “*alquilan cuartuchos en medio del bosque.*” This shows the persecution that exiles face from those with authority or power; oppression which results in the marginalization and isolation of the immigrants.<sup>44</sup> The English side indicates the poverty of others, but the knowledge of others in similar situations does not unite them in their suffering. Instead it separates them further as the protagonists of the poem remain alone as ever, “*camped out in the forest.*” The result is that the poetic voice has no one else to turn to except the addressee, the recipient of the apostrophe that courses throughout the poem. The inability to seek help or consolation from anyone else culminates in the final set of stanzas, where the speaker and his companion lie down and die together.

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<sup>44</sup> Laó-Montes and Dávila (2001, 39) refer to these unequal power exchanges as transculturation, a term developed by Fernando Ortiz in *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. The unequal exchange between hierarchical historical relationships has its foundations in colonial times, but its influences are still heavily felt today.

As the poem chronicles the journey of the exile, it concludes with the speaker and the addressee dying together in each other's arms. Although the poetic voice and his companion have constantly been marginalized and separated from others, their death in the final stanza is emphasized as a truly solitary experience. This stanza places the pair "*in the land of no one,*" contrasting with the other stanzas set "*in the land of all,*" "*some,*" "*few*" or "*many.*" The final fate of the speaker provides a counterpoint to the beginning stanza where the two characters cannot find their niche in the new society and feel "*left over*" and redundant amid so many others. By the end of the poem, the poetic voice and addressee still have not found a purpose or a place in the diaspora and are consigned to death alone in the moonlight.

The physical isolation of the last stanza reiterates the social segregation faced by the poetic voice, but it also emphasizes that the only person he can rely upon is the recipient of the apostrophe throughout the poem. The first person plural conjugations are used in every stanza to link the fate of the speaker with that of the addressee. Although they are separated from the rest of society, they perform every action in unison and it is impossible to disentangle the two from each other. So enmeshed and inseparable are the two characters, that the reader must question their identity. I argue that the apostrophe is directed at the poetic voice of the other language, which in turn is another facet of the speaker himself. As the poetic voice lives out his life in exile and eventually dies alone, the only interaction available to him is to access his own internal multilinguality. The dialogue between languages driving the poem is always expressed from the viewpoint of the exile, with the perspective shifting, according to the language

used. This dialogue is ultimately an inner monologue between the splintered identities of the immigrant, a result of life in diaspora.

The loneliness and ostracism felt by the speaker of this poem are the expected byproducts of the diasporic journey, as the exile deals with what Portes (1996) calls the “social aftershocks of the transnational metamorphosis” (3). This difficult transition, along with the exile’s feelings of subalternity and marginalization stem from the power differentials that lead to the subject’s dislodgment from the homeland: “Since the act of displacement intrinsic to diasporic experience is typically (even if not axiomatically) attributable to conditions of oppression and violence, diaspora most commonly connotes subordination and marginalization rather than collective or individual empowerment” (Flores 2009, 18). The disenfranchisement experienced by the speakers here is representative of forces that propagate immigration patterns among Puerto Ricans,<sup>45</sup> but it is also characteristic of the way that both island and mainland Puerto Ricans are marginalized.

Due to the unique, pseudo-colonial or neocolonial relationship that Puerto Rico has with the U.S., Puerto Ricans are subject to bilateral “minoritization,” regardless of their location. Sotomayor Miletti (2009) explains this “doble minoridad” as it applies to those living on the island:

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<sup>45</sup> “What is usually lacking from the many disparaging past assessments of the US Puerto Rican population is a more discerning sociohistorical analysis of ways in which the colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States perpetuates most of the conditions that produce migration. The long-term consequences on Puerto Ricans living in a racially segregated and socially stratified environment and the structural factors that limit their social mobility and keep them as part of an underprivileged working class are also missing from those analyses” (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 148).

Somos marginados en el contexto latinoamericano y en el norteamericano. Examinados desde Latinoamérica, la ciudadanía norteamericana empantana de alguna manera nuestra producción cultural, según algunos; y analizados desde los Estados Unidos, nos hemos convertido en 'latinos', por lo cual sólo se privilegia en dicha producción una temática identitaria y una actitud lingüística bivalente en el momento de estimar su inclusión en dicha tradición (1039).

Mainland Puerto Ricans face a similar process as they are primarily identified by racial terms in the U.S., lumping them into the non-white minority category, while they are pejoratively called Nuyoricans when they return to Puerto Rico, with the connotation that their experience in the U.S. has corrupted them culturally and linguistically.<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, while not all Puerto Ricans can relate directly to the plight of the diaspora, the experience of marginalization is germane to Boricuas due to the sociopolitical relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. In this way, the poet once again situates the Puerto Rican condition at the center of the poetic experience, demonstrating the ramifications of globalization on Puerto Rico in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Although from a different viewpoint than the parodies of capitalism and consumerism found in the earlier poems, the critique of globalization courses through this final poem as well with its focus on migration. Transnational relocation, especially

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<sup>46</sup> "Various terms, such as 'Nuyorican' and 'Neorican,' are used to refer to the English speakers, particularly to distinguish them from the 'real' Puerto Ricans who never lived away from the Island. The use of such terms is resented by some, especially those who eventually return to Puerto Rico: it's hard, in one lifetime, to be a *spic* in New York and then a *Nuyorriqueño* back home" (Mohr 1982, *xiv*). See also Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006, 185.

as stemming from the desire to improve one's socioeconomic situation, is exacerbated by the market forces that unite the global economy.<sup>47</sup> By documenting the struggles of the migrant and the marginalization felt in diaspora, Noel unites himself with the voices of contemporary Puerto Rican poets whose poetry acts as "evidence and enduring rebuke of the unfulfilled promises of a meaningful citizenship by not one but two now complexly entangled societies, as well as a testimony to its inhabitants' refusal passively to reconcile themselves, in either locality, to a status and condition of abiding economic or social-cultural marginality" (Márquez 2007, xxxvi). This poetry builds on the cultural legacy left by 20<sup>th</sup> century Puerto Rican poets, from the earlier authors who emphasized Puerto Rican identity in order to combat the forces of Americanization, to the poets of the 1970s and afterwards who began to enlist the use of English to help create a national identity and decried the globalization of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico's response to the globalizing forces of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is at the center of Noel's oeuvre as he parodies and criticizes the acceptance of the ideologies and attitudes in contemporary Puerto Rico which were resisted for so long. Noel's upbringing gives him special insight to examine globalization from both a North American as well as a Latin American perspective, a hybrid sensibility that he exemplifies, but which is inherently Puerto Rican (Pabón 2003, 42). Globalization is not only culturally relevant as Puerto Rico confronts the changes that accompany

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<sup>47</sup> "It is indisputable that the globalization processes of the early twenty-first century intensify the forces that foster international migration, driving migrants of many national origins and from the less-privileged regions of the world to seek their fortunes in highly industrialized metropolitan countries like the United States" (Acosta-Belén and Santiago, 2006, p. 225).

postmodernism, *la isla* is also at the geographical and historic center of the very concept of globalization. García Canclini (1995) calls the spread of European culture in Latin America, and specifically the Caribbean, the first attempt at creating an “economía-mundo”, wherein “la cristianización de los indígenas, su alfabetización en español y portugués, el diseño colonial y luego moderno del espacio urbano, la uniformación de sistemas políticos y educacionales fueron consiguiendo uno de los procesos homogeneizadores más eficaces del planeta” (149). By emphasizing the impact of globalization on Puerto Rico, Noel’s work is situated at the epicenter of these homogenizing forces that have transformed the cultural landscape of the entire world. Ironically, the multilingual nature of his work is particularly proficient in articulating these changes in Puerto Rico, a nation that for so long sought to establish its identity by distancing itself from the influences of the English language.

Throughout his poetry, Urayoán Noel does not use self-translation as solely a means of reaching a larger audience or bridging language gaps, which some critics cite as one of the primary purposes of self-translation (Castro 2009, 30; Bassnett 2013, 18; Grutman 2013, 67). Instead, self-translation becomes an extension of the critique of globalization found throughout his poetry as the various linguistic versions of each poem interact with and change each other, mirroring the way that postmodernism has indelibly transformed Puerto Rico. Although Noel’s approach evolves over time, the constant factor among these poems is the integration of the structure and format of self-translation into the poetic theme of Puerto Rico’s place in the postmodern world; in each case, the process of self-translation complements the acerbic criticism of 21<sup>st</sup>

century culture. In “Los suburbios lejanos/In the Faraway Suburbs,” self-translation is used to illustrate the Americanization of Puerto Rico and the culture clash that arises from globalization as the speaker wanders from Puerto Rico to New York and California, and in between Spanish and English, only to find the homogenizing impact of globalization everywhere. In “Kool Logic/La lógica kool,” the impact of capitalism and consumerism on a globalized world is exemplified by the exaltation of excess found in the poetic images and mirrored by the use of self-translation to mix rhyme and poetic forms, creating a postmodern pastiche parodying global avarice. With its transcreative code-switching and heavy cross-linguistic influence, “sitibodis” uses self-translation and the bilingual format to portray multilinguality as one of the outcomes of a postmodern society. Self-translation is also central to the theme of diaspora caused by globalization in “Balada del exilio/ *Exile Ballad*,” where it creates a dialogue between languages that echoes the hybridity made up of “sometimes clashing identities” experienced by modern Puerto Ricans. Although carried out in different ways and highlighting divergent aspects of globalization, the uses of self-translation examined here reinforce Noel’s viewpoint of Puerto Rico as it confronts the cultural shifts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, making them an indispensable addition to his body of work.

Noel’s tactics of self-translation, shifting and adapting within his own work, are quite divergent to the way that Gelman and Castaño approach self-translation. Despite the stylistic and formalistic differences, self-translation in Noel’s work points to that of the other two poets. Noel’s use of self-translation, especially in a bilingual format, allows him to assert a control over language and effect a cross-linguistic germination, resulting



in a new third space. This new space, formed between the languages and poetic versions is also a fundamental aspect of Gelman's self-translated collection. Moreover, Noel's use of self-translation to articulate a Puerto Rican hybridity that cannot be restricted to dualities connects directly to Castaño's poetry, which depicts a postnational Galicia that has broken free of the nationalistic view of Galician identity based solely on the Galician language.

## CHAPTER III

### ***NILA CAZA DIL TIEMPU: USING LANGUAGE, TIME, AND THE WORD TO CRAFT A SPACE OF REUNION IN DIBAXU***

In March 1995, the country of Argentina was glued to the television as retired Navy Captain Adolfo Scilingo appeared on the most influential Argentine news show over the course of two weeks, confessing his role in the Dirty War “death flights,” a practice that involved drugging supposed subversives and then throwing them out of planes over the ocean (Feitlowitz 1998, 193-95). Scilingo’s confession opened the door for other military officials directly involved in kidnapping, torture, and murder to openly admit their crimes, verifying the military regime’s responsibility for the insidious crimes over a decade after the military junta relinquished control of Argentina in 1983. Although Raúl Alfonsín—the democratically elected president following the junta’s abdication—initially investigated human rights abuses and prosecuted military commanders, he was later pressured by the military to declare a statute of limitations in the form of a “*punto final*,” after which military leaders could not be held responsible for their crimes. The dictatorship’s latitude was intensified by Alfonsín’s successor President Carlos Saúl Menem as he pardoned all of the previously convicted officers within the first year of his presidency.<sup>48</sup> It is within this atmosphere of impunity that the confessions initiated by Scilingo rocked the Argentine psyche; what Feitlowitz describes as a moment just when “many Argentines were beginning to regain a sense of communal space” (Feitlowitz

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<sup>48</sup> See Wright, 2007, p.142-160

1998, 193). Even though the security and inviolability of this “communal space” was stolen from the citizens of Argentina by the military dictatorship through a brutal campaign of state-sponsored terrorism and suppression, most Argentines chose to ignore the atrocities committed by the dictatorship and act as if nothing had changed in their country until their collective consciousness was rattled by these confessions in 1995. However, a year before the “Scilingo effect” gripped the nation, the Argentine poet Juan Gelman published the unique poetry collection *dibaxu* (1994).<sup>49</sup> Rather than attempt to directly recover the communal space stripped away during the Dirty War, this book strives instead to create a new space for hope and love, an interliminal and interlingual space of solace.

Certainly Juan Gelman’s most formally experimental book, *dibaxu* is a self-translated, bilingual Ladino<sup>50</sup> and Modern Spanish poetry collection that Gelman wrote in exile which confronts the pain and loss that he suffered during the Dirty War through tender love poems. I argue that *dibaxu* offers an alternate viewpoint of the homeland and loved ones than that traditionally embraced by writers in exile, including Gelman’s own earlier exilic poetry. Rather than the conventional agony over those places and people left behind or anger directed at those people and regimes responsible for the

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<sup>49</sup> I have decided to respect Gelman’s “de-capitalization” of the title of this book throughout this chapter. Through the course of Gelman’s exilic poetry, there is a progression away from standard capitalization and punctuation rules that seems to culminate in *dibaxu*. I believe that this is in part due to the effort to return to a time in the past when linguistic rules were not firmly set and the language was more mercurial.

<sup>50</sup> The name of the language of the Sephardic people is hotly contested and debated. For the sake of simplicity, I refer to it as Ladino throughout this chapter. For more information on the different names and meanings, see Balbuena 2009, 286-87.

poet's deterritorialization, the poetic voice of *dibaxu* is hopeful, with an emphasis on his love for the addressee. The poems in this collection are able to focus on love instead of mourning because, rather than dwelling on what has been lost or taken away, the speaker uses his poetry to craft a new space where he can be reunited with his loved one. This new location grows directly out of the poetry as meaning trembles between the languages, opening an interliminal position wherein the speaker uses the poetry to form a new space outside of linear history, but crafted from time itself and the word itself. The result of this "spatialization of time" (Fabry 2008, 233-38) is the creation of a space for reunification that helps to revive the lost love.<sup>51</sup> Balbuena (2016) contends that "to write his exile and express his deterritorialized, decentered identity, Gelman abandons his Castellano and instead writes in a minor language, born of an experience of marginalization and exclusion, and without a center of power" (156). I argue that while Gelman's adoption of Ladino is a self-marginalization that places him outside the sphere of influence of the military dictatorship, he doesn't fully abandon his native tongue. Instead, the bilingual format of *dibaxu* is central to the collection as the modern Spanish interacts with the anachronistic Ladino draw attention to the interliminal space, creating the new space of reunion.

The coup d'état of March 24, 1976 which ushered in the military dictatorship that ruled Argentina until 1983 was both expected, and for the most part, welcomed by the

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<sup>51</sup> Throughout this chapter, I refer to the speaker's "loved one." Similar to the mystical view of the "beloved," the loved one here represents everything from which the speaker has been separated, and for which he yearns. In the case of Gelman, the "love" of *dibaxu* represents the family members and friends that he lost in the Dirty War, as well as Argentina itself. See Montanaro and Ture 1998, 28 for more information.

general population for two key reasons. First, the Argentine people were accustomed to a long history of military takeovers, with nine successful military coups and twenty-one different presidential administrations between 1930 and 1976 (Wright 2007, 96) and second, the preceding twenty-two month administration of Isabel Perón—the widow of three-time president Juan Perón—was characterized by chaos and ineptitude, and the military intervention was viewed as necessary to halt the economic decline (Ibid. 100, Feitlowitz 1998, 20-21). Although the military regime represented a dramatic political shift, it also continued a war against the left which had begun in the previous administration.

Soon after assuming control, and almost two years before the military coup, Isabel Perón's administration organized death squads under the Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (AAA) to persecute and "eradicate" all "subversive elements" present in Argentina (Feitlowitz 1998, 6). This anti-subversive Dirty War was so effective that months before the coup that installed him as the first junta leader, Jorge Rafael Videla declared that the militant left was "absolutely impotent," with "little fighting capability" left (Quoted in Wright 2007, 102). Regardless, the military dictatorship continued the ruthless war against any that opposed them for seven more years, leading to an estimated 30,000 victims. A hallmark of the Dirty War, and the reason that exact figures of victims are impossible to know, was the term coined by the AAA and the military regime of *los desaparecidos*, making "the term 'disappear' a sinister transitive verb" (Ibid. 108). Having observed the international backlash against the Chilean coup across the Andes two and a half years earlier, the disappearances of subversive victims by

Argentine military junta allowed the regime to deny all knowledge and involvement of the war crimes because there was no paper trail to follow or corpse to identify (Ibid. 29-30).<sup>52</sup> Additionally, the disappearances advanced the dictatorship's mission by fomenting terror and uncertainty, discouraging criticism and reprisal from the family and friends of *desaparecidos*. Juan Gelman's personal experience is in many ways exemplary of the loss and suffering experienced by those whom the government deemed subversive.

As a writer active in the communist movement since his early youth, Gelman was forced to exile himself in Rome in 1975, after receiving death threats from the AAA. In Europe, he briefly joined the Movimiento Peronista Montonero (MPM), an exilic opposition group, before renouncing it a few years later in 1979 (Mercado 2008, 12-13). Although the military relinquished control of Argentina in 1983, Gelman was unable to return to his homeland until 1988 because of his connections with the MPM, and during his exile, many of his closest friends and family members fell victim to the violence of the military regime. His daughter, son, and pregnant daughter-in-law were kidnapped and tortured in 1976 soon after the military coup. His son was murdered in the months following the abduction and his daughter-in-law was forced to give birth in a covert government site, where her child was taken away from her before she was murdered herself. Adding to the grief of exile, Gelman's mother also died of a heart attack while he was barred from the country. Additionally, many other friends and writers close to

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<sup>52</sup> See also Feitlowitz 1998, 49.

Gelman were disappeared by the government in this period (Montanaro and Ture 1998, 95-97).

For these reasons, Gelman refers to exile as a “castigo duro,” adding that the Greeks considered exile a punishment “peor que la muerte” (Ibid. 27). Conceding that “desexilio” (Bocannera 1999, 46) doesn’t exist, he explains that “al dolor y a la lejanía [del exilio] le tenés que sumar la impotencia” (Montanaro and Ture 1998, 21). Though it wasn’t published until 1994, *dibaxu* was composed while Gelman was exiled in Europe in 1983 and 1984 in response to the deterritorialization and feelings of powerlessness that he felt at that time. In his acceptance speech of the Cervantes Award in 2007, Gelman states that the deprivation inflicted on him by the dictatorship through exile and the forced disappearance of his loved ones is a fate worse than death: “Yo moría muchas veces y más con cada noticia de un amigo o compañero asesinado o desaparecido que agrandaba la pérdida de lo amado.” In spite of the horrors of these years, Gelman acknowledges the role of poetry for confronting the pain inflicted by others, stating that “ahí está la poesía: de pie contra la muerte” (Gelman 2007). It is through his firm belief in the redemptive power of poetry that Gelman is able to face his loss with the optimism found in *dibaxu*, creating a space where he is reunited with his loved ones.

He articulates his marginalized position of writing from exile by writing in a marginal tongue, a strategy of otherness that enables him to establish the new space of reunification outside of the historical narrative of the Dirty War. Balbuena (2009) notes

that *dibaxu* is “Gelman’s first public acknowledgement that he is Jewish” (284), at a time Semilla Durán (2014) comments that his other identity, “la Argentina, le ha sido prohibida” (179). This disassociation of the self from the national identity is a direct result of both the act of deterritorialization,<sup>53</sup> as well as the conscious efforts of the dictatorship to marginalize those citizens that oppose it. In Argentina, General Videla, leader of the first military junta, classified the supposed insurgents fighting against the government as those “we do not consider Argentine,” holding “ideas contrary to our western, Christian civilization” (Quoted in Wright 2007, 106). The latter part of this dictatorial rationalization indicates the government’s complicity in marginalizing the Jewish population of Argentina at this time. By identifying Argentina with its Christian values, the dictator reinforces the persecution and Anti-Semitism that Argentine Jews face, resulting in disproportionate suffering inflicted on the Jews throughout the Dirty War.<sup>54</sup> It is from this perspective of ostracization that Gelman chooses to further marginalize himself by adopting the Ladino language so that he can be reunited with his love in the new space created by his bilingual, self-translated poetry.

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<sup>53</sup> “Una vez que una persona es desterrada [...] se produce una ruptura entre el principio de ciudadanía sostenido por el Estado y el proyecto de nación que los exiliados han imaginado poder construir. Se disocian así los principios de nacionalidad y ciudadanía.” Roniger 2010, 145

<sup>54</sup> “Jews suffered disproportionately, in part because of their overrepresentation in some of the ‘subversive’ or suspect categories and professions, and in part owing to virulent anti-Semitism within the military and police and within the extreme right in general [...] Jews accounted for less than 2 percent of Argentina’s population but 10 percent of the disappeared. According to much evidence, they suffered even greater abuse and humiliation than non-Jews” (Wright 2007, 112-113). See also Finchelstein 2014, for a detailed analysis of the longstanding role of anti-semitism in Argentine nationalism and fascism that helped to lay the foundation for the ideology of the Dirty War.



In Latin America, including Gelman's Argentina, Sephardic Jews are viewed as a "minority within a minority" (Bejarano and Aizenberg 2012, *xiii*) dwarfed by larger Ashkenazic communities. Ladino, as the language of the Sephardim, is thus "marginal to Hebrew and even to Yiddish (Balbuena 2009, 285), a tongue that only exists in exile and is conceived as dwelling in a "double exile" with the passing of the majority of its speakers (Balbuena 2003, 189). Gelman's decision to write in a marginalized, exilic tongue is the first step of his self-marginalization. This course of action is intensified as the marginal language forms only one half of the equation of self-translation, a process that has been viewed as "something marginal, a sort of cultural or literary oddity, as a borderline case of both translation and literary studies" (Wilson 2009, 187). This double marginalization, first through Ladino, and then through the act of self-translation allows the speaker to assume an extra-territorial location from where he can enunciate his poetry, inviting his love to join him there.<sup>55</sup> This self-marginalization is crucial to Gelman's poetics for two reasons: it allows him to articulate his exile as well as withdraw to an interior position within his poetry, and therefore under his control. Thus, self-marginalization is the reappropriation of the very act of deterritorialization that cut off the poet from his loved ones, an act through which he is able to create the new space of reunification.

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<sup>55</sup> Enrique Foffani argues that all modern writers are doubly exiled: "La máxima paradoja para el escritor moderno consist[e] en su condición extraterritorial, la de ser y estar doblemente exiliado: exilio de territorio y de la lengua al mismo tiempo." Quoted in Fabry 2008, 229. This notion of double exile also relates to Gelman because after he renounced the MPM, he was targeted for death by both the AAA and the MPM. See Montanaro and Ture 1998, 24 for more information.

Pérez López (2002) argues that both Ladino as an exilic tongue and the process of self-translation act in concert to convey the estrangement that Gelman suffers as he is exiled from Argentina and his loved ones are abducted and murdered:

La autotraducción de una lengua exiliada horada en la noción de raíz o sustrato [...] desregula la lengua empleada, con lo que desregula también el orden de un mundo alienado que se contaría en un lenguaje alienado. Si la experiencia del exilio podría considerarse como una experiencia extrema de la alienación, entendida como extrañamiento o enajenación del yo, su respuesta poética no puede ser más concluyente, al proponerse una lengua extranjera, extraña y extrañante que hace necesariamente visibles las fronteras y separaciones, y al tiempo convida a una voz profundamente consciente de sí (y de los otros) (91).<sup>56</sup>

Ladino in this sense becomes a metaphor for self-translation; they each make visible “las fronteras y separaciones” by highlighting the differences across languages, while also reinforcing the similarities. By marginalizing him further through the process of “enajenación,” self-translation and Ladino allow Gelman to go beyond the deterritorialization and marginalization imposed upon him by the military junta, to a place within himself from where he can begin to craft the space of reencounter.

One of the primary strategies that the Argentine dictatorship employed to foment terror was that of disappearing their victims, a crime that the Inter-American

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<sup>56</sup> Semilla Durán (2014) adds that “si el poeta, de tradición judía ashkenaze, se expresa en la lengua de los judíos sefardíes, sigue descolocando —desorientando— los códigos y los marcos, «pasa del otro lado», reasumiendo un judaísmo que es y no es el suyo” (178).

Commission on Human Rights called “a true form of torture for the victim’s family and friends, because of the uncertainty they experience as to the fate of the victim and because they feel powerless to provide legal, moral, and material assistance” (Quoted in Wright 2007, 108). One mother of a disappeared victim described the heartbreak in this way: “Disappearance is inexplicable. You are left with a void that is never filled” (Ibid. 108). In effect, the disappeared person, as an absence that is always present, becomes an empty space where once there was a person. To combat this prolonged horror, in an attempt to recover what was stolen from him, Gelman takes a counter-approach by creating a space that didn’t exist before, inviting the beloved to join him there.

Gelman states in the introduction to *dibaxu* that this collection was a direct outcome of *Citas y Comentarios*, his book that revisits early modern mystical poetry. It is from his interaction with mystical poetry that he is able to formulate the concept of reuniting with his lost ones: “La unión-reencuentro con la amada sólo es posible en el sitio más interior del alma dentro del marco de una experiencia mística que el poeta recupera gracias a la escritura” (Sillato 1996, 107).<sup>57</sup> By turning inwards and searching for this “residencia interna” (Mercado 2008, 12), Gelman opens up the possibility of being with his loved ones again. The hope and anticipation of this reunion stems directly from the words and language of the poetry. It is through these linguistic building blocks that the speaker is able to construct a new space, and because it is an atemporal space formed

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<sup>57</sup> See also “comentario VI” from *Citas y Comentarios* for more information.

within the poet himself, it is out of the reach of the regime of terror that strives to forever eliminate the chance of amorous reunion.

### **Trembling Across Time and Languages**

Central to the theme of *dibaxu* is the idea of “batideru/temblor,” a trembling or tremor. However these terms are translated or viewed, they imply a state of movement, a vacillation to and fro. The speaker who uses Ladino in exile trembles with desire as he yearns for his native tongue. The reader shifts constantly between the Ladino and Castellano versions of each poem. The words that become objects, and vice-versa, shudder as they change forms. And the language itself shakes as it travels through time from the ancient form of Ladino to become the Spanish of contemporary Argentina. Thus, there is both lateral trembling as the poetry collection flows between the two languages and the reader is invited to experience them simultaneously, and vertical trembling as well as the languages reach backwards in time, expressed frequently throughout the collection in terms of digging down through various linguistic strata (Balbuena 2003, 129-30). The metaphor of trembling as both a synchronic and a diachronic approach to language and poetry is crucial for Gelman; it is through this trembling that the speaker, addressee, and the reader are all able to overcome the pains of loss as the linguistic and temporal vacillations help to create a space from which to repair the devastation of deterritorialization.

Edward Said (2000b) argues that while the phenomenon of exile and diaspora have altered cultures for millennia, it is a problem especially germane to our modern world:

“The difference between earlier exiles and those of our own time is, it bears stressing, scale: our age—with its modern warfare, imperialism, and the quasi-theological ambitions of totalitarian rulers—is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration” (174).<sup>58</sup> In addition to the increased frequency of deterritorialization inflicted by a globalized world, the interconnectedness of postmodernity itself aggravates the suffering of the exile as “living with the many reminders that [one is] in exile, that home is not in fact so far away, and that the normal traffic of everyday contemporary life keeps [the exile] in constant but tantalizing and unfulfilled touch with the old place” (Said 2000a, 370). It is the “tantalizing and unfulfilled” closeness of that left behind that sparks the trembling that Gelman employs to mitigate the impact of deterritorialization. Gelman’s poetry of exile is both an intensely personal view of his own suffering and his attempts to rise above it, as well as a model by which modern exiles can reclaim the identity and right to self-determination that have been stripped from them by oppressive regimes.

In poem XVI from an earlier exilic collection *Bajo la lluvia ajena*, Gelman articulates the damage inflicted by exile: “No debiera arrancarse a la gente de su tierra o país, no a la fuerza. La gente queda dolorida, la tierra queda dolorida” (2012 vol. 1, 629). The scars of displacement are felt as much by the vacated land as they are by the exile (Quintana

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<sup>58</sup> See also Appadurai 2003, p.35, who calls deterritorialization “one of the central forces of the modern world.”

2004, 8) and for Gelman, the healing process for both is through the new space created by the trembling of language and time.

The poet lays out his vision for the function of the tremor in the final sentence of the introduction to *dibaxu*: “A quien ruego que los lea en voz alta en un castellano y en el otro para escuchar, tal vez, entre los dos sonidos, algo del tiempo que tiembla y que nos da pasado desde el Cid” (5). His plea highlights both the lateral and vertical aspects of the language tremor, describing how they join together to carry all involved to a new place; the synchronic meaning created “entre los dos sonidos” as the languages are read out loud together and the diachronic language change of the “tiempo que tiembla.” This multi-dimensional trembling allows the reader to join the poetic voice and his beloved in a new space, before the contemporary human rights crisis that exiled the poet, before the expulsion of the Jewish people that led to the creation of Ladino as a diasporic language, to the time of el Cid, a historical-cultural anchor point for both languages of *dibaxu*.

The trembling felt throughout the collection parallels the poet’s perspective on the act of writing poetry itself, whereby a dialogue across time and texts forms the foundation of poetic meaning. Describing the genesis of *dibaxu*, Gelman explains that the Ladino poetry is a direct result of *Citas y Comentarios*, to which he adds that these earlier books “dialogan con el castellano del siglo XVI” (Ibid.). Trembling as dialogue features both the lateral and vertical vacillation discussed previously. In terms of side-to-side movement, Mercado argues that Gelman “utiliza el sefardí y el castellano

moderno para proponer un diálogo en el fluir de la lengua a través del acto de la traducción” (Mercado 2008, 57).<sup>59</sup> Therefore, translation is the catalyst that makes a synchronic interaction between languages possible. Conversely, dialogue surfaces as vertical trembling through the poetic process itself, as the poet builds upon the poetic traditions of those that have preceded him. In fact, all poetry is predicated on a dialogue with the past, creating an intertextual web of tradition as poets respond to and build upon previous generations’ work (Guzmán 2013, 110). Trembling consequently acts as a metaphor for poetic composition in the case of *dibaxu* as the lateral movement arises through translation and the vertical movement manifests itself through the intertextual interaction with other historical poetic conventions. As the “tiempo que tiembla y que nos da pasado desde el Cid” becomes poetry creation itself, it is this poetry-as-trembling that allows the speaker to craft a space of union with his loved ones, safe from the ravages of war and time. The multi-dimensional trembling that transports the reader to *El Cid* is significant in that the medieval epic is not only a paragon of Spanish language and culture, it also establishes the pattern to overcome forced exile in order to regain lost honor, a model which Gelman employs in his quest for his loved ones.

In a 1988 interview, years after the conclusion of the Dirty War, but before he was allowed to return to Argentina, Gelman describes the emotional extremes sparked by exile: “ahora tengo emociones encontradas, paso de la alegría a la pena con sorprendente rapidez y, a mis años, ya no se debiera. A veces me acuerdo de ese soneto

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<sup>59</sup> See also Balbuena, 2003, p.132

de Petrarca, es un fragmento de amor, donde él navega, describe las contradicciones del amor y en el último verso dice: ‘tiemblo en verano y ardo en invierno’. Aquí estamos en verano y he temblado más de una vez” (Bocannera 1999, 48-49). These drastic emotional fluctuations stem directly from the battering waves of memory that flood the exile as distance from the beloved intensifies the feelings of love, but also of loss. The oscillations between fever and cold chills that a lovesick person experiences is echoed in the diasporic experience, as the exile vacillates between the happiness stirred by memories of the past and the bitterness of the separation of the present. As an exilic language, this emotional trembling is an inherent quality of Ladino heritage. In a later interview, Gelman illuminates his use of Ladino as he states “creo que esta lengua tiene la particularidad de dar cuenta del placer y del dolor que causa el amor” (Montanaro and Ture 1998, 147). Ladino itself then is an extension of the trembling felt throughout *dibaxu* as it encapsulates the contradictory highs and lows of love for both lost ones and the homeland. The speaker’s use of Ladino is a means by which he can articulate his feelings without forsaking the conflicting nuances of his love, and this vacillation allows him to conquer the loss and separation forced upon him.

The various examples of trembling in *dibaxu* demonstrate this range of emotions experienced by the speaker. Fabry (2008) points out that by taking into account both the noun *temblor* and the verb *temblar*, the notion of trembling is one of the most ubiquitous themes throughout the work (234). Despite the frequency of appearance, each use highlights the range of emotions the speaker undergoes in exile as he crafts the new space to reencounter his lost love. The “temblor de mis labios” of poem I and



the “llave/ temblando” of poem XX both seem to depict the excitement felt at the thought of amorous reunification, while the “pájaro...que pasó es malo” that “[a la voz poética le] dejó temblando” from poem II shows the pain and fear that speaker experiences as well. In poem VII, “el calor que destruye al pensar” prefaces “la luz [que] tiembla/ en tus besos,” articulating Gelman’s interpretation of Petrarch and the vagaries of love as the light shivers in the burning heat, illustrating the emotional extremes the lover suffers, both through the process of loving and in separation. In certain examples, trembling appear to highlight the inherent action of the movement itself such as in poem XVI where the speaker twice states that he hears “el temblor/ de tu saya en el viento.” The variety of ways that trembling is incorporated into the work reinforces the complex emotions that the speaker undergoes in exile and contribute to his longing for a new space for loves’ reencounter.

Vacillation within a single language is also present on the odd-numbered pages as the Spanish versions demonstrate linguistic movement, which in turn serves to connect the two languages. Gelman’s use of Ladino is a specific attempt to portray his sufferings while in exile, as well as what Balbuena (2009) calls a “way of rejecting a limited and oppressive national identity—that of an Argentina controlled by a military dictatorship” (296). In relation to the notion of casting off the language of the oppressors, Gelman also modifies his Spanish in order to place it in a space within his control, removed from the influence of the perpetrators of the Dirty War. Despite widely using *voseo* in his

other poetry, including his other works written in exile,<sup>60</sup> the Spanish versions of *dibaxu* avoid all *voseo* conjugations.<sup>61</sup> In fact, *vos* only appears in Spanish in poems IX and XVII, and then only as a prepositional pronoun. This limited use of *voseo* is a way of showing the internal movement that occurs within Spanish as the speaker reminds the reader that he indeed speaks a *porteño* geolect of Spanish, but chooses not to fully engage with it as an act of resistance.

Another way to view the use/lack of *voseo* in the Spanish version is to consider it as superfluous due to the presence of Ladino which has also preserved *voseo* across the centuries and diverse locations of diaspora. Gelman uses Ladino to both reject the actions of the dirty war, as well as express love for his native tongue and country. Chirinos (2002) states that “el retorno al ‘voseo’ en la queja amorosa supone hermanar el lenguaje de los judeoespañoles expulsados con el lenguaje popular de los argentinos” (42). Just as tango celebrates its origins in the marginalized elements of Argentine society where it subverted the mainstream culture and was a space of refuge for criminals and others from lower classes, the connection of *voseo* between Ladino and rioplatense Spanish allows the speaker to link the language of exile and the mother tongue by shifting to the periphery, operating on the poet’s terms and not those established by the government. In this way, Gelman can still lovingly employ the *voseo*

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<sup>60</sup> See *Carta Abierta, Si dulcemente, Carta a mi madre* in Gelman, 2012, vols. 1 and 2 for examples.

<sup>61</sup> The one exception to this is found in the *voseo* conjugation of the verb *mirar* in poem V. However, this conjugation only appears in the *Poesía reunida* version, volume 2, 205. It is unclear whether this is a conscious decision from the author and the publishers, or if it is a typographical error.

with which he was raised, without succumbing to the need to use the same language used by the Videla regime.

