J.M. Coetzee as Latin American Writer: Simultaneous Translation – Foreignness – World Literature

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> One can think of a life in art, schematically, in two or perhaps three stages. In the first you find, or pose for yourself, a great question. In the second you labor away at answering it. And then, if you live long enough, you come to the third stage, when the aforesaid great question begins to bore you, and you need to look elsewhere.[1]

In J.M. Coetzee's latest fictional work, the Jesus trilogy, two refugees – a man in his early forties and a five-year-old boy – arrive in an unidentified country after travelling across an ocean. Their first two stops are Belstar, a city by the sea, and a refugee camp "in the desert"[2] where they are given new names, Simón for the man and David for the boy. They have, like all other refugees, no memories of their past, not even of their original names or their native language, except maybe for David who can sing Johann Wolfgang Goethe's 1782 ballad "Erlköning" in German, though he believes he is singing it in English (a misidentification that Simón also makes).[3] The language of their host country is Spanish, which they have been learning in the refugee camp, and hence, they experience typical problems associated with language acquisition. They wrestle with new words ("*Reubicación*: what does that mean? Not a word he has learned"), speak hesitantly at first ("He articulates the words slowly, in the Spanish he has worked hard to master"), and invent new meanings for Spanish words most probably in accordance with their mother tongue ("sometimes, when she wants to tease him, she uses the word *descongelar*, thaw: 'If you like, you can have another go at thawing me'"). According to Simón's soon-to-be boss, Álvaro Avocado, "[a]s for … Spanish, don't worry, persist. One day, it will cease to feel like a language, it will become the way things are".[4]

The fact that Spanish is the language spoken in the host country might help the reader to locate it despite the narrator's vague, almost non-existent references to a specific place. An obvious possibility is Spain (or the Iberian Peninsula, in general) and the allusion to Portuguese, Catalan, Galician, and Basque language courses could certainly support this.[5] However, the fact that the country's currency is the *real* and

I am most grateful to Magdalena Cámpora (Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina and CONICET) and Inmaculada Mas Álvarez (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela) for their valuable help and advice. I am also very grateful to J.M. Coetzee's foreign rights agent Rema Dilan for her patience in answering my questions. I am especially grateful to Elena Marengo, who offered many comments and spent a great deal of time discussing problems of detail with me. In addition, I must also give special thanks to Amanda Vicent Escorihuela (Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir) for her help with library and cataloguing technicalities and César Pellicer Marco (Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir) for his help with Japanese.

[1] Paul Auster and J.M. Coetzee, *Here and Now: Letters (2008–2011)* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 88 (Coetzee to Auster, 26 September 2009).

[2] J.M. Coetzee, *The Childhood of Jesus* (New York: Viking, 2013), 5.

[3] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 67; J.M. Coetzee, *The Schooldays of Jesus* (London: Harvill Secker, 2016), 133.

[4] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 1, 61, and 12.

[5] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 121. Interestingly, none of the aforementioned language courses, nor Esperanto or Volapük are offered.

neighbourhoods and streets in the city of Novilla are called East Village, West Village, and New Street seems to invalidate this identification. Another obvious possibility is that the action takes place somewhere in Spanish-speaking America, as "the ranches on the great flatlands" and a dog named Bolívar might suggest. Similarly, the fact that in this country "[l]ions and tigers have gone away. Gone into the past" invalidates any Latin American location.[6] This geographical vagueness is a purposeful strategy used by Coetzee and, consequently, nothing more specific than a nameless home country "[b]ack across the sea" and a nameless host country where "all human relations have to be conducted in beginner's Spanish" can be asserted.[7]

Coetzee's 2002 relocation from South Africa to Australia and its impact on his work has led critics to propose that his work can be divided into either two or three periods. From a geocritical perspective, Gillian Dooley claims that "[i]n his Australian books he is free to consider the personal divorced from the political, while in South Africa, like it or not, the political implications of writing are under constant scrutiny." The label she uses – "Australian books" – can be traced to the writer's first biography, compiled by John C. Kannemeyer.[8] Likewise, Elleke Boehmer, Lynda Ng, and Paul Sheehan argue that Coetzee's career can be divided into two periods, the first running from the 1970s to the 1990s and the second from 2002 onwards. While the first period includes "South African and metropolitan allegiances in his work", the second post-2002 Australian period includes narratives grounded "in the context of his new homeland".[9] David Attwell, in contradistinction, is in favour of three stages. Two of these take place before Coetzee moves to Australia and are marked by the publication of *Waiting for the Barbarians* (first stage) and *Disgrace* (second stage). Attwell defines the third stage as "what comes after *Disgrace*".[10] Boehmer, Ng, and Sheehan's discussion is especially relevant here insofar as they include the first novel of the Jesus trilogy, which, "with its apparently South American setting", would not point to a new, third period, but rather to a return to "his usual practice of rewriting a pre-existing novel", as exemplified by "references to Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and Kafka's *Amerika*."[11]

Boehmer, Ng, and Sheehan's claim that *The Childhood of Jesus* does not represent a third stage (or fourth, if one deals with Attwell's proposal) is highly debatable, as is their claim that the trilogy is set in South America. In this essay, I am not particularly concerned with the number of stages in Coetzee's career, nor with detecting a new period as reflected by distinct, thematic and stylistic features. Instead, I am much more interested in how such intratextual features may be interacting with specific extratextual features, and vice versa. While the first two novels in the trilogy were first published in Dutch "translation" (*De kinderjaren van Jezus* – The Childhood of Jesus; *De schooldagen van Jezus* – The Schooldays of Jesus), at the moment of writing this essay (July 2019) the trilogy has been brought to conclusion with a novel in Spanish "translation" – *La muerte*

[6] Coetzee, *Schooldays*, 33 and 35.

[7] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 21 and 106.

