

José Rizal's Ghost

Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada

City University of New York
Estados Unidos

Resumen

José Rizal es un autor canónico en las Filipinas, donde se le considera el perfecto ejemplo de luchador anticolonial. La presencia de los Estados Unidos en la isla transformó el paisaje lingüístico del país, cuyos ciudadanos tan solo pueden acceder a la obra de su escritor nacional a través de traducciones del castellano al inglés. El estudio de dos de esas traducciones (Derbyshire 1912 y Guerrero 1968) permite profundizar en cuestiones ideológicas, culturales y lingüísticas que ayudan a entender el papel del colonialismo estadounidense en las Filipinas. La traducción se convierte así en un mapa que, con la ayuda de la teoría postcolonial, permite crear estrategias de resistencia cultural.

Palabras claves: traducción–colonialismo – José Rizal - Filipinas –nacionalismo

Keywords: translation – colonialism – José Rizal – Philippines - nationalism

Fecha de recepción: 20-03-2001

Fecha de aceptación: 10-11-2001

José Rizal (Calamba, 1861 - Manila, 1896) is a problematic figure full of contradictions, misunderstood in his own time and misread afterwards. Although Philippine critics consider him a canonical author, he wrote in a language that many of his compatriots could not read. Seen as the father of Philippine nationalism, he had joined the Spaniards on their way to Cuba to fight an anti-Spanish rebellion when he was sent back to Manila to be judged, and, later, the Spaniards, for promoting a rebellion he did not support, sentenced him to death. Somehow, it seems impossible to grasp the complexity of this figure, and it is not my intention to do so, but his presence is a reminder of the limitations faced by theorists when trying to explain the colonial encounter and the post-colonial world. In a

field where European languages, Asian languages, languages in translation, translation theory, and postcolonial studies converge, Rizal's presence, rather, the presence of his ghost, may help us understand some of the problems that we face when trying to explain the colonial experience and its impact on the contemporary world.

One of the main problems scholars find when dealing with texts in translation outside the boundaries of a strictly linguistic approach is the need to build bridges, to find plausible explanations for phenomena that cannot be fully explained either from a linguistic point of view or from a cultural one. Postcolonial translation studies emerged some fifteen years ago (Robinson 3) as a new field of scholarship that opened the boundaries of traditional approaches to translation, mainly using postcolonial theory. While talking about a completely different matter, Keith Harvey summarises the position of these new translation theories, in need of solutions that cannot be found in any specific discipline:

Translation is not just about texts: nor is it only about cultures and power. It is about the relation of the one to the other. [...] What is required, then, in translation studies is a methodology that neither prioritises broad concerns with power, ideology and patronage to the detriment of the need to examine representative examples of text, nor contents itself with detailed text-linguistic analysis while making do with sketchy and generalised notions of context. [...] The challenge is to find a way just not to *situate* discourse in its interactional and cultural settings, but to give the relationship between settings and discourse the force of causality (447).

This concern, i.e. to build bridges between traditional text-based approaches to translation and modern and postmodern cultural readings of translation, is at the base of this paper. I will discuss two different English translations of José Rizal's novel, *Noli me tangere*, in an attempt to collapse assumptions about language and translation that do not seem to be valid any longer.

Linguistic Approaches and Cultural Reflections

Traditional linguistic approaches to translation, based for a long time upon a misread quote from Horace (Robinson 51), worked on a merely linguistic base, trying to avoid *verbum pro verbo* renderings and moving towards a *sensum pro senso* work; hence the need to find new translation units beyond isolated words. First, sentences; afterwards,

complete paragraphs, and, lately, entire cultures have been considered translation units, acceptable frames in which to fit the practice of translation. Ideal profiles of the translator were construed according to these units, bilingual people with knowledge of the two languages involved or, even better, bicultural people, capable of moving freely between cultures, inhabitants of that in-between space evoked by Bhabha (216).

From the very beginning of the discipline, postcolonial studies scholars have used translation mainly as a metaphor, a symptom to describe the colonial illness present in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised: translation has been seen either as a colonising tool (Cheyfitz) or as a device for resistance (Rafael), always inscribed in a major cultural frame, that of colonialism. Actual language and translations were at the heart of the colonising experience, because Europeans had to communicate somehow to peoples overseas their new fate under white rule and some linguistic mediation was needed. Thus, colonised individuals were forced to learn European languages in order to serve as interpreters. Likewise, missionaries learned Indigenous languages and translated their religious texts to preach and to convert the colonised peoples, while European languages displaced local tongues as languages of power and culture.