The unnecessariness of *voseo* in Spanish due to the Ladino version prompts the question of the presence of the Spanish at all. Why include the Spanish when the Ladino is readily accessible for Spanish speakers? Although the Spanish side can be viewed as a gateway to access the Ladino,<sup>62</sup> I argue that the inclusion of Spanish is more than merely a means of reducing the difficulty of reading Ladino for a Spanish-speaking audience. The poet has chosen Ladino for its exilic quality in order to create a new space within his control. Likewise, Spanish also has characteristics necessary to establishing a space of safety. Bolaños (2008) points to this aspect of Spanish as it relates to Ladino: “A pesar del origen centroeuropeo o de la Europa oriental de tantos judíos llegados a países iberoamericanos, como es el caso de la familia de Juan Gelman, la lengua de unión de todos ellos fue, obviamente, el español. El español, entonces, se hace prolongación de lo que había sido, antes, el sefardí. Se convierte en ‘lengua matria’ cuando las ‘patrias’ expulsan y aniquilan” (104). Therefore, in order to craft a space within which he can reunite with his lost loves, the speaker needs to tremble between both Ladino, the language of exile, and Spanish, the language of union. In this way, Gelman doesn’t reject outright his mother tongue of Spanish, just those aspects controlled by an oppressive regime, in order to emphasize other qualities that help him on his mission. I argue that both Ladino and Spanish are crucial aspects of Gelman’s challenge to the patriarchal

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<sup>62</sup> Both Fabry (2008, 230) and Gasparini (2014, 10) argue that readers approach the Ladino only through the Spanish version.

regime that expelled him and took away his loved ones, as the new space which overcomes murder and loss arises from the simultaneous presence and interaction of the two languages of *dibaxu*. In an act that requires both languages, Gelman uses self-translation to defy the oppressive military junta by reclaiming what was taken away from him, creating a new space for love to blossom to supplant the home that he lost.

Although there are examples that highlight vertical movement more than the lateral and vice versa, it is ultimately impossible to isolate these vibrations that are really the same movement, albeit on different axes. If synchronic movement arises from the translation between Ladino and Spanish as the two face each other on the page, then diachronic movement is the viewpoint that Ladino is the historical antecedent to modern Spanish. Regardless of how they are viewed, these are not two unrelated tremors, but facets of the same movement that cannot be parsed. The first poem of the collection provides a multitude of different examples that illustrate the interconnectedness of this trembling:

<i>il batideru di mis bezus/ quero dizer: il batideru di mis bezus si sentirá in tu pasadu cun mí in tu vinu/</i>	el temblor de mis labios/ quiero decir: el temblor de mis besos se oirá en tu pasado conmigo en tu vino/
<i>avrindo la puarta dil tiempo/ tu sueniu dexa cayer yuvia durmida/ dámila tu yuvia/</i>	abriendo la puerta del tiempo/ tu sueño deja caer lluvia dormida/ dame tu lluvia/

*mi quedarí/ quietu  
in tu yuvia di sueniu/  
londji nil pinser/  
sin spantu/ sin sulvidu/*

me detendré/ quieto  
en tu lluvia de sueño/  
lejos en el pensar/  
sin temor/ sin olvido/

*nila caza dil tiempo  
sta il pasadu/  
dibaxu di tu piede/  
qui balia/*

en la casa del tiempo  
está el pasado/  
debajo de tu pie/  
que baila/

The very first image of the poem is the word pair *batideru/temblor*. Not only does this trembling open the poetry collection, it is preceded directly by the author's final wish in the introduction that the reader read out loud the two languages, promising that there will be "algo del tiempo que tiembla," carrying the reader to the new space of solace. This opening image sets the tone of the collection and hints at the various forms of linguistic and historical movement throughout the work.

The signs themselves evoke a trembling between Ladino and Spanish. This word pair is one of many examples where the translations feature a drastic semiotic divergence, drawing attention to the language itself and calling into question the assumptions of the role of translation in a work. The Ladino version of the word is similar in appearance to the Spanish verb "batir", meaning to "churn, beat or stir", which might surprise readers when they see it translated as "trembling or tremor" on the Spanish side. While arguably synonymous, this word pair highlights the language and the act of using language in a similar way that self-translation focuses attention on the process of translation. This increased attention to the languages themselves opens up the interliminal space as the reader realizes that neither language is complete in its own

right and that the true space of communication does not reside in either version, but between them.

Borrowing from Bhabha's (2004) assertion that the location of culture resides in an interstitial or "third space" (2, 38-52), Hokenson and Munson (2007) argue that this in-between space is the "only possible site of translation" (154) as the human experience in a globalized, postmodern world resides among the intersections of multiple languages and cultures. Extending the metaphor, they state that this condition of interliminality is exemplified by self-translation, as it "constructs [the interliminal space] stereoscopically as a unique reading field" (12). In this way, self-translation, which thrived in the linguistic heterogeneity of the Roman Empire and again in medieval Europe as authors wrote in both Latin and the various vernaculars, is particularly apt to reflect that multicultural and multilinguistic reality of the modern world.

The space between languages brings the reader to ask how a language means, not just what it means. This evokes Benjamin's discussion on mode of intention, which Kohlross (2009) clarifies by stating that "when Benjamin calls upon us to focus on the way of meaning more than on what is meant in conducting our translations, he is simply saying that we should pay more attention to the way in which something is linguistically understood" (103). The way we linguistically understand a statement is emphasized in *dibaxu* as the languages are presented side-by-side and the reader is invited to engage them together.

Complementing the synchronic focus on translation, the pair *batideru/temblor* also succeeds at illustrating diachronic vacillation. Fabry (2008) demonstrates this historical perspective by once again reflecting on the perceived gap between the two terms:

Ese mismo término ‘batideru’ deja resonar ese castellano antiguo que la Edad Moderna ha borrado en el español actual. En efecto, el ‘batidero’, nos dice Covarrubias, es ‘el lugar donde se bate y golpea’. Al comprobar la significación del verbo ‘batir’ en el mismo diccionario, la riqueza semántica del término se refuerza: ‘batir: golpear, del verbo latino *batuo*, vide batalla. [...]’. El temblor del tiempo da paso, en la versión judeoespañola, a una dimensión agónica, ausente del texto en castellano. Este ‘batideru’, a la vez temblor y combate, también abre pautas de lectura que permitirán hilar—como veremos—unos ejes semánticos en el conjunto de los veintinueve poemas (232-33).

In addition to the semiotic difference that the reader notices when these terms are juxtaposed, the historical connection that forges in the reader’s mind strengthens the complexity of trembling as a means of creating a new safe space. Fabry contends that the Ladino version evokes a sense of struggle, which might seem to contradict the desire for a new space out of reach of the regime that exiled Gelman from his family, friends, and homeland. However, I argue that the new space can only be created as all those involved maintain the full memory of the loss and pain suffered so that their joy of reunion is even more complete in contrast. This same word pair is found in poem XVI,

and reaffirms the space of reencounter that springs forth from the desolation of the Dirty War, to which I will briefly shift before finishing the examination of the first poem.

Although the concept of trembling connects all of the poetry in *dibaxu*, poem XVI is the only other example besides poem I where this leitmotif is featured as a noun, resulting in the word pair *batideru/temblor*. The other explicit mentions of trembling are in the verb form, where the resulting word pair *timblar/temblar* lacks the semantic interplay salient in the substantive pair. The reappearance of this pair in poem XVI is significant not only for its role within in the poem, but also for where it is located in the collection.

*Dibaxu* is directly rooted in medieval and early modern poetry. Gelman states in the introduction that this work is the “culminación o más bien el desemboque de Citas y Comentarios,” works that are structured on the writings of San Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa. Also, he composed the Ladino poetry concurrently with *Com/posiciones*, a collection that went even further back in time to rewrite the early Hebrew poetry of the Iberian Peninsula. Placing *dibaxu* within this early modern context is important to understand the significance of the imagery found at the halfway mark of the collection. In collections such as Boscán’s second book and Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, the placement of the individual poems was meticulous, and often the center poem enjoyed a special prominence in part due to its position in the book.<sup>63</sup> Thus, rather than a coincidence, the

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<sup>63</sup> Although out of 29 poems, the sixteenth poem isn’t the halfway mark, in discussing the poems of *dibaxu*, Gelman stated “Después de escribir ‘Citas y comentarios,’ por ejemplo, hice unos treinta y tantos poemas en sefardí, que no están publicados” (Montanaro 1998, 109), showing that at one point, this poem could have been the halfway point and not all of the poems were published. A special thank-you to



fact that the word pair in question appears only at the beginning and at the halfway point of the collection reaffirms its centrality to the work.

Seeming to confirm Fabry's assertion concerning the violent associations with the *batideru*, the incorporation of this word pair in poem XVI points to the horrors of the Dirty War, before transcending them to open up the new space created for reunification with the beloved. The *temblor* in this poem is invoked as the speaker states that after dying, he will "*sintiré entudavía/ il batideru/ di tu saia nil vienti// oiré todavía/ el temblor/ de tu saya en el viento//.*" The implicit violence of the Ladino trembling eerily foreshadows the forced disappearances of his son and daughter-in-law.

When Marcelo Ariel and María Claudia were abducted in 1976, they were given unique treatment due to María Claudia's advanced pregnancy. Although they were separated, Marcelo Ariel was allowed to see his wife briefly, where he noted that she had been given a new maternity dress. During their short reunion and in an attempt to create solace amid desolation, the first thing she asked Marcelo Ariel was for his opinion on the new dress that they gave her. Gelman points to the significance of this exchange, stating that "*ella sabía que era el vestido de una compañera 'trasladada,' y estaba haciendo vida de la muerte*" (Montanaro and Ture 1998, 97). This short account articulates the tension associated with the *batideru/temblor*. María Claudia received the dress because of the new life growing in her womb, and as such, she imbued the article

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Professor Leah Middlebrook for her insight into the importance of the position of poems within the collection.

of clothing with a second life. However, she was aware that the dress came to her after its previous owner was “disappeared” by the Videla regime, a move that prefigured her own murder after giving birth to Gelman’s granddaughter. Thus the trembling between life and death found here parallels *dibaxu* as a response to the horrors of war and oppression.

In contrast to the Ladino term, the *temblor* of Spanish is devoid of the violence evoked on the facing page and more consistent with the tone of *dibaxu*. Even though it is necessary to contextualize this collection as a response to the pain suffered in exile, it is clear that instead of dwelling on the horrors of war, the poems from this collection choose to focus on a new place of hope from which to reunite with those that have been lost, instead of just clinging to their memory. Rather than the underlying violence of the *batideru*, the *temblor* of poem XVI points to the tremulousness of anticipation that accompanies the longing of the speaker. Neither image is more correct or true to the poetic voice’s viewpoint. Instead, both are necessary to demonstrate that despite the loss and suffering, the speaker of this collection has set his gaze clearly on a hope of a better world.

Returning again to poem I, the trembling that begins with the noun pair *batideru/temblor* casts linguistic ripples that spread throughout the rest of the poem, highlighting the tension that is created as the words of the two languages are juxtaposed with each other; the equivalents in the respective versions have the same Benjaminian intention, but they differ significantly in their mode of intention. This

resulting contrast greets the reader in the first two lines: “*il batideru di mis bezus// quero dizer: il batideru di mis bezus/ el temblor de mis labios// quiero decir: el temblor de mis besos.*” *Bezus* in Ladino with its corresponding *labios* and *besos* in Spanish are archetypical examples of the mode of intention of language. As homonyms in Ladino, they generate a connection between them and their equivalents in Spanish that creates a thematic tension that Fabry (2008) argues flows throughout the entire work, stating:

Los labios entroncan con las imágenes referidas a la voz y a la palabra, mientras que los besos (el segundo sustantivo más citado del poemario) orientan la significación hacia el ámbito de lo erótico-amoroso. Todo el poemario va a enlazar estas dos dimensiones pero sin confundirlas, introduciendo más bien una tensión con la reiterada afirmación de la no coincidencia del amor y de la palabra a pesar de (o través de) su relación consustancial (232).<sup>64</sup>

If the reader were only presented with the Ladino version, it would be possible, even probable to elide the relation between the two *bezus*. But the separate words on the Spanish side explicitly foreground and bring attention to not only the meaning of the words, but how they mean as well. By connecting voice, word, and erotic love, these terms anticipate poetry’s role in this collection to create the new space out of the voice of the lover. In addition, these two terms are connected through the oscillation of trembling that reverberates throughout the book.

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<sup>64</sup> See also Balbuena 2003, 135.

To add even more tension to the word pair(s), the speaker shifts from one word to the other with the phrase “quiero decir,” which could mean both “I want to say” and “I mean to say,” foregrounding the fact that what is intended to be expressed is distinct from what is said, as well as how it is said. The inability of any language to fully express the intention of the speaker points to what Rose (1997) calls “the affective, semantic space between” (55) as the site of communication. It also reinforces the connection of *dibaxu* with *Citas y Comentarios* and *Com/posiciones*, because “el acercamiento a la poesía mística y a la Cábala no se produce únicamente por la coincidencia en una visión exiliar, sino también porque la escritura mística tiene en su punto de partida la condición del «inefable» o «indecible»” (Pérez López 2002, 83).<sup>65</sup> Thus, opening the poetry collection with the oscillation between what the speaker means to say and what he wants to say foreshadows the trembling felt throughout the book, but it also pays homage to the poet’s rich poetic pedigree and connection to the ineffableness of mystical poetry.

Following the introduction of the trembling with its accompanying *bezus/labios/besos*, the poetic voice concludes the first stanza of poem I, declaring the fate of all these elements: “*si sentirá in tu pasadu/ cun mí in tu vinu// se oirá en tu pasado/ conmigo en tu vino//.*” The paradoxical and disjointed nature of time depicted here is central to the work and I will return to it when I take up the prominent theme of

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<sup>65</sup> See also Balbuena, 2003, p.146

the spacialization of time. At this point though, I will look past the verb tenses and focus instead on the verbs themselves.

Similar to *batideru/temblor*, the verbs *sintir/oir* are semantically charged and evidence the poetic interaction and dialogue present throughout *dibaxu*. While presented as linguistic equivalents of each other, the precise relationship of these and other similarly distinct pairs from the collection illuminates the role of language, translation and bilingual presentation in establishing the new space of reunification by highlighting the semiotic gap between the terms. Rather than “false cognates” that are similar in form and meaning but have different roots, or “false friends” that look similar but differ significantly in meaning, these word pairs are presented as having the same meaning in languages sharing a common ancestor, but vary greatly in appearance and in function. Perhaps a more useful way to classify these word pairs would be to turn to the biological vocabulary of divergent evolution, wherein the accumulation of differences between species can lead to the formation of new species. Like the beaks of Darwin’s finches which underwent drastic changes in size and shape over time as an adaptation to different food sources, these pairs have diverged from each other in form and function, contributing to the creation of two related, but separate languages over time. In scientific terms, this specific type of divergence witnessed in *dibaxu* would be classified as allopatric speciation, because the individual species (or languages) have been geographically isolated from each other. Thus these linguistic “allopatries” approach the same linguistic intention with different tools or backgrounds, altering how

they are received by the reader. Rather than the misleading similarity of false cognates, linguistic allopatries are visibly divergent pairs that strive to represent the same idea.

While *sinter/oir* purportedly both have the intention of hearing, the Ladino verb looks much more like *sentir* in Spanish. There is not a direct link between hearing and feeling in the text, but when confronted with this translation, the reader no doubt forms a connection, whether consciously or subconsciously. This association in turn creates a form of synesthesia; the reader, having come across one sensation first in the Ladino and formed a mental image, will encounter a completely different sense or way to interface with the world by crossing the page.<sup>66</sup> This synesthetic moment leads to what Balbuena (2009) calls a “heightened sense of ‘strangement’: the physical proximity of Ladino and Castellano underscores their differences, while confirming their similarity” (294). This “strangement,” a mixture of the distancing that comes through estrangement and the strange feeling that arises when met with something foreign, sheds a light on the act of translation. On the surface, the similarities of these languages imply that their translations will be relatively close to each other, but the area between them grows with each examination. This semantic gap is observable throughout the collection whenever the speaker employs the allopatry *sinter/oir*.

The primary reason that this word pair evokes strangement is due to its synesthetic quality of two simultaneous, somewhat contradictory sensations. The feeling through hearing and hearing by feeling in poem I and again in poem XVI both reference the

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<sup>66</sup> Or viceversa if the reader encounters the Spanish first before proceeding to the Ladino.

trembling of the *batideru/temblor*, and both enrich the multi-dimensional trembling previously discussed. In the case of the first poem, the two different senses connect directly with the union of lips and kisses formed by the usage of *bezus* on the Ladino side. The two interpretations of this allopatric verb reinforce Fabry's earlier statement of lips suggesting word and voice, while kisses evoke an amorous connotation, as the sense of hearing connects to *labios* and touch associates with *besos*. In poem XVI, it is the trembling of the dress to which these verbs refer. The synesthetic condition of the verb pair reinforces the power of longing and memory as the speaker asserts that he will be able to alternately feel and hear his lover's dress after he is dead. In both poems, the allopatricity of the verbs reinforces the trembling that ultimately serves as the birthplace of the speaker's new space.

I will briefly mention the other two occurrences of *sinter/oir* in the collection before finishing the allopatric analysis of poem I. In poem VI, the sun "*senti cayer/ tus folyas// oye caer/ tus hojas//*." Throughout *dibaxu*, leaves are connected to voice and poetry. Hence the connection of poem VI with poem XXI, where the poem opens stating that "*sintí tu boz in mi vintana// oí tu voz en mi ventana//*." There is an obvious link between the oral elements evoked by these images, connecting them to the sense of hearing in this word pair. The sense of touch is also represented however, as voice and poetry are reified throughout the book.

The next example of allopatric deviation in poem I appears in the third stanza: "*mi quedará/ quietu/ in tu yuvia di sueniu// me detendré/ quieto/ en tu lluvia de sueño.*"

Similar to the first verb pair from this poem, these two verbs arguably have the same intention, but a different mode of intention. In contrast to *sintir/oir*, the latter verbs don't work together to form synesthesia, but rather they diverge based on the activity of the subject. The Ladino verb *quedar* suggests a certain amount of remaining or persisting in an action, in this case, remaining immobile in the addressee's dream rain. There is an implication of passivity; the speaker is already still and chooses to remain that way.

The outcome is completely different on the Spanish side as the poetic voice uses the verb *detener*, denoting a conscious cessation of an action. Therefore, instead of continuing on in stillness, the speaker in the Spanish version must actively calm himself to partake of the dream rain. The gap between these two verbs that depicts the speaker arriving at the same point in the rain, albeit from two opposite directions, prompts a reflection on the active-passive dichotomy of exile. The speaker is passive in his role of exile in the sense that he is deterritorialized against his will. Although he is powerless to resist the oppressive regime and regain his homeland, he can actively create a new poetic homeland of hope that will allow him to be reunited with his lover. Another verbal allopatry that frequents *dibaxu* demonstrates that the approach to activity and passivity is not necessarily fixed to the languages as presented in this first example.

The verb pair *aspirar/esperar* appears in four different poems in the collection including poem VI, where the speaker comments that colored leaves "*aspiran/ qu'il spantu si amati// esperan/ que el espanto se apague.*" These verbs are reminiscent of



*quedar/detener* from poem I as the pair, when viewed from the perspective of a Spanish-speaker, are related to each other in function but diverge in the way that the speaker engages in the action. In the first poem, the passiveness of the Ladino verb juxtaposes with the active stance of the Spanish verb. The example from poem VI reverses language roles as the leaves in Ladino appear to actively strive to end the fear—related to loss and forgetting throughout the collection—while across the page, the leaves wait for the fear to cease of its own accord. Examining both of these examples together, it is clear that neither language is inherently more active or passive than the other, but rather, the possibility of different approaches and the trembling between options is what contributes to the linguistic interliminality of the collection.

Straying from the active-passive continuum of these last examples, and tied more closely to the synesthesia of the first verb pair, the final example of allopatric verbs establishes a connection of poetic language and ideas that requires the two poetic versions face each other and interact. In the third poem of the collection, the poetic voice states that the morning “*sta aviarta/ teni friscura/ la biviremus djuntu/ está abierta/ tiene frescura/ la beberemos junto.*” The translation of *biviremus* to *beberemos*, as the Ladino verb evokes *vivir* in Spanish, establishes a connection between living and drinking that would otherwise not exist without the bilingual presentation of *dibaxu*. Bringing to mind Christ’s living waters, these verbs acknowledge the link this collection shares with the mystical poetry of *Citas y Comentarios*, while also reinforcing the need for both languages to communicate with each other. It is only through the linguistic

trembling back and forth that the speaker is able to overcome the devastation of exile and loss to be reunited with his loved ones.

The last allopatric example from poem I provides another outlook on the fragmented or fractured perspective presented by the speaker as the two languages appear in concert: “*nila caza dil tiempu/ sta il pasadu// en la casa del tiempo/ está el pasado//*.” The words *caza/casa*, different from the noun pair that opens the poem with its drastic semiotic divergence, are homonyms that nevertheless elicit a tension in their relationship with time, a relationship that Semilla Durán states “*jueg[a] en el momento de la lectura y la hac[e] plurívoca, más allá de la simplicidad exhibida en los textos*” (Semilla Durán 2014, 181). This plurivocality points in Ladino towards the hunt or search for lost time, and in Spanish to the place where time resides. The trembling that shudders throughout *dibaxu*, the synchronic and diachronic language vacillations present in every poem, allow the speaker to carve out this new space within his control, “*la caza dil tiempu,*” so that he can reclaim what was taken away from him: his loved ones and his homeland. These tremors make the creation of the new space possible, allowing for time and word to be spatialized in the work so that the new space can take shape and become reality.

As the first poem of the collection, the speaker introduces the concept of the new space that brings the beloved back to life, as well as establishes the centrality of the speaker and addressee to this space and to the entire collection. Having recently endured the process of resurrection effected through the poetic word, the addressee

appears exhausted as her “*sueniu/ dexa cayer yuvia durmida.*” Notwithstanding her tired condition, she is able to bless the speaker as he takes refuge in her rain. Thus, as she is resurrected through his poetry, he is fed by her Christ-like living waters, which in this case fall from the sky as rain. Therefore, this poem lays the foundation of the cyclical relationship between the speaker and recipient followed throughout the rest of the collection wherein the speaker creates the “*caza dil tiempu*” so that the addressee can live again, and as she returns to life, her love grants him a new life, imbued with the vivacity of her “*piede// qui balia//.*”

### **The Spatialization of Time and Word for a Reunion with the Beloved**

The trembling that echoes through *dibaxu*—trembling of desire, anticipation, fear, and hope—creates a new interliminal space as meaning oscillates back and forth between languages. However, it is only once this new space is reified by spatializing time and poetry within the work that the speaker can utilize it as a place to reunite with his loved ones. As time and word combine into a space of reunion in the interliminality of the poetry, the speaker positions himself in a lacuna of his own creation and within his own power, removing himself from the control and influence of oppressive regimes. By converting time into a space, the poetic voice confronts the exile and forced disappearances of the Dirty War, reencountering hope, and in doing so, defeating the state sponsored terrorism weapon of eradicating hope through fear and cruelty.

The spatialization of time in this collection makes it possible for the speaker to reunite with his beloved. It's central to the work that this occurs on the poet's own

terms and not those set by an oppressive regime, but crafting this space becomes even more necessary, considering that after disappearing Argentine citizens, the dictatorship also erased the locations of disappearance itself: “Before exiting, the armed forces took precautions to protect themselves against both truth and justice. They bulldozed or dismantled the remaining secret detention centers and destroyed records and other evidence of their crimes” (Wright 2007, 126). Towards the end of April 1983, the junta issued a “Documento final” wherein they justified their actions during the Dirty War, concluding that “talk of disappeared persons was ‘a lie used for political ends, since there are no secret places of detention in the country’” (Ibid.). Thus the new interlingual space formed in *dibaxu*, is not only a place for the speaker to be with his lover again, it is also simply a place for the disappeared *to be*.

The notion of a place of “being,” especially as it relates to the new space formed out of time and language, is essential to this collection; Fabry (2008) points out the most common verb in the book is *estar*, and the speaker uses it almost twice as much as *ser* (236). The inherent features and characteristics of the beloved, articulated in Spanish with the verb *ser*, are ingrained in the speaker’s mind, making it unnecessary to express them again. However, the poetic voice is in need of a place of reunion, requiring the use of *estar*.<sup>67</sup> The focus on this verb connects back to the exilic nature of the work, where Semilla Durán argues that the exiled writer “efectúa viajes que lo llevan a una suerte de

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<sup>67</sup> See poem III from *Bajo la lluvia ajena (Notas al pie de una derrota)*: “No era perfecto mi país antes del golpe militar. Pero era mi estar, las veces que temblé contra los muros del amor, las veces que fui niño, perro, hombre, las veces que quise, me quisieron.”

desdoblamiento, a *ser donde no está y a estar y escribir donde no es*” (Semilla Durán 2014, 179).<sup>68</sup> This in turn connects to Ladino itself, what Pérez Hernández (2009) calls an “idioma de no-estar” (215); as a language existing only in diaspora, the need for a new place to be with those lost along the way is included in its genetic makeup. By foregrounding the verb *estar*, the speaker is able to forge his new space, all the while defying the regime that took his loved ones away and subsequently denied doing so.<sup>69</sup>

In the introduction to *dibaxu*, Gelman explains the motivation of stepping back in time with Ladino poetry: “Como si buscar el sustrato de ese castellano, sustrato a su vez del nuestro, hubiera sido mi obsesión. Como si la soledad extrema del exilio me empujara a buscar raíces en la lengua, las más profundas y exiliadas de la lengua. Yo tampoco me lo explico.” The despair and isolation of exile, coupled with the loss of loved ones, led the poet to turn inwards in a search for relief and respite. Although he initially claims that he is unable to explain why he did this, or how it possibly succeeded, he provides insight into the reasoning in the next paragraph, stating that Ladino possesses “una ternura de otros tiempos que está viva, y por eso, llena de consuelo.” It is both the inherent tenderness of this language and its anachronistic tendency to

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<sup>68</sup> Emphasis in the original. Abdelmalek Sayad relates the idea of *estar* to exile: “El espacio y el tiempo se sitúan en el mismo plano...el sueño de estar aquí y allá al mismo tiempo y constantemente se alimenta de esa duplicidad entre dos existencias simultáneas vividas en registros diferentes, el de la realidad y el del deseo.” Quoted in Bocanera 1999, 11.

<sup>69</sup> Semilla Durán 2014, points out that “Recobrar lo perdido o lo que nos quieren hacer perder, es un acto de resistencia” 179.

preserve a more innocent time that enable Ladino to combat the forced forgetting of the Dirty War.

Another way to conceptualize Gelman's use of Ladino is by framing it in the context of memory studies. For Wright (2007), "memory politics is a struggle over how national history will be taught and understood, and thus over how future generations will think and act," with the fight over the Dirty War's legacy dividing the Argentine people. Wright argues that the leaders of the former dictatorship advocate for forgetting the past in order to move forward, while the opposing viewpoint wishes to shed as much light as possible on the past in order to ensure that similar repression never happens again (*xiv*). I argue that Gelman separates himself from this dichotomy by using Ladino to spatialize time, which allows him to create a new space that is set in an earlier time distinct from the past full of horrors orchestrated by the dictatorship.

Gelman states that writing in Ladino gave him "una ternura de otros tiempos," even though as a diasporic language arising from the expulsion of the Jewish people from Spain, Ladino may not seem like the natural choice to recall the tenderness of the past. However, he specifically points towards the *diminutivos* in Ladino as the key to his wistful look towards the past, highlighting Ladino's childlike ability to view the world more innocently. By using Ladino to create a new space set in the past that is not the historical past, Gelman separates himself and his work from the forgetting championed by the military leaders, but also from the need to constantly relive the horrors of the past for which the opposition clamors. In this way, Gelman's new space made possible

by Ladino reframes the either-or schism of forgetting and remembering everything to provide a third option: establishing a new past where the speaker can have new joyful memories with the addressee. This new space is reminiscent of Hirsch's (1994) concept of rememory, described as "neither memory nor forgetting," but a "way to re-member, and to do so *differently*, what an entire culture has been trying to repress" (96). This new space of reunification with the beloved helps establish a new past with new memories, without conceding to the forgetting promoted by the dictators, while also avoiding the need to constantly face the pain of loss brought about by the relentless specter of remembrance. By creating a new set of memories with his beloved, the speaker is able to reshape the cultural memory that was ravaged by the Dirty War.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the "candor perdido" that Ladino inspires throughout *dibaxu*, imbuing the work with a hopeful reply to the violence of the military regimes, the language is intimately tied to Gelman's experience of deterritorialization, uniquely allowing him to express his exilic condition with an exilic tongue. As Gelman is exiled from his homeland, he seeks out linguistic forms that allow him to articulate his feelings from his marginal position, settling on "las formas del castellano medieval que [...] no han sostenido ningún centro (de la enunciación, del Poder), sino que, bien al contrario, son formas nacidas de la experiencia del margen, la exclusión, el ostracismo" (Pérez López 2002, 90). Ladino is a peripheral language allowing the poet to cast off the language of his

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<sup>70</sup> Hodgkin and Radstone (2003) argue that "memory is not only individual but cultural." They explain that this is a two-way relationship, stating that "If individual memories are constructed within culture, and are part of cultural systems of representation, so cultural memories are constituted by the cumulative weight of dispersed and fragmented individual memories, among other things." (5) By creating a new space, Gelman creates new memories, which can therefore begin to reform the cultural memory of Argentina.

oppressors, but its footing in the past is also central to the work; only as he uses the past to remove himself from the present is he able to spatialize time in order to establish the space to be reunited with lost loves.

Although this process of reappropriating language as a rejection of oppression is facilitated by Ladino, the process is completed by the bilingual presentation of *dibaxu* that creates a dialogue between the languages. Gelman admits that his search for the substratum of language led him to writing in Ladino (1994, 5). Gasparini (2014) adds that “al igual que en la base de toda identidad, el sustrato o fundamento es siempre extranjero... [y] este fundamento sólo puede decirse en traducción” (8). Just as the unique characteristics of Ladino position it to articulate the author’s exile, the translation between languages allows for the encounter and expression of the linguistic foundation that Gelman seeks. Stating that the white space between poems is a type of “travesía a través del tiempo,” Semilla Durán (2014) clarifies that this process occurs as a dialogue, where although buried, “las voces de los perseguidos siguen hablando” (183). Thus, to ensure that the dialogue across time is able to resist tyranny, the interchange needs to be anchored on both sides of time, with the substrates of language articulated through translation.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *Dibaxu* is full of voices from the past, such as in poem XII: “*lu qui a mí dates/ es avla qui timbla/ nila namu dil tiempu/ aviarta para beber// lo que me diste/ es palabra que tiembla/ en la mano del tiempo/ abierta para beber//*.” The voices of the past in these poems ring out in the new space where time has become a location, a site of reunion that mixes the past with the present and future.



Exile punishes not only those expelled, but also those left behind, and for Gelman, poetry is the only method available to confront the devastating loss that accompanies exile, both his own personal suffering, as well as that of his family and friends:

Exiliarse le ha significado distanciarse definitivamente de esos 'otros yo' que han quedado en el país, en cada compañero que continúa la lucha, en cada amigo que cae en manos de la dictadura. Desde el exilio sólo tiene su palabra, su voz, para recuperar el país del que ha sido desterrado [...] La poesía actúa como acto redentor, como posibilidad de conjurar aquello que ya no se posee y se desea, como manera de construir una realidad en la que el poeta se reencuentre con tantos seres cercanos a su corazón o desconocidos que andarán por el sur cubriendo el espacio dejado por él (Sillato 1996, 55-56).

Armed only with his voice and his words, Gelman fights to take back what was taken from him and others by creating a new space forged from time. One primary way this is accomplished in *dibaxu*, where poetry is “la búsqueda de un origen y la experiencia liminar del lenguaje” (Mercado 2008, 30), is through a stratification of language and time that allows him to delve into an exploration of the linguistic substrates that have become his obsession.

After *Citas y Comentarios*, having been immersed in the Spanish of sixteenth century mystics, Gelman describes the compulsion that he felt to write poetry in Ladino as the “necesidad de ir más abajo todavía, es decir a zonas más exiliadas de la lengua” (Montanaro and Ture 1994, 147). Forced from his homeland, Gelman reaches down,

through the layers of time, to find the linguistic stratum that allows him to articulate his exile on his own terms. His description of Ladino points out precisely how it fulfills this need: “Es una lengua que me encanta el judeo español, sobre todo porque las palabras mismas tienen una calidad de candor extraordinaria. ‘Cándido’ tiene que ver con ‘plata’ (con el metal digo) y estas palabras conservan un candor como intocado, o tal vez nos parece ahora después de tantos siglos” (Ibid. 109). Ladino is the perfect nexus of form and function of Gelman’s exile for a number of reasons.

As a language born of exile, Ladino unites Gelman’s voice with those of countless deterritorialized individuals before, lending his discourse strength of numbers and tradition. The nature of Ladino imbues *dibaxu* with a warmth and simplicity that allows the author to populate this collection with a hope that is absent from Gelman’s previous exile poetry with a “candor intocado” by those responsible for his exile. And as both a precursor to his own mother tongue as well as a linguistic alternate timeline, burgeoning with the possibilities of the future, Ladino allows the poet to explore the past in a way that connects past, present, and future in a new space of potential and reunion, crafted out of time itself.

Ladino, as a voice from before, allows the poet to engage the past in order to remake the present: “el poema requiere del pasado del idioma para articularse en una sintaxis y una fonética de otro tiempo y reencontrar su presente: restituye una historia y restaura el deseo” (Monteleone 1997, 151). By using the past to rebuild the present, Gelman celebrates this “pasado que una vez fue presente,” while demonstrating that it

is “algo que se encuentra ya muy lejano, pero no por ello deja de estar presente o se desvanece: habita en ‘la casa del tiempo’” (Rivera 2014, 63). The proximity of the past as manifested through Ladino alters the present as it brings with it the latent capacity that this exilic language holds at its core, what Balbuena (2003) calls the “primeval stage of the language, full of potentiality and expressiveness, in which there are different, multiple and unexpected linguistic possibilities” (139). As a living link to the past, as well as a glimpse of what may have occurred had Spanish taken a different path, Ladino allows Gelman to escape oppression by removing himself from the suffering of the present, replacing it with an alternate time not overshadowed by dictatorship. Hence, the centrality of digging down through the “depósito de siglos” (Pérez Hernández 2009, 215) to find the bedrock layer beneath all language and poetry.

Fabry (2008) points out that the “esqueleto léxico” of *dibaxu* is dominated by nouns and verbs, with other morphological categories only operating in auxiliary roles in the collection (234). This foregrounds the title, an adverb meaning “under” or “below,” even more prominently as a harbinger of the “layers of figurality” (Balbuena 2003, 172) that comprise the work, alternately concealing and protecting more strata underneath. In the introduction, Gelman states that his goal in writing the book was to “buscar raíces en la lengua, [...] el sustrato de ese castellano,” associating directly the notion of “dibaxu” with Ladino in geological and biological terms. As the poet searches for the origins of his mother tongue that are buried in time, they are not only linguistic precursors, but they also act like tree roots, reaching down through layers of sedimentation to nourish the organism in the present. In this imagery of stratification,

digging downwards is constantly tied to the past, but, as with the tree roots, in a way that brings the past into the present.

The first and the last poems in *dibaxu* both create explicit connections with the downward direction of the past, converting it into a layer of poetic and amorous encounter rather than a forgotten period without any bearing on the present. The first poem concludes that “*nila caza dil tiempo/ sta il pasadu// dibaxu di tu piede// qui balia// en la casa del tiempo/ está el pasado// debajo de tu pie// que baila.*” This stanza foreshadows the reification of time echoing throughout the rest of the book, explaining that the past exists within the “caza del tiempo,” residing just below the addressee. The final poem, complements and completes the stratification of the past which began with the first poem by adding another layer, this time below the past: “*pondrí mi spantu londji// dibaxu dil pasadu// qui arde/ cayadu com’il sol// pondré mi espanto lejos// debajo del pasado// que arde/ callado como el sol/.*” Although the layering of the past is shown to be proximal to the addressee in poem I, creating a space to reunite with the loved one, poem XXIX demonstrates that it is also large, a wide enough layer that the speaker can bury his fear far away by placing it below the past. In this way, the usefulness of the past shines through the poetry as it acts as both a fortification against the consequences of dictatorship, as well as a means of overcoming loss as the present is replaced with the space of interaction for the poetic voice and addressee.