[8] Gillian Dooley, "'A Dozy City': Adelaide in J.M. Coetzee's *Slow Man* and Amy T. Matthews' *End of the Night Girl*", in *Adelaide: A Literary City*, ed. Philip Butterss (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2013), 259; J.C. Kannemeyer, *J.M. Coetzee: A Life in Writing*, trans. Michiel Heyns (2012; Victoria: Scribe, 2013), chap. 16.

[9] Elleke Boehmer, Lynda Ng, and Paul Sheehan, "The World, the Text and the Author: Coetzee and Untranslatability", *European Journal of English Studies* 20, no. 2 (2016): 193 and 194.

[10] David Attwell, *J.M. Coetzee and the Life of Writing: Face-to-Face with Time* (New York: Viking, 2015), 210.

[11] Boehmer, Ng, and Sheehan, "The World, the Text and the Author", 195.

de Jesús (The Death of Jesus).[12] I enclose *translation* in inverted commas to highlight the disruption caused by a translation which is published before the "original". Likewise, I enclose *original* in inverted commas to highlight the problematisation of this very concept when the translation precedes the original, which may even be non-existent for the public (as is the case today with the original of *La muerte de Jesús*). The chronological pre-eminence of the Dutch "translation" in relation to the English "original" in the first novel of the trilogy has not been taken into consideration in Boehmer, Ng, and Sheehan's work. Arguably, the publication of *La muerte de Jesús* should be pointing towards something much more complex than the mere "practice of rewriting a pre-existing novel", however complex the rewriting process is in itself.

A "translation" being published before the "original", and hence an "original" being unknown to the public for an indefinite amount of time, has received scholarly attention from Rebecca L. Walkowitz in her ground-breaking 2015 book *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature*. "[M]any novels do not simply appear in translation. They have been written for translation from the start. […] I call these novels *born translated*", argues Walkowitz.[13] In which of these two categories of born translated works does Coetzee's fiction fit? Does it first appear in translation or is it written for translation from the start? It is both, according to Walkowitz, who uses Coetzee's *The Childhood of Jesus* as one of her key examples. It has appeared in translation for "between February and December 2013, J.M. Coetzee's *Childhood of Jesus* was published on five continents in nine languages, including Chinese, Polish, and two versions of Portuguese." It has been written for translation for it "initially appeared in Dutch, though Coetzee, born in South Africa and now living in Australia, composes his works in English." Furthermore, "it pretends to take place in Spanish. For its principal characters, Simón and David, English is a foreign language."[14]

Though I draw heavily on Walkowitz's work, I am not entirely satisfied with the reasons – both personal and commercial – she gives for Coetzee's choice of providing a translation into Dutch in advance of the publication of the English original. "Coetzee has an ongoing relationship with his Dutch translator; he was raised speaking Afrikaans (closely related to Dutch), and he has translated several works of Dutch poetry and prose into English", says Walkowitz.[15] On the one hand, Coetzee's relationship with translators is not restricted to Peter Bergsma, his Dutch translator.[16] On the other hand, Coetzee's translations from Dutch into English surely enjoy greater success because he is a Nobel laureate than because Dutch is close to his native language, Afrikaans. In terms of my focus on the interactions between intratextual and extratextual elements, there certainly is a connection between a trilogy that pretends "to take place in a language other [Spanish] than the one [English] in which … [it has], in fact, been composed"[17], a story in which

[12] J.M. Coetzee, *De kinderjaren van Jezus*, trans. Peter Bergsma (Amsterdam: Cossee, 2013); J.M. Coetzee, *De schooldagen van Jezus*, trans. Peter Bergsma (Amsterdam: Cossee, 2016); and J.M. Coetzee, *La muerte de Jesús*, trans. Elena Marengo (Buenos Aires: El Hilo de Ariadna; Buenos Aires and Barcelona: Penguin Random House, 2019). The unpublished original *The Death of Jesus* is scheduled to be published in January 2020 in the UK according to information provided by Rema Dilan, Coetzee's foreign rights agent (e-mail message to author, 11 June 2019).

[13] Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 3.

[14] Walkowitz, *Born Translated*, 3 and 4.

[15] Walkowitz, *Born Translated*, 3.

[16] A key text by Coetzee on his relationships with translators is "Working with Translators", in *Translation and the Classic: Identity as Change in the History of Culture*, ed. Alexandra Lianeri and Vana Zajko, 407–19 (2006; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). This essay was originally published under the title "Speaking in Tongues" in *The Australian: Weekend Review*, 28 January 2006.

[17] Walkowitz, *Born Translated*, 4.

most of the characters have recently learned to speak Spanish[18], and a final book that as of the present moment exists only in Spanish "translation".

My reading of the Jesus trilogy sees the country in which the action takes place not as a nameless nation-state on a specific continent, but rather as the territory of language, of the Spanish language, stretching from "La Mancha … in Spain, where the Spanish language originally came from" to a land on the other side of the ocean where Simón and David have come "as everyone does, for the sake of a new life, a new beginning."[19] In the Spanish-language territory, there is a central book, which obviously is Cervantes' *Don Quijote*, though it appears here as *An Illustrated Children's Don Quixote*, authored by "[a] man named Benengeli" and illustrated with lots of pictures that "distract the mind from the words."[20] Chapter 4 in Part 2 (1615) of *Don Quijote* is one of the many chapters in which characters discuss how their lives have been portrayed in Part 1 (1605), which is already being enjoyed by real and fictional readers. Don Quijote asks a question about his future, "Y por ventura –dijo don Quijote– ¿promete el autor segunda parte?", to which Bachiller Sansón Carrasco replies, "Sí promete … y, así, estamos en duda si saldrá o no".[21] In my reading, the fact that Simón and David believe the author of *Don Quijote* to be the fictional Arab Muslim historian Cide Hamete Benengeli rather than Miguel de Cervantes, who is never mentioned, shows that they inhabit the territory of fiction. In *Don Quijote*, the main character knows nothing about his future insofar as Part 2 has not yet been published. Likewise, in the Jesus trilogy, characters know nothing about their past insofar as they have just arrived in the nameless land of fiction. "Like you I crossed the ocean. Like you I bring no history with me", says Simón to Álvaro. And the fact that this fictional world sees metafiction constructed so poorly by a tool lacking any depth, *An Illustrated Children's Don Quixote*, may explain why it is "so bloodless" a country and hence Simón's question, "How can that be, humanly speaking?"[22]