The approach of postcolonial studies to translation, however, has very rarely taken into account the research made in the field of translation studies. Scholars saw it as too linguistically oriented and, therefore, not suited to explain relationships that were far beyond the scope of mere words or texts. Something similar happened the other way round: translation studies scholars have been very resistant to accepting new research made in the field of postcolonial studies, viewing it as too metaphorical and without the attachment to actual discourse that is at the heart of any linguistic discipline.

That said, it must be remembered that translation and metaphor are indeed connected, if only etymologically, since both terms indicate a sense of movement, inherent to the activity of travelling from one language to another. Besides this etymological connection, though, there is the fact that translation has traditionally been described using metaphors, usually related to sexual images: the quest for fidelity and the idea of the translator penetrating in the source-language text are common in many translation theories¹.

Neither the traditional linguistic approaches nor the more modern postcolonial readings of translation seem to be able to escape the tyranny of metaphors, and, in their search for the ultimate image to explain the phenomena observed, none of them could fully account for the translation practices of the postmodern era, the era of globalisation. In their assumptions of separate languages, separate cultures, that have to meet somewhere in the middle, either in a domestic setting, closer to the target language, or in a foreign ground, closer to the source language², many of these theoretical constructs fail to explain current translation practices, often more complex than the conventional relationship between the self and the other.

Rizal in English

José Rizal has been seen as the nationalist Philippine writer par excellence. However, his literary production (the novels *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo*) poses many problems, among which the fact that it was composed in Spanish, a language that is no longer widely spoken in his country, after many years of North-American colonisation and cultural influence.

Many translations have been done of Rizal's novels. Some have acquired canonical status within the Philippines, to the point of being compulsory readings in the Philippine educational system, and others remain less known or have been completely forgotten. It is not my intention to present a comparison of them all or to engage in a close reading of the original and the translations. Some of this work has already been done (Anderson 235-262) and my purpose is quite different: I would like to present Rizal's translations as a problem, because they occupy a quite particular space and ask more questions than they are able to solve.

Edition

André Lefevere has done extensive research on the conditions under which a translation is published, who publishes it, when, why, etc. and has come up with the concept of "patronage." The same way it did during the Early Modern period, money matters today, and, therefore, literary productions (translations for instance) are shaped by forces beyond the literary field, by people with a lot more than merely cultural capital.

It is important, then, to take into account the conditions under which the different editions were published.

I have worked with three different editions of Rizal's text, each one representing a different stage in the history of the Philippines and its relationship with Rizal. These editions are:

- Noli me tangere*. Spanish original with a foreword by Pedro Ortiz Armengol. Galaxia Gutenberg, Círculo de Lectores: Barcelona, 1998.
The Social Cancer. A Complete English Version by Charles E. Derbyshire. Philippine Education Company: Manila, 1961 (1912).
The Lost Eden. A Completely New Translation for the Contemporary Reader by León María Guerrero with His Introduction. Greenwood Press: New York, 1968.

The original version with which I have worked was published in Barcelona in 1998, a quite significant date, since it marked the centennial of the “disaster”, the loss of the last remains of the Spanish colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines (although everybody seemed to forget that in 1898 parts of Morocco and Equatorial Guinea were still under Spanish rule...). Much attention was devoted to the impact of that fact on *fin de siècle* Spanish life and culture, but less to its significance for the former colonies. In an attempt to “recuperar esa mirada de ultramar y conmemorar el centenario de aquella fecha” the editors published a collection of three texts: Rizal's *Noli me tangere*, José Martí's *Diarios* and Alejandro Tapia y Ribera's *Póstumo el transmigrado*.

Derbyshire's translation was first published in Manila in 1912 when the Philippines were a US colony, some fourteen years after they had been “freed from the Spanish domination by the United States intervention” (Rizal, Eden vi). It underwent more than ten re-editions and it was used for educational purposes, since the Philippine Education Company published it. Guerrero's was the last to be published, in 1968, and its historical coordinates were quite different: the Philippines had become an independent state, but US imperialism and Japanese occupation during World War II had definitely shaped the country and its people.