In addition to evoking the past, the titular adverb also points toward the interactive relationships that proliferate throughout the collection. All poetry is formed on the basis

of connections and relationships. The intertextual influence of writings from the past foments new poetry as poets establish a dialogue with their predecessors. Additionally, poets encourage a discourse with their readers by publishing their work, and there is often an interaction between speaker and addressee in the poem, particularly in the tender love poems of *dibaxu*. The adverb of the title stresses all these types of interaction. Balbuena (2003) points out the intertextuality of the title as it alludes to the poetry of Clarisse Nicoïdski (171) and Sillato (1996) demonstrates Gelman's tendency to convert the reader into a co-author of the work (80). Perhaps the strongest connection attached to "dibaxu" in the work, however, is the connection between speaker and addressee.

During the course of *dibaxu*, the directionality of "below" is repeatedly employed in connection with the addressee. In poem I, the past is spatialized and placed below the recipient. In addition to the past residing below the poem's "tú," by placing the addressee above, the speaker implicitly establishes himself below, with the past. In poem XV, the speaker states that "*tus bezus inculgan lunas/ qui yelan mi caminu/y/ timblu/ dibaxu dil sol// tus besos cuelgan lunas/ que hielan mi camino/y/ tiemblo/ debajo del sol//*," evoking Petrarch's paradoxical trembling borne of desire. This same relationship is found in poem V, although from the opposite perspective: "*la lampa di tu sangri// sangri di tu solombra// tu solombra/ sovri mi curasón// la lámpara de tu sangre// sangre de tu sombra// tu sombra/ sobre mi corazón//*." The speaker is now protected underneath his love, whose blood provides the light that made him shiver in poem XV.

Poem VI continues the imagery of the poetic voice positioned underneath the recipient. With subtle differences, the bilingual presentation gives access to divergent perspectives that highlight the role of “dibaxu.” Referring to the recurring image of leaves associated with words and voice,<sup>72</sup> the two linguistic versions of the poem approach the location and positioning of the leaves distinctly: “*durmin dibaxu dil sol// dibaxu di vos// duermen debajo del sol// debajo tuyo.*” The Ladino side proclaims that the leaves, which in the previous stanza were said to have fallen from the recipient’s voice, sleep in the space both below the sun and below the addressee herself. This places the leaves, or the loved one’s voice, directly with the speaker who has been shown in other poems to reside beneath his love. It also merges the addressee with the sun as the two are conflated.

In the Spanish version, the leaves still sleep below the sun. However, the next verse, with its possessive pronoun, doesn’t indicate that the leaves sleep beneath the recipient, as in the Ladino version. Instead it modifies the earlier “debajo” of the sun, clarifying that it belongs to the addressee. Thus, there is still a direct connection between the sun and the recipient, but instead of combining the two, the Spanish version adds a dimension of ownership. This reification of the adverb, or the ability to possess the downward relationship inherent within the term, connects back to the materialization of time by emphasizing the physicality of these intangible concepts that arises within the new space created by the poet.

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<sup>72</sup> See Fabry 2008, 235-36.

The link between the spatialization of time and the above/below relationship of the collection's title becomes most clear in poem XIX where the speaker and addressee are finally reunited:

*quirinsioza:  
no ti vayas d'aquí/  
di mi granu di arena/  
desti minutu/*

*querendona:  
no te vayas de aquí/  
de mi grano de arena/  
de este minuto/*

*cuando stamus djuntos  
il fuegu cayi  
sovri las ruinas  
dil sol/*

*cuando estamos juntos  
el fuego cae  
sobre las ruinas  
del sol/*

Whereas in other poems the speaker is next to, and yet, underneath his loved one, in poem XIX they are finally reunited. The result is that the recipient no longer needs to provide him light and protection, because the two occupy a space together, and what is left of the sun is now below. Contrasting with poem VI where the addressee was equated with the sun, this poem appears to depict the reunification of the lovers long after the destruction of the sun, now in ruins. However, the key to the amorous reunion is found in the first stanza. The location where the speaker can finally be with his lost love, although comprised of both time *and* space, described alternately as a "granu di arena" and a "minutu," exists outside of them both. This is possible because the new site where they can be together is crafted through the speaker's poetry as language converts time into a space outside the timeline of reality where the poet's son and daughter-in-law were disappeared, and where his mother died while he was in exile.

In turn, the fire falling upon the “ruinas dil sol” can also be read erotically, evoking a passionate encounter. This reading is reminiscent of the early modern mystical poetry which is replete with erotic affairs, and out of which *dibaxu* emerges. In the mystical tradition, the amorous experience is a metaphor for the union with God. In this collection, Gelman substitutes his lost ones and his country for God, but the emphasis is still on the reunification. Whether read as an atemporal, post-apocalyptic setting or an erotic encounter, the poem highlights the space that the poetic voice and the addressee occupy together. Only by creating a new space made out of time itself and anchored in the past can the speaker assuage the devastating losses that he has suffered in banishment to create a new future with his loved ones.

Fabry (2008) pinpoints that this new space formed from time is made possible by the language of the poetry: “La reversibilidad del espacio y del tiempo es posible gracias a la palabra hospitalaria. Esta, al hacer oír el temblor de otras voces, se reconcilia con la vocación original de la palabra como espacio de acogida, transformando así el potencial poder mortífero de la expulsión en apertura radical no sólo como recogimiento del pasado sino apertura activa hacia el futuro” (237). The word enables the formation of the new space on the page through its asynchronous juxtapositions, both those across languages as Ladino and Spanish interact with each other through the centuries, and within the languages as time is spatialized in the poetry. An examination of the various thematizations of time in the poetry illustrates the function of language in crafting the new space of reunion.



The first poem sets the precedent for the rest of the collection as time appears as a physical location where the speaker can seek refuge and with which the addressee interacts. In the final stanza, within the “caza dil tiempu” is “il pasadu,” a safe harbor for the speaker, located just below the addressee. In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (1964) highlights the connection between houses and a hope for the future in poetry: “The house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace [...] I must show that the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind” (6). The poetic house is a place where it is okay to dream for a better future, and in this opening poem, the house has been erected out of time, making it possible to also rewrite the past. By using time to construct the place of dreaming, the speaker establishes a promising new past, present, and future, removing himself from the historical timeline where he suffered the depravities of the Dirty War. The spatialization of time makes it possible to be with the recipient together again, undisturbed in their new space.

Further strengthening the connection between the house and dreaming, an earlier stanza of the initial poem details how the “yuvia di sueniu” opens “la puarta dil tiempu.” As time is spatialized, the resulting new space where the poetic voice longs to be is accessed through his loved one, and the resulting space allows both a chance to be protected in their daydreaming. Poem XX describes this process, extending the connection between the addressee and entrance to the new space:

*no tenis puarta/yave/  
no tenis sirradura/  
volas di nochi/  
volas di día/*

no tienes puerta/llave/  
no tienes cerradura/  
vuelas de noche/  
vuelas de día/

*lu amadu cría lu qui si amarà/  
comu vos/yave/  
timblandu  
nila puarta dil tiempo/*

lo amado crea lo que se amarà/  
como tú/llave/  
temblando  
en la puerta del tiempo/

In this example, the loved one is still the means through which the door opens, but now, rather than merely providing access, the recipient is fundamental in constructing the new space. Throughout the poem, the addressee is identified as the key, a key which at first has neither a door, nor a lock. The addressee is only able to get into position and grant access to the door of spatialized time when the speaker concedes that “*lu amadu cría lu qui si amarà.*” This verse hints at the importance of both the speaker and addressee in forming the new space where they can finally be together; the latter because the framework for the new space is built upon the memories of her that reside in the past, and it is through his poetry that the former is able to open up this space by creating “*lu qui si amarà.*” In other words, the new space of encounter occurs as time is spatialized, precisely because it is through the confluence of past, manifested as memories of the beloved, and the present of the speaker’s poetry that the two will have a new future together.

As time is spatialized through the junction of memory and poetry, it also becomes personified as it takes on characteristics of the people that inhabit it. In poem XII, not only time, but the words of the poetry itself are reified: “*lu qui a mí dates/ es avla qui*

*tiembla/ nila manu dil tiempu/ aviarta para beber//* lo que me diste/ es palabra que tiembla/ en la mano del tiempo/ abierta para beber//.” The addressee is able to give her words to the speaker because they are the building blocks of this new space, in turn taking up residence in the house that they helped construct, a house that has begun to take on biological qualities. Poem XXV clarifies the personification of this “temporaliz[ed] space” (Balbuena 2009, 293): *“ista yuvia di vos/ dexa cayer pidazus di tiempu// pidazus d’infinitu// pidazus di nus mesmos//* tu lluvia/ deja caer pedazos de tiempo// pedazos de infinito// pedazos de nosotros//.” Time has acquired human characteristics because it is made out of the protagonists of this poetry; the pieces of time are also pieces of the speaker and his beloved. The new space of reunion is sculpted out of time, created by the words and memories of the lovers and as it takes shape, they too transform, from refugees within the space, to an integral part of the space itself.

Along with the fragments of the lovers, the other component forming the physicalized time of poem XXV are the pieces of infinity. The limitlessness of infinity is often associated with time, but it can also be thought of in spatial terms, demonstrated in poem XVIII: *“todu lu qui terra yaman/ es tiempu// es aspira di vos//* todo lo que llaman tierra/ es tiempo// es espera de vos//.” The poetic voice explicitly associates all space, conceived here as earth, as part of time. By claiming that all land is essentially time, the poetic voice makes it possible for the new space to exist anywhere and anytime. More specifically, as the two are inseparably connected, the new space exists outside of time and space, in its own plane. This is what makes the long-awaited reunion

of poem XIX possible, as the lovers are finally together again on the “granu di arena,” within the “minutu.” The site of reunification is crafted out of all time and all space, and is therefore free to exist outside of the linear bounds of time, or the physical limits of real space.

The language of *dibaxu* is what makes it possible for the lovers to be together on a grain of sand, sharing eternity in a minute as the new space, the “caza dil tiempu” materializes in the poetry. Rooted in Jewish history and as the heir to the Christian mysticism of *Citas y Comentarios*, this collection builds on the common origin that each of these traditions share, wherein *Logos*, the word of God, creates the world. In an Huidobrian concession, it is again the poet, or at least the word of the poet, that is able to create a new world made out of time where the poetic voice can overcome the loss of exile and the addressee can be brought back to life, conquering the oppression of dictatorial regimes.

By crafting the site of reunification out of time itself, Gelman disrupts the conventional linear vision of time. Olivera-Williams (1988) describes this asynchronicity as a means of confronting deterritorialization present in all of Gelman’s exilic poetry:

El tiempo en la poesía de Gelman es histórico, cronológico y su fragmentación aprehende la escisión temporal del exilio. La memoria paraliza el transcurso normal del tiempo y el olvido que lo deja fluir borra los hechos que la historia no debe omitir. La lucha de Gelman es por recobrar, revivir a los que cayeron por la

patria, sin dejar de estar en el flujo de la historia. Así, la ruptura de la lógica relación entre tiempos verbales y adverbios (138).

This “ruptura lógica” of the verb tenses and nouns related to time reflects the strain faced by exiles as they constantly long to be in their homeland, while trapped in a new land. The creation of the new space out of time, but free from its linear restrictions, allows the speaker to deal with his situation in a way that he can recover what was taken away from him, free from the control of the government which forced his abandonment of the homeland.

The ungrammatical tenses/tension in Gelman’s poetry also points to the positioning of the new space outside of customary perspectives of time and space, to a new position where past, present and future are all coetaneous. In this way, he breaks down the hierarchical view of time to establish a vision that allows him to return to his loved ones, a view that Balbuena (2003) states is a rejection of the “mere opposition between past and future, or the idea that the future simply supersedes the past. Gelman states the need to reclaim the language’s past and make it present” (137). Although there is a stratification of time throughout *dibaxu*, the layering is constantly transgressed as illogical verb conjugations and grammatical combinations show that sometimes the future can be placed below the past, or even next to it in the same strata. In addition to establishing a space outside of time, the asynchronicity of this collection also reflects

the experience of the exile as longing for the past is vibrantly juxtaposed with the present.<sup>73</sup>

The first and last poems of *dibaxu*, with their position of prominence in the collection, each feature verbs in the future tense in combination with the past, articulating the non-linear view of time that Gelman seeks to carve out. In poem I, it is the trembling of the lips/kisses that “si sentirá in tu pasadu.” This statement demonstrates two separate facets of the space of reunion. On one hand, the connection that this verse shares with trembling highlights the oscillatory nature of time, reflecting the vacillations between languages. Just as the back-and-forth on the page from Ladino to Spanish and vice versa establishes a new area of communication in the white space between languages, there is an alternation between future and past that serves the same function by creating the new space amid the two incongruent times. On the other hand, this verse also specifically introduces the addressee into the new space, because it is precisely in *her* past that the trembling will be heard. The paradox of a future act transpiring in the past of someone lost to violence revives this person by removing their erased history from the past, placing it alongside the future, the time of possibility and hope.

The asynchronous example from the final poem shifts the focus from the addressee and the trembling to the stratification of time. The speaker states that he will “pondrí mi

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<sup>73</sup> “For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally” (Said 2000, 186).

spantu londji// dibaxu dil pasadu/.” Reinforcing the layering of time, the poetic voice demonstrates that although the past is below the addressee, it is not the lowest level. Further disrupting any possible temporal arrangement, future actions can place objects, in this case a reified fear, below the past. This seemingly jumbled stratification of time reminds the reader that while the new space is crafted out of time, it lies outside its conventional order and is not subject to its rules.

Poem IV consists of a series of objects that interact with the recipient of the direct address. The final stanza exhibits a similar temporal paradox as the two previous examples, but this time after relisting the objects from earlier in the poem, the speaker places them in an unchronological setting where the verb is conjugated in the past tense, accompanying a future time frame: “*durmi todo// il páxaru/la boz// il caminu/la yerva/ qui amañana viniara// todo duerme// el pájaro/la voz// el camino/la hierba/ que mañana vino//.*” This “dislocación temporal extrema” (Pérez López 2002, 90) allows entrance to the same space outside of time, albeit from a different direction. It also places the recurring images found throughout the collection in the new space along with the speaker and addressee. The final section of this chapter will further examine the imagery and poetic figures in *dibaxu*, detailing their contribution to the goal of creating the space of reunion and recovery.

Adding to the temporal anomaly of pairing a past tense verb with a future setting, there exists a semantic gap, or a semiotic gap at least, that complicates how this paradox is portrayed. The past tense of the Ladino verb, “*viniara*” resembles directly the

imperfect subjunctive of modern Spanish, while on the Spanish side of the page, the verb is in the preterite tense. While the examples from each language are in the past, the Spanish verb describes a specific event that occurred and ended, and the Ladino verb implies all the speculation and theoretical nature that the subjunctive evokes for a primarily Spanish-speaking audience. This opens a schism of understanding between languages, or, if the two are considered aspects of the same language divided by time, a generation gap that leads readers to different conclusions. The Spanish side concludes that all the objects earlier listed are asleep, nestled in the atemporal space along with the speaker and the addressee, but the Ladino version gives the impression that under different circumstances, this all would have occurred but didn't. The result of these "relaciones temporales 'subvertidas'" (Gasparini 2014, 11), as the imperfect subjunctive and preterite are juxtaposed, is the creation of "desplazamientos" between the two languages, where, "el lenguaje es también 'el expulsado,' es decir, en las que la experiencia exiliar modifica de modo raigal al verbo que la nombra, e invita a un diálogo con aquellos autores que han vivido el exilio como condición central" (Pérez López 2002, 93). This space between languages portrays the impact of exile not only on the exiled, but on his language as well. The result of the breach that opens between languages is that each contributes in part to the overall meaning, but by way of different semantic approaches. Consequently, this language gap melds with the space of reunification carved out by time throughout the collection.

The dichotomy of past tenses exhibited between languages traverses *dibaxu*. The Spanish action is presented as *fait accompli*, while the Ladino wades through puddles of



conjecture, such as in poem VIII, where “*lus animalis qui ti quimaran/ adientru dil sueniu// nunca dizin nada// los animales que te quemaron/ adentro del sueño// nunca dicen nada//*.” The animals don’t say anything on either side, but they burn the addressee in Spanish, and in Ladino, the speaker only suggests that they could have burned her. Connecting Ladino with what is possible is a direct reflection of Gelman’s view of archaic forms of Spanish: “Es que la lengua española de entonces tenía muchas avenidas abiertas que por una razón u otra se fueron cerrando, pero esas avenidas están ahí, eso forma parte de lo inaferrable, de la cosa misteriosa y de algún modo gozosa que tiene la lengua” (Montanaro and Ture 1998, 109). By placing the discourse between languages in speculative terms, leading the Ladino to focus on what could have happened, Gelman grounds the linguistic dialogue across time in ways that stress the exilic nature of *dibaxu*. Rivera argues that the sense of exile develops in “la ausencia, tanto de lo amado como del amante y, por consecuencia, de lo que no ocurrió entre ellos. La carencia es otra forma de exilio” (Rivera 2014, 64). For the same reason that Ladino itself is “lo que no ocurrió” with Spanish, Gelman uses it to show what could have happened, in contrast to what did happen on the Spanish side.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> It’s important to remember that Gelman uses the differences in Ladino and Spanish for his own purposes, prompting some scholars to call his Ladino of “autenticidad dudosa” (Friolet, quoted in Fabry 2008, 229). One example would be the past tenses in the second person of the verb “to give.” In poem XV, this verb is shown as *dieras/diste*, reinforcing the differences already discussed. However, the same verb (at least in Spanish) in poem XII is conjugated as *dates/diste*.

The hypothetical nature of Ladino is foregrounded in poem XVI, reinforcing the space of opportunity created as the languages are presented together and interact with each other.

*cuando mi aya muridu  
sintiré entudavía  
il batideru  
di tu saia nil vienti/*

cuando esté muerto  
oiré todavía  
el temblor  
de tu saya en el viento/

*uno qui liyera istus versus  
prieguntara: “¿cómu así?/  
¿quí sentirás? ¿quí batideru?/  
¿quí saia?/¿quí vienti?”/*

alguien que leyó estos versos  
preguntó: “¿cómo así?/  
¿qué oirás? ¿qué temblor?/  
¿qué saya?/¿qué viento?”/

*li dixí qui cayara/  
qui si sintara a la mesa cun mí/  
qui viviera mi vinu/  
qui scriviera istus versus:*

le dije que callara/  
que se sentara a mi mesa/  
que bebiera mi vino/  
que escribiera estos versos:

*“cuando mi aya muridu  
sintiré entudavía  
il batideru  
di tu saia nil vienti”/*

“cuando esté muerto  
oiré todavía  
el temblor  
de tu saya en el viento”/

Throughout *dibaxu*, the third-person, singular verbs in the preterite on the Spanish side are contrasted to verbs in Ladino that purportedly convey the same meaning, but appear much closer to the imperfect subjunctive of modern Spanish. This pattern continues in poem XVI with the pairs “liyera/leyó” and “prieguntara/preguntó.” This emphasizes a quality of speculation associated with Ladino and reinforces its identity as an exilic tongue.

The tension between languages is highlighted, as well as the link connecting them, as the poem enters the third stanza, consisting of a series of dependent clauses, with

the verbs in the imperfect subjunctive as the speaker instructs the reader how to approach his verses. This is the only example of the imperfect subjunctive on the Spanish side in *dibaxu*, but the Ladino is unchanged, and the verbs appear to have the same form as all of the other third person past tense verbs in the collection. If all the previous examples of the juxtaposition between preterite and imperfect subjunctive contributed a sense of the hypothetical on the Ladino side, the simultaneous presence of the imperfect subjunctive on both sides draws attention to the fact that in the past in Ladino, the indicative and subjunctive moods are indistinguishable. This strengthens the position that Ladino, as a language of absence and exile, is a language of possibility. The semiotic similarity of the Ladino past tense forms seems to state that what happened, and what could have happened, or what the speaker wanted to happen, are all one and the same. Although the speaker demonstrates this using Ladino, it is only in contrast with contemporary Spanish that it becomes clear, necessitating a bilingual reading to open up this space of possibility.

The transition from preterite to past subjunctive in Spanish, mirrored by unchanging forms in Ladino, is a space where hope blossoms, but it also clears the way for the reader to join the speaker in writing the poetry, and thus, in creating the space of reunification. By insisting that the reader takes part in the process of writing poetry, Gelman invites the reader to join him and his beloved in the new space. Chirinos (2004) argues that engaging the reader and forcing her to take an active part is the only way that the mission of *dibaxu*—which is to say, healing and recovery from the pain of loss in a new site of refuge—can be attained: “los obstáculos que suponen el uso de sefardí y

los referentes propios de la experiencia del hablante solo pueden ser salvados si el lector participa de esa experiencia; es decir, si se atreve a dar el salto para convertirse en *autor* de esos versos” (107). Therefore, the switch of authorship from the speaker to the reader is not merely an act of inclusivity, it is central to the purpose of the collection. This is a key requirement for all poetry; without active readers, the communication of poetry is incomplete, withering into forgetfulness.<sup>75</sup> This poetic necessity is intensified in *dibaxu*, for as the poetry revives those that were lost, the speaker needs his reader’s participation to ensure that his resurrected loved ones maintain their new access to immortality through the enduring renewing memories of the readers.

Although the stanza that the reader is tasked with composing repeats the speaker’s earlier stanza verbatim, it is not just a duplication of what came before. In much the same way that Pierre Menard’s *Don Quixote* changes according to the historical context in which it is “composed,” separating itself from the original, the verses written by the reader are what Chirinos (2004) calls “el palimpsesto que se inscribe sobre los anteriores y los redefine convirtiéndose en su traducción” (107).

I would add that what the reader produces is actually a translation of a translation, as the two linguistic versions interact with and translate each other. By writing over what the speaker wrote in the past, the reader takes part in actively writing the poetry

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<sup>75</sup> In the field of reception theory, the reader as author reflects Hans Robert Jauss’s productive aesthetic experience of *poiesis*, where the construction and understanding of a literature depends “on the receiver or observer as well as the producer.” (Holub 1984, 76)

through the lens of translation, a process that characterizes much of Gelman's oeuvre, going back to the early 70s with his heteronyms.<sup>76</sup> In addition to connecting to Gelman's earlier works, the reader as re-writer and translator raises a mirror to the process of self-translation. Describing his experiences with self-translation, Antoni Marí declares that translating his own work grants him a "perspectiva de un 'lector modelo'" who acts as the "'co-autor' de la obra en la lengua de llegada" (Marí 2002, 16). Thus, this shift of perspectives points to a direct exchange of positions as poem XVI comes to a close; at the same moment that self-translation allows the poet to examine his poetry from the reader's chair, the reader is invited to take his place at the poet's desk to draft the final stanza. The new space that is established, where the speaker hears and feels "il batideru/ di tu saia nil vienti//'" as he is reunited with his love, stems directly from the act of translation, executed in part through the participation of the reader.

Mercado (2008) explains Gelman's use of translation as a linguistic tool throughout his poetry: "La traducción en la obra de Gelman se puede leer como un ejercicio poético que supone un desplazamiento (temporal y espacial) de la palabra y también como la búsqueda de un origen a través de la relación con el propio idioma" (34-35). The displacement carried out by translation is the perfect metaphor for exile, as well as the means of opening up the new space carved out of time. The constant translation *across* time in the pages of *dibaxu* forms the basis of the spatialization of time. Translation is

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<sup>76</sup> Sillato argues that in the poetry of Sidney West, Gelman "desafía al lector a abandonar su fácil postura de receptor y atreverse a ser cómplice de esas voces que hablan en los 'lamentos' a las que puede llegar a comprender más por el tono que por los mensajes que transmiten. Es el reconocimiento al lugar del otro, del lector, en la construcción del poema" (1996, 35).

the gateway that allows the reader to go back and forth across the pages, while also traveling backwards and forwards through time as Pym argues that translators inhabit an “interculture” (Pym 1998, 181) a space not “between languages, between source and target cultures, but in the midst of them” (Hokenson and Munson 2007, 4). This combines with the thematization of time within the poetry to create the place for the speaker, addressee, and reader to all be together, outside of the ravages of linear time and away from the violence of dictatorship.

### **Echoed Images and Intertextual Discourse in Gelman’s Exilic Poetry**

*Dibaxu* extends many of the tropes and images that characterize Gelman’s poetry throughout his career, albeit, in a way that allows him to criticize the regimes of the Dirty War. By using Ladino to express the recurring rhetorical figures, Gelman is no longer restricted to writing them in Spanish. This technique of stockpiling the Ladino with his poetic traditions allows him to continue an intertextual discourse with his past work, while circumventing the language of his oppressors. The resulting subversion, through recovering that which was forcibly taken away and accomplished by writing in an exilic tongue, permits a criticism of dictatorial repression that lacks the language and imagery of fury that was common in his previous exile poetry. Unfettered by the need to focus on outrage, Gelman uses *dibaxu* to instead emphasize the revival of his loved ones by spatializing time into a new space of reunion.

Sillato (1996) points out that heteronyms, translation, and intertextuality are recurring motifs in Gelman’s poetry, expressing a sense of otherness that ties all his

work together (16). She argues further that the intertextuality found in his work, rather than merely a recurring theme, is part of the underlying structural foundation of his poetry:

La teoría de la intertextualidad se asienta en la idea de que el texto no es un universo cerrado y hermético ni funciona en un sistema cerrado sino como un sistema sígnico que depende de otros sistemas sígnicos [...] Es en este sentido que consideramos las estrategias intertextuales empleadas por Gelman como una manifestación del concepto de otredad, [...] a partir del texto mismo cuya existencia depende de la existencia de otros textos (81).

Therefore, in order to fully grasp the impact of the language and images in *dibaxu* on its ability to create a new space within the author's control, it is paramount to contextualize it within Gelman's oeuvre, particularly his poetry written in exile.

A longitudinal examination of Gelman's exilic poetry reveals a transition from "describing what is happening in the world around him to concentrating on the irreparable loss suffered by his country, and specifically by himself as father and friend of the dead," as the "tone and the form progressively become more intimate, intense and fragmented," as Crites suggests (2005, 492). As the focus shifts from events surrounding him to an interiorization of his gaze, Gelman simultaneously moves from a burning rage directed at those who deprived him of his homeland and loved ones, to focusing on the possibility of reuniting with those he has lost. This evolution of exilic perspective is observed in the books leading up to *dibaxu*. For example, in "Rojos" from

*Relaciones*, Gelman forges links between the killing of Lorca at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War to the atrocities in Tucumán province which paved the way for the Dirty War, hoping to draw international attention to the conflict. This is followed a few years later by *Si dulcemente*, written abroad after the abduction of his son and daughter-in-law, as well as the death of close friends and writers. The opening poem of the first section of this collection, *Notas*, demonstrates a personalized view of the violence wracking Argentina, portrayed with a seething condemnation of the oppressors: “te pisaré loco de furia./ te mataré los pedacitos./ te mataré uno con paco./ otro lo mato con rodolfo./ con haroldo te mato un pedacito más./ te mataré con mi hijo en la mano” (Gelman 2012 vol. 1, 389). The memories of lost ones function as weapons of vengeance, demonstrating an undeniable rage against those behind the disappearances of the Dirty War. The remaining two sections of *Si dulcemente*, while maintaining the “‘derrota’ cuya ‘recordación de muerte’ está omnipresente” (Fabry 2008, 184), demonstrate the shift away from rage to a more tender expression of the poet’s grief.

The poems of *Carta Abierta*, the second section of *Si dulcemente* composed after Gelman became aware that his son had been murdered following his abduction by the state, speak directly to this lost son in a “grito de dolor” (Ibid., 185). This section abounds in the same loss and death as the preceding part, but as it becomes more personal and intimate, the earlier fury evanesces.



The final section of *Si dulcemente*, sharing its name with the title of the collection, proceeds even further along this trajectory, evoking according to Fabry “una nostalgia dolorosa muy distinta de la ‘furia’ que habíamos observado en los libros inmediatamente anteriores” (Ibid.). Julio Cortázar, tasked with writing the introduction to this third section, points to the poet’s changing strategies of confronting his pain and loss:

Acaso lo más admirable en su poesía es su casi impensable ternura allí donde más se justificaría el paroxismo del rechazo y la denuncia, su invocación de tantas sombras desde una voz que sosiega y arrulla, una permanente caricia de palabras sobre tumbas ignotas [...] También yo quise a Paco, a Rodolfo, a Haroldo, a tanto más, y sólo supe llorarlos; con Juan, por Juan, me acerco ahora a ellos de otro modo, el que ellos hubieran preferido (Gelman 2012 vol. 1, 435).

This tenderness, permitting both the speaker and the reader to draw closer to those lost in the Dirty War, is a direct precursor to the sensitive love poems of *dibaxu*, which are in turn an extension of the reach backwards in time for the origins of Spanish initiated in *Citas y Comentarios*. Both the search for linguistic roots and the need for “una ternura de otros tiempos” lead Gelman to his adoption of Ladino to create the site of reunion. Ladino consequently makes it possible for the poet to continue an intertextual dialogue with his previous work by extending prominent tropes from throughout his career, without needing to resort to the language of his oppressors.

In addition to providing an avenue of expression away from the influence of the Dirty War regimes, intrinsic aspects of Ladino, such as the use of diminutives, the feminization of certain words, and the normalization of irregular verb forms are all characteristics of Gelman's poetic works. Therefore, while Ladino is a language which the junta does not control, perhaps more important, it is also the repository of so many Gelmanian traits, that he is able to perpetuate his frequent leitmotifs in and through this exilic tongue. This allows the modern Spanish also present in *dibaxu* to act as a foil to the Ladino. In this way, his individuality is manifested through Ladino, using Spanish to highlight the otherness of exile represented by the Jewish, diasporic tongue.

I argue that the creation of the location formed from time and word in *dibaxu* is contingent on a dual reading of the languages as their trembling shapes the new space. The co-presence of the languages is necessary, but as Gelman writes his characteristic tropes into the Ladino, the Spanish side is relieved of the pressure to continue the intertextual tradition of his poetry. Through this process, Ladino becomes the new mother tongue for Gelman, and the Spanish, while important to the work and therefore not completely abandoned by the poet, becomes a mirror of the other. Rather than renouncing completely modern Spanish, the author places the aspects of it to which he is endeared into the Ladino, and the Castellano of *dibaxu* becomes a nondescript version of Spanish that is markedly not Argentine, and therefore, does not belong to those responsible for the Dirty War.

Gelman's use of Ladino can also be conceptualized in anti-nationalistic terms.

Although Gelman makes it clear that he pines for his beloved Argentina,<sup>77</sup> he still adopts a strong, anti-nationalist position to fight against the distinctly Argentine nationalism that led to the Dirty War. Commenting on the interplay between nationalism and exile, Said argues that "in time, successful nationalisms consign truth exclusively to themselves and relegate falsehood and inferiority to outsiders" (Said 2000, 176). This process is evident in Argentina as the strong *nacionalismo* that began in the 1920s and continued to grow was largely based on an admiration for Hitler's fascist tactics and convictions, especially the anti-Semitic tenets at the core of Nazism, but grounded in a Latin American setting. This connection between fascism and Argentine nationalism was a key part of the dictatorship's ideology during the Dirty War as they fought to defend Argentina from those they deemed un-Argentine.<sup>78</sup> Establishing what Argentina stood for and represented,<sup>79</sup> as well as labeling their enemies anti-nationalist, was crucial for justifying the junta's goal of eradicating those who opposed them. By composing poetry in Ladino, Gelman removes his writing from the nationalist rhetoric controlled by the junta, while simultaneously addressing his yearning for his homeland through love

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<sup>77</sup> See Gelman, 2007

<sup>78</sup> "Anti-Semitism, anticommunism, and the idea of the internal enemy as a non-Argentine 'Other' were key elements in the ideology of the junta. The perceived enemies were considered to be the personification of the 'anti-patria' (the anti-homeland) and therefore opposed to the specific Argentine conflation of God and homeland that the military state represented" (Finchelstein 2014, 123).

<sup>79</sup> Geographer Doreen Massey argues that place has always been defined and constructed politically: "Two points seem clear. First, and very obviously, the way in which we characterize places is fundamentally political. But second, and far less obviously perhaps, the politics lies not just in the particular characteristics assigned to places [...] but in the very way in which the image of place is constructed" (1994, 114)

poetry in a language that echoes his deterritorialization and his separation from his beloved.

Gelman feels a kinship for Ladino, which, like him, has suffered “los embates de la vida” (Rivera 2014, 66) and, although anachronistically related to his *castellano porteño*, the Sephardic language connects emotionally to it<sup>80</sup> in a way that alleviates the burden of self-expression from resting squarely on the shoulders of the modern Spanish commandeered by the military junta of Argentina. For example, the *voseo* of Ladino produces the positive affect that Gelman seeks in language, and therefore the Spanish side is virtually devoid of this particular characteristic of Rioplatense Spanish. Another elemental feature of Ladino that fulfills the poet’s emotional yearnings for his mother tongue is the frequent use of archaic sibilants that evokes the *sheísmo* of Buenos Aires, according to Semilla Durán (2014): “En tanto que como argentinos, no podemos evitar escuchar, en esa proliferación de «x» y de «y», ese sonido intruso de palatalización que le hemos impuesto al castellano, que nos designa, nos identifica y nos diferencia en el interior de la lengua, y que constituye la marca registrada de cierto acento porteño, tanguero, popular” (180). Gelman has chosen Ladino precisely because of its quality as an exilic language, aptly representing his deterritorialization and his desire to go backwards in time to reunite with loved ones that were taken away. Archaic characteristics of the language allow him to represent all these things, as well as his deeply Argentine self-identification, in a method completely under his own control.

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<sup>80</sup> See Montanaro and Ture 1998, 27.

Further intrinsic attributes of Ladino which connect with Gelman's body of work demonstrate the expediency of using this language to continue an intertextual discourse with his previous poetry while criticizing those accountable for his anguish.

One of the techniques that Gelman utilizes throughout his work, but with increasing frequency and scope in the exilic poetry preceding *dibaxu*, is the feminization of masculine nouns, such as "la todo," "la pecho," and "la cielo."<sup>81</sup> During the course of his poetic career, this feminization is a method of intensification (Olivera-Williams 1988, 139) or what Mesa Falcón (1989) describes as "una manera de llamar la atención sobre palabras esenciales que pueden estar adormecidas por el uso, el desgaste de la rutina" (84, Quoted in Crites 2013, 720) While these aspects of the feminization of *dibaxu* remain accurate, this process acquires a renewed significance in Gelman's poetry of exile.

Fabry (2008) argues that when faced with loss in western society, women are tasked with the ritual of mourning, and thus "esta feminización del léxico podría ser la señal de un paso de la tentación espectral y su consiguiente melancolía a la voluntad de exteriorizar el duelo y asignarle una función política y moral" (164). While there may be a perceived cultural correlation between open and outward mourning and women, I contend that this attempt to link substantive feminization to grieving women is problematic in that it relies too heavily on gender generalizations; men too can and do

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<sup>81</sup> All examples from *Carta abierta* in Gelman 2012, vol. 1. See also *Citas y Comentarios* in the same volume.

mourn just as deeply and vociferously as women. Instead, I argue, with Mesa Falcón, that the feminization of modern Spanish masculine words in Ladino, draws the reader's attention to an otherwise "adormecida" word. This is especially true in the case of *dibaxu* where the bilingual presentation, with the contemporary Spanish on the opposing page, highlights the difference. Thus, in poem VII, "el calor" on the Castellano side reinforces the striking presence of "la calor" in Ladino. In addition to renewing the poetic language, the feminization in Ladino is also a reinforcement of the feminine addressee that haunts the collection. Even though the beloved represents his homeland and all those that Gelman lost, men and women, the addressee is characterized in feminine terms in the mystical tradition of the beloved. As the Ladino side feminizes the language, emphasizing the beloved and thus the space where she and the speaker can be reunited, the foregrounding of feminine aspects contributes a sense of tenderness and understanding that allows those impacted by violence to grieve their loss.