In this essay I will correlate Coetzee's born translated fiction with the nameless territory of fiction where Spanish is spoken within the broader area of the Global South. As already mentioned, Coetzee's most recent fiction has circulated first in translation and subsequently the original in English has been published. Furthermore, translation has functioned as both an origin and a medium within the texture of his recent works. They are "born translated" pieces, to use the term posited by Walkowitz, whose 2015 book is my main source of inspiration in this regard. It is no wonder that the territory where Spanish is spoken has no name. A linguistic and cultural commonality for the Spanish-

[18] A vague reference to characters for whom Spanish is a native language, or at least a language in which they are more proficient than incoming refugees, is made only once in the trilogy: "Their neighbours have been, on one side, an old man who dodders around in his dressing gown talking to himself, and on the other a stand-offish couple who pretend not to understand the Spanish he [Simón] speaks." (Coetzee, *Childhood*, 51)

[19] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 152 and 79.

[20] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 151, 154, and 204.

[21] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Francisco Rico (Barcelona: Instituto Cervantes / Crítica, 1998), 658 (Part 2, chap. 4). "'And by any chance', said Don Quixote, 'does the author promise a second part?'" / "'Yes, he does', responded Sansón, … and so we don't know if it will be published or not", in Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Edith Grossman (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 482 (Part 2, chap. 4). This exchange between Don Quixote and Carrasco includes the latter's statement "algunos dicen: 'Nunca segunda partes fueron buenas'" (658) / "some people say: 'Second parts were never very good'" (482), which Coetzee uses as an epigraph for *The Schooldays of Jesus*, the second part of the Jesus trilogy. For the role played by Cervantes in Coetzee's fiction, see María J. López, "Miguel de Cervantes and J.M. Coetzee: An Unacknowledged Paternity", *Journal of Literary Studies* 29, no. 4 (2013): 80–97; and Fernando Galván, "Borges, Cervantes, and Coetzee, or the Fictionalisation of the Author", *European Journal of English Studies* 20, no. 2 (2016): 179–91.

[22] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 140 and 30.

speaking areas was predicated as a kind of immaterial commonwealth after the loss of the last colonies in 1898 and was politically instrumentalised first by the rebel faction during the Spanish Civil War and later by the Francoist dictatorship under the name of *Hispanidad*.[23] Transition to democracy and democracy in Spain have not alleviated the nationalist burden of *Hispanidad*. On the contrary, *Hispanidad* has strongly re-emerged as of late, both in academia and in the political arena with, on the one hand, the rise of the populist Spanish nationalist party Ciudadanos and, on the other, the fact that the far-right party Vox has entered a regional parliament (Andalusia), the Senate, and the Congress of Deputies.[24] Alternative names for Spanish-speaking areas, such as *panhispanismo* and *hispanofonía*, have been recently discussed by José del Valle as an attempt towards the "economic and political instrumentalization of the Spanish-speaking area".[25] As for the Global South, my approach here will be limited to the implications of an issue highlighted by Derek Attridge. "I was lucky enough to be in the auditorium at Princeton University … when Professor John Coetzee rose to deliver 'The Philosophers and the Animals'", remarks Attridge. And he goes on, "This was, of course, J.M. Coetzee the novelist, but his presence in an academic setting made one particularly conscious of his status as Professor of General Literature at the University of Cape Town."[26] I do not think the dynamics between "John Coetzee" and "J.M. Coetzee", nor the full gamut of literary impersonations from Elizabeth Costello to Señor C., have been sufficiently explored by scholarship.[27] Here I am interested in the interplay between J.M. Coetzee, the writer whose most recent fiction takes place in a nameless Spanish-speaking country, and John Coetzee, the scholar who leads academic initiatives in the field of world literature for, from and within the Global South through networks that connect South Africa, Australia, and Argentina.

My correlation of Coetzee's born translated fiction, the territory of fiction where Spanish is spoken, and the Global South will not be based on the Jesus trilogy, but on a book that is yet to be published, *Moral Tales*. As *An Illustrated Children's Don Quixote* is a metafictional tool purposefully lacking any depth, I will adopt the Jesus trilogy as a symbolic metafictional tool to approach the collection of stories held in *Moral Tales* and the five translations of it that have been published at the time of writing this essay: Spanish (May 2018), Japanese (May 2018), French (August 2018), Italian (May 2019), and Dutch (June 2019).

1. "A NEW LIFE, A NEW NAME"

[23] For general introductions to the political uses of *Hispanidad* by Spanish fascists who called themselves *cruzados* (crusaders), see Rosa María Pardo Sanz, "Hispanoamérica en la política nacionalista, 1936–1939", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 5 (1992): 211–38; and Isidro Sepúlveda Muñoz, *El sueño de la madre patria: hispanoamericanismo y nacionalismo* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2005).

[24] A case in point concerning the defence of the Spanish Empire for its *mission civilisatrice* as voiced in pseudo-academic discourse is María Elvira Roca Barea's 2016 book *Imperiofobia y leyenda negra*, which has turned into a bestseller, with twenty-three editions and over 100,000 copies sold. José Luis Villacañas discusses the right-wing populist roots of Roca Barea's book in his 2019 *Imperiofilia*. Some links between academic discourse, right-wing parties, journalists, and intellectuals need to be underlined in this regard. The journalist Arcadi Espada, a founder of the Ciutadans de Catalunya forum which gave rise to the Ciudadanos party, wrote a preface for Roca Barea's book. The Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, in turn, has celebrated Roca Barea's book in "Historia y ficción", *El País*, 16 September 2018.

[25] José del Valle, "Panhispanismo e hispanofonía: breve historia de dos ideologías siamesas", *Sociolinguistic Studies* 5, no. 3 (2011): 480 (my trans.).