Anderson reminds us that it is impossible to read the *Noli me tangere* today as a young Manileño would have read it in 1897 (Anderson 232). We have, then, three different settings and three potential readers, quite different from the “amigo o enemigo” (Rizal, *Noli* 40) Rizal may

have imagined when composing his work. For the Spanish edition, XXth century Spaniards, who no longer dominate the country; for Derbyshire's translation, 1920s Philippine readers under US rule; and for Guerrero's version, contemporary Philippines, who seem to be quite similar to their North-American counterparts, if one takes into account the image that this translation projects of its readers. Rizal wrote for a very specific audience, Spanish colonisers and fellow XIXth century Philippines, an audience that no longer exists, and this historical burden affects the way we may read today both the original or the translations³.

Title and lemma

I will be discussing several features of these texts, including an analysis of some parts of the novel, but I want to start with the peripheries of them, those parts that frame the text and situate it in a given context: title, lemma, and dedication; the metatext.

The Latin original title, *Noli me tangere*, is a very significant quote from Saint John's Gospel, the first words Jesus said to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection. It was an indication of the influence that the religion he was to criticise so fiercely in his book had had on Rizal. Many aspects of Rizal's life and thought were not understood in his time—he had problems, among other things, because of his anti-clericalism—and this makes him a complicated figure who is difficult to describe. However, complicated figures are not useful for political purposes and need to be simplified, their words must be reinterpreted to fit the image one has of them: thus, when shot by the Spaniards, he was dismissed as a “rebelde”. No questions asked. Quite the same simplification goes on when translators use different quotes of Rizal to title their versions. Did Derbyshire see “the social cancer” as a way of describing the state of the Philippines under Spanish colonialism, and, therefore, as a way of making the US rule seem an improvement? Why is Guerrero misquoting from Rizal's last poem⁴ if not to go back to an imagined-golden era, before US colonisation?

If the translation of the title is used to simplify Rizal and to push him back into History, the presence or absence of lemmata can be read as an attempt to reframe his work, to avoid the questions his novel asked. The original was preceded by a quote from a poem by Schiller translated into Spanish, probably by Rizal himself:

«¿Qué? ¿No podría un César presentarse en vuestras tablas?
 ¿No más un Aquiles, un Orestes o Andrómaca mostrarse?»
 ¡Quia! Si no vemos más que concejales, curas, alféreces,
 y secretarios, de húsares comandantes y alguaciles.
 «Mas, di, ¿qué pueden estos perdularios hacer de grande?
 ¿Pueden tales ratas dar lugar a hechos extraordinarios?» (Rizal, *Noli* 35)

»Was? Es dürfte kein Cäsar auf euren Bühnen sich zeigen,
 Kein Achill, kein Orest, keine Andromacha mehr?«
 -Nichts! Man sieht bei uns nur Pfarrer, Commerzienräthe,
 Fähndriche, Secretärs oder Husarenmajors.
 »Aber, ich bitte dich, Freund, was kann denn dieser Misere
 Großes begegnen, was kann Großes denn durch sie geschehn?« (Schiller)

This poem, *Shakespeares Schatten. Eine Parodie*, illustrates the fierce irony of the relationship between the artist and the social powers, and thus makes a perfect lemma. Framing the novel, it is a very good summary of Rizal's critique, since it indicates his purpose of criticising petty officials and clerics who impeded the development of his country. It also makes him part of a tradition, shows how he was using tools that had already been used elsewhere, and, at the same time, demonstrates his originality in applying them to a completely new setting—the Philippines. When Derbyshire erases it, he is erasing all inter-textuality; no dialog is possible and Rizal remains a “rebelde”, but one without a cause.

Guerrero's case is even more problematic, because he not only erases the quote, but includes a quite different one: Rizal's last poem, written short before he was executed, which he titles “The lost Eden”. As I have indicated before, it is quite a different thing to talk about “último pensamiento” than to say “the lost Eden”, not only because Rizal never actually used the word “lost” but because, in doing so, Guerrero is pushing Rizal aside, making a romantic figure out of him, and, therefore, disempowering him. Irony of ironies, the version of the poem is supposed to be Derbyshire's.