Another way to understand the contribution of feminization to Gelman's exile poetry is by examining dialects of Spanish that have a tendency to alter regularized forms of speech: "el español de la época de la conquista; las deformaciones o barbarismos del 'habla popular'; y el habla infantil previa a su normalización, sobre cuyo emisor-niño se hace confluír ahora la voz misma del poema" (Dalmaroni 2001, 8). Each of these three linguistic variants of standard Spanish articulate the effect that writing in Ladino carries out for Gelman. He states in the introduction to *dibaxu* that it was necessary for him to return to an archaic Spanish as he searched for the "raíces en la

lengua, las más profundas y exiliadas de la lengua.”<sup>82</sup> The connection that Ladino shares with popular Argentine Spanish has already been discussed here. The third trait is evident in any burgeoning speaker who is still learning the rules of language, capable of manipulating her tongue in a way that the rigidity of adulthood doesn’t allow. The childlike flexibility of grammar, manifested through feminization also relates to Ladino in that it acts as a portal to the past, allowing the speaker to look upon the past with nostalgia, regardless of whether a more innocent time ever really existed. This “habla infantil” manifests itself in other ways in *dibaxu* that connect Ladino to the poet’s larger body of work.

The use of diminutives and de-irregularized past participles are two hallmarks of Gelman’s poetry, each of which appear in *dibaxu* as essential components of Ladino that allow the poet’s legacy to continue, in a space safe from those that would use Spanish against him. The non-standard, regularized verb forms present in Gelman’s poetry since at least the early 1970s, while always associated with a childlike form of speaking, take on a renewed innocence as they emerge in *dibaxu*, such as *muridu* (XVI and XXIX) and *rompidu* (XVII). Concentrating these normalized verbs on the Ladino side foregrounds their omission in Spanish, which Fabry (2008) argues is a way of adopting the perspective of the “other”: “la deformación lingüística a la que Gelman somete el castellano en otros poemarios, se desplaza aquí hacia el judeoespañol, como si las transgresiones lingüísticas de Gelman se arraigaran en ese ‘otro’ castellano”(235). While

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<sup>82</sup> See also Mercad, 2008, 53-54.

writing in Ladino is a conscious choice of self-marginalization, at least initially, I argue that situating salient features of his poetry only in the Ladino version converts it into his mother tongue, which in turn converts the Spanish side lacking these qualities into the other. Thus, as Ladino inherently possesses qualities that Gelman has long expressed through experimentation, the poet no longer needs to write them into Spanish and he is able to defy the dictatorship through innocence and “habla infantil”.

Diminutives, “which accentuate the emotional tension” (Crites 2005, 497), are another feature of Gelman’s writing that he naturally incorporates into Ladino. Used throughout his poetry, diminutives take on a new significance in *dibaxu*, where in Ladino, “el uso del diminutivo no constituye una elección deliberada del hablante o un signo específico de determinado nivel de lengua, sino que forma parte de una dimensión constitutiva del idioma” (Fabry 2008, 235). As a constitutive trait of Ladino, the diminutives are one of the features that Gelman finds attractive in Ladino, citing in the introduction to *dibaxu* that Ladino gives him a “candor perdido y sus diminutivos, una ternura de otros tiempos.” These “otros tiempos” that the poet longs for could be a historical time at the beginnings of Ladino, as the past is idealized as a simpler time when compared to the present, but it could also represent a time in the author’s own life, perhaps a time of family bliss when his children were young. In either situation, the idea of being transported to another time through the innocence of the diminutives reinforces the argument that Ladino enables the poet to escape the persecution of the recent past, and in so doing, establish a space of safety for himself and his beloved.



A Gelmanian characteristic that is conspicuously absent in *dibaxu* are the neologisms that frequent his other work (Ibid. 234). This lack is clarified by examining Gelman's use of Ladino: "[él] tuvo que aprender esa lengua que de ninguna manera pertenece a su tradición, que él no hablaba, y que ha sido sobre todo un instrumento literario, una lengua casi inventada para rendir cuenta de un momento preciso de su itinerario personal y poético" (Semilla Durán 2014, 178). As a "lengua casi inventada," the entirety of Ladino in this work is a neologism consistent with Gelman's use of new coinages in previous poetry that force the reader to view the language of the poetry in a novel way. Thus, while on the surface, the language of *dibaxu* is "más sencillo y depurado que evita la sintaxis tensionada de otros de sus libros" (Pérez López 2002, 93), I argue that this collection is his most experimental, with the Ladino a venture into overcoming death and loss<sup>83</sup> by forming a new space, created out of the language itself.

While completely different in concept from any of Gelman's other works, before or since, *dibaxu* maintains intertextual linkages with his body of work in part by means of the linguistic experimentation of Ladino, but also through the recurring symbols that unite all his poetry. Birds are one of the most common images in Gelman's poetry, and they are also the most frequently used noun in *dibaxu*. In addition to connecting to his

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<sup>83</sup> The only two poems that comment on death in the collection are XVI, where the speaker refers to his own impending death, and XXIX, referring to a future time where the "páxarus" of the speaker and addressee's kisses live on, even though their kisses are dead. There are also no explicit mentions of loss, but repeated references to the need of overcoming "sulvidu" or forgetting. For Gelman, loss is the punishment for those guilty of the crime of forgetting. Conversely, he also believes in poetry's ability to combat the loss of forgetting. In his 1997 acceptance speech for the Premio Nacional de Poesía, he stated "Es la poesía la encargada de mostrar que verdad y memoria son la misma cosa." (Montanaro and Ture 1998, 102)

previous work, the presence of so many birds in *dibaxu* links it to the Ladino poetry of Clarisse Nicoïdski as well as other contemporary Ladino writers (Balbuena 2003, 184).

The birds in *dibaxu* are often associated with the voice, most frequently acting as an intermediary between the speaker and the addressee. In poem IV, the bird springs forth out of the voice of the speaker, opening the way for him to his beloved: “*il páxaru/ qui vola in mi boz/ atan chitiu// por il páxaru pasa un caminu/ qui va a tus ojus// el pájaro/ que vuela en mi voz// tan chico// por el pájaro pasa un camino/ que va a tus ojos//.*”

The bird in this case makes it possible for the speaker to connect with the addressee, doing so through synesthesia as the auditory voice and the visual eyes are linked together. This synesthetic bird which acts as an intercessor between the speaker and his beloved thus becomes a metaphor for the poetry of *dibaxu*. It is through the poetry that the speaker is able to craft the new space where he can be reunited with his love, a poetry which is deeply synesthetic itself as the acoustic tremblings between languages are vitally important as mentioned by Gelman in the *escolio*, but the visual back-and-forth between languages is just as crucial.

In poem XIV, the bird springs from the recipient’s voice, while still guiding the speaker to her: “*lu qui avlas/ dexa cayer/ un páxaru/ qui li soy nidu// lo que hablas/ deja caer/ un pájaro/ y le soy nido//.*” Although still connecting addressee and speaker, the route reversal of the bird in this case emphasizes the recipient, who has been restored to life through the poetry, and her ability to also contribute to the dialogue with the speaker which fortifies the new space created in the poetry. As the bird falls from the

words of the addressee, the speaker becomes a nest for the bird, indicating that the home for the beloved's words comes directly out of the speaker and his poetry, again underlining the theme that the poetry and language of *dibaxu* is what grants new life to both speaker and addressee. It is their connection to orality and the voice that enables these birds to connect the speaker and addressee. By means of their song, which is to say the oral trembling between languages that Gelman urges of his readers, birds in this collection bring the lovers together, acting as a metaphor of the ability that poetry wields to create the space of reunification.<sup>84</sup>

In addition to connecting the speaker and his beloved, the birds in *dibaxu*, as a representation of the power of poetry, also evoke a stunning hope that language has the capacity to help the bereaved cope with loss, especially when located in the interliminal space between languages, as demonstrated by the semantic distance between Ladino and Spanish in poem III: "*l'amaniana arrelumbra a lus páxarus// la mañana hace brillar a los pájaros/.*" Commenting on Gelman's choice to not use the modern Spanish word which more visually and sonically resembles the Ladino verb, Balbuena (2016) explains that "in this specific example, Ladino offers two possible meanings (with a transitive and an intransitive verb) whereas Spanish is crystallized around one meaning. While *relumbrar* in Spanish means 'to shine brightly,' *arrelumbrar* may be *briyar*, which is *lucir* in Spanish, or 'sparkle, shine,' as well as *asender*, translated as *alumbrar*, 'illuminate,' in Spanish" (150). In the end, Gelman forgoes the Spanish verb

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<sup>84</sup> See Balbuena 2012, 178 for more on the importance of orality in Ladino traditions.

that most resembles the Ladino, choosing another verb phrase so as to highlight its transitive quality: “In this poem, the birds don’t shine; rather, the morning makes them shine—in agrammatical terms, ‘it shines them’” (Ibid.).

By choosing transitivity over proximity, Gelman transforms the Spanish verb *relumbrar*, evoked in the mind of the predominately Spanish-speaking audience by the Ladino *arrelumbrar*, from intransitive to a transitive. In this way, the poet speaks out against the horrors of the Dirty War by inverting the military regime’s use of language as a tool of oppression, demonstrated by their conversion of *desaparecer* into a transitive verb designed to both strike fear into the hearts of their political enemies and destroy any hope. Counteracting the asphyxiating darkness of the military ruler’s official language, *arrelumbrar* at its core is a word of light and optimism. In this case, it connects the morning, a time of hope and possibility with birds, a symbol of poetry throughout Gelman’s work, and the means by which the speaker is connected to his beloved in this collection. By evoking *relumbrar*, and then converting it into a transitive verb, the speaker demonstrates that impact that hope and brightness can exert on his beloved.

In addition to depicting the illumination that is possible through language and hope, this poem reinforces the interliminal, the space between languages which Gelman seeks to create as a site of reunification with his beloved. For Gelman, this new space emerges through the poetry itself as the languages interact and tremble back and forth, coming to rest somewhere between each other. The second line of the poem unequivocally

establishes the new space, following the illumination of the birds with the concession that the morning “*sta aviarta/ teni frescura/ está abierta/ tiene frescura.*” Thus, the morning, conventionally conceived as a period of time, is endowed with a physicality, a locus from where it can affect the birds, and in turn reach out and touch the speaker’s beloved. I argue that this interliminal space is central to Gelman’s mission to create a space of reunification away from the influence and power of the perpetrators of the Dirty War, a space enabled by the trembling between languages that reifies the gap between languages into a site for amorous reunion.

One of the other most frequent images in Gelman’s poetry are the trees, which, like birds, link poetry, orality, and the word together to ensure that the speaker can recover his lost ones. Referring to the poetic presence of trees, Bachelard states that “Poets will help us to discover within ourselves such joy in looking that sometimes, in the presence of a perfectly familiar object, we experience an extension of our intimate space” (Bachelard 1964, 199). This concept is perfectly reflected in *dibaxu* because it is through the extremely limited vocabulary of the collection, with its many repeated images such as the birds and trees that the poet creates the intimate space to be with his lover again.

The arboreal images in *dibaxu* all evoke the love for the addressee, connecting it intertextually with the trees of Gelman’s other works. For example, in poem XXVII, the speaker states “*mirandu il manzanu/ vidi mi amor// mirando el mazano/ vi a mi amor.*” This is a continuation of “el manzano del amor” from Cita VI from *Citas y Comentarios*

(Gelman 2012 vol.1, 506), and therefore also a continuation of the poetic dialogue that Gelman conducted with the mystic poetry of Santa Teresa. Even the poetry of Santa Teresa serves as a reference to The Song of Songs, where the woman says that her lover “is like/ an apple tree among the trees of a wood” (Jay 1975, 28). This example demonstrates the intertextual quality of the recurring images of *dibaxu* with his own poetry, but also situates Gelman in a rich poetic heritage, contributing to what Octavio Paz coined a “bosque parlante” (Paz 2014). By participating in a poetic tradition, these trees ensure the enduring impact of the poetry, thus assuring that the new space created by the poetry will persist so that the lovers can be together eternally. This insight into the role of poetic trees to establish a site of solace is echoed in Rilke: “These trees are magnificent, but even more magnificent is the sublime and moving space between them, as though with their growth it too increased” (Quoted in Bachelard 1964, 201).

Poem X demonstrates that these trees directly grow out of the words of the poem: “*dizis avlas cun árvulis/ tenin folyas qui cantan/ dices palabras con árboles/ tienen hojas que cantan.*” In addition to their explicit causal relation in the poem, Balbuena (2003) points out an even deeper connection on the Ladino side: “Note the aural and graphic similarity of the words AVLaS (words) and ArVuLIS (trees), forming a paronomasia in the first verse in Ladino. Not only does it call attention to the poetic function, but, in comparison to the Castellano version, it also strengthens the identification between the two elements” (184). The extra association between these words in Ladino is fitting; the presence of Ladino is what allows for the trembling between language and time, which

consequently creates the new space out of time for the lovers to reunite. Thus, as the word is declared, whether itself or as the birds and trees that stand in for it, it undermines the actions of the Dirty War by fostering amorous reunion that overcomes the fear and uncertainty fomented by state terrorism.

Poem XXIV illuminates the impact that the word has on the lovers' relationship, again correlating it to trees: "*amarti es istu:/ un avla qui va a dizer// un arvulicu sin folyas/ que da solombra// amarte es esto:/ una palabra que está por decir// un arbolito sin hojas/ que da sombra//.*" The word of this poem connects the tree to the speaker's love for the addressee, but it also describes the new space. As a word that is yet to be said, this tree presents the possibility of the impossible. The word/shade-giving-tree-without-leaves is an apt representation of the space formed by spatializing time, but residing outside of it, demonstrating that the word itself, especially the oral aspect, is as vital to create the new space as time is. The Ladino term *avla* points to the importance of orality in this poetry. Similar to the allopatric examples viewed previously, *avla* is not only translated as *palabra* on the Spanish side, but as a form of the verb *hablar* as well.<sup>85</sup> Hence, the indivisible oral quality of this poetry wherein neither the poetry nor the orality can exist on their own. As he pleads in the introduction, Gelman knows that only by reading this poetry out loud will the trembling allow us—the reader, speaker, and the addressee—passage "desde el Cid."

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<sup>85</sup> Balbuena points out that Nicoïdski uses "palabra" for "word," clarifying that Gelman's use of "avla" is for poetic effect. (2009, 289).

The words of the poetry are crucial to establish the new space of refuge because it is through the speaker's words that the addressee is resurrected in preparation for their reunion. Poem XIII is one of the shortest poems in the collection. Its pithiness exhibits the ability of *dibaxu* to overcome the forced disappearances and state-sponsored terror of the Dirty War, allowing the lovers to be together.

<i>eris</i>	eres
<i>mi única avla/</i>	mi única palabra/
<i>no sé</i>	no sé
<i>tu nombri/</i>	tu nombre/

The notion that the speaker doesn't know his lover's name is an echo of the official line of the instigators of the Dirty War, who, after disappearing their victims, toiled to eradicate their identity as well. General Videla, the leader of the first military junta, stated the government's position to the press regarding *los desaparecidos*: "Le diré que frente al desaparecido en tanto esté como tal, es una incógnita. Si reapareciera tendría un tratamiento equis. Pero si la desaparición se convirtiera en certeza de su fallecimiento tiene otro tratamiento. Mientras sea desaparecido no puede tener tratamiento especial, porque no tiene identidad: no está ni muerto ni vivo" (Quoted in Crenzel 2010, 161). By eradicating the identity of those that they abducted, the government effectively places them in a position akin to limbo, where each person "no está ni muerto ni vivo." This military-imposed indeterminacy was parroted by the Argentine media in the years following the Dirty War when human rights organizations began to recover the remains of victims. As the victims were exhumed, the media also



employed a narrative that supported the government's official version by stripping the humanity from the *desaparecidos*:

El primer elemento a señalar es que la figura que se construye es la del cadáver o los cadáveres en plural, los cuerpos, pero no se habla de 'muertos'. De este modo, los medios de comunicación prolongan en su discurso la privación de humanidad que había producido, en los hechos, la dictadura con las víctimas del sistema represivo y prolongan la privación de la muerte que implicó la modalidad de la desaparición forzada [...] En las noticias, los cuerpos 'aparecen' sin identidad: no sólo porque no tienen nombre, sino porque esa muerte que no se menciona los ha vaciado de su calidad de seres humanos. Incluso cuando están identificados, en la construcción periodística lo central son los cadáveres (Feld 2010, 34).

Poem XIII appears to specifically react to the stance taken by the media and the military regime, removing the addressee from the location of ambiguity that they have placed her in, moving her to the new space that the speaker has created for her. In order to refer to the victims, the Argentine press used the term Latin term *nomen nescio* (NN), or name unknown (Ibid. 25). *Nescio* is a first person conjugation, so a more literal translation of the term would be "I do not know the name" (Thode 1992, 179). Gelman echoes this sentiment almost exactly at the end of the poem, stating "no sé/ tu nombri//." However, rather than a concession of defeat and acceptance of the military

dictum, the admittance of not knowing the addressee's name follows the powerful pronouncement: "eris/ mi única avla//."

Regardless of the junta's disavowal of victims' identities, which prolonged the terror that began with abduction,<sup>86</sup> Gelman asserts that his poetry is able to grant life to the beloved, recovering them from the forgetfulness of forced disappearance. Rather than the rage of earlier exile poetry, or the anguish of the poem-letters written to his murdered son, this poem is symptomatic of the hope that irrupts in the pages of *dibaxu*. By choosing a marginal language to interact with modern Spanish, this hope that flows throughout *dibaxu* uses language to directly contrast the military junta's appropriation of language as an extension of their power and control:

Brutal, sadistic, and rapacious, the whole regime was intensely verbal. From the moment of the coup, there was a constant torrent of speeches, proclamations, and interviews [...] With diabolical skill, the regime used language to: (1) shroud in mystery its true actions and intentions, (2) say the opposite of what it meant, (3) inspire trust, both at home and abroad, (4) instill guilt, especially in mothers, to seal their complicity, and (5) sow paralyzing terror and confusion (Feitlowitz 1998, 20).

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<sup>86</sup> "Como puede verse, al construir la figura del cadáver NN como tema central de la información, los diarios no sólo ponen el acento en lo macabro, sino que además prolongan muchos de los efectos producidos por el sistema desaparecedor: las informaciones se dan de manera fragmentaria, la violencia se hace visible en las huellas que deja y sigue oculta en tanto práctica sistemática, las personas privadas de su muerte no aparecen y a los cuerpos hallados no se les asigna una identidad" (Feld 2010, 36).

The speaker in poem XIII expresses his faith that his words have the power to bring the addressee back to life, so that she can join him in the new space, also formed through his words. As his poetry brings his lost love back to life and reunites them, the forced loss of her identity and name due to the government's actions no longer hold any power over either of them.

As the poetry overcomes the devastating impact of the Dirty War, bringing lost ones back to life through the word, that same word also has the power to restore their name and identity that were stripped away from them. Poem XXVIII demonstrates this power, by asking “¿*quí avla ti dezirá?// quí nombri ti nombrará?// ¿qué palabra te dirá?// ¿qué nombre te nombrará?//*.” The power of words and names become evident, because as they are evoked, they speak and name those lost back into existence, restoring their stolen identities and personalities at the same time. The poetic word is the means by which the speaker can breathe life anew into his beloved, allowing him to also hold on to the homeland from which he has been exiled: “Desde el exilio [el poeta] sólo tiene su palabra, su voz, para recuperar el país del que ha sido desterrado [...] La poesía actúa como acto redentor, como posibilidad de conjurar aquello que ya no se posee y se desea, como manera de construir una realidad en la que el poeta se reencuentre con tantos seres cercanos a su corazón” (Sillato 1996, 55-56). The redemption of both the lost loved ones and the *patria* through the word allows the exiled poet to hold on to those things dear to him that he has had to leave behind. The poetry of *dibaxu* takes this process one step further. The words of this collection don't stop at allowing the speaker

to hold onto the idea of his loved one. Rather, it is through the words of the poem that the speaker is reunited with his beloved “nila caza dil tiempu.”

The shining optimism present throughout *dibaxu* blooms directly out of the word and language of the poetry. As the languages tremble back and forth, they create an interliminal space between them. This allows for time to be spatialized within this interstitial opening as the new space is crafted from the language of the poem. As if to underscore the hope for this new space, the images of *dibaxu* carry out a dialogue with Gelman’s other works. This intertextual discourse connects this work with those preceding it, while also distinguishing it from the earlier poetry of fury and suffering. The lovers can only be reunited in the new space made possible by the poetic word, a location that materializes as the pain of the past is set aside, allowing for the focus on hope. It is ultimately through the poet’s self-translation and bilingual writing that love has a chance again in the world of the exile and the disappeared.

## CHAPTER IV

### **NA PUNTA DA LINGUA: POSTNATIONAL GALICIAN IDENTITY FORMATION THROUGH SELF-TRANSLATION**

In November 2002, the international tanker *Prestige* crashed off the coast of Galicia, spilling over 70,000 metric tons of oil and causing one of the largest man-made environmental disasters in history (Colmeiro 2009, 226). One of the clearest indicators of the postmodern condition of this catastrophe, and indeed, one of the key factors that made it virtually impossible to hold any particular entity financially responsible, was the globalization of which it was symptomatic: “the *Prestige* was a Greek-operated tanker flying a Bahamas flag that had been chartered by a Swiss-based Russian oil company” (Bermúdez 2006, 126). Although tragic, it is ironically fitting that this international disaster occurred in Galicia, a land that has always been located at the periphery and simultaneously at multiple crossroads, between land and sea, Europe and America, and the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking world, among others (Hooper 2006, 173). It should come as no surprise then that “the catastrophe of the *Prestige* coincided with and contributed to the national circulation of representations of a multi-national otherness. In this context, a generation of Galician women writers [...] appeal to the dynamism of a literary space that redefines itself under the auspice of ‘plurality’” (Labrador Méndez 2010, 271). It is precisely from this sense of “plurality” that Yolanda Castaño composes her 2014 poetry collection *A segunda lingua/ La segunda lengua*, creating a transnational and translingual setting from which to enunciate a particularly

Galician sense of identity. In this chapter, I argue that Castaño's self-translated, multilingual poetry articulates a Galician interpretation of the concepts of heteroglossia and postnationalism by demonstrating the multiplicity of factors that comprise her identity, a fractured identity that is closely bound to Galician cultural markers. By positioning herself in Bhabha's third space through the process of self-translation, Castaño evokes the permeation of hybridity that reflects the cultural and linguistic postnational polyphony of Galicia, combatting a false sense of homogeneity and monoglossia imposed by the hegemonic, nationalist model.

As a Galician citizen, Castaño resides at the periphery, on a cultural borderline, suspended between antagonistic forces that would delineate the Galician cultural system, continually seeking to define itself within the larger settings of Spain, Europe, and a globalized world. This peripheral position results in an ever-present sense of hybridity, which "is seen as the product of contact moments of cultural spaces, thus resulting in the transformation of all subjects involved" (Wolf 2008, 12). Although all aspects of Galician culture are characterized by hybridity, Bhabha argues that every modern culture is in fact molded by it: "We see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha 1990, 211). Thus, the third space that arises from the postmodern condition of hybridity allows for new

aspects of self and identity to be explored through interactions at the crossroads<sup>87</sup>.

These exchanges in turn point to the role of translation in creating the third space, where translation is “an interactive process, a meeting place where conflicts are acted out and the margins of collaborations explored” (Wolf 2008, 13). In this sense, the third space and its relation to translation demonstrates the role of self-translation in Castaño’s poetry to engage and articulate the Galician cultural sense of hybridity as a fundamental component of its identity. Translation then becomes an instrumental tool used to help pinpoint identity.

Translation is able to shed light on the notion of identity because the act of translation necessitates the co-occurrence of the translator’s other “self,” which foments an interaction between the various aspects of her identity: “It is translation that helps the otherness of the self to come to the surface, because it makes the two parts of the self physically present, visible and audible. Moreover, I believe that translation and self-translation are powerful tools to resist assimilation” (Klimkiewicz 2013, 194)<sup>88</sup>. By engaging the various aspects of a translator’s identity and forcing an interaction, translation allows for an interrogation of what it means to *be*, especially in regards to the constant sense of hybridity that pervades modern life. In the sense that translation helps to clarify the concept of identity, self-translation can further illuminate the problem. Van Bolderen (2010) employs Gayatri Spivak’s foundational essay on the

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<sup>87</sup> “Reacting to the homogenizing pressure of a material world culture, new constellations often emerge which do not so much level out existing cultural differences as create a new multiplicity of hybridized forms” (Habermas 2001, 75).

<sup>88</sup> See also Nikolaou 2006, 15.

politics of translation to demonstrate the relevance of self-translation to delineating identity. Spivak argues that identity is a sense of “self-meaning,” and that meaning is created through language. Van Bolderen adds that

this notion of language suggests that self-translation is a particularly valuable tool for creating and understanding identity: since self-translation constitutes a double (at least) encounter with language [...] and therefore a double opportunity to create the self, it would also represent a means by which the individual could create her identity to a greater extent than were she writing only an ‘original’ or only a translation of someone else’s text (116-17).

This ability of translation to manifest identity through the interaction of the selves is a direct consequence of translation’s occurrence at the third space. The result of this inherent hybridity is that “translation takes place in a context where tradition and identity are no longer homogenizing, unifying forces and where subjects operate in complex networks of symbols and meaning which call for permanent interaction” (Wolf 2008, 18). The fact that translation occurs under conditions where identity is no longer a homogenizing factor foregrounds once again the postmodern condition of fragmentation. The person occupying the borderline, “where translation and cultural transfer are common, and where hybridization is not only a natural feature but a defining one,” is defined “by this plural personality that trades in contradictions and ambivalence, [...] rejecting both essentialisms of identity as well as rigid, immutable concepts” (Camps 2008, 80). Both translation and identity in the modern sense abandon



homogenous and essentialized views of identity and culture, a point articulated by Castaño's self-translated poetry in support of the Galician concepts of postnationalism and heteroglossia addressed in this chapter.

The question of identity, and particularly that of national identity, has always been a central preoccupation of Galician culture and the national collective (Carballeira and Hooper 2009, 201). As a stateless nation, the impulse to define and strengthen the national identity is particularly germane to a society, a people who view themselves pushed to the periphery of the Spanish state. For nations seeking to define themselves, especially those existing without the support of their own sovereign state, the notion of identity is often conflated with language, to the point where the two become inseparably intertwined. This trend of equating one language with national identity, while excluding all others, can be attributed to an ideological shift that began in the nineteenth century. The rise of nationalisms that accompanied the sweep of Romanticism in Europe brought with it a change in perception of language use and its implications for the notion of national identity. For centuries Europeans had existed in largely multilingual societies, with writers in the Middle Ages often writing in Latin in addition to their vernacular languages (Hokenson and Munson 2007, 22-25). However, the conception of nationalism that grew out of the Romantic Movement brought with it a new focus on monolingualism, establishing national languages as one of the purest symbols of the nation in what Woolard calls the "nationalist ideology of language and identity" (1998, 14). This monolingual approach to nationalism has had a long-lasting

impact on the perception of languages in Galicia, affecting the interlinguistic relationship in the region.

One major ramification of the centralist government's influence over the rest of Spain is the creation of a diglossic linguistic situation in Galicia. The Galician language has often been stigmatized, associated with its disenfranchised poor and uneducated speakers. A higher percentage of monolingual or predominately Galician speakers correlate to those Gallegos who have a lower level of formal education and with those who live in rural areas. Additionally, there is a trend towards the increase of predominantly Spanish or Spanish monolingualism, especially with the younger generations.

Despite the impact of Spanish on Galicia, resulting from Galicia's marginalized presence within Spain, the constitution of 1976, and the subsequent recognition of Galicia as a traditional kingdom in 1983 allowed for the recognition and acceptance of Galician as one of the co-official languages of the state. Both the central government and the regional government have advocated for a language policy that promotes what is known in Galicia as "bilingüismo harmónico" or balanced bilingualism, where the languages are treated equally, resulting in a supposed peaceful co-existence (Hooper 2007b, 149). However, many Galician nationalists argue that balanced bilingualism merely covers up the conflict between languages, contributing to the regional diglossia and accelerating the modern language shift (del Valle 2000, 109). Consequently, Galician

nationalists call for a Galician-only system in order to correct what they view as historic damage to their linguistic heritage by the state language.

José del Valle (2000) argues that both the hegemonic and non-hegemonic perspectives on language in Galicia are rooted in what he terms monoglossia. On the one hand, the legal discourse of the Spanish Constitution equates nation and language, with the idea behind balanced bilingualism to make both Galician and Spanish available to the Galician people and allow them to choose one or the other, depending on the circumstances. On the other side of the political continuum, those advocating for Galician-only argue that the dual presence of the two languages will favor the language of prestige, Spanish in this case, leading to a linguistic convergence of Galician with Spanish and the abandonment of Galician. Although from opposite ends of the spectrum, both balanced bilingualism and Galician-only operate under the assumption of a zero-sum game, where a language can only thrive at the expense of the other language, leading del Valle to conclude that the “policies of both monolingualism and bilingualism are products of monoglossic culture” (ibid., 122).

This concept of monoglossia, which assumes that the only alternative to monolingualism is bilingualism, “constitutes a partial misrepresentation of [Galicia’s] complex sociolinguistic configuration” (ibid., 127). Alvarez-Cáccamo (1989) illustrates the linguistic range available in Galicia, including Standard Galician and Standard Spanish, but also *Iusista* (Portuguese-like) Standard, Galician Spanish, Spanish-inflected

Galician, and many other local varieties. In view of the assortment of linguistic possibilities, del Valle challenges the concept of monoglossia, arguing that

Galicia is a diffused speech community in which the availability of several norms of linguistic behavior constitutes a source of ethnic identity. Multiplicity of norms and resistance to convergence are the principles on which the popular linguistic culture is based, a linguistic culture that, for the sake of consistency, I will term the *popular culture of heteroglossia* (2000, 127-28).

The significance of this model of heteroglossia is that it obviates the need for the either-or mentality that arises from the monoglossia of balanced bilingualism, allowing Galicians to maintain the multiple linguistic norms that they currently enjoy. The resulting “linguistic hybridity” has “become one of the cultural institutions that make up Galician identity and that may feed the Galician-identity movement of the twenty-first century” (ibid., 128). A very close parallel to the linguistic dichotomy of monoglossia and heteroglossia has surfaced on the literary front in Galicia.

Concomitant to the move towards national languages amid the rise of nationalism and Romanticism, the literary systems of Spain in the nineteenth century began to separate from each other, sequestering themselves within their own national literary systems on the basis almost exclusively of language. The result of this literary balkanization was that writers—many of whom lived and wrote bilingually—were drafted into one system, to the exclusion of the other. This led to prominent Galician writers being placed in the Spanish canon, writers such as Emilia Pardo Bazán, Camilo

José Cela, and Ramón del Valle-Inclán, were considered Spanish writers and their allegiance to their homeland and the nascent nationalist movement was doubted. Kirsty Hooper (2007) details the specific campaign against Valle-Inclán as archetypical of the inclusion or omission of writers based on language, in the effort to develop a national cultural system.

The modern Galician literary movement began in earnest with the *Rexurdimento* in the 1860s. For the first sixty years of this literary history, it was widely understood and accepted that speaking and publishing bilingually was a natural occurrence for the majority of Galician writers. However, with the emergence of a new generation of Galician writers and cultural theorists in the 1920s dubbed the *Xeración Nós*, Galician cultural identity—and with it the Galician language—was equated with a burgeoning nationalist movement. A poet and primary member of the *Xeración Nós*, Manoel Antonio wrote a manifesto in 1922, inveighing directly against Valle-Inclán, criticizing his “Castilianizing campaign” and openly hoping that he stay with Spanish so that he doesn’t “infect” Galician (Hooper 2007a, 151). Hooper explains that

For Manoel Antonio, Valle's insistence on writing and publishing in Castilian is constructed as a direct attack on the Galician language, which itself stands for the emergent Galician cultural system: that is, the younger author conflates Galician language and culture, setting them up in opposition to Spanish language and culture, in a way that in 1922 was still new and radical (ibid., 152).

Hooper uses Gilroy's term the "fatal junction" from *The Black Atlantic* to describe the conflation of language, culture, and identity in Galicia that stems from the *Xeración Nós* and continues into present day. By merging language with cultural identity, this "fatal junction" has made it possible for a revisionist perspective of Galician literary history to conveniently forget the many writers who wrote bilingually and present the Galician literary system as a monolingual and monolithic phenomenon (Hooper 2011, 21-22).

The writer who best represents the tension between state and 'historical nationalities,' Castilian and Galician, is Rosalía de Castro. Castro is a unique figure in the literary systems of the Iberian Peninsula in that both the Galician and the Spanish literary canon claim her as a fundamental member of their respective literary systems. The publication of *Cantares Gallegos* in 1863 ushered in the *Rexurdimento*, effectively beginning the Galician literary system that is more or less equated with Castro. However, with the majority of her later work written in Castilian, the Spanish literary system was eager to sweep her earlier Galician-language writing out of sight and adopt her into the national canon. In fact, when her bilingual career is addressed at all, it is often viewed as a weakness or a liability; her distinct borderline position makes her difficult to conveniently classify, and places her under circumstances similar to other writers in comparable scenarios—"neither Galician enough for Galicia nor Spanish enough for Spain" (Hooper 2003, 105).

One critic's views on Castro's bilingualism articulates the struggle that all writers in this position suffer. Ernesto Guerra da Cal in 1985 draws attention to Castro's use of

different linguistic forms for the same term in one poem as an indication of the negative impact that her bilingual upbringing has had on her. He contrasts her mother tongue Galician, which he calls “a dialectal tongue, used only in rural areas, by peasants, a degraded sylvan residue,” with Castilian, which, according to him, she only learned the “rudiments of at primary school.” He then concludes that “Both languages were equally ‘incomplete’” (quoted in Rábade Villar 2011, 61-62).<sup>89</sup> By casting Castro’s language acquisition and use as “incomplete,” Guerra da Cal not only dismisses her literary output as flawed and inferior, but essentially places the work of other borderline writers under the same condemnation.

Rábade Villar argues that it is more appropriate to view certain literary events, such as this particular case with Castro, as deliberate actions instead of accidents.

In an author as aware as Rosalía, it does not seem likely that the linguistic fluctuations are the result of negligence or ignorance. In fact, as we can clearly see from her statements in her prologue to *Cantares Gallegos*, she chose to write in a damaged language in order to represent a damaged experience. The hesitations and fluctuations in the spelling she chooses are not the consequences of that decision but formal ways of representing a rupture in the order of reality (2011, 62).

Choosing to represent “a rupture in the order of reality” through intra-linguistic vacillations demonstrates the difficulty and the richness of writing from the borderline,

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<sup>89</sup> See also Gabilondo 2011, 87-92.

providing support to del Valle's argument that the monoglossic framework of the state and regional nationalist groups doesn't properly account for the heteroglossia of Galicia. This indicates an ideological shift in terms of how linguistically "damaged" languages are interpreted, especially when the register is oral and/or poetic. It also points towards the postnational shift that has characterized the field of Galician cultural studies in the past decade.

In order to construct his argument for the need of the postnational framework when examining the Galician literary system, Gabilondo (2009) details the restrictive nature of all the literary traditions of Spain. In the case of each of the historical nationalities of Spain, the consensus is that their individual literary systems are comprised of only that literature written in their respective tongue. Likewise, the Spanish system includes that literature written in Spanish by Spanish citizens, discounting not only the literature of the co-official tongues, but also all that is written by Latin American or foreign writers living in Spain. This exclusionary character of the various literary traditions creates what Gabilondo calls a "nationalist excess" (251). In other words, if Galician is the literary language of Galicia, then is literature written in Spanish by Galicians or in Galicia not part of the Galician literary system? And on the contrary, does literature in Galician not belong to the Spanish literary system? His conclusion that "the exclusive and separatist structure of nationalist literary identities and histories in Spain creates an irreconcilable excess of nationalist identity that no literary history can encompass" (251) points to the need for postnational theory to be applied to the Galician literary system. He uses the case of Emilia Pardo Bazán to illustrate how the postnational perspective delineates the



relationship between the national literary systems of Spain more aptly than the traditional framework of nationalism.