[26] Derek Attridge, *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 192.

[27] Señor C. – the main character in *Diary of a Bad Year* – has written *Waiting for the Barbarians*, is from South Africa, and lives in Australia.

When refugees arrive in the nameless country where Spanish is spoken, "[a] new life, a new name" are waiting for them.[28] This is an accurate description of how translation works, with names and words being transferred from one language to another, reaching new audiences, and breathing new life into the work that is translated. However, what we have witnessed in recent years is that translation is no longer an "afterthought", but rather "medium and origin".[29] This is particularly true in the case of the collection *Siete cuentos morales*. Published in early May 2018, it is the first in a series of translations which, as of today, comprises Japanese (published only around two or three weeks later), French, Italian, and Dutch. All five translations point in their edition notice to an "original" in English titled *Moral Tales* and dated 2017, sometimes in italics, sometimes in inverted commas and, in the latter case, typographically presented on equal terms with the titles of the short stories in the collection. But there exists neither a short story in English titled "Moral Tales" by Coetzee, nor a 2017 (or later) collection in English titled *Moral Tales* by Coetzee, except for the 2018 Japanese translation. This translation includes both the title in English (*Moral Tales*) and Japanese (モラルの話, Moraru no hanashi) on the dust-jacket and the title page. The title appears only in English on the front cover, yet the book provides the reader with a monolingual text in Japanese.[30] As it is a rather complex situation, I summarise it in Table 1.

Target Language	Publication Date	Translation Title	Translator	Publishing House
Spanish	2018 (May)	*Siete cuentos morales* [Seven Moral Tales]	Elena Marengo	El Hilo de Ariadna and Literatura Random House
Japanese	2018 (May)	*Moral Tales* モラルの話	Kubota Nozomi	Jinbunshoin
French	2018 (August)	*L'abattoir de verre* [The Glass Abattoir]	Georges Lory	Seuil
Italian	2019 (May)	*Bugie e altri racconti morali* [Lies and Other Moral Tales]	Maria Baiocchi	Einaudi
Dutch	2019 (June)	*De oude vrouw en de katten* [The Old Woman and the Cats]	Peter Bergsma	Cossee

Table 1: Translations of J.M. Coetzee's "Moral Tales" (July 2019)

In times of what I call "subsequent translation", a translation is typically published *after* the original and may be instrumental in initiating a series of translations into other languages. In contradistinction, in times of "(almost) simultaneous translations", the original loses its status of privilege, so much so that it may be unknown to the general public and translations circulate on an unprecedented scale into multiple languages. Interestingly, in the latter case, a single translation may adopt the role of "original" due to several reasons, with chronology playing a key role. In the case of Coetzee's unpublished manuscript "Moral Tales", this is what happens with its translation into Spanish. Being the first in an ongoing series of translations (and here weeks and months can make a difference), Argentinian media applauded the presentation of the book at the Buenos Aires Book Fair stressing "a special feature: it has been published in Spanish

[28] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 18.

[29] Walkowitz, *Born Translated*, 4 and 3.

[30] As of mid-June 2019, the English manuscript of "Moral Tales" is in the process of being submitted to the publisher, according to information provided by Rema Dilan (e-mail message to author, 11 June 2019).

before English" (my trans.).[31] The temporal precedence of the "Spanish translation" over the "English original" has become even more noticeable with the publication of *La muerte de Jesús.* Verónica Abdala has claimed that "the author writes in English but an Argentinian translates his books and these translations are considered the *original version*" (my trans. and emphasis).[32]

Though contemplating the Spanish translation as "original" deserves full consideration, first it is necessary to show why the whole picture is much more complex than the one represented in Table 1. To the best of my knowledge, Table 1 is an accurate description for the collection as a whole. But if single short stories are taken into consideration, the complexities of translation and circulation increase, as Table 2 shows.

[31] Andrea Guzmán, "El sur existe", *La Agenda. Revista*, 7 May 2018. As I have already pointed out, there is no English version of the collection published as yet. Notice that *La Agenda. Revista* is an online magazine run by the government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

[32] "Verónica Abdala, "La revolución de J.M. Coetzee, el Premio Nobel sudafricano que se pasó al castellano", *Clarín*, 29 May 2019.

Short Story	Reading by the Author	Publication of Source Text	Title in Translation	Translator	Publication of Target Text
"The Dog"	Hay Literary Festival (Colombia, March 2018)	*The New Yorker* (27 Nov 2017)	"El perro"	Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)
			"Inu"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
			"Le chien"	Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)
			"Il cane"	Maria Baiocchi	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"De hond"	Peter Bergsma	*De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)
"Story"			"Una historia"	[Elena Marengo?]	*Clarín. Revista Ñ* 2 Feb 2018
				Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)
			"Monogatari"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
			"Histoire"	Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)
			"Racconto"	Maria Baiocchi	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"Verhaal"	Peter Bergsma	*De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)
"Vanity"			"Vanidad"	Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)
			"Kyoei"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
			"Vanité"	Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)
			"Vanità"	Maria Baiocchi	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"IJdelheid"	Peter Bergsma	*De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)
"As a Woman Grows Older"	Robert B. Silvers Lecture (NY Public Library, Nov 2003)	*The New York Review of Books* (15 Jan 2004)	"A medida que una mujer envejece"	Cristóbal Pérez Barra	*Dos lecciones de Elizabeth Costello* (2015)
		The Best Australian Stories (2004)	"Una mujer que envejece"	Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)
			"Hitori no onna ga sai wo toru to"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
		Where There's Smoke (2015)	"Une femme en train de vieillir"	Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)