Rizal's original showed his erudition and inscribed him in the European literary tradition. This inscription has undergone a process of erosion and denial, which ultimately led to what Anderson calls the “de-europeanisation” (244) of Rizal: the text becomes fossilised and is pushed back to space outside of time, a process that can be seen in the changes

made to titles, lemmata and dedications. This systematic erasure cannot be explained from a linguistic point of view since all the terms involved have common equivalents in English; therefore, the explanation must lie somewhere else: this manipulation actually shows the ideology of the translators and calls for a whole re-evaluation of their role as linguistic mediators.

Dedication

Rizal was a doctor; therefore, it is not surprising that he used medical metaphors in his writing. When addressing his fatherland, he evokes a cancer that must be treated in order for it to recover its health; that is exactly the purpose of his work, to show the problems and to wait for people to propose a cure. Even if it is never clear what this cancer could be, it is not difficult either to imagine that Rizal is talking about the Spanish rule in the Philippines or that he is advocating for the condition of his country to be improved, in a comparison move which is a typical example of what Anderson has called “double consciousness” (229).

This medical metaphor, however, suffers such a process of amplification in the translations that it becomes a hyperbole. The reader is oriented in a way never intended by Rizal, making the author appear as the rebel he never was. Derbyshire exploits the usage of typographical resources while Guerrero clearly exaggerates the extent of the medical metaphor:

A mi patria. Regístranse en la historia de los padecimientos humanos un cáncer de un carácter tan maligno que el menor contacto le irrita y despierta en él agudísimos dolores. Pues bien, cuantas veces en medio de las civilizaciones modernas he querido evocarte, ya para acompañarme de tus recuerdos, ya para compararte con otros países, tantas veces se me presentó tu querida imagen como un cáncer social parecido (Rizal, *Noli* 37)

To my fatherland. Recorded in the history of human sufferings is a cancer of so malignant a character that the least touch irritates it and awakens in it the sharpest pains. Thus, how many times, when in the midst of modern civilizations I have wished to call thee before me, now to accompany me in my memories, now to compare thee with other countries, hath thy dear image presented itself showing a *social cancer* like to that other! (Rizal, *Cancer* vii; translator’s emphasis)

To my country. In the catalogue of human *ills* there is to be found a cancer so malignant that the least touch *inflames* it and causes *agonising* pains; afflicted with such a *cancer*, a *social cancer*, has your dear image appeared to me, when, for my own heart’s ease or

to compare you with others, I have sought, in the centres of modern civilisation, to call you to my mind (Rizal, *Eden* 5; my emphasis).

Historical Specificity: Mediators and their Time

Peter Newmark has a word of advice for translators on notes, additions and glosses, which is very clear in its purpose: “The artistic illusion of your non-existence is unnecessary” (93). The fallacy of the invisibility of the translator has been going on for a long time and is still re-enacted when texts are read in translation as if they were originals, a question that has been highlighted by many theorists and which poses many problems to the research being conducted in several disciplines, mainly in the field of Comparative Literature.⁵

This being said, both Derbyshire and Guerrero follow Newmark’s advice and make their presence clear, either introducing notes to the text or a foreword commenting on their translation. Their procedures, however, are quite different. Nevertheless, before getting to the presence of the translators in their work, we must pay attention to the absence of the author from his own work, a problem that is often forgotten when explaining these kinds of linguistic transfers.

The road that goes from the author’s manuscript to the actual printed volume can be a long one and is mediated by the figure of the editor. This figure has been traditionally dismissed in translation theory since her intervention is previous to the semasiological and onomasiological processes involved in translation; but editorship is a linguistic mediation as well, since it implies a process of interpretation that can be compared to that implemented within translation, except that it only involves one language. This consideration is quite important in this case, since the 1998 edition with which I have been working leads the reader in very specific ways, offering explanations that seem to be absent from the original edition, and erasing the author’s notes that were there and that subsequently resurface only in translation.