Although completely integrated into the Spanish canon, Gabilondo argues that the work of Pardo Bazán exhibits an “originary identity and language” that cannot be fully captured in nationalist terms, neither Spanish nor Galician (254). He posits that due to this “originary” identity, Pardo Bazán, should be considered a Galician writer whose linguistic publishing decisions are based on bio-political factors—such as gender, sexuality, or class—rather than strictly geopolitical reasons. In this way, Gabilondo argues that postnational theory provides the means to reframe the situation, in order to overcome the reductive nature of state-sponsored nationalism:

A postnationalist literary history, as seen in the case of Pardo Bazán, requires that we think of a new history and map, in which, rather than using a single two-dimensional geopolitical axis (Galician, Spanish...), we rethink this history from a three-dimensional perspective that includes geopolitics and bio-politics. In this way, the work of Pardo Bazán can no longer be reduced to either Spanish or Galician, on the one hand, or to women’s literature, on the other, so that the geopolitical gains prominence over the bio-political or vice versa (254).

Thus, the lens of postnational theory provides a method of analysis that, to a greater extent, encompasses the influences of Pardo Bazán’s work rather than relying on the assumption that language choice or nationalism vs. regionalism are the only factors in her work.

By going beyond the reductive notion that language equals identity, postnational theory as applied to the Galician literary system broadens the scope of possibility to the other dynamics that influence a writer. In this way, it acts as cultural and literary analogue to del Valle's linguistic concept of heteroglossia. Both postnational theory and heteroglossia overcome false dichotomies, providing a more complete view of the sociocultural circumstance and ensuring a more thorough inquiry. Additionally, extending the analysis of the Galician literary system beyond its limited "vertical" relationship with the Spanish state relocates Galician culture to an international setting, to a global culture that exhibits a more "horizontal" relationship between regions and individuals, which in turn helps to mitigate the inherent hierarchy imposed on the stateless nation by the nationalist model (Hooper 2007, 135). All of these discursive lens as applied to the Galician literary system demonstrate how the "globalization of markets and of economic processes generally, of modes of communication and commerce, of culture, and of risk, all increasingly deprive the classical nation-state of its formerly assured bases of sovereign power" (Pensky 2001, xiii).

In this chapter I analyze how this postnational and heteroglossic nature is articulated in the work of Yolanda Castaño. I argue that her self-translated, bilingual poetry exhibits these Galician characteristics through a fragmentation and multiplication of identities largely occurring through language, a divided and split tongue representing individual and national identities, and the identification of the body and tongue with Galician geography and the cultural presence of absence.

## **Upholding Intertextual Traditions through Fragmentation, Transformation, and Multiplication of the Self**

Flowing across the trajectory of Castaño's poetic oeuvre, the current of a fractured identity defines the poetic voices in her separate poetry collections. Although an element common throughout her work, the notion of multiple identities itself follows a narrative arc, changing over time. In this way, Castaño reflects the attitude towards identity that she adopts in her work, namely that identity is a process carried out by the poetic "I," and not a list of characteristics set in stone by hegemonic forces: "Os descubrimentos efectuados polo eu achégano á conclusión de que é imprescindible acabar cos límites impostos, traspasalos e, así, rematar coa escravitude nun corpo que se define desde unas normas ao servizo do poder hexemónico" (Comesaña Besteiros 2005, 51). As the poetic voice tears down the limits placed on her, restrictions which manifest themselves in the form of prescriptive societal expectations for her individual identity, she expresses her own liberty with regard to self-actualization by using her self-translations to enact a self-fracturing, reflecting "phenomena like fragmentation, hybridity or pluralism [that have] radically changed the criteria and agencies responsible for the construction of cultures in their multifaceted aspects" (Wolf 2008, 11). Additionally, she reinforces the notion of postnationalism in the Galician cultural landscape, which argues against an essentialist viewpoint that reduces Galician culture to a simplistic state-versus-nation binary. Furthermore, as her portrayal of her own

multiple identity evolves and adapts over the course of her work, this adaptability foregrounds both her ability to choose, as well as a three-dimensional reality more than merely a reductive two dimensions when it comes to establishing the identity of Galicia and Spain. I propose that Castaño's writing across languages reinforces the changes that her personas choose to undergo, changes which highlight the postnational and heteroglossic character of Galicia<sup>90</sup>. In this section, I will contextualize Castaño's work within the Galician literary system to clarify the significance of her intertextual dialogue with other Galician women writers, followed by an examination of characteristic examples of her frequent poetic tropes and images of self-splintering across her career to highlight how this propensity to change has itself developed. This evolution of transformations all leads to the split tongue, and with it identity, of *A segunda lingua*.

It is widely held that Galician literature began in earnest with Rosalía de Castro and her 1863 Galician-language poetry collection *Cantares Gallegos* (Rábade Villar 2011, 58; Palacios and Lojo 2009, 21). However, despite the presence of Castro as the foundational figure, women have largely been excised from the Galician literary system:

One would expect the importance of Rosalía de Castro to have broken down many of the barriers facing women writers. In fact, [...] the reverse is true: women writers other than Rosalía have no place in literary history, as proved by

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<sup>90</sup> "La posibilidad de escribir en varias lenguas aparece en momentos de cambio, cuando se modifica la relación (real y simbólica) entre dos (o posiblemente más) lenguas" (Grutman 2011, 78).

the lack of any reference to other female writers on the Galician school syllabus beyond a passing mention of the poet Luz Pozo Garza (Hooper 2003, 102).

This exclusion of Galician women writers from the literary history is the conscious decision of the intellectual movement *Xeración Nos* that sprouted up in Galicia between the First World War and the Spanish Civil War. According to Hooper (2003), “the Galician metanarrative as developed by the *Xeración Nos* conflates language choice and national affiliation” (105), leading to the omission of a generation of largely bilingual writers, including most women writers of the early twentieth century (Hooper 2011, 21; Gabilondo 2009, 266). The large-scale exclusion of women and other bilingual writers is a deliberate action by the *Xeración Nos* to retroactively shape the Galician literary landscape in an attempt to create their version of an idealized monolingual Galician culture. This construction of a “generational model” consisting of a supposedly seamless progression from the *Rexurdimento* to the *Xeración Nos*

Leaves no space for writers who are not considered to have participated in the creation of the master narrative. Women writers other than Rosalía are excluded, with the result [...] that the narrative of women's writing in Galicia appears fragmented, jumping from the publication of Rosalía's *Follas novas* in 1880 to the publication of Herrera Garrido's *Néveda* in 1920 (Hooper 2003, 106).

In consequence, besides the foundational figure of Rosalía de Castro, the Galician literary system is almost completely devoid of major female literary figures throughout most of the twentieth century<sup>91</sup>.

The *Xeración Galaxia* of the 1950s, the first generation of post-war writers in Galicia, continued the legacy of the *Xeración Nós*, namely that of rewriting the Galician literary history to exclude any non-monolingual writings and authors (Hooper 2011, 21). A few women, including María Xosé Queizán and Xohana Torres, participated in the literary circles of the *Xeración Nós*, writing under hostile circumstances (Palacios and Lojo 2009, 20; Nogueira et al. 2010, 4). Although lacking a large group, these Galician women writers of the 1950s helped establish the necessary conditions for subsequent generations of women authors.

The following generation of Galician women writers were born towards the end of the 1950s, and enjoyed access to a post-secondary education that was primarily unavailable to earlier women writers. Notable writers from this group include Pilar Pallarés, M. Xosé Queizán, Chus Pato, Ana Romani, and Luisa Castro, characterized by their feminist and nationalist views, as well as their left-wing activism (Palacios and Lojo 2009, 21). The subsequent and contemporary generation of young women writers in

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<sup>91</sup> Despite Castro's seminal position in Galician literary history, or perhaps because of it, her tenuous position within the wider literary system of Spain is underscored: "According to which it is generally accepted that a writer can belong to only one literature, that which is *authentically* his or hers. Thus, to go back to a previous example, Rosalía de Castro's *Cantares Gallegos* is excluded from Spanish literature because it is somehow accepted that the work cannot be simultaneously considered a member of both Spanish and Galician literary history. [...] This exclusive vision of literary citizenship ignores—because it does not recognize—the possibility of multiple and overlapping cultural identifications" (Santana 2005, 119-20).

Galicia, including Yolanda Castaño, were for the most part born after the death of Franco. Having grown up in the transition to democracy, this group of writers had the opportunity to study the Galician language in school (ibid.). Nogueira et al. (2010) comment that the contemporary generation of Galician women poets, despite the scarcity of a feminine poetic institution upon which they could model themselves, employ

Two procedures aimed at constructing and fortifying a tradition in which they could situate themselves. One was the recuperation of the figure of Rosalía de Castro so as to break free of some of the patriarchal prejudices that had burdened the reading of her work. [...] Another strategy employed by Galician women poets was intergenerational dialogue, which resulted in exemplary co-existence in public space—at times evoking *sisterhood*—that turned out to be useful for normalizing women’s writing and making it visible (5).

This “intergenerational dialogue,” as well as the conscious elicitation of Rosalía de Castro, created the conditions for a Galician poetic boom, a renaissance of female poets, beginning in the 1980s and coming to full fruition in the 1990s.

This proliferation of Galician women poets, despite their diverse backgrounds, wide range of formal education, and different ages, shared “o desexo de crear unha poesía centrada na reivindicación dun suxeito feminino que contrarrestase o establecido e sustentado desde a tradición patriarcal, e que se enuncia desde unha primeira persoa, desde un corpo de muller que se (d)escribe explícitamente sexuado” (Comesaña

Besteiros 2005, 48). The desire to “reclaim the female subject” manifests itself in shared characteristics among the work of these poets. These include the enunciation from a distinctly feminine “I,” an unabashed expression of the women’s body in association with previously taboo subjects, such as menstrual blood, a resulting eroticism emanating from this feminine body, which is no longer the object of another’s pleasure, but rather the subject, and the reappropriation of traditional myths involving women that have served the patriarchy, such as Penelope, and recasting them from a feminist perspective (ibid., 54)<sup>92</sup>. The work of Castaño is in clear dialogue with that of her peers, displaying all the common traits of this “poesía de tetas, putas e sangue” (ibid.). In addition, Castaño’s work, particularly her self-translated, bilingual poetry, distinctly echoes certain poetic positions taken by Rosalía de Castro, a connection which serves to more strongly reinforce her link to the other poets of her generation.

As discussed earlier, critics such as Guerra da Cal have viewed Castro’s bilingual work as a weakness and not worthy of her more canonical work, choosing to categorize the bilingual fluctuations in her poetry as symptomatic of a lack of education. This perspective ignores the centrality of multilingualism in her work: “Todo esto muestra que el bilingüismo, en la obra de Rosalía, es una extraordinaria fuente de riqueza y de variedad, y un aspecto tan fundamental que es imposible prescindir de él cuando se estudia su poesía” (Poullain 1986, 437). The same can be said about Castaño, where the question of interlinguistic interaction and interference has always informed her work

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<sup>92</sup> See also Nogueira et al. 2010, 5, and Palacios and Lojos 2009, 23.



and her motivations to self-translate, culminating in the entire premise of her latest poetry collection that uses the task of learning other languages and the multilingual interactions of a global society to articulate the postnational aspect of Galician identity. Hokenson (20013) argues that self-translators draw upon the canonical figures from all the literary systems with which they work: “self-translators as a group seem acutely conscious of writing in the language of venerable predecessors in both languages, those predecessors who established the dominant stylistic conventions in and against which they feel they must work” (50). The fact that Castro’s bilingualism is central to her work means that she serves as a literary pillar for Castaño and other Galician self-translators in both systems.

Rábade-Villar (2009) also points out the “liminal spaces in Rosalía’s work, so conducive to the apparition of spectral figures” (234). These liminal spaces emerge throughout her work, often portrayed as the result of the Galician landscape itself, consequences of the combination of the rural nature of Galicia and the extensive emigration that characterizes it. Castaño herself occupies this same liminal space in her work as her poetic voice enunciates from a constant condition of otherness. The bilingual format of her self-translated work foregrounds this position as the dual presence of the two languages highlights the interliminality inherent in the process of self-translation, reinforcing the omnipresent search for Galician identity with its foundation in hybridity and ambiguity. In this way, her work echoes that of Noel and Gelman. All three poets use the interliminal space that results from self-translation to investigate the notion of identity. In particular, Castaño and Noel’s poetry both situate

the identity of their respective speakers and countries within the interliminal, articulating the identity of a postcolonial society in a globalized world.

Despite a confluence of women writers forming the core of the Galician poetic boom, these poets must still confront the reality of writing from a marginalized position from within a traditionally patriarchal society. In addition to overcoming traditional challenges to writers such as market forces, editorial restraints, or creative plateaus, these Galician women writers are also engaged with a literary system that has historically excluded them, in a society which has conventionally restricted them to the home. It is not coincidental then that the explosion of women writers in Galicia came about only after the demise of Franco in the years of the Transition: “The slow, albeit progressive, incorporation of women into Galician literary writing in recent times mirrors their active incorporation in other roles in society: workplace, academic, corporate. Women are still regaining territory once closed to us, and thus abandoning marginality, which entails a kind of visibility” (Queixas Zas 2010, 93).

While it is true that the current generation of Galician women writers have received ample visibility within Galicia, this prominence, and the scrutiny that accompanies it, skews the public perception of these poets. The resulting reception of this group is paradoxical in nature. On one hand, there is a “continued treatment of them as exceptional” (Rábade Villar 2011, 68) by the media, while simultaneously “there is a tendency in the patriarchal perspective [...] to see *many* or *too many* women where they are actually in the minority. In reality, of the 93 poets who published a first book in the

1990s, only 26 were women” (Aleixandre 2010, 72). This double bind articulates the societal pressures and paradoxical expectations demanded of women, and also helps to explain these women’s response to the burdens set forth by their society and culture. By enunciating from a feminine standpoint and coopting taboo subjects, these writers reappropriate their own bodies and identities, long controlled by a patriarchy that objectified them in order to subjugate them. In addition to joining her fellow Galician poets in systemic self-eroticization and a recasting of feminine myths, Yolanda Castaño also confronts the feminine double bind paradox—with the exceptional status alongside the notion that there are too many women writers—through a constant self-fracturing in her work. This self-splintering supports Julia Kristeva’s (1980) argument that whereas those who enunciate from a position of power in a phallogentric society are deemed “masters of their speech,” the “fragmentation of language in a text calls into question the very posture of this mastery” (165). Therefore, Castaño’s self-fragmentation through her poetic tropes as well as through the act of self-translation reinforces her feminist themes throughout her work in order to tear down oppressive patrilineal barriers.

The question of identity has always been a cornerstone of Galician studies, emphasizing the importance of defining the national identity with an associated formation and strengthening of the national culture. Carballeira and Hooper (2009) argue though, that with the advent of the twenty-first century, the traditional focus on national identity and culture has changed in Galicia: “Some of the most dynamic cultural discussions in Galicia at the moment are happening on the margins of institutionalized forums and identities, perhaps most markedly in the case of gendered identities and

sexualities” (201). This shift is evident in the poetic boom of Galician women writers; as they reassert the female subject, long objectified by a patriarchal system, they reclaim their right to define their own identity, rather than relying on the hegemonic system to continue to marginalize them as “the Other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another” (de Beauvoir 1980, 47)<sup>93</sup>. In other words, they accomplish this reappropriation by making the woman the site of enunciation and the subject of the sexual experience, rather than merely the object of another’s desire.

Yolanda Castaño aligns herself with her peers by foregrounding the focus on the feminine subject and enunciating from a distinctly female perspective: “Castaño emprende no seu poemario a procura dun novo suxeito, marcado como feminino, e considerado como nun constante proceso de renovación, de forma que orixina unha sorte de identidade multiple que se persegue ata a mesma orixe” (Comesaña Besteiros 2005, 55). This “constant process of renovation” generates a new identity that both reflects the trends of Castaño’s poetic generation, as well as evokes the fragmentation that is a result of modern life with its globalization and transnational relations. Further reflecting a postmodern life, the “multiple identity” of Castaño’s work never quite fractures the same way across her work, instead adapting and evolving as it splinters.

Castaño’s 2003 book *O libro da egoísta/El libro de la egoísta* opens with an epigraph by Estíbaliz Espinosa, a contemporary Galician poet and peer of Castaño. Espinosa states

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<sup>93</sup> See also Felman 1975 and Cixous 1980 who demonstrate that societally constructed binaries (e.g. activity/passivity, culture/nature, man/woman) are established to create a hierarchization, subjugating women to the role of the Other.

that “no en vano su nombre comienza por YO,” hinting at the focus on the self that permeates this collection. Nevertheless, rather than a conventional exercise in introspection, the inward gaze here portrays the process of active identity formation. Throughout the book, the poetic voice praises the “outra Yolanda,” opening a dialogue with her as she explicitly addresses the poetry to her other self. The result is a “decentering of the self” that creates a “polymorphous individuality that is constantly self-fragmenting” (Rodríguez García 2011, 110). However, this self-fragmentation is not merely an unfortunate ramification of modern life and societal mores. Instead, it is a conscious decision, what Comesaña Besteiros (2005) calls “o suxeito performativo” (55), following the model of self-construction put forth by Judith Butler.

The result of the self-fragmentation of this “performative subject” is the establishment of a dialogue with the reader as well as with the self: “o valor diferencial d'O libro da egoísta é que o eu amosa os seus interrogantes, propón preguntas que non pode resolver soa e, noutras palabras, establece un diálogo cos lectores e coas lectoras, cómplices, ao dárselles a oportunidade de pensar e intervir, aínda que sexa virtualmente, nas mesmas cuestións que desacougan o eu lírico” (Ibid.). Thus, by “displaying her doubts,” the poetic voice opens a channel of dialogue with the reader, resulting in a meta-literary activation and involvement of the reader. This process is echoed by the bilingual format of the self-translated poetry. The reader can more readily consider the role of translation, assuming a meta-literary viewpoint, when faced with the two versions of the poem side-by-side: “self-translation can also be thought of as a type of reflexive metacommentary in which the self-translated work reflects on the

prior version of the text, and by doing so foregrounds the workings of both source and target languages” (Noonan 2013, 165). In this way, the form complements the function of the poem, as the effect of the process of self-fragmentation on the reader is underscored by a parallel impact by the self-translation. The meta-poetic outcome of both of these processes creates a link between reader and the poetic voice, a connection which encourages the reader to also consider who she is as the process of identity formation is foregrounded in the poetry.

The practice of self-splintering is never far from the poetic voice’s mind—nor the reader’s—in *O libro da egoísta*, as the “other Yolanda” is constantly evoked in her myriad forms. In one section, the poetic voice composes a series of epistolary poems addressed to Yolanda, while in another, the poetic voice combines the format of prose poetry with the stage directions of a drama, beginning the poem with the parenthetical line “Yolanda entra en escena” (82-83). Through the focus on another Yolanda, it is evident that the representation of Yolanda as a fragmentation of the author and/or the poetic voice is itself fractured, with the speaker explicitly navigating between the different versions of Yolanda. These variants of Yolanda extend the full gamut of intellectual capabilities and social positions:

*Entro na cadea con interese:  
aprendo a entrar no templo, facerme  
sacerdotisa. Son mala porque obedezco.  
Amo tanto ós meus fregueses, aplaudo  
a construción da fraude.*

*E todas as noites con devoción envío  
arrebadoras cartas de amor á miña  
miseria raíña, a analfabeta. E nas  
madrugadas panexíricos a esta  
Yolanda mesquiña, que **sabe** venderse  
e  
coñoce o final.*

Entro en la cadena con interés:  
aprendo a entrar en el templo, a  
hacerme sacerdotisa. Soy mala porque  
obedezco. Amo tanto a mis feligreses,  
aplaudo la construcción del fraude.

Y todas las noches con devoción  
envío arrebadoras cartas de amor a  
mi miseria emperatriz, la analfabeta. Y  
en las madrugadas panegíricos a esta  
Yolanda mezquina, que **sabe** venderse  
y  
conoce el final. (36-37, emphasis in  
original)

The speaker in this poem is strained by the pull of opposing directions, acknowledging the often contradictory expectations imposed on women by an oppressive patriarchy. To begin the poem, the speaker herself, who while supported by her parishioners, is caught in the incongruous condition of a religious leader transgressing through her obedience. In the following stanza, the speaker transitions to the position of supporting other Yolandas through her writings. She praises both of the markedly different personas on a daily basis, regardless of the contradiction of her actions. Moreover, the other Yolandas in this instance seem to represent the only positions of power available to women in a traditional society, that of royalty or a woman that “sabe venderse.” Regardless of her adoration, which in itself is conflicted as demonstrated by the “arrebadoras cartas de amor,” the two Others are both miserable in their roles. This example demonstrates the paradoxical nature of Castaño and other women writers reappropriating their bodies and personas, but being forced to do so within the constraints of the dominant patriarchy.

By contrasting the differing versions of Yolanda, the poetic voice articulates the extent of self-fracturing that she has undergone. Furthermore, acknowledging the widespread splintering allows the poetic voice to illustrate the degree of uncertainty pertaining to identity that arises for a poet like Yolanda Castaño. As a woman writer emerging in a patriarchal society in a time of transition from oppressive cultural norms to more open possibilities, as a citizen of a peripheral stateless nation residing within Spain and the European Union, and as a poet when the genre of poetry has been increasingly marginalized, Castaño's identity as represented by her speaker is in constant flux as it is stretched and pulled in a variety of directions. Thus, even though the speaker identifies with the different facets of Yolanda's character, she is also left with a growing sense of ambiguity. In a poem comprised entirely of questions, she asks "*¿Cál son eu?/ ¿De qué ventrílocuo somos?// ¿Cuál soy yo?/ ¿De qué ventrílocuo somos?*" (60-61). These questions highlight her doubts concerning her identity, eliciting her uncertainty whether one of the Yolandas is the true Yolanda, or if they are all part of her actual identity. Additionally, by introducing the theme of the ventriloquist, a recurring motif in the collection, she also reveals that someone or something else contributes to her voice, acknowledging the impact of all the various societal and cultural factors that come together to mold one's identity.

In the last section of the collection, the poems are composed as a series of diary entries, an especially introspective format to close out a book centered on the self and the question of identity. These diary entries foreground the ambivalence and inconsistency that the speaker feels as she tries to determine who she is. The mercurial



nature of her own self-perception is observed from wide swings of certainty to doubt and denial within a single poem: “*‘Eu, son moi guapa, parece evidente./ Pero ¿quién é que di isto? Eu non me sei.’/ [...] (A necesidade de sentirme fraude.)// ‘Yo, soy muy guapa, parece evidente./ Pero ¿quién es que dice esto? Yo no me<sup>94</sup> sé.’/ [...] (La necesidade de sentirme fraude.)*” (92-93). The speaker systematically progresses, or degenerates, depending on the point of view, from confidence in her beauty, to uncertainty in the same stanza, finally settling on renunciation and complete denial.

Amid all the vacillation in this collection, one of the few constants is the speaker’s affirmation that her beauty is both a blessing and a curse, itself another seeming incongruity. This ambivalence arises in part from Castaño’s liminal position as both a prominent poet and as a media darling in Galicia and Spain, with experience as a model, journalist, and game show host: “Her visual body speaks one language, which is not exactly the language spoken by her text's body of print. Both the script and the pictures are masks [...] crafted in such a way as to enable her tightrope act” (Rodríguez García 2011, 110). The notion that her media persona is yet another identity that accompanies and competes with the various Yolandas of the poetry further reinforces the self-fracturing in this collection, highlighting the difficulty of pinning down a concrete identity for a contemporary Galician woman writer. The self-fragmentation of her poetic

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<sup>94</sup> The use of the pronoun here in the Spanish version seems to be influenced by the Galician version. In this sense, it demonstrates the heteroglossia of Galicia, portraying Alvarez-Cáccamo’s (1989) linguistic variety of Galician Spanish.

output, along with the process of self-transformation that she chooses to undergo, both point to the heteroglossic and postnational character of modern Galicia.

The poetic voice reiterates the struggle of settling on a definitive identity in a modern, postnational literary setting in the final diary poem. The poem hovers in the gap of understanding between the various personas and the poetic voice:

*“Creo que non me comprende. Semella claro. Atendo a cómo se trabuca, a cómo me ama. Pero eu son da dúbida. Por qué non me comprende.”*

*(Podría decirse de non amar. Pero nunca entendería esta miña polimorfía, este ser un non sen un non, este non ser posible sincerarse. Non se trata de que importe. Trátase se ser.)*

*“Creo que no me comprende. Parece claro. Atiendo a cómo se equivoca, a cómo me ama. Pero yo soy de la duda. Por qué no me comprende.”*

*(Podría decirse de no amar. Pero nunca entendería esta polimorfía mía, este ser un no sin un no, este no ser posible sincerarse. No se trata de que importe. Se trata de ser) (102-3).*

Throughout the collection, the poetic voice has identified with different versions of Yolanda, frequently uncertain which one best represents her. This final poem reveals that the personas also have trouble understanding her as much as she struggles with them, an admission that foregrounds the speaker’s doubts. In much the same way that the heteroglossia of Galicia signifies the presence of a range of linguistic options, the many different versions of the speaker’s self indicate the extent of her aspects, often contradictory in nature as they love without really understanding each other. As the different Yolandas demonstrate a plethora of options rather than a binary, the speaker’s identity reflects the postnationalism of her homeland.

She concludes that she would never be able to understand her volatile nature, what she calls her “polimorfía.” The speaker’s use of the conditional tense in this concession

elicits a sense of disquietude. Rather than a straightforward statement that *she will never understand*, the conditional *would never understand* has an unsettling effect on the reader, suggesting that we as readers have been deposited in the latter half of an if-then statement, without knowing what happened in the first part. Ultimately, this sense of perturbation conveys the ambiguity that the poetic voice endures, once again inviting the reader to partake in the same experiences alongside the speaker.

The poetic voice attempts to clarify her *polimorphy*, this capacity to alter herself, with two metaphors; she describes it as “this being a no without a no” and “this inability to tell the truth.” Each of these images illustrates a conventional Galician trait that is wrapped up in the speaker’s haziness over her identity. The first example echoes the Galician sense of *saudade*, a constant longing which evokes a presence of absence, and which permeates Galician culture. Castaño seems to refer to this feeling earlier in the collection when she cites her “consciencia de ausencia” (16-17). By connecting this sense of loss and absence to her changing identity, Castaño acknowledges its impact on her own life and on that of all Galicians, resulting in the recurring presence of absence throughout her work. Additionally, the classification of a core part of her identity by what it is not evokes the third space in association with postmodernism and the process of self-translation, a space “located between existing referential systems and antagonisms,” where “the whole body of resistant hybridization comes into being in the form of [...] contrapuntal re-combinations” (Wolf 2008, 13). In this way, she uses her notion of polymorphy with its connection to the culturally ingrained concept of *saudade*

to articulate a sense of hybridization, which in turn points toward the postnationalism of Galicia.

The second image of polymorphy, the inability to tell the truth, also touches on Galician culture and identity formation. In *Libro da egoísta*, as Castaño identifies with the various Yolandas, she continually speculates which one is the true Yolanda, or which one most accurately represents her identity. Closing this collection by admitting that her mutable nature has left her unable to speak the truth, she in essence reveals that there is no truth to tell. In other words, her previous preoccupation with the true identity was irrelevant, because all the different Yolandas contribute to her identity; the true Yolanda lies somewhere between the various personas and no single one has a monopoly on her character. This liminal nature reflects “Galicia’s position at multiple crossroads, not only between Europe and America, but also between land and sea, Northern and Southern Europe, Hispanidad and Lusofonía, bring[ing] into existence multiple deterritorialized spaces of identity, both symbolic and material” (Hooper 2006, 173). Thus, by reaffirming her ambiguity as a manifestation of a junction of personas, Castaño evokes the liminal position at the crossroads of Galician culture, as its postnational character, demonstrated as it transcends the barrier of the traditional center-periphery duality. In the end, Castaño’s use of self-fragmentation through multiple Yolandas in *Libro da egoísta*, a fracturing that is magnified by the process of self-translation and the co-presence of two languages,<sup>95</sup> is a manifestation of her *galeguidade* and her position

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<sup>95</sup> Cordingley (2013), in the introduction to his collected edition of self-translation essays, demonstrates this link between self-translation and postnationalisms, where both attempt to overcome reductive

among women poets of the post-transition boom who have been forced to enunciate from a position of double marginalization. It also paves the way for a continued, albeit altered, splintering in her later work.

Castaño shifts away from the active self-fracturing of *Libro da egoísta* in her next book, *Profundidade de campo/Profundidad de campo* (2009), foregrounding instead her volatile nature through her predilection for self-transformation based on her milieu. As with the earlier book, her versatile nature on display in *Profundidade de campo* is a reflection of her identity both as a Galician citizen and as a woman writer. The emphasis on identity is reflected by the preponderance of the verb *ser* throughout the collection. Through a plurality of means, this verb is employed to highlight the speaker's transformations, changes of a physical, aesthetic, or linguistic nature.

The first poem of the collection, "(Re)ser(vado)<sup>96</sup>," establishes the tonal focus of the collection, reinforcing the connection between *ser* and the speaker's uncertain or unstable identity. The first line of the poem explicitly broaches the subject of identity by stating "*Unha navalla lenta é o proxecto da identidade./ Una navaja lenta es el proyecto de la identidad.*" (6-7). The initial declaration of identity appears within the context of the verb *ser*, as the poem's title parenthetically isolates the verb within the word *reservado*. With the title unchanged in the other linguistic version across the page, the parentheses also foreground the word *vado*, while highlighting the aforementioned

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binaries: "The aim of this book is to move beyond thinking self-translation through a binary logic of source-target/text-reader and its attendant notion of fidelity to the original" (3).

<sup>96</sup> Appendix 2: Poetry of Yolanda Castaño.

verb. Although *vado* doesn't have a meaning in Galician, in Castilian it is translated as a ford, evoking the place in the river most conducive for crossing. Therefore, the notion of identity, which is inherently wrapped up in the verb *ser*, is connected to the concept of a river crossing, the transection of what is typically viewed as a geographical border or barrier. This connection between identity and transmigratory flow is the metaphor *par excellence* for the speaker's conception of identity throughout this collection, as she consistently changes how she sees herself and how others perceive her, depending on her changes in location. Furthermore, the link between being and crossing borders is only made possible through the inclusion of the Castilian version and the co-presence of the two languages, as the process of self-translation allows the Spanish side to provide an alternate perspective that illuminates the meaning on the Galician side<sup>97</sup>.

The next section of the poem opens by extending the theme of the difficulty with maintaining a stable identity: "*Cando deixo de ser flor/ molesto./ Pero o duro era ser.* // *Cuando dejo de ser flor/ molesto./ Pero lo duro era ser.*" (8-9). These lines hint at the speaker's mutability, and the challenges that arise from her many transformations. Furthermore, the temporal disjointedness of "era ser" foregrounds the axiomatic concept of the inevitableness of change over a lifetime, implying that although things are different than before, the difficulty of being that accompanies those transformations has not changed. These concessions prepare the way for the speaker's self-reflection on her status as a woman in the public sphere: "*Como non teña traballo, marcho para Las*

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<sup>97</sup> See Li 2007, 23.

*Vegas./ Nos Estados Unidos son más guapa que en ningún sitio.// Como no encuentre trabajo, me marchó a Las Vegas./ En los Estados Unidos soy más guapa que en ningún sitio.*" (8-9). A constant preoccupation with her own features underlies all of Castaño's work, as she repeatedly asserts that her beauty is both a blessing and a curse. These lines articulate the notion that inherent characteristics such as physical appearances are as subjective and changeable as culturally determined aesthetic value. With a change of scenery, the speaker is able to assert her outward beauty, and therefore renew her worth as an individual; her self-worth was previously called into question because she was unable to find employment, which, in a postindustrial world, is viewed as something that gives life meaning. Thus, as the speaker crosses borders, she alters culturally ingrained qualities about herself and her identity, which in turn allows her to tap into the fracturing consistent with the modern Galician experience.

When the speaker enters new environments as the poem continues, the changes in her being, manifested through her interactions with others, are more extensive than merely altered perceptions of a purely aesthetic quality. The first lines of the next section of the poem hint at other ways that she changes by entering new spaces as she states "*Hanayo compréndeme. Non sei/ se talvez se me entendería mellor no Xapón.// Hanayo me comprende. No sé/ si tal vez se me entendería mejor en Japón.*" (10-11). Although no longer an exterior fluctuation, this change still emphasizes that the speaker's mutability arises due to her interactions with others and how they perceive her. The possibility of being better understood in Japan demonstrates that language forms a central part of the speaker's identity, just as her beauty does in the previous

example. The linguistic nature of this transformation paves the way for *A segunda lingua*, where the theme of crossing linguistic boundaries and adopting new identities through new languages foregrounds the resulting changes that occur as frontiers are traversed. The last case from this *Profundidade de campo* reinforces the close connection between identity and fragmentation through change that Castaño cultivates across her work.

The title of the final example from this collection, “Historia da transformación/Historia de la transformación,” indicates the centrality of evolution for the speaker’s character. This poem circles back to the beginning of the collection as it highlights the verb *ser*, again placing it into a non-chronological order reminiscent of the earlier “era ser” that reinforces the notion that the speaker’s changes do not follow a linear progression through time. Throughout the poem, the speaker uses all the various forms of *ser* in the first person to emphasize her adaptability. This transience is foregrounded as the speaker announces “*Pechei os ollos e desexei con todas as miñas forzas/ lograr dunha vez por todas converterme na que era.// Cerré los ojos y empecé a desear con todas mis fuerzas/ lograr de una vez por todas convertirme en la que era.*” (58-59). Beginning the phrase in the preterit past tense and finishing it the imperfect past, although not grammatically incorrect, creates a sense of disquietude that draws attention to the non-linear flow of events. This results in an atemporal space where the action occurs in the disjointed space of non-time. By placing her actions outside the bounds of conventional time, reminiscent of Gelman in *dibaxu*, the speaker allows for the possibility of other facets of her identity to incorporate the Galician *topos* of the



void. In this way, the speaker acknowledges once again the omnipresence of absence in Galician culture and its connection to self-identity formation that first arises in *Libro da egoísta* and continues to be a salient motif in *A segunda lingua*.

The multiple selves of *A segunda lingua* no longer emphasize Castaño's earlier self-fragmentation as much as they highlight a sense of evolution or transformation, a change enabled by the languages that contribute to the speaker's identities. With a focus on languages and the (mis)translations that regularly occur through cross-cultural interactions, the speaker of this collection fixes her gaze on how her mother tongues and those that she is learning contribute to her already splintered identity. In this sense, the speaker of this collection is wholly consistent with the bilingual writer, whose existence is defined by a multilingual perception of the world, which in turn alters how she approaches writing: "The bilingual writer is not merely aware of the existence of a multiplicity of tongues but lives in the continual presence of this awareness during the very act of writing" (Fitch 1988, 158). The speaker uses the act of engaging diverse languages to articulate her belief that identity is not static, concluding that she has the agency to form her identity outside of the hegemonic forces that would establish her identity for her:

Desde a noción dun suxeito múltiple e en permanente mutación, conséguese derrubar a opción única, o totalitarismo [...] E é que o poder se impón e se transmite desde as palabras. A multiplicidade acaba con elas, nunca neutras, nunca nin tan sequera obxectivas. O novo suxeito que se perfila necesita duhna

linguaxe tamén nova e diferente, porque a xa existente está chea de trampas, baleiros e ausencias (Comesaña Besteiros 2005, 55).

In other words, employing innovative language does not just make new identities possible, rather new linguistic options are essential to free oneself from culturally and societally imposed identities that oppress and constrain.