			"Quando una donna invecchia"	Paola Splendore	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"Als een vrouw ouder wordt"	Peter Bergsma	*Al seen vrouw ouder wordt* (2008) *De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)
"The Old Woman and the Cats"	Jaipur Literary Festival (Jan 2011)	*Cripplewood /Kreupelhout* (2013)	"La vieja de los gatos"	Daniel Gascón	*Letras Libres* (2014)
			"La vieja y los gatos"	Cristóbal Pérez Barra	*Dos lecciones de Elizabeth Costello* (2015)
			"La anciana y los gatos"	Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)
			"Roujyou to nekotachi"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
			"La vieille dame et ses chats"	Catherine Warnant	*Cripplewood /Kreupelhout* (2013)
				Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)
			"La vecchia e i gatti"	Maria Baiocchi	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"De oude vrouw en de katten"	Robrecht Vandemeulebroecke	*Cripplewood /Kreupelhout* (2013)
				Peter Bergsma	*De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)
"Lies"		*The New York Review of Books* (21 Dec 2017)	"Mentiras"	Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)
			"Uso"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
			"Mensonges"	Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)
			"Bugie"	Maria Baiocchi	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"Leugens"	Peter Bergsma	*De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)
"The Glass Abattoir"	Openair Literatur Festival (Zürich, 4 Jul 2017; simultaneous translation into German) International Conference (Buenos Aires, 11 Sept 2017)		"El matadero de cristal"	Elena Marengo	*Siete cuentos morales* (2018)

	Curtin University (12 Jun 2018)		"Garasu bari no shokuniku shorijyou"	Kubota Nozomi	*Moraru no hanashi* (2018)
			"L'abattoir de verre"	Georges Lory	*L'abattoir de verre* (2018)
	Melbourne Writers Festival (25 Aug 2018)		"Mattatoio di vetro"	Maria Baiocchi	*Bugie et altri racconti morali* (2019)
			"Het glazen abattoir"	Peter Bergsma	*De oude vrouw en de katten* (2019)

Table 2: Translation and Circulation of Short Stories in "Moral Tales" (July 2019)

As Table 2 shows, translation and circulation are much more complex in "born translated short stories" than in born translated novels, the genre about which most theories of world literature have been elaborated. Short stories, like poems, are portable literary artefacts par excellence. By "portability" I refer to the much wider range of publication options available to them vis-à-vis the novel (including newspapers, literary magazines, ad hoc implementations[33]), re-assemblage (typically, single-authored collections and multi-authored anthologies), retranslation, and oral presentation. Consider the case of "As a Woman Grows Older". Coetzee read this short story – at the time unpublished – for his 2003 Robert B. Silvers Lecture at the New York Public Library. Only some weeks after having been awarded the Nobel Prize, the writer "had vowed never to accept a lecture invitation"[34] but made an exception for this event, which was created in honour of Silvers, co-editor of *The New York Review of Books*. The exception he made saw him read "As a Woman Grows Older" instead of giving a conventional lecture. On 15 January 2004, this story was published in *The New York Review of Books* and later that year in the anthology *The Best Australian Stories* (and eleven years later in another anthology of short stories by "Australian men"). As of today, this story has been translated into Spanish (three times), Japanese, French, Italian, and Dutch (twice). In oral form, this story was presented for the first time in November 2003 and hence, this unrecorded English version[35] should be considered the "original". It was printed in English in 2003 (in a newspaper) and in 2004 and 2015 (within multi-authored anthologies). The first versions of the story within single-authored collections date from 2008 and 2019 (in Dutch) and 2015 and 2018 (in Spanish). Interestingly, Coetzee's decision to replace "lectures" with readings of his short stories has become quite common in his recent career at both academic events and literary venues. This makes it imperative that we consider two interrelated issues.

First, while novels may be presented at public readings, typically such presentations only cover some parts (one or more chapters) due to obvious time constraints. In contradistinction, short stories (like poems) are read in full and staged as "monologues". A case in point is "The Glass Abattoir", a reading of which took place during the 2018 Melbourne Writers Festival at Animal Church, a performance space and art installation dedicated to lost and loved animals' lives. While Caroline Levine has argued in favour of recognising "the global importance and diffusion of orature" as a goal for "world literature teaching and scholarship"[36], the bulk of her examples date from pre-modern times. This focus in her work results in downplaying the importance of orality and oral performances in the modern and contemporary era, including the role of literary readings in the promotion of a specific writer and the circulation of their work. It is no wonder from this perspective that Coetzee has built his *Elizabeth Costello* around the public presentations given by the celebrated, ageing homonymous Australian writer.[37]

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[33] By "ad hoc implementations" I refer to works created or used for a specific purpose and later republished. This is the case of "The Old Woman and the Cats", which Coetzee offered to Berlinde de Bruyckere as inspiration for Belgium's Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale; see Berlinde De Bruyckere and J.M. Coetzee, *Cripplewood/Kreupelhout* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2013) 7–12 and 21–28.

[34] Dinitia Smith, "Who Needs a Lecture? Coetzee Reads from a New Story", *The New York Times*, 22 November 2003.

[35] Recorded versions of the Robert B. Silvers Lectures, from 2006 onwards, are available online. Other public readings by Coetzee are available online, mainly on YouTube.

[36] Caroline Levine, "The Great Unwritten: World Literature and the Effacement of Orality", *Modern Language Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (June 2013): 232.

[37] The (almost) simultaneous circulation of born translated fiction in multiple languages creates a transnational interpretive community which may be correlated to the collective audience of literary readings, in which "[t]he presence of others watching and listening with me releases a power and a magic" (Kristin M. Langellier, "A Phenomenological Approach to Audience", *Literature in Performance* 3, no. 2

Second, Coetzee's decision to replace lectures with literary readings endows the literary texts on which the latter are based with a deep allegorical meaning. This meaning arises in accordance with the aims of the venue and intermingles John Coetzee-the-scholar-and-public-intellectual with J.M. Coetzee-the-writer, very much in the same way Elizabeth Costello combines literary reflections with societal issues.[38] To return to "The Glass Abattoir", in this story, John Bernard, Elizabeth Costello's son, receives some documents from her mother in which she discusses animal rights, a topic that can be traced back to the Australian writer's public lecture series "The Lives of Animals" (included in *Elizabeth Costello*). John Coetzee, in turn, is well known for being a vegetarian and animal rights activist and this cannot be disentangled from the topic of "The Glass Abattoir" or the fact that J.M. Coetzee read it in Melbourne at Animal Church surrounded by pictures of dear departed pets.