The editors have included a great number of footnotes that can only be explained bearing in mind potential readers of the edition: XXth century Spaniards, who appear to be seen as quite uneducated, I must say. Some deal with geographical sites such as “Binondo” (“arrabal de Manila, fuera de la ciudad murada, conocido por su activo comercio” [Rizal, *Noli* 39]) or “Makiling” (“monte que separa las provincias de

Laguna y Tayabas” [Rizal, *Noli* 198]; others give encyclopaedic information about different terms, perfectly understandable for the common reader (“paulistas”, “religiosos pertenecientes a la congregación fundada en 1625 por San Vicente de Paúl” [Rizal, *Noli* 79]); some translate foreign quotes and terms that appeared untranslated in the original, such as Latin sentences (“beati pauperes spiritu”, “bienaventurados los pobres de espíritu” [Rizal, *Noli* 78]) or Tagalog words (“dalaga”, “palabra tagala que significa mujer soltera, doncella” [Rizal, *Noli* 41]); but the most interesting are those in which the text is interpreted in order to expose what was supposed to be Rizal’s thinking or to make it closer to an autobiography. For instance, when describing Capitán Tiago’s house, Rizal says that the furnishings are “incómodos y malsanos”, but the editor seems compelled to add on a footnote that “Rizal consideraba impropias para países tropicales las sillas de cojín y forradas de terciopelo que se usaban en Europa.” (Rizal, *Noli* 42). Another instance would be the description of the separation between María Clara and her fiancé Crisóstomo Ibarra, when he left the Philippines for Spain and she entered a convent to pursue her education “bajo la vigilancia de la madre escucha”, a nun who, the editor explains, “en los conventos y colegios de niñas, tiene por oficio acompañar a las que reciben visitas y vigilarlas.” To this semantic information, a biographical entry is added: “Esta parte de la narración supone un reflejo de la vida de Rizal. Rizal partió para Barcelona el día 3 de mayo de 1882, dejando a la novia en Manila, una hermosa joven llamada Leonor Rivera.” (Rizal, *Noli* 82).

As we have seen, the translator is not the only one who can become invisible; the author as well can be silenced or interpreted, not being allowed to speak by himself. The paradox is that Derbyshire’s translation actually gives Rizal his own voice back, making a clear distinction between author’s notes and translator’s notes, which are usually cultural or geographical but never interfere with the original quotes in languages other than Spanish. Some examples; for instance, the gloss on “the sons of Guzman” (the Dominican friars, whose order was founded by Dominic de Guzman)⁶, or the “Sabana Drive” (now Plaza Lawton and Bagumbayan)⁷. Rizal is not interpreted as flagrantly as he is in the Spanish edition, but his geography is adapted to fit historic evolution, the American presence in the archipelago. This move, which respects Rizal’s text and inscription between a European and a Tagalog literary

tradition but americanises his geographical descriptions is very revealing as far as Derbyshire's intentions are concerned.

More interesting, however, is the level of translator's presence and manipulation in Guerrero's translation. I would like to show how his actual work contradicts his own statements, and the way in which his foreword to the translation collapses traditional assumptions that have been the base of translation or postcolonial studies.

A much-quoted letter written in 1857 by Edward Fitzgerald, translator of *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyán*, is usually given as an example of the colonial approach to translation. During the colonial era, the coloniser felt entitled to play freely with the text, since non-European texts were not good enough and, therefore, needed a European hand to intervene in order to make them more "literary"; something that Fitzgerald seemed very happy to do:

It is an amusement for me to take what liberties I like with these Persians, who (as I think) are not Poets enough to frighten on from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them (80).

Now, compare that statement to some of the affirmations Guerrero makes in his note on the translation:

Personally, I have never been at ease with any of the existing translations of the *Noli*. [...] When essayed by Filipinos, they suffer from an, it seems to me, *exaggerated reverence for the original text* which makes for tortured constructions. [...] Rizal's style is often unlikely to appeal to the modern ear; Spanish, moreover, is a language that can afford to be more florid and sentimental than modern English. *I have therefore allowed myself the further liberty of certain passages* that might have otherwise have provoked a sophisticated snigger. [...] *Other passages had to be re-worked willy-nilly* (Rizal, *Cancer* xvi-xvii, [my emphasis]).