Throughout *A segunda lingua*, the speaker uses the impact of foreign languages on identity as a means of conjecture, speculating how the language will change the user, and in the process, reaffirming the notion of multiple identities and the central role of language in establishing these identities. In the poem “LISTEN AND REPEAT: un paxaro, unha barba/ LISTEN AND REPEAT: un pájaro, una barba,” the speaker uses the idiosyncrasies of a second-language classroom to ruminate on the fickleness of our identities. She gives an example of the challenge of learning a new language, following it with a question that exposes the drastic changes of identity afforded to those who adopt a new tongue: “*Helga confunde os significados de país e paisaxe./ (Que clase de persoa serías noutro idioma?).// Helga confunde los significados de país y paisaje./ (Qué clase de persona serías en otro idioma?).*” (52-53). This question reinforces the fact that the transformations that Castaño’s personas undergo are not merely shifts in aspect or different facets of the same individual, but entirely new “performative subjects.” In this way, new tongues allow speakers to take on new identities, in response to the fracturing inherent in globalized, postmodern societies: “National identity is not only a mobile concept but it is also an indeterminate one that changes according to the social,

political, and/or physical context” (Romero 2006, 166), a list to which linguistic context could certainly be added. Additionally, by conjugating the verb in the conditional tense, Castaño foregrounds the indeterminacy of the question, placing the reader in an ambiguous setting reminiscent of the earlier atemporal zone, where the indefinite or ambiguous nature of each situation relates back to the positioning of Galician culture at the crossroads and its tendency to embrace absence.

Up to this point in her poetry, the emphasis on fragmentation and transformation has been focused on herself, manifested as what she calls “yolandatría.” This is consistent with the other poets of her generation participating in the Galician women’s poetic boom, where enunciation from an “I” clearly marked as feminine is one of the key characteristics of the poetic movement (Comesaña Besteiros 2005, 54). Thus the use of the second person informal in the previous example, and echoed later in the collection with the line “*Estou segura de que en París te expresarás ben agudo./ Estoy segura de que en París te expresarás bien agudo.*” (60-61), is a direct shift away from her earlier work. I contend that there are three factors contributing to this change.

First, the self-fracturing present throughout her work creates a multitude of Yolandas, a group to whom she subsequently directs her attention and address. Therefore, in pondering what the recipient will be like in other places and languages, these questions and thoughts can still be directed at herself. What’s more, considering these examples as a self-reflection and/or a rhetorical question highlights the hypothetical nature evoked by the conditional tense of the question “(Que clase de

persoa serías noutro idioma?).” In this way, the conjugation of the verbs in the second person is a direct continuation of Castaño’s self-fragmentation and multiplication.

The next reason that the move from exclusively first person to second person is not a break with, but an extension of Castaño’s literary trope of splintering, is the very method Castaño uses to articulate these fissures in herself. Evolving from her “polymorphy” of self-multiplication through fragmentation, to a focus on becoming or transforming by entering new environments, and settling on the completely new identities that arise through speaking new languages, the one consistent in this chain of changes is the change itself. For that reason, the shift in addressee is one more point on Castaño’s continually altering trajectory.

The final reason that helps to explain this shift is that by extending her apostrophe beyond herself, the speaker’s address is a manifestation of the postnational nature of her work, and a microcosm for the postnationality of Galicia itself. Within the framework of heteroglossia, Galicia has always had an excess of linguistic varieties, making it unable to fit into the reductive binary of nationalism. This postnational excess shines through in Castaño’s work as the Galician speaker learning Croatian or Arabic, or a Chinese citizen learning Galician can still identify with what it means to be Galician when identity isn’t reduced to unnecessarily simplistic terms. Thus, by opening up the discussion of self-fragmentation to more than just herself, Castaño demonstrates how it applies to all Galicians in an era of globalization where

some of the most dynamic cultural discussions in Galicia at the moment are happening on the margins of institutionalized forums and identities, perhaps most markedly in the case of gendered identities and sexualities, but also in the case of Galician identities whose national identification is inflected by other geo- and bio-political markers such as race, ethnicity, class, language and location (Carballeira and Hooper 2009, 201).

The inherent interliminality resulting from the process of self-fracturing is representative of Galician culture, which has always occupied a position at the crossroads, and Castaño's work reveals that this in-betweenness applies to all, now more than ever in an interconnected, global society.

The next example of transformation through language returns to the speaker as the subject of change, but it still foregrounds the magnitude of the possibility for change upon the subject's identity. In the poem "A musa falou e non traía intérprete/ Habló la musa y no traía intérprete," the speaker reflects on an interlinguistic sexual relationship, sparking the question "*Que clase de beixo daría se cubrise/ a miña boca coa membrana doutra fala?// ¿Qué clase de beso daría si cubriese/ mi boca con la membrana de otro acento?*" (80-81). Once again, the conditional-imperfect subjunctive construction of this line clearly places it into the realm of ambiguity representative of all Galician culture. To the extent to which language can and does impact one's identity and personality, consistent with current scientific research (Bialystok et al. 2012, Bialystok and Barac 2011, Chen and Bond 2010), this question demonstrates that the presence of another

language can fundamentally alter a person's interaction with the world. In this case, the speaker speculates on how her erotic nature would change by speaking another language as manifested by the accompanying accent. Castaño is constantly preoccupied with the notion of sexuality, viewing it as a blessing and a curse as she has entered the media mainstream in Spain. For this reason, learning a new language allows her to hypothetically leave her own ambivalent sensuality and try on another. With her eroticism forming an integral part of her identity, the ability of language to transform it speaks precisely to the depth of change that occurs.

The final example from *A segunda lingua* also demonstrates the degree to which the speaker can alter her identity through language by transforming a fundamental component of her identity, her name. In the poem "Tradución/Traducción," the speaker reflects that "(*Que o meu nome podía ser/ cuadrilábico para ese idioma,/ que podía relucir tan ben/ se seguido de habibti*)// (*Que me nombre podía ser/ cuadrilábico para ese idioma,/ que podía relucir tan bien/ si seguido de habibti*)." (94-95). By changing the syllabification of her name, the linguistic impact on her identity extends beyond how she perceives herself to include how others see her as well. This idea is reinforced as she adds that in this language, *habibti*—meaning "my love" in Arabic—follows her name as part of it, along with the new extra syllable. This term of endearment, by definition, implies a relationship and an interaction with another person, emphasizing that the new language has changed the speaker's identity in the eyes of others as well as for herself. All this serves to foreground the fact that identity is a cultural construct, and that

language is a potent force in identity formation, a force that can manifest identities in different ways depending on the cultural context.

The verb tense of this final example also evokes the earlier discussion on disjointed time in this process of self-transformation. Here, the speaker's use of the past imperfect directly contrasts with the other examples from this collection that emphasize the conditional tense. Furthermore, the past imperfect is used with *poder*, a verb that the reader might typically associate with the conditional in this type of phrase. The result then is not *what the name could be* in that language, but *what it was*. This gap in between what is possible in the future and how it was in the past exploits the interliminal nature of Castaño's poetry; the innate interliminality of the process of self-translation and the bilingual format, the positioning of a woman writer in a society that has long been not inclusive of diverse ideologies, and as representative of a citizen of Galicia, a historic nationality characterized by its place at the periphery and at the crossroads. These various interliminalities underline the need for a postnational conception of Galician culture, a model not based on false dichotomies, and which establish "the appropriate forms for the democratic process to take *beyond* the nation-state" (Habermas 2001, 61).

By crafting a feminine subject in her work, Castaño clearly aligns herself with her generation of female Galician poets in a tradition that extends back to Rosalía de Castro. Additionally, her consistent self-fragmentation and transformation reinforce the constant focus on identity in the Galician cultural system as well as the difficulty of

pinning down this Galician identity due to its liminality. Moreover, by using language as a key agent in this identity change, Castaño demonstrates the Galician quality of heteroglossia, where a plurality of language varieties make up the linguistic reality in Galicia. In this way, the application of languages as they alter one's identity articulates the postnationality of Galicia as the speaker and the other subjects of *A segunda lingua* are able to engage a wide spectrum of languages in settings around the world, while still maintaining a distinctly Galician identity. It is the very things that contribute to Galician identity as positioned at the periphery, in this case its multilingual nature, which facilitate "its transition to the global condition" (Colmeiro 2009, 220).

### **Personal and National Identity through Split Tongues**

In *A segunda lingua*, the metalinguistic emphasis on double meanings positions the Galician language as an extension of the speaker's body via her tongue. As the source of the speaker's personal identity, the tongue also becomes a symbol of the source of Galician national identity. The tongue becomes both the language spoken, but also a tool to articulate the shibboleth, which safeguards the proper pronunciation of the speaker's homeland. By doing this, it ensures that the homeland is properly maintained, while simultaneously distinguishing itself from other languages. Additionally, the speaker's jocular tone both highlights the playfulness of the double meanings, which reinforces the dual nature of Galician identity and the indeterminate position of Galician national identity. In the poem "A palabra Galicia/La palabra Galicia,"<sup>98</sup> the speaker

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<sup>98</sup> Appendix 2: Poetry of Yolanda Castaño.



asserts her identity by using her tongue to distinguish her languages from others, and in the process, demonstrates the heteroglossic and postnational quality of the linguistic and cultural landscape of Galicia.

Like most other poems in this collection, “A palabra Galicia” is constructed upon the interaction between the speaker and a recipient, but portrayed exclusively from the perspective of the speaker. The use of apostrophe establishes the presence of the recipient not only as an interlocutor, but as someone foreign, to whom the poetic voice needs to explain herself and elaborate her background. The opening couplet of the poem, with the speaker declaring her intention to focus on “*de onde veño/ de dónde vengo,*” reveals two things: she is away from her homeland, and she feels it necessary to preface her pronunciation with the caveat that she is going to stick out her tongue at the recipient. This concession—whether an acknowledgement that the act of sticking out one’s tongue at someone else is culturally charged, or a preemptive apology for any perceived disrespect—establishes the speaker’s use of her tongue not just as an organ in her body, but as the site of cultural enunciation. Through this process, her tongue becomes a synecdochic emblem of her own “mother tongue,” the Galician language, with all the implied associations and symbolic value that that language holds in relation to Galician national identity. Having linked her own tongue with the Galician language, the speaker uses analogous examples of synecdoche throughout the rest of the poem as a running commentary on the use of the tongue in other languages, implying a quasi-naturalistic connection between a society’s language and the behavior of its people. In

this way, the poetic voice is able to juxtapose other languages against Galician, and through the appraisal of other tongues, implicitly assess her own.

The second stanza begins with the word “*Ónde/ Dónde,*” clarifying the notion of origin expressed in the opening line of the poem. In this place of origin, the tongue has become a fire, a flame that has licked “*un pouco de todo/ un poco de todo*” while the lips of the poetic voice are barely open, enunciating the voiceless interdental fricative found in the word Galicia. This tongue of flames doesn’t appear to have caused any damage, although it has licked every aspect of life, all the way down to the roots. Instead, it evokes the mighty wind that fills the house on the day of Pentecost recorded in the book of Acts: “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2.3-4). The link between the Galician language as the tongue of flames and the gift of tongues reflects Hooper’s conception of Galicia positioned at a globalized crossroads and Galicia as a postnational site of interaction (2006, 173; Hooper and Moruxa 2011, 99). It is precisely this tongue of flames confirming the gift of tongues that is uniquely positioned to provide a commentary on the use of other tongues in the rest of the poem, beginning with the next stanza.

The speaker’s commentary on the (mis)use of the tongue in other languages begins in the third stanza, but extends throughout the poem. The first observation, that “*Hai pobos tan educados que nunca ensinan a lingua/ Hay pueblos tan educados que nunca*

enseñan la lengua” establishes the pattern followed thereafter, where the speaker’s interpretation of the various uses of the tongue becomes a reflection on the nation and people who speak the language. Moreover, this commentary on tongue/language use also provides implicit insight into the speaker’s perception of her own language. By supplying a rather tendentious portrayal of foreign tongues, the speaker not only clarifies her view on the proper use of the tongue, but also how Galician, according to the requirements set forth, qualifies itself as a correctly employing the tongue to enunciate and communicate.

Returning to the first linguistic commentary, the speaker notes that some nations are “so educated” because they never show their tongue. Rather than uphold this trait as a standard to which other peoples should strive, the speaker implies that this politeness is more a liability than a virtue, concluding that “*Hai que tomar o risco de sacala para fora, aínda entre os dentes./ Hay que tomarse el riesgo de sacarla para afuera, entre los dientes.*” She clarifies this, listing three words where the supposed impoliteness of the interdental fricative is required for proper pronunciation in Galician. Thus, she implies that Galician may not be as courteous as other languages, but it takes the risks that the poetic voice deems necessary and appropriate. By portraying Galician in this ironic manner, a tongue-in-teeth if not tongue-in-cheek way, Castaño continues to judge her tongue against others, but with a humorous air that disarms the reader instead of putting her on the defensive.

Contrasting with those societies whose languages prevent them from showing their tongues, the speaker illustrates the other extreme as well, commenting that “*Hainas con tendencia a saírense da boca e chantarse na solapa,/ outras teñen cicatriz de tanto ser mordidas polos dentes.*”// Las hay con tendencia a salirse de la boca y plantarse en la solapa,/ otras tienen cicatriz de tanto ser mordidas por los dientes.” As before, Galician is juxtaposed with other languages, allowing the poetic voice to implicitly describe her mother tongue. However, rather than a bolder option in comparison to more restrictive languages, these examples portray Galician as a model of moderation, conspicuous when positioned alongside languages that go too far in their use of the tongue.

By positioning her mother tongue as the preferred option, the poetic voice reveals her own biased perspective on the nature of language in our lives. The high ranking given to the role of the tongue in her personal linguistic profile demonstrates the inseparable link between language and identity, and the near-impossible task of viewing our identities objectively. This partiality towards self and one’s own language is compounded in this poem as the speaker enunciates from a foreign position, away from her homeland.

Continuing the reflection on other languages, the poetic voice indicates that she speaks from a foreign city, as the fourth stanza begins with the word “*Dende/ Desde.*” The exact position is clarified as the interlocutor states “*hrvatski, hrvatski,*” or the name of the Croatian language. The speaker’s foreign location in this poem allows her more opportunity to interact with and assess other languages, in this case concluding that

Croatian seems like *“un idioma que se esputa/ un idioma que se esputa.”* This linguistic interaction and observation goes both ways, as the exotic locale also allows others to comment on the speaker’s language(s).

The next time the addressee speaks, he expresses ambiguity with her language use: *“[M]e contas que non distingues/ en cal dos dous idiomas estar a falar// [M]e cuentas que no distingues/ en cual de los dos idiomas estoy hablando.”* Her response is full of irony and indignation, stating that *“era/ para partiche a boca,/ así terías ti tamén unha lingua dividida en dúas.// era/ para partirte la boca,/ así tendrías tú también una lengua dividida en dos.”* The speaker reacts to a perceived slight with violence, hitting the interlocutor in the face so as to divide his tongue into two. The outcome of this interaction, the bifurcation of the addressee’s tongue, is steeped in Galician culture and thus helps to confer upon the addressee a distinctly Galician identity.

The presence of forked-tongue devils in Galician lore is well documented, and is celebrated in popular folk music and traditional festivals throughout Galicia (Mandianes 2009, Riera de Santantoni 2011). By splitting the interlocutor’s tongue, the speaker essentially begins the process of transforming the recipient into a traditional Galician folk creature, thus altering his self-identity by incorporating him into Galician culture. The addressee acts as a surrogate for the reader in this case, where his assimilation into this traditional aspect of Galician culture allows the reader to also experience a vicarious fracturing of identity. Both addressee and reader then join the speaker, who “tamén” has a tongue split in two.

This act of violence by the speaker reveals her outrage due to the addressee's inability to distinguish her languages. Moreover, it is an act of communion as the speaker insists that the addressee and reader view the world from her fractured, bilingual perspective. As these two side with the speaker and the mythic nature of traditional Galician culture is evoked through their newly forked-tongues, they collectively challenge the status quo of Galician marginalization by the Spanish state. Romero clarifies the connection between defiance and Galician folklore by stating "The creation of a mythical space to challenge institutionalized discourses seems to be a constant in contemporary Galician literature and culture" (2012, 67). In this case, the bifurcating tongue links the addressee and recipient with Galician mythology, but it also connects them to the speaker's quotidian existence of life in two languages. This connection is crucial, as it pushes against the marginalizing force of the state that constantly casts Galicia as the other.<sup>99</sup> This allows Galician culture and language to be experienced on its own merits and not merely as a pale shadow or antithesis of Spanish culture.

In addition to evoking the mythic side of Galician folklore associated with forked-tongue devils, on the opposite end of the spiritual spectrum the tongue split in two also creates another poetic association to the day of Pentecost as mentioned in the book of Acts, with its "cloven tongues like as of fire." Reiteration of the earlier biblical

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<sup>99</sup> "Only the question of peripheral literature raises all kinds of fantasies (and ideologies), since it is centered on the issue of the other. As psychoanalysis explains, it is the fantasy of the other, what the other is and is not, that keeps the self (the Spanish state) from disintegrating—hence the symptomatic and libidinal nature of the other. Everybody wants to discuss that question, the question of the other, in order ultimately to dismiss it" (Gabilondo 2011, 75).

connection reinforces the bestowal of the gift of tongues through the flaming tongue. And it is in this sense of having “new utterance” through the spirit that the bifurcated tongue comes to represent all of Castaño’s bilingual poetry, which, contrary to many Galician studies scholars, I argue has a similar effect of pulling her often times monolingual readers into a phase of multilinguality.

To understand the effect that Castaño’s self-translations have on a Castilian-speaking, monolingual readership, or even on a bilingual reader who is more accustomed to reading in Castilian, one needs to properly understand the context of contemporary Galician publishing and circulation. Rodríguez García (2011) claims that the majority of Castaño’s readers in either language approach her work most often through Castilian translation (107). This statement seems to be supported by the fact that despite the widespread use of the Galician language in Galicia, only 25% of Galicians claim to read in Galician (Alonso 2010, 38). In light of a limited audience in Galicia and the reliance on translation for exposure outside of Galicia, it then becomes evident that the decision to write in Galician is an “act of self-affirmation and resistance which connects in various ways with nationalist claims” (Palacios 2009, 198). While the political implication of writing in Galician was never her motivating factor, Castaño nevertheless acknowledges the omnipresence of the political sphere for writers who decide to use a stateless language:

Cuando yo era más joven, siempre decía ‘Yo escribo en gallego por una motivación artística, motivación puramente creativa.’ Porque, quizá me quería

apartar un poco de algunos escritores gallegos que era una cuestión demasiado programáticamente ideológica...Pero, según me he ido haciendo mayor y madurando, no dejo de darme cuenta de que en parte también hay una motivación política. Política es todo. La política es nuestra relación con el mundo, nuestra relación con la polis. No tiene que ser el apoyo a una causa electoral, no va por allí. Pero, sí que me interesa posicionarme en la escena literaria escribiendo en gallego (2015).

Thus, for Castaño, writing in Galician is political in the sense that the way we interact with each other and the world around us is governed by politics, and, with Galician as her mother tongue, Castaño's interactions are conducted via the lens of Galician. She actively chooses to write poetry in Galician as a means to combat the homogenizing effect of the Spanish state, embracing the multilingualism and multiculturalism of Spain<sup>100</sup>. Moreover, instead of merely a means of interaction, she believes that there is an intimate link between writing poetry and the Galician language:

La poesía en sí misma, es un género que está en el margen. Para arremeter contra el centro, claro. Hoy en día escribir siendo mujer, siendo gallega, y hacerlo en poesía, creo que es coherente. Es escribir en una lengua que está minorizada todavía, que no tiene estado, que no se sabe de dónde es y a mí me interesa. Me resulta expresivamente interesante. Es un lenguaje alternativo al discurso de

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<sup>100</sup> "El propio hecho de escribir en la lengua minorizada (incluso si responde a una simple opción personal e *inocente* de la autor/a sin mayores intencionalidades) necesariamente conlleva consecuencias políticas, por cuanto añade un elemento más de significación y una función normalizadora en términos lingüísticos, literarios y culturales" (Castro 2011, 28).



poder, a los discursos de los medios de comunicación, a los discursos de la política electoralista. La poesía es otra cosa, habla idioma mucho más minoritario. Y por eso, casa bien con el gallego (2015).

By writing a “minoritized” genre with a “minority” language, Castaño demonstrates her resistance to the centripetal forces of a homogenizing, central government in Madrid. Insofar as this illuminates Castaño’s decision to write in Galician, her choice to subsequently translate her work into Castilian and publish her collections bilingually appears to destabilize her claims regarding the political aspects of her poetry, albeit, only on the surface.

Rodríguez García argues that translating a stateless language into the dominant language of the state negatively impacts the author’s writings in the original language: “The subordination of the satellite or substate system to the state system through the homogenizing work of translation often carries denationalizing implications for an author’s primary language of expression” (2011, 118). The critic proceeds to list the ways in which he believes that Castaño’s literary decisions have a “denationalizing” bearing upon her Galician work. These include the aesthetic choice to maintain a Spanish rendering of her name, “to the detriment of its Galician equivalent,” (119) or the media-oriented choices of publishing her bilingual editions through Madrid-based imprints as well as seeking out the attention of the major media corporations in Madrid. According to Rodríguez García however, the highest degree of destabilization to her Galician writing comes from Castaño’s commitment to the process of self-translation.

He argues that her decision to translate her own work exacerbates the “[failure] to encode a significant dimension of autochthony and vernacularity in her Galician-language texts, which her translations into Spanish subsequently rendered invisible to all effects” (119). Thus, in keeping with Rodríguez García, self-translation and the bilingual format undermine a Galician text that is already devoid of important Galician cultural markers, opting for cosmopolitanism over solidarity with the history and culture of Castaño’s homeland. This echoes the commonly heard critique against self-translation, that it “is more likely to undermine the status of the original than is translation done by someone other than the author” (Krause 2008, 130)<sup>101</sup>. I contend that this interpretation of self-translation in the work of Castaño is a zero-sum view of the language situation in Galicia, akin to nationalist and monoglossic models, a perspective that overlooks the heteroglossia and postnationalist polyphony of the contemporary Galician literary system.

Among Rodríguez García’s critiques, the focus on Castaño’s relationship with Madrid—such as the complaint that she uses the Castilian version of her name—presents a false binary. This specious dichotomy portrays Galicians either as gaining ground over Castilian as they choose to favor speaking Galician, or surrendering their national identity to the centrist government as they capitulate to Castilian. This overly simplified representation belies the linguistic richness of heteroglossia as demonstrated by del Valle as well as the various factors that contribute to the need for a postnational

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<sup>101</sup> See also Krause 2013, 129.

model to analyze Galician culture. Therefore, the decision to publish bilingually in Galician and Castilian reflects a cultural authenticity that more accurately depicts Galicia's position at the crossroads of a global world than an exclusionary, either-or system.

In addition to representing the linguistic complexity of Galicia, the bilingual, self-translated format is, in fact, evocative of Galician culture in a way that contests Rodríguez García's claim that Castaño's poetry is neutral and devoid of autochthonous elements<sup>102</sup>. The critic cites explicit omissions from Castaño's oeuvre, such as the absence of emigration and social protest, that she doesn't mention hunger and poverty, or that she resists discussing the decline of rural Galicia and the subsequent growth of the city (115-17). While these elements are all central to Galician culture, they are not the only markers of Galician identity, and it would be inaccurate to claim that Castaño's work is generally devoid of any sensibility of *galeguidade*, or "Galicianness." Instead, by singling out Castaño's work because of its lack of traditional elements, this argument echoes the cultural policies of Manuel Fraga, a conservative politician and former minister under Franco, who ruled in Galicia from 1980 to 2005. During his time as leader of the Galician government, Fraga appropriated the most traditional aspects of Galician cultural identity, such as bagpipes and folk music, "[rejecting] innovation and [seeking] to maintain a concept of Galicia as it had been traditionally understood" (Toro, "Negotiating" 349-50, in 27.3). This strategy was an attempt to create a sense of

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<sup>102</sup> Enjuto Rangel (2014, 25) points out that Rosalía de Castro faced similar criticisms of a lack of *galeguidade* almost a century and a half earlier.

nostalgia that would help to woo voters, especially those Galicians abroad, and followed the “Francoist strategy of neutralization” (Hooper 2009, 151), meaning that “for a cultural artifact to be popular during the Franco regime, it needed to come across as ‘neutral’ and ‘correct’” (Carbayo-Abengozar 2007, 433).

Colmeiro (2009) argues that modern Galician culture is based upon a sense of hybridity that merges the old with the new, locating Galicia in a perpetual state of in-betweenness. Modern Galicia is neither rural nor urban, but ‘rurban,’ and the constant “interaction of the local and the global has produced new post-peripheral ‘glocal’ cultural forms that are transforming the inherited status quo” (217). It is in this modern, hybrid setting that Castaño’s poetic voice—as a Galician citizen who is constantly, and often painfully, aware of her position on the borderline—is able to offer her own vision of Galician cultural identity, one that is hybrid and changing instead of static and fake. Moreover, the side-by-side presentation of her bilingual collections highlights further the hybridity of contemporary Galicia. While living and writing bilingually isn’t unique to Galicia, it is a distinctly Galician trait that is reflected in the daily lives of Galicians, both in Galicia and in the extensive diaspora abroad.

The inherent hybridity of the dual-presence of Galician and Castilian in Castaño’s bilingual editions challenges the monoglossic assumptions from both ends of the politico-linguistic spectrum. For the nationalists, the “theorizations of Galician cultural nationalism have depended for survival on repression of the Spanish ‘other’” (Hooper 2007a, 149). This tension gives more prominence to the debate over language choice,

“thus creating an ever-increasing gulf between the institutionalized culture for which language has become a key element in identity-definition, and the lived reality of most Galicians, which involves a constant balancing act between Galician and Spanish cultures, languages, and identities” (*ibid.*). Thus, the effort to strengthen Galician cultural identity by repressing Castilian and elevating the legitimacy of Galician directly opposes the hybrid reality of contemporary Galicia. The side-by-side presentation of the bilingual editions places the two languages on equal footing and more closely resembles the actual situation in Galicia.

As demonstrated by del Valle (2000), although those at the other end of the political spectrum espouse bilingualism, their policy is rooted in monoglossia (109). The official doctrine of the Spanish central government and Fraga’s administration in Galicia is *bilingüismo harmónico*, where the two languages peacefully co-exist alongside each other. Critics of this position, however, believe that the “contemporary language policy has simply hidden, rather than resolved, the conflict; it has perpetuated the historical diglossic situation and accelerated the language shift initiated in modern times” (*ibid.*). Therefore, by “deliberately neutraliz[ing] questions of power and relative influence” (Hooper 2007, 149), this policy also leads to the eventual triumph of one language over the other. While Castaño’s bilingual collections may seem to support the linguistic equivalence championed by *bilingüismo harmónico*, the postnational nature of her work, particularly *A segunda lingua*, removes the poetry from the two-dimensional dichotomy of the monoglossic and nationalist framework. All of her poetry, whether the monolingual Galician collections or the bilingual editions, presents the speaker—and by

extension the Galician tongue and the broader Galician cultural identity—in a postnational setting that encompasses a plurality of languages and identities in the modern world. This “pluralization of national identity [...] entails a radical redefinition of the hallowed notion of sovereignty. In essence, it signals the *deterritorialization* of national sovereignty—namely, the attribution of sovereignty to peoples rather than land” (Kearney 2004, 35). It is precisely the postnational context, by locating these languages in a wider, global setting not bound by nationalist dualities, which elevates the co-presence of Galician and Castilian beyond the specious equality advocated by *bilingüismo harmónico*, allowing the two languages to work together in a way that avoids the “deliberate neutralization” of postcolonial power differentials<sup>103</sup>.

In a true sense of the term postnational, the poem “A palabra galicia” breaks down the diglossic situation found in Galicia, in which Galician is a language of low prestige slowly being replaced by Castilian (del Valle 2000, 115), by compelling all readers to adopt Galician in a pronouncement of self-identity construction in solidarity with the speaker. Throughout the poem, the speaker highlights the use of the tongue to pronounce correctly the interdental fricative in the word “Galicia” as fundamental to her identity as a Galician citizen. At the bottom of each of the pages of the poem, the speaker prefaces a list of Galician words with the phrase “*por iso/ por eso,*”

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<sup>103</sup> “It is not rare to find, among contemporary Galician writers, critiques of the disparagement of the vernacular language, which has been constructed by Spanish-speaking groups as an obstacle to progress” (Palacios 2009, 198).

demonstrating that her declaration of these words reinforces her own status as a Galician, but also the connection between language and identity in Galicia.

The words that the speaker chooses to enunciate in Galician may seem to be chosen randomly, with their only shared link being the multiple interdental fricatives needed to pronounce them: *maza*, *cercear*, *zarzallo*, *cinza*, *cercella*, and *zazamelo*. I argue however, that in addition to their desirable sonorous qualities, these words all provide insight into Galician culture. As such, they help to demonstrate the heteroglossic reality of life lived through multiple languages in Galicia by showing that in Galicia, there exists more than merely Standard Galician and Standard Castilian, separate from each other but equal according to *bilingüismo harmónico*. Instead, the presence of these words demonstrates the influence that these languages exert on each other in Galicia, resulting in the diverse linguistic strata of heteroglossia.

Two of the words evoke the natural setting of Galicia, with its cultural connections to the sea and the wet climate: *zarzallo* is a drizzling rain with a heavy presence at certain times of the year in Galicia, while *cercella* can mean a sea star, or it can be a synonym of *zarzallo*. A third word, *zazamelo*, or stutterer, suggests the hesitation or difficulty arising for anyone caught between languages.

The other three Galician words all share a connection that articulates the linguistic identity struggles that have come to define Galicia as one of the historic nationalities of Spain. Each of these three words implies either a direct relation to violence, or the aftermath of a violent act. *Maza* is a mace, a weapon which can be used to inflict pain

and suffering on a people in order to subjugate them. The verb *cercear* means to amputate a limb. This violent action is reminiscent of the tumultuous existence of the Galician language in Spain, where, during the Franco regime, the use of Galician was prohibited and Galicians felt cut off from their language, and by extension, from their history and culture. Lastly, *cinza*, or ash, suggests the outcome of a brutal attack or devastating accident. The violence evoked by these three words all points to the tenuous relationship that Galician culture and the Galician literary system maintain with the central government in Madrid. After decades of state-sanctioned repression, any attempt at suppressing Galician culture or aligning it with mainstream, national values feels like a violent attack on the language and culture of the region.

The violence implicit in these words also relates to the fracturing of identity that occurs in a region such as Galicia, where its heteroglossic nature is masked by a monoglossia which pits the languages against one another. As such, the inherent violence of the fractured identity connects to the earlier moment in the poem, when the speaker strikes the recipient's face, so that he would also have “unha lingua dividida en dúas.” The act of violence against the recipient results in a splintered identity, helping him identify with his Galician interlocutor who has repeatedly demonstrated her propensity for self-fracturing, as well as imbuing him with the new ability to speak more than one language with his split tongue. In this way, the speaker's actions against the recipient mirrors Castaño's bilingual poetry, which compels readers, many of whom do not speak Galician, to interface with Galician through the bilingual format and the influence of Galician on both sides of the poem.



If it is true that the majority of Castaño's audience approaches her work through translation, whether they be Galician speakers or Castilian monolinguals, then rather than having a "denationalizing" effect, her poetry in translation in fact immerses the reader into the actual socio-political Galician situation of heteroglossia. Throughout her work, the constant linguistic dual-presence of the bilingual editions entices the reader who is more comfortable reading in Castilian to approach the Galician and experience it firsthand. Demonstrating her awareness that "translation can never happen 'outside' ideology" (Reimóndez 2009, 72), Castaño observes

Empiezo a pensar que la edición bilingüe tiene algo también de político. Tiene alguna idea también de visibilizar la lengua gallega. Porque, no creas, no es tan fácil, si vives en Madrid, poder escuchar o leer gallego [...] Entonces, claro que un lector, monolingüe en castellano, tiene su traducción al castellano. Pero, me encantaría que fuese suficiente curioso como para, por el rabillo del ojo, echar una mirada al texto original. Creo que entendernos es también una cuestión de voluntad. El entendernos, el encontrarnos, el tender la mano a otros, es también una cuestión de esa voluntad, de esta predisposición de desear hacerlo. Así que, también es una invitación a que se descubran las semejanzas que puede haber, lo poco apartados que estamos (2015).

Therefore, for Castaño, the power of the bilingual format resides in its ability to make Galician accessible to an audience that would otherwise have no interaction with the language, elevating its prominence to a national and international level: "Pues las

traducciones tendrían un gran impacto simbólico en el reconocimiento y revaloración de la obra en el sistema origen, funcionando como revulsivo y dosis de autoestima para el sistema literario *marginal*” (Castro 2011, 28). Additionally, as the proximity of the languages, both on the page and linguistically, encourages the reader to venture to the Galician side, both Castilian monolinguals and Galician-speakers who typically read in Castilian gain greater exposure to Galician poetry. In this way, Castaño uses the format of self-translation and an *en face* presentation to mitigate some of the damaging effects on a marginal language that stem from linguistic hierarchies, much as Gelman does with Ladino.

The bilingual edition of “A palabra galicia” culminates this process of enticing the readers to engage with Galician language and culture with the inclusion of the six Galician words in both versions of the poem. While the poet’s hope is that the reader feels the desire to inspect the Galician side more closely, the prominence of these Galician words in this poem force the reader to take in the language and begin to assimilate it. Because the focus is on the pronunciation of the words with the interdental fricative, the reader will naturally have the urge to voice these words out loud in Galician. Thus, far from the claim that Castilian translations of Galician poetry have a “denationalizing” effect, Castaño’s bilingual poetry instead requires the reader to acknowledge and respond to the Galician. This process ensures that a monolingual, Castilian-speaking reader will begin the process of transformation to more closely resemble the heteroglossia present in Galicia, as the now Galicianized Spanish evokes a

“third language,” “a medium of communicative energy which somehow reconciles both languages in a tongue deeper, more comprehensive than either” (Mukherjee 1994, 83).

The speaker’s final admission in the poem before she lists the three words in Galician is that she is an “*escrava das palabras e haberame condenar a mina lingua./ esclava de las palabras y habré de condenarme por mi lengua.*” It is in fact this revelation that leads her to pronounce the Galician words. Throughout *A segunda lingua*, the speaker’s physical tongue is often a symbol for the speaker’s language. However, more than only an occasional link between linguistic and physical tongues, the speaker’s tongue always acts as a proxy for the speaker’s identity and culture. Accordingly, the interdental fricative necessary to enunciate her homeland becomes a symbol for the speaker’s perception of her own identity. After the last three words in Galician, the speaker concludes the poem by coaching the recipient on how to properly pronounce her site of origin: “*Nada de galisia, nada de galichia,/ aténdeme ben: ga-li-Cia./ Nada de galisia, nada de galichia,/ atiéndeme bien: ga-li-Cia.*” With the interdental fricative a central part of the speaker’s individual and national identity, the word Galicia comes to be a shibboleth by which the speaker can generate a sense of solidarity with her homeland through correct pronunciation.

The emphasis at the close of the poem on the correct articulation of the word Galicia completes a circle, connecting the end of the poem to the title. As the focus of the poem is on the *word* Galicia, and not necessarily the Galician language itself, the final stress on the interdental fricative underscores the centrality of this oral articulation

within the poem. The phonological importance of the word Galicia throughout the poem allows for a postnational manifestation of heteroglossia that would be absent if the speaker instead chose to align her self-identity with the Galician language. In other words, the word Galicia is pronounced the same in Galician as it is in Castilian, and therefore, the insistence that its proper pronunciation is vital to the speaker's identity illuminates the entirety of the speaker's linguistic profile, not only Galician.

By portraying a self-identity based in heteroglossia rather than trying to erect a monoglossic standard, this poem demonstrates a postnational depiction of Galicia that is not limited by nationalistic dichotomies; the focus on biological and cultural aspects of the speaker's identity removes the notion of identity formation from solely the geopolitical realm. Castaño's self-translation and the bilingual format augment this postnational condition by presenting the two languages together, where the final articulation of the word Galicia is mirrored, and consequently highlighted, on both sides of the page.