In the memorandum from the editor for *The Best Australian Stories 2004*, Frank Moorhouse claims that "the short story has become sub-economic, that is, … there is little economic validation afforded it and …, as an art form, it is not garnering sufficient resources from society to permit sustained serious work with the form."[39] The publication of short stories is a late addition to Coetzee's career and, leaving aside Moorhouse's comments on the genre's sub-economy, it is undeniable that re-assemblage, retranslation, and public readings offer maximum benefits and minimal costs. As shown in Table 2, "As a Woman Grows Older" has been retranslated into Spanish, while "The Old Woman and the Cats" has been retranslated into Spanish, French, and Dutch. Of these target languages, I will focus on Spanish in accordance with my general aims.

2. "WE MAY … FEEL AT HOME IN SPANISH"

Learning a foreign language is a demanding experience, particularly so when the aim is to speak it as one's own "mother tongue".[40] Once Simón has found a job as a docker in Novilla, he needs a place where his adopted child David can be taken care of. He asks his colleague Eugenio:

> "David, the child I am looking after, is still too young to go to school", he says. "Do you know anything about schools around here? Is there – he hunts for the term – *un jardín para los niños*?"
>
> "Do you mean a playground?"
>
> "No, a school for the younger children. A school before proper school".[41]

As a new speaker of Spanish, Simón is still "hunting" for words and when he does not know the proper term in Spanish, he coins terms according to the corresponding ones in his mother tongue, which he has forgotten after travelling across an ocean. Here he coins the term "jardín para los niños" (literally, 'garden for children'), which looks like a literal

(1983): 35), in contrast to solitary individual reading. For the importance of literary readings in contemporary Irish writers' careers, see Helena Wulff, "Literary Readings as Performance: On the Career of Contemporary Writers in the New Ireland", *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 17, no. 2 (September 2008): 98–113.

[38] Notice that in five out of the seven short stories in *Siete cuentos morales*, Elizabeth Costello is explicitly the main character.

[39] Frank Moorhouse, "Memorandum from the Editor", in *The Best Australian Stories 2004* (Melbourne: Black, 2004), x.

[40] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 107.

[41] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 22.

translation from the German *Kindergarten*.[42] But, for a native speaker (or a more fluent speaker) of Spanish – in this case, Eugenio – "jardín para los niños" is not an idiomatic expression and hence, he retranslates it into Spanish as *parque infantil* ("playground" in the English version), which is not the term Simón was looking for. Additionally, when learning a language that covers a vast transcontinental area, like Spanish, foreign learners acquire one standard which may prove problematic elsewhere. Thus, in a passage cited earlier, where Simón mentions a "stand-offish couple who pretend not to understand the Spanish"[43] he speaks, it is quite possible that they do not understand him because of the standard he has learned. Consider the example of *Kindergarten*, whose equivalent in Spanish Simón is looking for. While the right word in Peninsular Spanish is *parvulario*, in South American Spanish it is *jardín de infancia*.

In my metafictional reading, I first project this linguistic issue onto the "translations" of the Jesus trilogy to stress that, while the first and second books have been translated by the Spaniards Miguel Temprano García and Javier Calvo Perales, respectively, the third book has been translated by the Argentinian Elena Marengo. My second projection concerns "Moral Tales", which has undergone two partial translations and one complete translation. The Spaniard Daniel Gascón has translated "La vieja de los gatos". The Chilean Cristóbal Pérez Barra has translated "A medida que una mujer envejece" and "La vieja y los gatos" as part of *Dos lecciones de Elizabeth Costello*. A complete translation has been produced by the Argentinian Marengo and published as *Siete cuentos morales*. In the remainder of this section, I will focus on comparing the different versions of "La vieja de los gatos" and "A medida que una mujer envejece"/"Una mujer que envejece".

In the 1990s, theoretical assumptions on retranslation were indebted to Antoine Berman's "retranslation hypothesis", which reads: "We must retranslate because translations age and none is *the* translation; translating is an activity subject to time and an activity that has a temporality of its own, that of expiration and incompleteness."[44] On the one hand, the retranslation hypothesis stresses ideas of temporality and ageing, which are not always applicable (here, the translations by Gascón, Pérez Barra and Marengo are published between just twelve and forty-four months apart). On the other hand, it implies a teleological view – retranslation aims at completeness – which is still dependent on the privileged status of the "original" and the possibility of "fully" conveying its meaning. Translation scholars in the 2000s have criticised this approach to retranslation on the grounds of a variety of issues. For my purposes, I follow Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva in understanding "retranslation" as "subsequent translations of a text, or part of a text, carried out after the initial translation which introduced this text to the 'same' target language" in connection to "a synchronous struggle in the receiving system to create the target discourse into which these translations will be incorporated."[45]

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[42] Earlier I have mentioned that David sings Goethe's ballad "Erlköning" in German and hence, the possibility that German is his (as well as Simón's) mother tongue. Though *kindergarten* is a German loan word in English, David's ability to sing in German supports my hypothesis about his mother tongue. In the last book in the trilogy, David sings another song in German, "In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus", a poem by Friedrich Rückert set as *lied* by Gustav Mahler within the cycle *Kindertotenlieder*; see J.M. Coetzee, *Muerte*, 19.

[43] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 51.

[44] Antoine Berman, "La retraduction comme espace de la traduction", *Palimpsestes* 4 (1990): 1 (my trans.).