Leaving aside the pseudo-linguistic commentaries on the genius of the different languages, this piece poses many methodological as well as theoretical problems. Besides the obvious implications for the on-going debate over foreignizing versus domesticating approaches to translation, we find the problem of the translation of the canon. Rizal is a canonical author in the Philippines, as Guerrero himself recognises, and, therefore, any approach to his work is condemned to be polemical. Guerrero's does not escape this fate, but I find his vision to be especially problematic

because under all his rhetoric I cannot find a liberating project, that is, an attempt to question the canon, but rather a very compromising one, an ideology that erases difference, that relegates Rizal to the role of ghost. This move, typical of the colonial translation, is now found in a postcolonial text. Is Guerrero crossing the boundaries that separate coloniser from colonised or is he the victim of some kind of Althusserian interpellation, having internalised the discourse of the coloniser?

Every single translation is shaped by an outside presence, different from that of the author, and can be read as a map, an outline of the presence of the translator. I would like to follow a couple of paths in the maps provided by the translations I am studying, because they are related to language and, moreover, because Guerrero himself talks about them in his introductory note. Both are puns that can, and many times do, drive a translator crazy, since they are based on sounds and words of the source language that are difficult to reproduce in the target language.

The first case is set in a discussion between doña Consolación and her Spanish husband over the correct way to pronounce the name of the country, “Filipinas”⁸. Consolación is a native woman who tries to forget her Tagalog and to use as much Spanish as possible in order to appear as a true European; the problem is that she actually is a Philippine, and cannot completely erase the Tagalog in her, which re-appears in her phonetics, much to her concern⁹. When speaking Spanish, she pronounces “Pilipinas” instead of “Filipinas”, and her husband, a Spanish officer, corrects her. When he tries to explain why she has to say “Filipinas”, he also gets into trouble, since he says that the country was named after king Felipe V (*sic*) and had the Latin suffix *-nas*, meaning “island of Indians”, added after it (*sic*). Therefore, she concludes, the country’s name must be “Felipenas”. The discussion goes on and the husband eventually seeks advice from a fellow officer, who tells him that the ancient pronunciation was “Filipi” (hence Filipinas), but that all modern people in Madrid have switched to a “French” fashion and the name is to be pronounced “Felipe.”

In this instance, Rizal is being very careful to expose several political problems without actually stating them overtly: the situation of the colonial subject, eager to learn the coloniser’s language and, therefore, losing her identity and her own language in the process; the situation of the European expatriate, in the position of setting a cultural example

without necessarily having any culture, even with a distrust of any modern “French” ideas, a typical attitude of the right-wing ideologues of XIXth century Spain. Derbyshire and Guerrero use two different techniques to reproduce the pun. Both use a coherent translation procedure throughout the novel: Derbyshire simply reproduces the Spanish pronunciation, putting words in italics, and Guerrero makes an adaptation to English phonetics, switching the problem from the pronunciation of vowels (i-e) to the pronunciation of consonants (f-p). What is really interesting, though, is that Guerrero makes some ideological adaptations as well, a move that can only be read as colonial.

First, the meaning of the so-called Latin suffix (“island of Indians”) changes in Guerrero’s into being “nigger islands”. Secondly, the discussion of the French influence on Madrid’s linguistic fashion turns into the influence of “the British or Oxford accent”; does that mean that upper Spanish classes were receiving an Oxbridge education at the time? The racial switch is difficult enough to explain, but the anglosaxonisation of the Spanish language is quite impossible. Or maybe not. It seems to be the result of the particular history of the Philippines, firstly colonised by Spain and, later, by the United States. In Rizal’s time, for any Filipino (i.e. Spaniard born in the Philippines), the other was definitely the Philippine native, the “Indian”, and the prestige centre, the capital of the metropolis, Madrid, even if under a suspicious French influence. By the time Guerrero is writing, we find a new other, the “nigger”, and a new prestige centre, England. This move implies a quite complicated ideological swift, since North-American influence makes prestige travel further north in Europe but Spanish colonisation cannot be completely erased; thus, we end up with Spaniards speaking with an Oxbridge accent!

The second case is the idiolect of doña Victorina¹⁰, the doctor De Espadaña’s wife, again a native woman married to a poorly educated Spaniard. Rizal repeats his criticism showing a character that tries to fit into a role imposed by colonial society: “doña Agustina, aunque hablaba mal el español, era más española que la Agustina de Zaragoza”¹¹. The irony is actually accentuated since the dialog where she shows such linguistic innovation takes place right after some comments made by a Chinese candlemaker, who actually uses a Chinese pidgin... at least in the Spanish version.