### **The Tongue as Galician Geography and Absence**

Throughout *A segunda lingua*, the speaker's tongue symbolically shifts from representing the Galician language, to a part of the speaker's body with a connection to the erotic nature of contemporary Galician women's poetry, to the geographic space that comprises the speaker's homeland. Regardless of the different functions or applications of the tongue, one thing that never changes is its association with the concept of identity. In the final poem of the collection, "The winner takes it all, a musa

non leva un peso/ The winner takes it all, la musa no se lleva un duro”<sup>104</sup> (110-113), the speaker compiles the various functions of the tongue, maintaining it as a metonymy of identity, both individual and national. As the speaker uses her tongue to identify with the landscape of Galicia and cultural obsession with longing and absence, she demonstrates how all aspects of her character are encompassed by the Galician culture, and that her linguistic profiles are just one facet of her fractured and splintered identity.

The tongue takes on a metaliterary aspect in this poem, as it first appears in the second stanza: “*todo o que queda na punta da lingua/ molla a saliva coa que digo este verso.*”// *Todo lo que se queda en la punta de la lengua/ moja la saliva con la que digo este verso.*” The tip of the tongue is the resting place for those things that one cannot quite remember, despite the maddening feeling that they are almost at our disposal. It is these forgotten things that make the poem’s composition and enunciation possible. The speaker elucidates the role of things unremembered in crafting the poem with a list of objects that conceal hidden depths below the surface: “*Tubérculo, iceberg, un corpo extraño na ostra.*”/ *Tubérculo, iceberg, un cuerpo extraño en la ostra.*” In each case, what appears on the surface belies the reality underneath, and it is the dregs of these profundities that “*estruman todas as miñas fragas/ abonan cada uno de mis pastos,*” giving life to the utterances of the poem. This act of fertilizing the speaker’s pastures evokes a line in an earlier poem in the collection, where the speaker concludes that “*Onde se rumian as palabras, bótase a lingua a pacer.*”/ *Donde se rumian las palabras, se*

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<sup>104</sup> Appendix 2: Poetry of Yolanda Castaño.

echa la lengua a pacer” (84-85). The major difference between these lines is that while in the earlier poem, the tongue feeds in the company of the eating words, in this poem, the words no longer sustain the tongue, instead, it is all that is not said which sustains the poem.

The concept of the forgotten and uncommunicated becomes the basis of this poem, as the speaker uses her tongue to ensure a disconnect with the addressee, continuing in the next stanza: “*Todo canto poida dicirche/ diriacho só na lingua que non entendas.*” // *Todo cuanto pudiera decirte/ te lo diría en la lengua que no entiendas.*” By openly using the language that the recipient doesn’t understand, the poem is once again propelled by a lack of communication. This focus on the absence of meaning or communication highlights the particularly Galician cultural emphasis of the constant presence of absence. *Saudade*, a sense of nostalgia that pervades every part of life in Galicia—both for Galicians within their birthplace, and especially for those abroad—as the cultural longing for the homeland replaces the homeland itself in the minds and hearts of Galicians. Because the nation has been so deeply mythologized, the longed-for perfect nation “has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, [...] continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack” (Stewart 1984, 23). The persistent specter of absence and longing that hovers over Galician culture is reflected by the speaker’s insistence on blocking the communicative value of this poem, creating a gap in understanding evocative of Galician culture and literature.

Mirroring the *saudade* that permeates all aspects of Galician culture, Galician literary history is distinguished too by omissions.

Galician literary history, like any teleological narrative, is characterized by lacunae and absence—that is, as much by what is excluded, as by what finds a place. [...] In consequence, the absences and lacunae that make up a teleological history (literary or otherwise) become naturalized, undetectable to all but the most determined eyes. A key consequence of this naturalization, in the Galician case, is the absence of socially and politically marginalized voices from the national narrative (Hooper 2007b, 125-26).

In a previous article, Hooper (2003) examines these lacunae in the context of women writers in Galician literature; particularly the almost complete exclusion of turn-of-the-century women writers in Galicia, who were left out in large part for their proclivity to write multilingually. By highlighting that which is left on the tip of the tongue, writing a poem “*só para que nunca podas lelos ti/ solo para que nunca puedas leerlos tú,*” Castañó creates a sense of literary *saudade* that glorifies the absent, both in Galician literature and society.

The emphasis on what is lacking in this poem has two influential impacts on the reader. First, as the poem is constructed on absence, the speaker’s explicit admission that these gaps impede the addressee from understanding the poem highlights their presence and function. Thus, by placing them in a position of prominence, the lacunae—which have otherwise become “naturalized” and thus overlooked in society—are

brought out into the light, into a position where they can be analyzed properly as a consequence of national identity formation rather than merely accepted as an intrinsic trait of the Galician cultural system. The second way that this poetry of omission influences the reader is that the absences presented are directly aimed at the addressee, and by extension, at the reader. The constant cultural focus on longing and lacking is a central part of Galician culture, and by drawing the reader into this awareness of the absent, this poem exerts a “galicianizing” effect on the reader. In much the same way that the inclusion of Galician words on both sides of the page in the poem “A palabra galicia” forces the reader to adopt a heteroglossic outlook, immersing the reader in the gaps of this poem situates the reader into Galician cultural territory. The result is a postnational contextualization, with the Galician speaker no longer enunciating from strictly a geo-political position of a periphery-center duality. As the international addressee and reader are incorporated into Galician culture through the lacunae, their resulting “galicianization” supports a postnational view of Galicia by problematizing the borders and limits of nationalist ideology (Gabilondo 2009, 266).

The bilingual format of Castaño’s self-translated poetry reinforces the associations that this poetry of omission creates with Galician culture. One of the principal challenges of translation is the need to confront the linguistic gaps created as one language is rendered into another. The majority of translations are not presented in a bilingual format, which leads to overlooking the communicative space between languages; most translations are presented in a way that obscures the fact that they are translations. The bilingual format, by placing the two languages next to each other,



foregrounds the act of translation and any potential dissimilarities between languages. The resulting lacunae between languages mirrors the poetic gaps that are a manifestation of the Galician literary and cultural system, allowing translation to highlight inherent elements of Galician culture that are always present, but which have often been concealed.

The translator Assumpta Camps (2008) argues that our modern multicultural and hybrid world demands a new approach to translation, expressing the need to go beyond merely textual translation, to embrace cultural translation: “In short, we are obliged to adopt a new approach to textual alterity, and are invited to place the reader in that uncertain space that is neither within nor without, but “in-between”: a space derived from a world of unstable cultures and identities” (81). This cultural translation, which places readers in this “in-between” space, is an indicator of the “unstable cultures and identities” of which it is a product. Echoing the galicianizing effect of the speaker’s use of lacunae in the poem, the gap between languages created through translation deposits the reader in the marginal position of in-between, an intrinsic location for a heteroglossic land such as Galicia.

The naturalization of that which has been forcefully omitted from the Galician literary system obscures its lack within Galician culture. As the speaker compares those unsaid things that drive the poem to objects which also conceal their true depth and nature, she both foregrounds the presence of absence, while also commenting on the

nature of this lacking. The objects of comparison all display different facets of the impact that this culture of lacking exerts on Galician society.

The first object, a tuber, represents the nutritive function that this lacking serves in Galicia. For many Galicians, the sense of *saudade* is a result of Galician hybridity and an outcome of the uprootedness and transculturation of modern Galicia (Colmeiro 2009, 221); as an omnipresent force in their lives, it nourishes and propels their own sense of *galeguidade*.

Another item from the list, the foreign object in an oyster, hints at the contradictory nature of this cultural foundation based on longing and lacking. With oysters, the pearl forms around a grain of sand because it is an irritant to the oyster. Similarly, a culture of absence that is a product of hybridity can be ultimately viewed as a source of strength for Galicia, better positioning it to a globally connected world that is increasingly multicultural and hybrid. However, the ambivalent nature of the pearl in the oyster is clear, taking into consideration that this national identity of lacking arises in large part from the forced marginalization that Galicia suffers in its relationship with the central government in Madrid. Thus, the same thing that provides great cultural value is itself a product of long-standing pain and discomfort as a thing of beauty and value emerges from the foreign grain of sand that invades the oyster.

The last depth-concealing object from the speaker's list is an iceberg. As it may too be related to Galician *saudade*, this comparison might hint at the magnitude to which the continuous presence of absence is ingrained in Galician culture, implying that while

apparent on the surface, its true impact is much stronger than initially manifest. However, I argue that more than merely the comparison with the proportion of the iceberg that is visible and that which is concealed, the metaphor of the iceberg connotes a sense of danger. Like the iceberg that sank the Titanic, the speaker seems to be warning all those who would underestimate Galicia's perpetual liminal position and hybridity, manifested in the Galician national identity as an emphasis on lacking and longing. To miscalculate Galicia's hybrid makeup would be to discount the marginalization of Galicia that has fomented this amalgamated nature. This leads to the same rationalism of nationalism, which conflates language and culture, suppressing the heteroglossic reality of contemporary Galicia (Hooper 2007b, 135-136). Although distinct in function, these three objects emphasize both the extent of the impact that the culture of lacking has on Galician national identity, as well as the resulting inherent ambivalence that this specter of omission creates as it permeates Galician culture.

After the speaker's discussion of her penchant for poetic composition that the recipient will not read or understand, she returns her focus to her tongue, creating a list of metaphors where her tongue metonymically stands in for her identity as a whole. Throughout *A segunda lingua*, the tongue is constantly called upon to represent various aspects of the speaker's identity, such as her physicality and sexuality, her innate hybridity as a multilingual member of a multilingual society, or a source of familiarity and shelter in a globalized and interconnected world. It seems fitting, then, that as the last poem of the collection, "The winner takes it all, a musa non leva un peso" encapsulates the disparate functions of the tongue, highlighting the tongue's impact on

the speaker as an individual, as well as all Galician national identity as the speaker represents Galicians both in Galicia and abroad.

The first metaphor for the tongue, “*a miña lingua fisterra/ mi lingua finisterre,*” segues between the previous discussion of absence and the different aspects of the speaker’s tongue as it connects to her identity as a Galician. Cape Finisterre, the western-most part of Galicia, was thought in Roman times to be the edge of the world, with its name deriving from the Latin phrase for “end of the earth.” By identifying herself with this part of the Galician landscape, the speaker transforms her tongue into the edge of the known world and site of all the omitted things previously mentioned, which reside at the tip of the tongue. The Galician novelist Antón Risco describes how this approach of positioning oneself at the edge is a distinctly Galician perspective: “*ser galego significa vivir nos confíns, tocando en todo tempo a beira do mundo, a derradeira marxe, e aspirando, por iso, o inquietante arrecendo do outro lado, no que se non pode saber o que hai. Así vivimos no fin da terra, nun país marxinal e marxinado por todos, feito fundamentalmente de ausencias*” (1987, 10). In addition to the acknowledgement that Galician society has been forced to the periphery as a result of systemic marginalization, Risco recognizes that this culture is largely built upon the same absences that Castaño highlights in this poem.

Although an outcome of the center-periphery dichotomy as a result of Spanish nationalism, the Galician self-perception as *Finisterre* has been co-opted and cultivated by Galician nationalists in response to the marginalization imposed upon them by the

central government in Madrid. In this way, this notion of being at the end of the world is reappropriated as a positive element of Galician society: “[El] nombre de Finisterre connota también la marginación de un territorio periférico, alejado de un centro social hegemónico. La mitificación de Galicia como Finisterre por parte del nacionalismo buscaba promover la superación de las condiciones seculares de marginación y atraso de Galicia, subvirtiendo las connotaciones negativas de este nombre y convirtiéndolo en signo positivo de identidad” (Hererro Pérez 2009, 165). With the advent of the *Rexionalismo* movement at the close of the nineteenth century in Galicia, Galician regionalists actively sought to portray their homeland as distinct and detached from Spain, with a separate Celtic origin, language, culture, and history (Romero 2012, 1). Thus the image of Galicia as Finisterre, at the extreme end of the world and the point furthest away from the center of Spain, epitomizes this narrative of distinction and becomes a source of cultural pride for Galicia.

In conjunction with the Galician self-perception as the edge of the world, Galicians have identified themselves with the large waves of emigration in Galician history, blaming Galicia’s rural nature and poor economic circumstances for the large percentages of Galicians forced to abandon their homeland in search of better opportunities elsewhere. Romero (2012) argues that “both myths—Galicia as *Finisterre* and as a migrant nation—are intrinsic to understanding the Galician national imaginary” (2). I argue that Castaño articulates each of these national myths through the speaker’s interaction with the addressee in this poem.

The discourse of omission here effectively illustrates the concept of *Finisterre*. The speaker's insistence on communicating in a tongue that the addressee does not understand creates a barrier blocking the transmission of ideas, resulting in the end of this conversational pathway between them. The end of the road as a geographic feature of Galicia thus metaphorically stands in for the "punta da lingua" that acts as a compelling force throughout the poem. However, just as Finisterre was the edge of the world for the Romans, as well as the end of the journey for countless pilgrims and tourists on the *Camiño de Santiago*, it is also the symbolic beginning for those Galicians who have left their homeland and emigrated abroad.

Between 1853 and 1930, over a quarter of all Galicians left Galicia and Spain, and it is estimated that a total of close to two million left their homeland over a period of 120 years beginning in 1853 (Hooper 2011, 40-42). For this reason, migration "has been a key trope—if not the key trope—in the imagining of modern Galician identity" (Hooper 2006, 172). Throughout this poem, the speaker foregrounds that which is withheld, highlighting the lack of communication between her and the recipient. Despite this emphasis on the linguistic and cultural lacunae, the fact remains that the poem is a direct interaction between a Galician poetic voice and an international recipient. This exchange, complete with its semantic gaps, characterizes the migratory journey that so many contemporary Galicians experience, establishing new lives away from Galicia as they embark from the edge of their world. In this way, the notion of *Finisterre* is a metaphor for both of the seemingly paradoxical principal representations of modern

Galician identity: Galicia as the end of the world, and Galicia as the point of departure, the place where the rest of the world begins.

As *Finisterre* metonymically represents contemporary Galician culture and identity, it also illustrates the postnational aspect of modern Galicia. Colmeiro (2009) argues that Galician culture reflects a modern “global condition,” because “Galician identity involves a particular way of perceiving reality and of interacting with the world, inflected by its history and geopolitical situation on the margins of the nation-state...Peripheral positions can thus lead to global visions” (220-21). Therefore, it is precisely Galicia’s peripheral nature that primes it to supersede a basic nationalist binary, putting it on a transnational and postnational stage that goes beyond the traditional contents and boundaries of nations (Carballeira 2009, 275).

In addition to the postnational, *Finisterre* also evokes Bhabha’s “third space” articulated by self-translated, bilingual poetry, where the two linguistic versions harmonize, in order to produce a “third” version<sup>105</sup>. Rather than existing either at a marginalized edge of the world or at the center of a globalized, transnational web, Galicians somehow belong to a space between these two extremes, but pertaining to them both; a marginalized people whose peripheral nature has positioned them to fully participate in a modern “glocal” world (Cramer 2007, 216). This positioning within the cultural interstices parallels the linguistic exchange that occurs with bilingual poetry. As

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<sup>105</sup> When discussing Beckett’s self-translations, Perloff (1987) asks “Which version is the ‘real’ or the ‘better’ one? Obviously both and neither. The scene of Beckett’s writing exists somewhere in between the two, a space where neither French nor English has autonomy” (47).

the two versions are presented side-by-side in a non-hierarchical format, the connotative and aesthetic essence of the poem resides in a space between them, rather than with one or the other. The self-translated, bilingual format of *A segunda lingua* thus highlights the notion of the third space, a concept that is reinforced by the foregrounding of the speaker's association with the marginal *Finisterre* throughout this poem.

In addition to tapping into the deep cultural reservoir of Galicia as periphery and a land of emigration, the speaker's self-identification with *Finisterre* connects her with a long-standing literary tradition in Galicia that seeks to unite the Galician landscape with the national identity of its people. Romero (2006) explains that this tendency, rather than unique to Galicia, is consistent with all national identity formation:

Consequently, it can be argued that the role of a geographic space in nation-formation and in border-demarkation is intrinsic to national identity. Along with the existence of a territory, as a localized space of identity, these scholars have also suggested that a national consciousness too is inherent to the idea of the nation. A shared feeling of belonging and a common national history emphasize and strengthen the connection between the members of a nation and the land they inhabit (156).

Although linking the physical homeland to its citizens is prevalent throughout the world, the Galician case is particularly salient, due in large part to the Galician literary system that began with Rosalía de Castro.



The *Rexurdimento*, the cultural reawakening which reignited the quest for a Galician national identity, was initiated by Castro's 1863 poetry collection *Cantares Gallegos* (Bermúdez 2011, 289). Castro's work is synonymous with the Galician national image, making it possible for the collective consciousness of Galicia to actively construct an identity with which to distinguish itself from the rest of Spain. In this way, Castro's work is fundamental to the Galician cultural system, where the national cultural identity and the national literary system are inseparable. It is within this context that the prominence of the Galician geography in Castro's poetry illuminates its function within Castaño's poetry.

Hooper (2011) describes the role of the Galician homeland in Castro's work as a connection so deep, that the individual and the landscape become conflated: "Castro writes principally from, of, sometimes even as Galicia. Her poetry is rooted in landscape[...]For almost a century and a half, Castro's treatment of Galicia's landscape and nature has been the dominant theme in scholarly readings of her work, inspiring a strong interest in landscape, *a terra*, in Galician literary studies more generally" (47). As Castaño declares her tongue to be a distinguishing feature of the Galician coastline, she bases this description on the cultural foundation of the Galician geography, both that of the wider literary tradition, and more specifically, the connection to the physical Galicia provided by Castro. By inserting herself into this tradition, Castaño demonstrates that her bilingual, self-translated poetry is not aberrant or an exception to the norm in Galicia, but rather the continuation of a literary convention that began with Castro.

Castaño's *Finisterre* is both a representation of the peripheral nature of Galicia, as well as the interstitial space that opens with the emigration that characterizes Galicia. This dual disposition is another manifestation of Castro's legacy in the work of Castaño, as Castro's work also occupies multiple geographic strata. In addition to the close connection with the physical geography of Galicia in Castro's poetry, Gabilondo (2011) argues that "[h]er narrative is located precisely in the exilic space that Galician subaltern emigration opens up—a conflictive space" (82). Accordingly, as Castaño's poetry inhabits the space just between the physical landscape and the void caused by emigration, she assumes a similar position of being in-between where Castro herself resided a century-and-a-half earlier. This positioning into the "third space" or the space in-between, although first formed in the work of Castro, has extended to all Galician literature: "In consequence, we might argue that a key aspect of the role of Galician Studies is, paradoxically, to examine and to contest national boundaries and borders" (Hooper 2007b, 125). By identifying herself with the Galician geography that paradoxically defines the border and limits of Galicia while also transcending it, Castaño's speaker places herself in dialogue with the entirety of Galician literature,<sup>106</sup> extending back to the inception of modern Galician literature with Rosalía de Castro.

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<sup>106</sup> Describing the work of one of the foremost contemporary Galician writers, Xosé Luís Méndez Ferrín, Moreiras-Menor (2003) illustrates that his work, as exemplary of Galician literature in general, resides at the transitory space between edge and the void just beyond the border: "El lugar del pensamiento en Ferrín es por tanto la frontera, el límite, la raya, la quiebra que inevitablemente está presente entre espacios regionales/nacionales; ese lugar de la discontinuidad histórica que impuso arbitrarias distinciones entre los espacios nacionales/regionales" (206).

In *A segunda lingua*, the speaker points to her tongue as a metonym that represents the entirety of her identity, exemplifying the differing characteristics of her life. By foregrounding the multi-faceted nature of her tongue, the speaker issues a direct challenge to the monoglossia of Galician nationalists who equate *galeguidade* with the Galician tongue, superseding any other aspect of Galician culture or identity. Hooper (2003), examining the case of turn of the century Galician writers, demonstrates that in connecting language with culture, nationalists have sought to exert a homogenizing effect in the determination of national identity: “[M]odern, monolingual histories of Galician literature do not always acknowledge that bilingualism, or even monolingualism in Castilian, did not—for *fin de século* writers—preclude participation in the emerging Galician cultural system. As language has become the central, institutionalized marker of Galician difference from Spain, so critics have sought to legitimize the connection between Galicianness and the Galician language, by rewriting cultural history through the erasure of non-Galician language voices” (105). Castaño’s bilingual, self-translated poetry is a direct challenge to this conscious cultural and linguistic whitewashing by demonstrating the linguistic interaction inherent in this format, thus articulating the heteroglossic model that actually exists in Galicia. The speaker extends this rebuttal of an enforced monoglossia by associating her tongue, and therefore her identity, with the various aspects of her own character, of which, the Galician language comprises just one of the many different facets working together to constitute her as an individual and as a postnational Galician citizen.

Concluding the many characterizations of the tongue throughout the collection, “The winner takes it all, a musa non leva un peso” creates an assortment of comparisons with the speaker’s tongue. While incorporating the idea that the speaker’s languages are part of her identity, this series of metaphors goes beyond the reductive one-to-one equivalence of Galician culture with the Galician language. Instead, as the speaker employs disparate elements to describe her tongue, a depiction emerges of her identity in a transnational setting, where her mother tongue is a vital, but not comprehensive component of the Galician culture that to a certain degree defines her.

The connection between the speaker’s tongue and her identity is evident in this list beginning with the comparison to *Finisterre*. The image directly following this geographical link to Galicia establishes a similar biological link, as the speaker declares that her tongue is “*un toxo raspando a gorxa/ tojo que raspa la garganta.*” *Toxo*, or gorse, is a flowering, thorny evergreen shrub native to western Europe and northern Africa, with the bulk of the species endemic to the Iberian peninsula. Consequently, the gorse flower, known as *chorima* in Galician, is the national flower of Galicia. By creating a link between this quintessential symbol of Galician culture and her tongue, the speaker clearly demonstrates the impossibility of separating her identity from the Galician culture in which it was formed.

The fractious nature of a beautiful, yet thorny bush that scratches the throat provides some insight into the challenge of belonging to a culture and society that is both vibrant and marginalized, peripheral to the center while simultaneously proud of

its unique heritage that distinguishes it from the rest of Spain. The unruliness of this image is reinforced by the following one, where the speaker's tongue has become "*o máis correúdo dos oito tentáculos fervendo/ el más correoso de los ocho tentáculos hirviendo.*" The speaker encapsulates the contradictory nature of Galician culture with the word *correúdo*, an adjective that means strong and robust, but also leathery when applied to food, or difficult and tricky; a description that implies a certain amount of flexibility and inflexibility with the same word.

Within the context of her conversation with an international addressee that doesn't understand her language, as constantly reiterated throughout this poem, the image of the gorse also evokes the Galician cultural constant of immigration; gorse has become an invasive species in much of the world due to its aggressive seed dispersal. These examples demonstrate the speaker's resolution to not only invoke Galician culture with closely associated symbols of said culture, but to specifically choose metaphors that articulate the Galician postnational experience.

Viewing the Galician culture and literature through a postnational lens removes it from a hierarchical, 'vertical' relationship with the Spanish nation, placing it instead onto a transnational global stage, characterized by 'horizontal' associations between regions, individuals, and social movements, rather than strictly between nations (Hooper 2007b, 135). In this way, the postnational frame allows Galician culture to push beyond the universalizing and essentialist structure of national literature (Ibid., 133), a move which allows for an embrace of the heteroglossic reality that exists in Galicia.

Within the international setting in which she finds herself, Castaño's speaker espouses her own plurivocality, while also adjusting to the new languages and cultures with which she comes into contact.

The next two images that the speaker uses to describe her tongue both seem to articulate the transnational setting in which the speaker finds herself, as well her reaction to this location. Conveying a sense of being overwhelmed often felt when facing a new language or culture, the speaker states that her tongue is a memory card, using an idiomatic expression to add that it is full. The profusion of objects filling up the speaker's "tarxeta de memoria" reflects the instinct to recoil readily experienced when overwhelmed by a new cultural milieu, but it also evokes the application of a postnational framework to Galician culture. Examining Galician culture through a postnational lens allows for a multiplicity of identities, viewed in non-exclusive terms, rather than a reductive center-periphery binary (Gabilondo 2009, 251). Applying this concept to languages, heteroglossia points towards the range of linguistic options available to modern Galicians, which could contribute to a sense of saturation in a transnational situation. This metaphor for the speaker's identity acknowledges the challenges of existing in a multicultural, multilingual, and marginalized region such as Galicia, with the notion that not even one more iota would fit on the memory card. The image that follows, where the speaker eats the delicious fig only so that it doesn't go to waste, underscores the difficulty of the cultural surfeit of Galicia, a scenario intensified as the speaker goes beyond Galicia and adjusts to even more cultures as she ventures abroad.

After expressing the feelings of cultural crapulousness, the speaker next manifests her cultural identity by comparing her tongue to outward manifestations of her culture. She first states that “*A miña lingua é unha corroza no medio de Manhattan/ Mi lengua una corroza en el medio de Manhattan.*” In Galicia, a *corroza* is a cape and hood made out of reeds or straw that laborers wear to protect them from the rain. The speaker’s decision to employ the metaphor of the *corroza* to describe her tongue, and therefore her identity, indicates the centrality of her Galician culture to her own identity formation by choosing a traditional Galician symbol. Moreover, the image of the *corroza* in the middle of Manhattan illuminates the complicated impact that traditional Galician culture exerts on the modern Galician.

On one hand, the reed suit is designed and worn to protect the worker from the elements, and this metaphor aptly conveys the sense of security and belonging that a culture confers upon its citizens, feelings that grow into nostalgia and longing as these citizens stray from their homeland. However, the *corroza* is also directly related to the rural aspect of Galicia, and its awkward presence in the center of one of the largest cities in the world evokes the constant tension between rural and urban life prevalent in Galician society and literature: “The tensions between the rural and the urban have been in a double bind that has yet to be resolved. In most cases, the positive portrayal of one space is in sharp contrast with the negative connotations of the other, suggesting a society in a continuous identity conflict” (Romero 2012, xvi). Galicia is a “society in continuous identity conflict” because of the peripheral position it occupies in relation to the central government, but its identity politics are symptomatic of a much more

universal trend of 'glocalization,' facilitating a relationship between the global and the local, while also fomenting a strain between the two (Hooper 2007b, 216). In this way, the speaker's use of a Galician cultural icon that foregrounds a rural-urban divide, amplifying this tension by placing it in New York, reflects her own internal identity conflicts as a microcosm of the identity tensions in her homeland and across the globe.

Parallel to the *coroza* as an outward manifestation of culture and belief, the speaker's subsequent lingual image of the kippah is the first in a series of religious and spiritual symbols, closing out the list of tongue metaphors. These range from the traditional and orthodox kippah, to the heterodox "*dedo dunha deus negra/ dedo de una dios negra*" and the inherently contradictory "*herexe emulado por un mártir/ hereje emulado por un mártir.*" I argue that by identifying herself with these disparate religious practices, the speaker affirms the manifold facets of Galician culture, overriding the homogenous and essentialist portrayal of Galicia proliferated by both Galician and Spanish-state nationalisms, allowing for the non-binary representation of postnationalism.

The last metaphor on the list is not religious *per se*, but it is presented as an expansion of the preceding concession that the speaker's tongue is a heretic emulated by a martyr. The speaker states that the tongue is "*o lugar do teu corpo ao que lle tés/ medo.// el lugar de tu cuerpo al que le tienes/ miedo.*" By explicitly linking the speaker's and the addressee's bodies, as well as inferring that this relationship is implicitly sacred, the speaker reinforces the previous notion of a varied Galician culture while also



foregrounding Galicia's role in an interconnected, global culture. This is a quintessential example of 'glocalization,' where the speaker's personal, individual Galician identity, as represented by her tongue, forms part of the international interlocutor's body, and therefore his identity. Although the addressee is afraid of this part of his body, it nevertheless details a non-hierarchical connection, embodying the 'horizontal' relationships of postnationalism.

The poem concludes by returning full circle to the presence of absence in the final stanza, with the words in the poem that the addressee "*nunca haber[á] ler/ nunca ir[a] a leer.*" The speaker prefaces this acknowledgement of omission with images of a game of cards. This reference to gambling ties into the title of the poem, which, until now, has not related thematically to the rest of the poem. The bilingual poem title is a reflection of the transnational setting of all of the poetry from this collection, but I also argue that it articulates Castaño's penchant for the acoustic aspects of her poetry. She states: "Creo que en mi proceso creativo, importa mucho la faceta sonora, la faceta musical. Creo que a veces escribo de oído. No sé lo que voy a elegir en el siguiente verso, pero sé cómo va a sonar" (Castaño, 2015)<sup>107</sup>. The title "The winner takes it all, a musa non se leva un peso" conveys this tendency by emphasizing the aural qualities of the words

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<sup>107</sup> The English portion of the title of this poem connects with the titles of other poems in the collection, such as "Less is more," "Teleprompter," and "Mute." Throughout these poems, the nature of learning another language and the interactions of these languages is a common concern. This is especially evident in "Listen and repeat: un paxaro, unha barba/ Listen and repeat: un pájaro, una barba," where the poetic voice bemoans the difficulty of distinguishing *beard* and *bird* in English. The second part of the title that mentions the muse is in dialogue with another earlier poem, "A musa falou e non traía intérprete/ Habló la musa y no traía intérprete," where the speaker's inability to understand her interlocutor's mother tongue doesn't impede their romantic tryst.

while downplaying their declarative or connotative properties, as the English portion is directed at a primarily Galician and Castilian-speaking audience. In addition, the reference to card games and gambling, both in the title and in the final stanza, foregrounds the playful nature of this “writing by ear,” a characteristic exemplified by the word play from the last stanza.

The speaker emphasizes the acoustic elements of language when she states “*mira este ás con ás, onde poño a boca poño a bala/ mira este as con alas, donde pongo la boca pongo la bala.*” The homonyms, alliteration, and assonance featured in this line all work in concert to draw the attention away from the meaning of the words to the words themselves, using poetical devices to force the reader into a meta-poetic examination of the poem. As Castaño translates this line into Castilian, she renders the former homonyms as “este as con alas.” Although this translation foregoes the visual parallels of the Galician side, it retains strong sonorous qualities that amplify the meta-literary nudge to the reader. This stimulus is reinforced as the side-by-side format of the bilingual translations also encourage a meta-examination of the role of translation, and consequently, the language in the poem. All of these poetic tropes and tactics work together to foreground the focus on the speaker’s words at the conclusion of the poem.

Returning to the notion of absence and omission, the speaker repeats one more time that the addressee will never read her words. She then explicitly links these unheard and unread words to her tongue, stating that the words “*son miñas, miñas esta/ cousa, miña, como miña esta lingua./ Miña.// son mías, mías esta/ cosa, mía,*

como mía esta lengua./ Mía.” The ending of this poem, with the direct connection between words and tongue, demonstrates the crucial contribution of Galician culture to her identity in a postnational world. She has internalized the omitted words, rooting herself in the central Galician concept of *saudade*. The conspicuously absent words are as much a part of who she is as her tongue, a tongue representing the different aspects of her identity. By emphasizing her ownership of these words and her tongue, ending the poem with just the word *Mine* on the final line, the speaker claims her position as a modern Galician citizen, with all of the cultural baggage that that entails. Furthermore, by clinging so strongly to what she has not said, connecting it to her identity via her tongue, the speaker places herself in a space between languages because the words that are hers have not been enunciated. In this way, she articulates the gap between conceiving an idea and writing it for a poet, the linguistic gap between translated languages, and also the heteroglossic situation of Galicia where a range of language options more accurately depict the sociolinguistic reality than the flatness of monoglossia can.

In the trajectory of her poetic work and culminating with *A segunda lingua*, Castaño’s self-fracturing, linguistic splintering, and her embracing of the Galician cultural absence all work together to demonstrate the postnational and heteroglossic quality of Galician society, culture, and the literary system. These characteristics in her works articulate a sense of multiplicity that results from the process of identity formation, an identity inseparably connected to the Galician national image. This focus on multiplicity, in Castaño’s speaker and by extension in the Galician cultural narrative, reveals that

Galician culture cannot be defined with simplistic dualities or dichotomies. In this way, Castaño's self-translated, bilingual poetry is both a product and cultural manifestation of heteroglossia and postnationalism. Each of these phenomena describe a linguistic and societal diversity that Castaño evokes through her self-fragmentation and multiplication as she uses her tongue to articulate the range of cultural possibilities in Galicia.

**CHAPTER V**  
**CONCLUSION**

*We can use the wide availability of and free access to translations in any society as a clear, determinative sign of vigorous, uncensored freedom of communication, an issue that deserves to be at the forefront of our political thinking.*  
-Edith Grossman

Although writing in 2010, Edith Grossman's perspective on the relevance of translation to the free dissemination of information and communication seems more relevant today than ever, where the "increasingly intense jingoistic parochialism in our country" (Ibid., 42) is manifested in the unfortunately non-metaphoric isolationism of building walls around our society. The need to examine and integrate translation into our collective consciousness becomes more pressing in an effort to counter the tide of populism, isolationism, and willful ignorance threatening the United States and the entire world. By embracing the multicultural flow of ideas established by translation, a sense of hybridity which "opens up the possibility of a cultural identity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 2004, 5) arises. This hybridity, free from "assumed or imposed hierarchy," foments connections between cultures, articulating translation's value as a standard of free communication that can combat destructive insularity.

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated the ability of self-translation to highlight, articulate, and propagate the hybridity and self-fragmentation of modern life. I argue that self-translators reside in a borderline position, a space where their modern hybridity is emphasized, which they choose to foreground through the process of self-

translation. Self-translation elicits this hybridization by manifesting the interliminal space between languages. This “third space” foments a cross-linguistic and multicultural dialogue that demonstrates the interliminal positionality of self-translators as they reside between cultures, a hybridity that supersedes reductionist, either-or situations, providing “the means whereby static, fixed forms can be dislodged and new modes of identification and understanding developed” (Young 2017, 190). Yolanda Castaño, Urayoán Noel, and Juan Gelman each employ the process of self-translation to express their cultural in-betweenness and hybridity, using self-translation to express and reinforce their marginal positions, shifting the locus of enunciation from the liminal to the interliminal between cultures and languages.

After centuries of colonial and neocolonial subjugation, Puerto Rico is characterized by an in-betweenness where the Puerto Ricans who frequent the “circular migration” between the island and mainland don’t fully belong in either place. Instead, they reside in a third space, a zone of hybridity where they are judged to be too American when they return to Puerto Rico, and classified as Latinos when on the mainland. This perpetual state of de-centeredness is exacerbated by the impact of globalization and consumerism on Puerto Rico as these postmodern forces highlight the island’s hybridity by reinforcing its characteristic marginal position, while simultaneously locating it at the center of globalizing forces. Within this context, Urayoán Noel uses the bilingual format and self-translation to articulate the in-betweenness of Puerto Rico by taking a “transcreative” approach, using the interactions between self-translations to work together to provide unique poetic viewpoints that, when read together, foreground the

interliminal space between languages. The interlinguistic dialogue of his poetry often results in a third space of its own, neither wholly English nor Spanish, but rather a form of Spanglish that defies a traditional translation into one or the other languages due to its hybrid nature. This interliminality is paralleled by an intercultural poetics, with a blending of traditional poetic forms, meters, and rhymes. The result of this linguistic and cultural hybridity, this metaphoric third space, is the formation of a new poetic space. No longer in either New York or Puerto Rico, Noel's speaker enters "Bronx Piedras," where the Grand Concourse of the Bronx flows into Río Piedras. This new geographic space prefigures the interliminal space that Juan Gelman crafts in his bilingual poetry as a refuge from the terror of the Dirty War.