[45] Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva, "Multiple-Entry Visa to Travelling Theory: Retranslations of Literary and Cultural Theories", *Target* 15, no. 1 (2003): 2 and 5. The allusion to synchronicity is contradictory to Susam-Sarajeva's understanding of the "'same' target language" exclusively in terms of Gideon Toury's theories on constant language change in translations done in different periods of time (Susam-Sarajeva,

In short, what is at stake here is which Spanish "sociolinguistic landscape" Coetzee's fiction is introduced in. This is relevant due to at least three reasons. First, there is heated debate around what Mexican writer Vicente Leñero has called "los traductores gilipollas de Jorge Herralde" (Jorge Herralde's idiotic translators). Herralde is the founder and director of Anagrama, a powerful Spanish publishing house which has flooded the Latin American market with Spanish translations in a *lenguaje neutro* (a kind of koine Spanish) mixed with Peninsular Spanish idioms. Second, Coetzee has claimed that one of the reasons why his books are easy to translate is that his "English is rarely embedded in any particular sociolinguistic landscape, which relieves the translator of one potentially vexatious burden." While Coetzee shows a strong proprietary view on translation, whereby he is "gratified when a translator contacts … [him] for advice", he seems to be oblivious to the full gamut of translation choices beyond the "connotations that cannot dependably be evoked in the target [language]."[46] Third, language acquisition – "Course after course on Spanish: Beginner's Spanish (twelve sections), Intermediate Spanish (five sections), Advanced Spanish, Spanish Composition, Spanish Conversation"[47] – and the range of variation within Spanish-speaking countries function as a thematic, conceptual, and structural device in Coetzee's most recent fiction. This device is in tension with, on the one hand, Novilla, Nueva Esperanza, and Estrella, cities in the nameless country, and, on the other hand, Spain, where Spanish was born, and, more specifically, the "Castilian plateau", where Elizabeth Costello has decided to spend her last days.[48]

Spanish writer and translator Daniel Gascón published his translation of "The Old Woman and the Cats" in January 2014 in the printed and online journal *Letras Libres*. It is an authorised translation, which, however, has been reproduced without credits in Ecuadorian Fernando Escobar Páez's blog *El hombre aproximativo*. This blog is conceived as a virtual library of short texts by his favourite writers. It is most probably an unauthorised translation insofar as the inclusion of content on the blog is attributed to "señorita Sasha Grey", best known for her work in the pornographic film industry.

Published in 2015, *Dos lecciones de Elizabeth Costello* (Two Lessons by Elizabeth Costello) includes the only two published short stories available at this time where the ageing Australian writer is the main character – "A medida que una mujer envejece" ("As a Woman Grows Older") and "La vieja y los gatos" ("The Old Woman and the Cats"), the latter being a retranslation. The title choice establishes an explicit link with the 2003 book *Elizabeth Costello*, whose chapters are called "lessons", thereby positing a continuity between both books. In diegetic terms, these two "new" lessons are located some time before *Elizabeth Costello*'s eighth lesson, "At the Gate", which portrays the writer in a kind of "waiting room" for the afterlife.[49] In the Introduction to *Dos lecciones*, translator Pérez Barra explains his approach to translation:

> The English of J.M. Coetzee, whose mother tongue is Afrikaans, is linguistically neutral. It is not distinctively from South Africa, England, the United States, or Australia, the four countries where

"Multiple-Entry Visa", 30n1). It is here where I depart from Susam-Sarajeva to take into consideration intralingual synchronous variation.

[46] Coetzee, "Working with Translators", 408, 407 and 412.

[47] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 121.

[48] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 152; J.M. Coetzee, "The Old Woman and the Cats", in De Bruyckere and Coetzee, *Cripplewood/Kreupelhout*, 7.

[49] For an interpretation of "At the Gate" as an allegory of the writers' devalued paradise, see Valeria Mosca, "'A Purgatory of Clichés': Elizabeth Costello and the Impossible Paradise for Writers", *Altre Modernità / Otras Modernidades / Autres Modernités / Other Modernities* 7 (May 2012: *Paradisi*): 127–39.

> the writer has lived. In accordance with this, I have tried to always choose, as far as possible, words and constructions that were recognisable for Spanish speakers from both Spain and *America*.[50]

Postcolonial and glotopolitical studies show, on the contrary, that language can never be truly neutral. Writers in a postcolonial context may use either the language of the colonial centre, the language of the colonial centre as used in the colonised place, or their (sometimes re-adopted) mother tongue. There is no such thing as a language existing outside geography and politics. In the case of Pérez Barra, he himself makes explicit such geography and politics when he claims that by the "America" of the quote above he understands "the cultural and linguistic community that existed between the Río Grande and Tierra del Fuego at the time of Imperial Spain".[51] Furthermore, the translation choice of a "Transatlantic Spanish", as Pérez Barra calls it, seems to be in direct contradiction to two issues. First, *Dos lecciones* is a peculiar artefact which consists of a limited edition of 10 non-commercial copies and 100 commercial copies (all of them signed by Coetzee) and, therefore, it is difficult for it to reach a wide Transatlantic readership. Second, Pérez Barra confuses two different narrative levels, the first being the "represented object (within the original or reported speech-event)" and the second being "language as representational means (within the reporting speech-event)".[52] In the case of "La vieja y los gatos", such confusion is more blatant insofar as, while language as representational means may be rendered in "neutral Spanish" in accordance with Coetzee's "neutral English", language as represented object is different. Besides the verbal interactions between Elizabeth and her son John, there are verbal interactions from Pablo, who "was born in this village [San Juan Obispo, on the Castilian plateau] and has lived here all his life."[53] In Pérez Barra's defence, it is true that Pablo's interventions are brief and already rendered in Spanish – an "old-fashioned" Spanish[54] – in the English original. But what I am pointing out here is Pablo's as well as Elizabeth's Spanish *qua* represented object in the diegetic world, which can only be Castilian Spanish, mother tongue or acquired language, respectively.