Besides the difficulties of reproducing in English the Andalusian Spanish accent, there are a couple of proverbs (misquoted) and, more importantly, there is native language, the real ghost of the novel, since it appears and disappears from the original and has real difficulties when travelling into the translations. Derbyshire chooses a quite literal version of the proverbs and tries to reproduce the accent in English:

'El que a buena zombra ze acobija, buen palo ze le arrima' (Rizal, *Noli* 457) (cf. *el que a buen árbol se arrima, buena sombra le cobija*).

'He who shelterz himzelf well, builds a good roof' (Rizal, *Cancer* 461) (cf. *keep good men company and you shall be of the number*).

This strategy, coherent with his quite literal approach to the source language, is abandoned when it comes to translating the Chinese pidgin, which is reproduced in Standard English and gets an explanatory footnote. Guerrero's move, on the other side, is quite different. He chooses to transform all quotes into English, making phonetic adaptations, and doña Victorina's accent is "transferred to American 'Old South'" (Rizal, *Eden* xii); a transformation that transports the reader outside the actual coordinates of the novel, and can only be understood by taking into account contemporary Philippine history; otherwise, why would a Philippine native speak with a North-American accent?:

'If you-all are takin' sheltah under a biggah tree, you are gettin' a biggah beatin'.' (Rizal, *Eden* 377)

As I have said, native languages are the actual ghosts of the novel, since they travel all over the text and into the translations. First, there is the question of Rizal writing in Spanish, a language he mastered, but which was not his mother tongue. Secondly, the use or misuse of Tagalog by some of the characters, either because that is the language they speak or the language they want to forget. Third, and even more important, is the way this linguistic complexity is managed in the translations. We have seen some examples from Derbyshire's translations, the way in which he keeps the quotes the way they were in the original, except for the Spanish puns, which are reproduced, with better or worse effect, in English. The edition includes a glossary at the end, not present in the original, an indicator of the change in the potential reader of the

way in which he keeps the quotes the way they were in the original, except for the Spanish puns, which are reproduced, with better or worse effect, in English. The edition includes a glossary at the end, not present in the original, an indicator of the change in the potential reader of the *Noli me tangere*: Filipinos and Tagalog speakers did not need that kind of linguistic help at the time, since they were familiar with the sociolinguistics of the country, a familiarity that the US occupation helped destroy. Guerrero's translation, however, completely erases the native languages, making them a presence that can only be guessed but is never actually there. English is meant for everybody and Tagalog terms are replaced by functional or descriptive equivalents, explanations that hide (deculturalise) cultural terms. In this sense, the colonial translation, Derbyshire's, is closer to the original than the postcolonial, Guerrero's, which makes the Chinese candlemaker forget his pidgin and learn how to speak English with an accent:

Donbee clazy; Bilgen Anipolo issy wan; she stlongeh evelybody;
donbee clazy! (Rizal, *Eden* 376)

Conclusion: When Translation Encounters Politics

The study of different versions of a text can prove revealing of the ideological changes concerning a given subject. This connection between ideology and language is even more powerfully revealed when the translation being examined comes from postcolonial contexts in which language, power and ideology have shaped the way many cultures see themselves and are seen from outside. This study, however, has been approached from quite distinct perspectives that seemed to be independent from each other; there was a look at cultural practices from a political frame, or there was a linguistic study, which was seen as free from ideological constraints.

Rizal's novel and its translations into English help us understand the limitations of these approaches, mainly because they ask for new theoretical tools in order to approach them. Traditional criteria, such as fidelity, which result in a valuation of the work of the translator, are not very helpful, because they do not give any information on the causes that are beyond it, remaining only on the level of the results. Textual criticism that reads the translation as a map, a tool suitable to find the ideological ground upon which language is constructed, also calls for a

redefinition of the role of the editor. If the different editions of a text are treated as problematic, the way translations are seen, and fitted into the larger scope of linguistic mediation, many interesting conclusions can be deduced, among them the idea that editorship is not ideologically-free and, therefore, needs to be evaluated as closely as any translation is.