During the Dirty War in Argentina, the military dictatorship engaged in an unprecedented attack on its own citizens whom it deemed subversive or otherwise impeding the regime's goals. In addition to the torture and murder of thousands of Argentines and exile of others, the dictatorship sought to control the official narrative by branding any who opposed them as "un-Argentine" and affirming that the disappeared were fugitives who had fled the country. In the collection *dibaxu*, Juan Gelman uses bilingually-presented poetry and the act of self-translation to reappropriate language and his Argentine identity. He accomplishes this act of self-marginalization by adopting the exilic language of Ladino, employing his characteristic poetic motifs in the Ladino versions of the poetry which he juxtaposes with the Spanish version largely devoid of these traits. In this way, he is able to reassert control over language, depriving the military regime of one of their most potent weapons. I argue

that a stereoscopic reading of *dibaxu* is necessary because the linguistic back-and-forth facilitates the creation of an interliminal space, a space which Gelman specifically constructs as a site of reunification with his loved one. The Ladino evokes a distant past, as well as the concept of an alternate timeline or what Spanish might have become under different circumstances. By trembling between a nondescript, modern Spanish and the anachronism of Ladino, the new space created in Gelman's poetry exists outside of traditional time, and therefore, away from power of the military junta. I contend that Gelman uses the process of self-translation, in particular the possibility for linguistic interaction that it enables, to establish a place where the speaker and the beloved can be together again, unaffected by time. In consequence, this process allows for a poetics of exile that is hopeful and that focuses on love, rather than the despair and rage that many other exilic writers place at the forefront of their reflections on their exilic position.

Gelman's use of self-translation to both depict and define exile connects to the tensions of modern Galicia, a land shaped by ubiquitous internal exile and migration. Galician society is characterized by both its marginality and its hybridity. The marginal position of the Galician state is foregrounded as the central government distinguishes itself against the peripheral nation-states within its boundaries; defining Galician culture as the Other allows Spanish culture to be viewed as the standard, a model which extends to their respective literary systems. Compounding this peripheral nature, Galicia is also portrayed as residing at the borderline between north and south, east and west, and the emigration between these spaces, and the focus on longing and absence forms



a central part of the Galician imaginary. I argue that Yolanda Castaño uses the process of self-translation to embrace this peripheral and hybrid nature of Galician culture, using the bilingual format to provide an anti-essentialist perspective of Galician linguistics and literature. Her bilingual, self-translated poetry demonstrates the heteroglossic and postnational character of Galicia, in contrast to the false dichotomies of Galician-language only or balanced bilingualism, which propose a zero-sum relationship between Galician and Castilian culture. Her work demonstrates a self-fragmentation that echoes the hybridity of Galician society, and she imbues all of her work, regardless of the language, with Galician cultural markers of multiplicity, a presence of absence, and the notion of identity formation. By using the process of self-translation to create an interaction between languages and cultures, I argue that Castaño articulates the postnational turn of Galician studies, contending that Galician culture cannot be reduced to simply Galician language versus Spanish language, or center-periphery relationship. Her self-splintering and multiplication through self-translation reveals additional axes upon which Galicians can construct their identities, placing them in a postnational position that removes the traditional, monolithic barriers of nationalism.

The interliminal and marginal positioning of these poets, articulated through their use of self-translation, demonstrates their locus of hybridity, a space “where the construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics” (Bhabha 2004, 37, emphasis in original). These authors, collectively, but also in their own ways, use self-translation to evoke the

complexity and tensions postmodern politics and societies. Although hybridity is a shared trait in a connected world, it is experienced uniquely, and this is reflected in the different ways that these poets use self-translation to portray their own experiences with hybridization. The examination of how they use self-translation in this dissertation reveals much about how their sociopolitical contexts have shaped their writing and perspectives.

Gelman's hybridity is a result of his exile as the military regime has sought to redefine his identity by deterritorializing him. He uses self-translation to marginalize himself further in an attempt to alleviate the damage inflicted on him by those in power. Thus, Gelman counteracts his marginalization by hegemonic forces with a self-marginalization that allows him control over his own identity as he places the Argentine characteristics of his Spanish into the Ladino language, resulting in a hybrid Argentine-diasporic position.

Castaño uses self-translation to create an interaction between Castilian and Galician, revealing the heteroglossic reality in contemporary Galicia. This is a linguistic hybridity that parallels the concept of postnationalism, maintaining that Galician culture cannot be defined by restrictive concepts of identity based on the nation-state solely in relation to the centralized government in Madrid. Self-translation also reinforces the self-fragmentation present throughout Castaño's poetry, reflecting the characteristic hybridity and de-centeredness of Galician society.

A cultural convention of hybridity is also present in Puerto Rico, where the uncertain neocolonial status of the island makes the question of national identity a ubiquitous concern. This indeterminacy is exacerbated as Puerto Ricans are marginalized as they travel to the United States, and then ostracized again when they return. Noel evokes this hybridity by demonstrating that Puerto Ricans are at the center of globalizing forces that paradoxically continue to marginalize them more.

Each of these three poets also seize upon the interliminality that self-translation reinforces, using it to extend the themes of their work. Noel uses self-translation to create a third space that is neither Puerto Rico nor the mainland, but a hybrid of the two, demonstrating that regardless of where they are, globalization has made it so that Puerto Ricans always reside in some “other island” of Puerto Rico. For Castaño, the interliminal is a space in between different versions of herself, where all the different “Yolandas” come together to more fully articulate her identity. In this way, self-translation allows her to add a linguistic and stylistic parallel to her themes of self-fragmentation. In *dibaxu*, Gelman creates a linguistic vacillation that opens up a new space that doesn’t completely reside in either language. It is from this third space that he is able to push back against the violence of war to be with his loved one again.

The bilingual format foregrounds the act of translation, but it also increases an awareness of language choice. The self-translation of these writers demonstrates a self-othering that is tied to their conception of identity. Gelman chooses to “other” himself by adopting a marginal tongue to reflect his deterritorialization, allowing him to write

on terms that he controls. Castaño's decision to translate her work into Castilian and publish it bilingually clearly a politicized cultural statement. While many claim that the bilingual format undermines the minority language, reinforcing its subjugation by the language of power, Castaño's use of both languages demonstrates that a monoglossic model fails to accurately describe the plurality of language options in Galicia.

Combining the ideas of hybridity and interliminality, these three poets all evoke a poetics of displacement with their self-translated poetry. Both Noel and Gelman use self-translation to describe modern conditions of diaspora and exile. Although from very different sociopolitical backgrounds, the third space created in their works reflects the unmoored conditions of deterritorialized people who belong neither in the homeland nor the new land, and are forced to reside somewhere in between. Although Castaño doesn't explicitly dwell on emigration in her work, it is such a large part of the Galician imaginary, along with the longing expressed in the motif of *saudade* that this transnational movement creates, that her work also reveals a propensity for displacement. She uses the space between languages to evoke the constant absence felt in Galician society, an absence which arises in large part from the movement of Galicians around the world.

Van Bolderen (2010) points out that the current literature on self-translation focuses on self-translators like Samuel Beckett—a contemporary male author writing and translating into European languages of power (122). This dissertation is an attempt to partly fill in the theoretical gap on self-translation, showing that self-translators

themselves are not a homogenous group of writers and that the hybridity and heterogeneity of self-translation extends to the stylistic choices and techniques of the authors engaging in this process. Although using self-translation for dramatically different effects, each of the three poets whom I examine use this process to contest traditional power differentials, essentially disrupting the status quo.

As a woman writer writing primarily in Galician, Yolanda Castaño uses self-translation to display an anti-essentialist facet of Galician culture. As her self-translations highlight the interaction and interdependence of Galician and Castilian, she resists the monolingualistic tendencies of Galician nationalism, as well as the center-periphery relationship that the Spanish state exerts on Galicia. Juan Gelman uses self-translation in *dibaxu* to combat the oppressive forces that exiled him from his homeland and deprived him of his loved ones. Adopting Ladino and pairing it with Spanish allows him to create a new space, thus undermining the linguistic and physical deterritorialization enacted upon him by the Dirty War military dictatorship. Urayoán Noel uses the interaction of English and Spanish, both languages which have been imposed upon Puerto Rico in its status as a colony, to criticize the globalization and capitalism that have contributed to perpetuating the island's neocolonial situation. By focusing on non-traditional self-translators and showing how they use the process to upend the hegemony, this dissertation is an important contribution to the literature of self-translation, minority writers, and transatlantic cultural studies.

Stereoscopic reading of translation allows for a multitude of perspectives, leading to a fuller reading of the text and a more nuanced understanding of both languages used. Continuing this line of reasoning, the examination of how contemporary self-translators use the act of self-translation provides insight into the fragmentation of modernity. However, instead of a sweeping analysis of the state of contemporary self-translation, I have focused on the specific use of this process in the works of Gelman, Noel, and Castaño, showing that the hybridity of self-translation reflects their individual sociopolitical situations. By demonstrating personal and individual contexts and portraying modernity's impact on these individuals, self-translation is able to illuminate the hybridity that is characteristic of the modern world. Therefore, analysis of the process of self-translation in the work of other poets would provide further alternate perspectives from which to analyze the impact of modernity. It would be instrumental to continue this work by examining other linguistic situations that articulate imbalances of power, which I propose can be seen in the work of Assumpció Forcada and Rubén Medina.

Forcada, a retired high-school biology teacher, is a Catalan poet whose work focuses almost exclusively on scientific themes such as astronomy, geology, and biology. The impetus of her oeuvre is the desire to bridge any perceived gap between the literary and the scientific world, and as such, the interaction of languages in her self-translations are extensions of her themes of overcoming apparent dualisms. Medina is the chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin. In his work, Mexican immigrants living in the United States are seen to reside in a "third country," a

concept that aligns seamlessly with the interliminal focus on the third space in self-translation. He seeks to use this third space, and the linguistic analogue of Spanglish, as a means of decentering the hegemony of English. In addition to providing more insights into how writers use self-translation to confront issues of hybridity, these two poets would provide a timely view into populist and isolationist views around the world with the push for independence in Catalonia and the strained relationship between Mexico and the US, and the precarious position of Latino immigrants in the US.

In a time when it seems like the loudest voices clamor for only what is deemed best for the empowered few, to the detriment of the rest, the need for the cultural understanding to be gained through translation is more important than ever.

“Translation expands our ability to explore through literature the thoughts and feelings of people from another society or another time. It permits us to savor the transformation of the foreign into the familiar and for a brief time to live outside our own skin, our own preconceptions and misconceptions. It expands and deepens our world, our consciousness, in countless, indescribable ways” (Grossman 2010, 14).

Focusing on the prevalent hybridity of modern culture of in the work of Noel, Gelman, and Castaño elucidates their particular sociopolitical contexts, but it also demonstrates how we are all connected. By using translation to bridge languages and cultures, we can better understand our own position in an interconnected world.

## APPENDIX 1: POETRY OF URAYOÁN NOEL

### En los suburbios lejanos

Escucha la proclamación atroz que  
Sopla en las guaridas de la nación-  
bosque

**Vachel Lindsay**

**1**

Mi negrita se me ha ido.  
Por Dios Santo, no la encuentro—  
será que se ha ido pal centro  
de un downtown desconocido?  
O, peor, y si es que ha sido  
seducida por villanos?  
o por cultos mahometanos?  
Me dicen que no me ofusque,  
que se perdió y que la busque  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**2**

**Puerto Rico**

En Guaynabo y en Toa Baja  
el profesor y el teórico  
juegan al póker retórico  
con la identidad-baraja  
y se jalan otra paja  
para impresionar decanos;  
y los buenos ciudadanos  
trabajan para el gobierno  
pegando loseta y cuerno  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**3**

**Nueva York**

El Greyhound carga su biela  
de Nueva York a Poughkeepsie  
y yo voy cantando "Gypsy"  
de Fleetwood Mac, a cappella,  
el paisaje de acuarela

### In the Faraway Suburbs

Listen to the creepy proclamation,  
Blown through the lairs of the forest-  
nation

**Vachel Lindsay**

**1**

Who knows why my baby left me?  
Who knows where she could have gone?  
Is she hiding in the center  
Of some little-known downtown?  
Has she been seduced by villains?  
Have they got her gagged and bound?  
Vanished from the lost and found  
With no trace and no reminder ... ?  
Yeah, she's lost, but I will find her  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**2**

**Puerto Rico**

In Guaynabo and Toa Baja  
The theorists and professors  
Are playing rhetorical poker  
With their identity cards,  
They are shooting wads of wisdom  
To impress the senile deans;  
Meanwhile, the good citizens  
Are all working for the government,  
Cheating on taxes and spouses  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**3**

**New York**

The Greyhound wheezes its way  
From New York up to Poughkeepsie;  
I pass the time singing "Gypsy"  
By Fleetwood Mac, a cappella;  
And the watercolor landscape



se deshace en grises planos:  
los diners y los desganos  
y las fabricas desiertas  
y el rechinar de las puertas  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**4**

Hay esqueletos prehistóricos  
en la playa en Staten Island  
y las aguavivas bailan  
lentos vales hidroclóricos,  
chalets con detalles dóricos  
y sirvientes bolivianos  
donde juegan los hermanos  
a oler sobaco y solventes,  
y el perro muestra sus dientes  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**5**

Al final de la autopista  
se abren bosques medievales  
hay centros correccionales  
y un McDonald's sin turistas  
me sobrecoge la vista:  
las mansiones en los llanos,  
los projects y los gusanos  
del enorme vertedero  
en fuego una noche de enero  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**6**

**California**

En los vecindarios regios,  
Atherton, West Palo Alto,  
pavimentan el asfalto  
con brea de privilegios—  
suenan solo los arpeggios  
de los pregrabados pianos  
y ese temblar de las manos  
que se sirven su ginebra  
hasta que el vaso se quiebra

Falls apart on the gray planes;  
The diners and the dead-ends,  
The deserted factories,  
And the doors creak noisily  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**4**

There are prehistoric skeletons  
At the beach on Staten Island  
And the jellyfish are dancing  
Slow, hydrochloric waltzes;  
There are Doric-style chalets  
With South American servants  
Where the little brothers play;  
Sniffing underarms and solvents  
While the dog shows off its teeth  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**5**

Here the end of the expressway  
Gives way to medieval forests  
And correctional facilities  
And McDonald's without tourists;  
I'm overwhelmed by the view  
Of the mansions on the plains,  
The housing projects, the flames  
Creeping through the dead of winter  
As the landfill burns tonight  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**6**

**California**

In the righteous neighborhoods,  
Atherton, West Palo Alto,  
They're paving over the asphalt  
With the gravel of privilege—  
All one hears are the arpeggios  
Of the pre-recorded pianos,  
And the trembling of the hands  
That are serving themselves gin  
And the shot glass shattering

en los suburbios lejanos.

**7**

Lejos de los arrabales,  
en Millbrae y en Redwood City,  
otro neighborhood committee  
crea centros comunales  
y moles monumentales  
para los placeres sanos:  
softbol peewee los veranos,  
window-shopping, Cineplex,  
batidas de fruta Tex-Mex  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**8**

Un Sol distante y magnífico  
lame los acantilados,  
busco tu ojo engominado  
en la costa del Pacífico.  
Marin County en específico  
tiene fantasmas urbanos,  
saxofonistas enanos  
que añoran días de gloria  
y ahora cuentan su historia  
en los suburbios lejanos.

**9**

Te he buscado en cada esquina  
del inocuo continente  
será que te tengo de frente?  
que te tengo de vecina?  
que el downtown y la gomina  
y la mugre de tus manos  
son hologramas arcanos?  
que tu promesa epiléptica  
murió esa noche antiséptica  
en los suburbios lejanos.

Down in the faraway suburbs.

**7**

Far from all the shantytowns,  
In Millbrae and Redwood City,  
One more neighborhood committee  
Is creating civic centers  
And more monumental malls  
Catering to healthy pleasures:  
Peewee softball in the summers,  
Window-shopping, Cineplex,  
And those fruity Tex-Mex shakes  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**8**

A distant, majestic Sun  
Licks the cliffs and the embankments,  
I search for your embalmed eye  
On the coast of the Pacific.  
Marin County in particular  
Has its share of urban ghosts,  
Like those midget saxophonists  
Who long for their days of glory  
And are now telling their story  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

**9**

I've searched for you in each corner of  
This innocuous continent—  
Could it be you're facing me?  
Could it be that you're my neighbor?  
That the downtown and the eye balm  
And the grime that coats your hands  
Are all arcane holograms?  
That your epileptic smile  
Died that antiseptic night  
Down in the faraway suburbs.

## Kool Logic

The Cultural Logic of Late  
Capitalism

**Fredric Jameson**

### 1

I hope this finds you in good health  
(Or at least gainfully employed).  
We're here to discuss the hologram-self  
In the era of the void.

Some say modern man is hollow,  
Others say it's a condition  
Called "postmodern." Do you follow?  
Could this use some exposition?

### 2

O.K. See the common graves  
Rotting in the ancient cities?  
The fast food? The porous borders?  
The ambiguous sexualities?

The debt-bludgeoned ethnicities?  
The wars of chemical roses?  
Cash flows from Utopian rivers  
And the market never closes!

*This is the kool logic  
Of late capitalism.*

### 3

In the Prozac marketplaces  
People hoard new modes of leisure;  
Love has been deregulated:  
Plastic breasts! Prosthetics! Seizures!

In the suburbs neighbors mourn  
The death drive of their libidos,

## La lógica kool

The Cultural Logic of Late  
Capitalism

**Fredric Jameson**

### 1

Cantémosle al día mítico  
de identidad-holograma,  
quince minutos de fama  
(veinte si eres político);  
ya salió el sol sifilítico  
en el pabellón sombrío  
de la era del vacío,  
lanza su luz desigual:  
*la lógica cultural  
del capitalismo tardío.*

### 2

Filas de comunes fosas  
en las ciudades antiguas,  
sexualidades ambiguas,  
fast food, fronteras porosas,  
guerras de químicas rosas,  
etnias que escurren rocío  
y la utopía es un río  
que vomita capital:

*la lógica cultural  
del capitalismo tardío.*

### 3

El amor desregulado  
por nuevos medios de ocio,  
senos plásticos, negocio  
de prótesis, Prozac, mercado,  
eros suburbanizado,  
pornografías de estío

Late summers full of soft porn,  
Stolen Wonderbras, torn Speedos.  
*This is the kool logic  
Of late capitalism.*

4

You can consume what you please:  
From world music to new age;  
Ricky Martin and John Cage  
Are touring the Basque Pyrenees;

You can sing your songs of peace  
(Pop! Punk! Folk! Tribal! Assorted!)  
But the violence will not cease,  
Hate's fetus can't be aborted!  
*This is the kool logic  
Of late capitalism.*

5

Macrobiotic-cybernetic  
Fiber-optic folderol!  
Neo-gothic supermodels!  
Satellites and virtual malls!

Vegan power lunch grand slams!  
Word Elites! Money-go-rounds!  
Free will or free (pillow?) shams  
In the global shantytown?  
*This is the kool logic  
Of late capitalism.*

6

NAFTA, Mercosur, Hamas!  
DVDs and open mikes!  
Watercress and motocross!  
SUV s and mountain bikes!

Trailer parks! Gated communities!  
Highrise ghettos and favelas!  
Acquired diplomatic immunities!

como geishas de Darío  
en flujo libidinal:  
*la lógica cultural  
del capitalismo tardío.*

4

Cada cual lo que le plazca,  
música-mundo, new age,  
Ricky Martin y John Cage  
de gira por Tierra Vasca—  
que el feta del odio nazca  
de la hojarasca de hastío,  
nueva trova, power trío,  
queer punk, flamenco tribal:  
*la lógica cultural  
del capitalismo tardío.*

5

Cibernéticoestrambótico,  
macrobióticoinformáticas,  
supermodelos hieráticas,  
geografías de lo erótico,  
lo ecológico y lo gótico,  
satélite, elite, mall frío,  
simulacro o albedrío  
en el chinchorro global:  
*la lógica cultural  
del capitalismo tardío.*

6

NAFTA, Mercosur, o sea  
Baudrillard y Lipovetsky,  
el sports utility, el jet ski,  
comunidad europea,  
Hollywood Hills y La Brea,  
D.F., Miami Beach, Río,  
la favela, el caserío  
y esta fiebre sin final:

Self-help prophets! Braille novellas!

Mexico, Miami, Río!  
Euro-Disney, Bollywood!  
Dell, Intel, Taco Bell, Geo!  
Stanford post-docs in da hood!

I'll stop fronting pedagogical ...  
One last question (extra credit):  
This kool logic ain't too logical  
But it's still "kool." Do you get it?!

*This is the kool logic  
Of late capitalism.*

*la lógica cultural  
del capitalismo tardío.*

selection of **sitibodis**

*tomas de una ciudad post-colapso*

**1.**  
no lleva "©" la "siti"  
uno se sitúa  
con tatuaje y sin estatus  
en parques sin estatuas  
*sitizen* sin estatuto  
"estates" disque "unite"?  
*disquiet estate!*  
un dáin no da a ten quid  
ten cuidado, sitadino  
estate quieto  
no digas nada y dilo bien  
*no shoutouts for the wall st. crews*  
*no bailouts no more*  
la siti owns these bancos  
(sin"©", tú sabes)  
siéntate en ellos  
son tuyos

*outtakes from a post-collapse siti*

**1.**  
there's no "©" in "siti"  
one sits  
with tats and without status  
in statueless parks  
a statuteless *siudadano*  
"estates" as in "unite"?  
*¿bienes o raíces?*  
a dime? *jno me digas!*  
be careful, siti dweller  
be still and chill  
say nothing and say it well  
*tírale al corillo milla de oro*  
*me late que no hay rescate ya*  
these benches are siti-owned  
(no"©," you know)  
sit down on them  
they're yours

### **Balada del exilio/ Exile Ballad**

En tierra de todos  
tú y sobramos,  
quedan los apodos  
que ayer nos llamamos.

*In the land of all  
you and I are left over  
with the names we won't call  
one another when sober.*

En tierra de algunos  
éramos aquellos  
dos inoportunos  
pescando destellos.

*In the land of some  
full of light and liquor  
we were forced to hum,  
fishing for a flicker.*

En tierra de pocos  
fuimos como esos  
estantes barrocos  
fornados de huesos.

*In the land of few  
we were two unknowns,  
left, like gaudy shelves, to  
overflow with bones.*

En tierra de muchos  
éramos de los que  
alquilan cuartuchos  
en medio del bosque.

*In the land of many  
we were not the poorest,  
down to our last penny,  
camped out in the forest.*

En tierra de nadie  
dormiremos juntos,  
¡que la luna irradie  
su luz de difuntos!

*In the land of no one  
we will sleep together,  
let the moonlight glow one  
last time on our tether!*

## APPENDIX 2: POETRY OF YOLANDA CASTAÑO

### (RE)SER(VADO)

A

*Unha navalla lenta é o proxecto da  
identidade.*

*Unha celebración añil o re-  
coñecemento.*

*Como deixei que todo isto me  
sobreviñera?*

*O meu propio soño marchou de min  
comigo*

*Non podo permitir que se me  
malinterprete una vez máis*

*Por que me afectas?, por que me  
afectas aínda?*

*Unha absurda desposesión  
infranqueable.*

*Pero que eu estaría ben, que non  
cumpren coidados xa sabes que total  
eu*

*estaría ben, sempre ben, aínda que non  
se me entende aínda  
que perdese a saúde na miña  
mocidade.*

*Eu tamén pensaba que podería  
controlalo.*

*Por que me desesperas?, por que aínda  
me desesperas?*

*Unha poza de notas sostidas,  
un ruiseñor mecánico é a tarde  
Como tiven a coraxe de asumir a túa  
estratexia?*

B

*Cando deixo de ser flor,  
molesto.*

### (RE)SER(VADO)

A

Una navaja lenta es el proyecto de la  
identidad.

Una celebración añil el re-  
conocimiento.

¿Cómo dejé que todo esto me  
sobreviniera?

Mi propio sueño se marchó de mí  
conmigo

No puedo permitir que se me  
malinterprete una vez más

¿Por qué me afectas?, ¿por qué me  
afectas todavía?

Una absurda desposesión  
infranqueable.

Pero yo estaría bien, que no hacen  
falta cuidados ya sabes que total yo  
estaría bien, siempre bien, aunque no  
se me entendiese aunque,  
perdiese la salud siendo todavía  
joven.

Yo también pensaba que podría  
controlarlo.

¿Por qué me desesperas?, ¿por qué  
todavía me desesperas?

Una charca de notas sostenidas,  
un ruiseñor mecánico es la tarde  
¿Cómo tuve el coraje de asumir tu  
estrategia?

B

Cuando dejo de ser flor  
molesto.

Pero lo duro era ser, lo



*Pero o duro era ser, o*

*infatigable*

infatigablemente aciago.

*aciago.*

*Que eu contraese algunha seria doenza  
favorecería grandemente á miña  
proxección literaria.*

Que yo contrajese alguna seria  
dolencia  
favorecería enormemente a mi  
proyección literaria.

*Como non teño traballo, marcho para  
Las Vegas.*

Como no encuentre trabajo, me  
marcho a Las Vegas.

*Nos Estados Unidos son máis guapa  
que en ningún sitio.*

En los Estados Unidos soy más guapa  
que en ningún sitio.

*Pero teño sido agre e pretenciosa,  
teño sorrído por interese propia,  
a axetreada capitalista sexy;  
compensei polos meus días de  
impotencia.*

Pero he sido antipática y pretenciosa,  
he sonreído por mi propio interés,  
*la ajetreada capitalista sexy;*  
compensé por mis días de impotencia.

*Ser*

Ser

*é o difícil.*

es lo difícil.

*Cando falei só contemplaron os meus  
labios.*

Cuando hablé sólo contemplaron mis  
labios.

*Se me tomo un descanso iso  
fame irresponsable?  
se son vulnerable  
serei pisoteada?  
se me fosen peor as cousas  
quereríadesme máis?*

¿Si me tomo un descanso eso  
me hará irresponsable?

¿si soy vulnerable

seré pisoteada?

¿si me fuesen peor las cosas

me querrías acaso más?

*Una profusa navalla é o proxecto da  
identidade,*

Una profusa navaja es el proyecto de  
la identidad,

*un reiseñor mecánico a tarde.*

un ruseñor mecánico la tarde.

*Tanto souvenir acabará con Notre  
Dame*

Tanto *souvenir* acabará con Notre  
Dame

*Onde estabas cando te necesitei?*

¿Dónde estabas cuando te necesité?

C

C

*Hanayo comprendeme. Non sei  
se talvez se me entendería mello no  
Xapón.*

Hanayo me comprende. No sé  
si tal vez se me entendería mejor en  
Japón.

*O peixe débil a corrente levaro a  
algún lugar seguro.  
O peixe forte estará só, nun esforzó  
que se multiplica.*

*O doado  
non é ser.*

*Non tería comprometido tanto  
por medo a facer que ti me  
despreciases,  
non tería sido tan autodestructiva  
non tería prescindido de necesidades,  
non tería negado os meus empeños  
¿se son guapa terei  
meno posibilidades de estar sóa?*

D

*Eu nada máis quería debuxar un  
amuleto  
pero cando falei só contemplaron os  
meus labios.*

*Preguntarlle ós lirios, ás pantallas, ós  
papeis térmicos,  
preguntarlle ós demais quen demos é  
que era eu.  
Corrín o risco de perderme, --a min,  
que fun todo canto tiven—  
apoucada nena pálida do uniforme  
azul.*

*Faria da nosa casa o éxito un fracaso?*

*Privilexio da miseria é ter o seu lugar  
Como non teña traballo, marchó para  
Las Vegas.  
O volume de todas as miñas cifras  
incide nas esporas ás que me inclino.  
Xúroche que non tería sometido tanto  
por medo a non estar a aquela altura.  
Se non quero é que non quero?*

Al pez débil la corriente lo llevará  
a algún lugar seguro.  
Al pez fuerte estará solo, en un  
esfuerzo que se multiplica.

Lo fácil  
no es ser.

No habría comprometido tanto  
por miedo a hacer que tú me  
despreciaras,  
no habría sido tan autodestructiva,  
no habría prescindido de necesidades,  
no habría negado mis empeños  
¿si soy guapa tendré  
menos posibilidades de estar sola?

D

Yo no quería más que dibujar un  
amuleto  
pero cuando hablé solo contemplaron  
mis labios.

Preguntar a los lirios, las pantallas, los  
papeles térmicos,  
preguntar a los demás quién  
demonios era yo.  
Corrí el riesgo de perderme, --a mí,  
que fui todo cuanto tuve—  
apocada niña pálida del uniforme  
azul.

¿Haría de nuestra casa el éxito un  
fracaso?

Privilegio de la miseria es tener su  
lugar  
Como no encuentre trabajo, me  
marchó a Las Vegas.  
El volumen de todas mis cifras incide  
en las espuelas a las que me inclino.  
Te juro que no habría sometido tanto

*Ó peixe débil a corrente levaró a algún lugar seguro.*

*O peixe forte estará só, nun esforzó que se multiplica.*

*Misericordioso é o premio quero estar enferma*

*Onde estabas cando te necestei?*

por miedo a no estar a aquella altura.  
¿Si no quiero es que no quiero?

Al pez débil la corriente lo llevará a algún sitio seguro.

Al pez fuerte estará solo, en un esfuerzo que se multiplica.

Misericordioso es el premio quiero estar enferma

¿Dónde estabas cuando te necesité?

### **A palabra Galicia**

*Para contarche de onde veño téñoche que sacara a lingua.*

*Ónde se viu que o lume lamba as follas, lamba a cortiza, lamba a raíz e lamba un pouco de todo sen apenas entreabrir os labios.*

*Hai pobos tan educados que nunca ensinan a lingua.*

*Dende o tumulto dunha cidade impaciente por morder ti dis hrvatski, hrvatski, iso só pode parecer un idioma que se esputa.*

*Hai posturas da lingua que non entendo.*

*Hai que tomar o risco de sacala para fóra, aínda entre os dentes. Por iso pronuncio maza, digo cercear, zarzallo.*

*Xa sei que hai quen reserva a lingua.*

### **La palabra Galicia**

Para contarte de dónde vengo te tengo que sacar la lengua.

Dónde se ha visto el fuego lama las hojas, lama la corteza, lama la raíz y lama un poco de todo sin apenas entreabrir los labios.

Hay pueblos tan educados que nunca enseñan la lengua.

Desde el tumulto de una ciudad impaciente por morder tú dices *hrvatski, hrvatski*, eso solo puede parecer un idioma que se esputa.

Hay posturas de la lengua que no entiendo.

Hay que tomarse el riesgo de sacarla para afuera, entre los dientes. Por eso pronuncio *maza*, digo *cercear*, *zarzallo*.

Ya sé que hay quien se reserva la lengua.

*Como unha vogal aberta no momento  
inoportuno,  
como roupa barata, un cheiro  
sospeitoso.*

*Hai pobos enteiros que se van da  
lingua.*

*Cando me contas que non distingues  
en cal dos dous idiomas estou a falar,  
era  
para partirte a boca,  
así terías ti tamén unha lingua dividida  
en dúas  
--coma Corea, non é?*

*Hai linguas que me quedan  
lonxe.*

*Hainas con tendencia a saírense da  
boca e chantarse na solapa,  
outras teñen cicatriz de tanto ser  
mordidas polos dentes.*

*Hai linguas nas que se fixo sangue  
Un anzol cravado na cartilaxe larínxea.*

*Hai fonemas que saen dun recuncho  
bucal que non coñezo,  
outros, responden a plans de  
autoexterminio.*

*Non me queda outro remedio, señor  
dos seus silencios, son  
escrava das palabras e haberame  
condenar a miña lingua.*

*Por iso: cinza, cercella, zazamelo.  
Nada de galisia, nada de galichia.  
aténdeme ben: ga-li-Cia.*

Como una vocal abierta en el momento  
inoportuno,  
como ropa barata, un tufo sospechoso.

Hay pueblos enteros que se van de la  
lingua.

Cuando me cuentas que no distingues  
en cuál de los dos idiomas estoy  
hablando, era  
para partirte la boca,  
así tendrías tú también una lengua  
dividida en dos  
--como Corea, verdad?

Hay lenguas que me quedan  
lejos.

Las hay con tendencia a salirse de la  
boca y plantarse en la solapa,  
otras tienen cicatriz de tanto ser  
mordidas por los dientes.

Hay lenguas en las que se hizo sangre  
Un anzuelo clavado en el cartílago  
laríngeo.

Hay fonemas que salen de un recoveco  
bucal que no conozco,  
otros, responden a planes de  
autoexterminio.

No me queda otro remedio, señor de  
sus silencios, soy  
esclava de las palabras y habré de  
condenarme por mi lengua.

Por eso: *cinza, cercella, zazamelo.*  
Nada de *galisia*, nada de *galichia*.  
atiéndeme bien: ga-li-Cia.

***The winner takes it all,  
a musa non leva un peso***

*Cando o ceo cobre a capota e a noite  
soborna o día  
saen do escuro as estrelas con  
zapatillos de vicetiple.*

*Todo o que queda na punta da lingua  
molla a saliva coa digo este verso.  
Tubérculo, iceberg, un corpo estaño na  
ostra,  
as súas feces estruman todas as miñas  
fragas.*

*Todo canto poida dicirche  
diriacho só na lingua que non  
entendas.*

*Un corpo cavernoso enche os seus  
motores,  
dosifica o seu canto en estilo indirecto.*

*A miña lingua amadriña o rubor destes  
poemas  
só para que nunca podas lelos ti.*

*A miña lingua fisterra, un toxo  
raspando a gorxa,  
o máis correúdo dos oito tentáculos  
fervendo.  
Unha tarxeta de memoria na que colle  
un alfinete,  
o figo meloso que se come só por que  
non podreza.  
A miña lingua é unha corozza no medio  
de Manhattan,  
un soportal de pedra por alí non pasa  
ningún río,  
unha kipá que escurece e medra e  
medra sobre as cabezas,*

***The winner takes it all,  
la musa no se lleva un duro***

Quando el cielo cierra la capota y la  
noche soborna al día salen de los  
oscuro las estrellas con zapatitos de  
vicetiple.

Todo lo que queda en la punta de la  
lengua  
moja la saliva con la que digo este  
verso.  
Tubérculo, iceberg, un cuerpo extraño  
en la ostra,  
sus heces abonan cada uno de mis  
pastos.

Todo cuanto pudiera decirte  
te lo diría en la lengua que no  
entiendas.

Un cuerpo cavernoso carga sus  
motores,  
dosifica su canto en estilo indirecto.

Mi lengua amadrina el rubor de estos  
poemas  
solo para que nunca puedas leerlos tú.

Mi lengua finisterre, tojo que raspa la  
garganta,  
el más correoso de los ocho tentáculos  
herviendo.  
Una tarjeta de memoria en la que no  
cabe una aguja,  
el higo meloso que se come solo por  
que no se pudra.  
Mi lengua una corozza en el medio de  
Manhattan,  
un soportal de piedra por allí no pasa  
ningún río,  
una kipá que oscurece y crece y crece  
sobe las cabezas,

*o dedo dunha deus negra sinalándonos  
dende o alto.  
A miña lingua é o herexe emulado por  
un mártir,  
o lugar do teu corpo ao que lle tés  
medo.*

*Pequena deslinguada en diferido, fun  
gardar a man e agora  
redobro a aposta,  
mira este ás con ás, onde poño a boca  
poño a bala.  
As palabras convulsas,  
estas palabras remotas,  
as que nunca haberás ler,  
orbitais porque son miñas, miña esta  
cousa, miña, como miña esta lingua.  
Miña.*

el dedo de una dios negra  
señalándonos desde lo alto,  
Mi lengua es el hereje emulado por un  
mártir,  
el lugar de tu cuerpo al que le tienes  
miedo.

Pequeña deslinguada en diferido, fui a  
guardar la mano y ahora  
redoblo la apuesta,  
mira este as con alas, donde pongo la  
boca pongo la bala.  
Las palabras convulsas, estas palabras  
remotas,  
las que nunca irás a leer,  
orbitales porque son mías, mía esta  
cosa, mía, como mía esta lengua.  
Mía.

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