It is impossible to recreate the past, but one can definitely shape the present in order to build a different future. At a time when international cultural exchanges are at stake, to show the contradictions between stated ideologies and actual cultural productions, between the activity of the translator as a mediator and the image of the reader as an interpreter, can be a very powerful tool in developing a politics of resistance.

Notes

¹ Modern translation theory is based, in part, on the need to move beyond this traditional conceptualization, to reveal it and to fight against it, even if some canonical theoretical texts, such as Steiner, fully embrace them.

² For a criticism of this notion, see Robinson 108-113.

³ In his comparison between Rizal, Tagore, and their respective audiences, Anderson forgets the fact that Tagore, even if he composed his poems in Bengali, translated them to English, re-writing them to fit an orientalist image of himself, whereas Rizal addressed the colonizer directly. Maybe that is why Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize and Rizal was sentenced to death (about this subject, see Sengupta).

⁴ Rizal titled the poem "Último pensamiento" and said "nuestro querido Edén" instead of "nuestro perdido Edén". Definitely, something was lost in translation here.

⁵ For an interesting discussion on this question, see Venuti 88-105.

⁶ Rizal, *Cancer* 5. The 1998 edition also includes this explanation

⁷ Rizal, *Cancer* 62. The 1998 edition does not include this indication, irrelevant to readers unfamiliar with Manila under North-American occupation.

⁸ Rizal, *Noli* 316-317; Rizal, *Cancer* 304-305; Rizal, *Eden* 246-247.

⁹ Tagalog lacks the phoneme /f/ and it is a common feature of the Spanish of the Philippines to transform it into /p/ (see Penny 24). Rizal, as a good observer and speaker of several languages, knew that and is making doña Consolación speak Tagalog *malgré lui*.

¹⁰ Rizal, *Noli* 457-458; Rizal, *Cancer* 461-462; Rizal, *Eden* 376-377.

¹¹ Agustina de Aragón has been construed as a Spanish patriotic heroine, since she fought against Napoleon's troupes in the siege of Zaragoza. Derbyshire gives this information in a footnote, whereas Guerrero incorporates it to the text.

Works cited

- Anderson, Benedict. *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, South East Asia, and the World*. New York: Verso, 1998.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Poetics of Imperialism. Translation and Colonization from "The Tempest" to "Tarzan"*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Fitzgerald, Edward. "Extract from a letter written to E. B. Cowell" (1857) in

- Lefevere, André (ed.). *Translation / History / Culture. A Sourcebook*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Harvey, Keith. "Translating Camp Talk. Gay Identities and Cultural Transfer" (1998) in Venuti, Lawrence (ed.). *The Translation Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Lefevere, André (ed.). *Traducción, reescritura y la manipulación del canon literario*. Translated by M^a Carmen África Vidal and Román Álvarez. Salamanca: Ediciones Colegio de España, 1997.
- Newmark, Peter. *A Textbook of Translation*. London: Prentice Hall, 1988.
- Penny, Ralph. *A History of the Spanish Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999 (1991).
- Rafael, Vicente. *Contracting Colonialism. Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Rizal, José. *The Social Cancer. "A complete English Version by Charles E. Derbyshire"*. Philippine Education Company: Manila, 1961 (1912).
- _____. *The Lost Eden. "A completely new translation for the contemporary reader by León María Guerrero with his introduction. Foreword by James A. Michener"*. Greenwood Press: New York, 1968.
- _____. *Noli me tangere*. Foreword by Pedro Ortiz Armengol. Galaxia Gutenberg, Círculo de Lectores: Barcelona, 1998.
- Robinson, Douglas. *Translation and Empire. Postcolonial Theories Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997.
- Schiller, Friedrich. *Shakespeares Schatten (Eine Parodie)*. <http://gutenberg.aol.de/schiller/gedichte/shakespr.htm>
- Sengupta, Mahasweta. "Translation, Colonialism and Poetics: Rabindranath Tagore in Two Worlds" in BASSNETT, Susan and André Lefevere (eds.). *Translation, History & Culture*. London: Cassell, 1995.
- Steiner, George. *Después de Babel. Aspectos del lenguaje y la traducción*. Translated by Adolfo Castañón. México, Madrid, Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1981.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation. Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.