Siete cuentos morales, in turn, is a rather different artefact. First, it includes all the short stories from the as yet unpublished "original" in English. Second, and similarly to *Dos lecciones*, the inclusion of the number "seven" in the title might point to a numerical continuity with *Elizabeth Costello* and its eight lessons, though it is debatable whether "lessons" and "moral tales" are synonymous in the sense that Coetzee defined the former as Bertolt Brecht's *Lehrstück*.[55] Third, it appeals to a wide, Transatlantic readership, at least in terms of publishing industry power, for it has been jointly published by the independent Argentinian publishing house El Hilo de Ariadna and Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, the Spanish division for Spain, Portugal, and Latin America of

[50] Cristóbal Pérez Barra, "Introducción", in J.M. Coetzee, *Dos lecciones de Elizabeth Costello*, ed. and trans. Cristóbal Pérez Barra (n.p.: El Faro, 2015), 12 (my trans. and emphasis). My emphasis on *America* ("América" in the original) follows the way Pérez Barra translates himself into English in a 2018 intervention: "recognisable to Spanish speakers both in Spain and America", in Cristóbal Pérez Barra, "Translating J.M. Coetzee in South America: In Search of Transatlantic Spanish", in Michael Hollington, "Translating Coetzee: A Panel Discussion", *Writers in Conversation* 5, no. 1 (February 2018): 10.

[51] Cristóbal Pérez Barra, "Translating J.M. Coetzee", 10.

[52] Meir Sternberg, "Polylingualism as Reality and Translation as Mimesis", *Poetics Today* 2, no. 4 (Summer–Autumn 1981): 222.

[53] J.M. Coetzee, "The Old Woman", 9.

[54] J.M. Coetzee, "The Old Woman", 28.

[55] The inclusion of "seven" by the publishing house might mirror the inclusion of the subtitle "Eight Lessons" in the case of *Elizabeth Costello* when it was first published by Secker in 2003. For similarities with Brecht's *Lehrstück*, see Pérez Barra, "Introducción", 10.

the US multinational corporation Penguin Random House.[56] Fourth, it retranslates two short stories ("La vieja de los gatos" included in *El hombre aproximativo* and "La vieja y los gatos" and "A medida que una mujer envejece" in *Dos lecciones*) and reprints one ("Una historia", previously published in the newspaper *Clarín. Revista Ñ*).[57] In Tables 3 and 4 I list the most significant translation similarities and discrepancies between both retranslated short stories in terms of three Spanish sociolinguistic landscapes – Latin American Spanish, Peninsular Spanish, and "Transatlantic Spanish", the latter concept having been coined by Pérez Barra to name "words and constructions that … [are] recognisable for Spanish speakers from both Spain and *America*".[58] Though several names for the latter sociolinguistic landscape exist, suffice here to mention two of them as formulated on either side of the Atlantic. For Eva Bravo García, *español internacional* (international Spanish) – as named in Spain – stresses "the common dimension of the language shared by all Spanish-speaking countries. Internationalism is underlined as positive, a value that fosters the circulation and acceptance of products while guaranteeing mutual understanding and a low rate of rejection."[59] For Pedro Luis Barcia, *español general* (general Spanish) – as named in Latin America – makes reference "to words which represent the shared pan-Hispanic heritage … [around] 80%".[60]

The corpus I present in Tables 3 and 4 is not the result of a set of criteria being systematically applied, but rather a random selection of lexical (dis)similarities, which, in terms of Barcia's description, point to either the 80% of vocabulary that is shared between the nine regions of the "pan-Hispanic community" or to the 20% of shared regional vocabulary.[61] A more systematic analysis, which I will carry out in the near future, may be based on the methodology of "parallel corpora".[62] Due to the high percentage of lexical commonality in *español general*, I claim that both similarities and dissimilarities as shown in Tables 3 and 4 may provide a clear picture as to whether these translations are pan-Hispanic or regionally oriented. The identification of the sociolinguistic landscape is based on the *Diccionario de la lengua española* for Peninsular Spanish, *Diccionario de americanismos*, *Diccionario del español de Argentina* and *Diccionario de variantes del español* for Latin American Spanish, whereas "Transatlantic Spanish" is considered unmarked (and only referenced with the *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas* in case of doubt).

[56] This ad hoc consortium is also responsible for the publication of *La muerte de Jesús*, which has also been translated by Marengo. The Argentinian publishing house El Hilo de Ariadna commissioned the translation into Spanish of both "Moral Tales" and *The Death of Jesus* to Elena Marengo upon J.M. Coetzee's request (Marengo's e-mail message to author, 21 August 2019).

[57] Though "Una historia" was published in *Clarín. Revista Ñ* without identifying the translator, a comparison with *Siete cuentos morales* shows there is no difference and hence, it should be considered a pre-published translation by Marengo intended to publicise the forthcoming publication of *Siete cuentos morales*.

[58] Pérez Barra, "Introducción", 12 (my trans.).

[59] Eva Bravo García, *El español internacional. Conceptos, contextos y aplicaciones* (Madrid: Arco/Libros, 2008), 28 (my trans.).

[60] Pedro Luis Barcia, "El español adveniente: ¿neutro? ¿general? ¿glocal? ¿internacional?", *Boletín de la Academia Argentina de Letras* 77 (January-April 2012), no. 319–20:150 (my trans.).

[61] Barcia, "El español adveniente", 150 and 148n21.

[62] For the parallel corpora method, see Bengt Altenberg, "Adverbial Connectors in English and Swedish: Semantic and Lexical Correspondences", in *Out of Corpora: Studies in Honour of Stig Johansson*, ed. Hilde Hasselgård and Signe Oksefjell, 249–68 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999). I am grateful to Inmaculada Mas Álvarez for pointing out to me the relevance of this method, which in my case needs to be adapted to intralingual similarities.

	English "Original"	Pérez Barra's Translation	Sociolinguistic Landscape	Marengo's Translation	Sociolinguistic Landscape
3.1	American	americanos	TS (DPD)	norteamericanos	TS (DPD)
3.2	boaters	panamás	LaS (DLE, DVE)	sombreros de paja	TS
3.3	old city	ciudad vieja	TS	casco antiguo de la ciudad	TS
3.4	pencil skirts	faldas tubo	PS (DLE)	polleras[63] tubo	LaS (DEA)
3.5	owlish glasses	anteojos de búho	LaS (DA, DEA)	anteojos de lechuza	LaS (DA, DEA)
3.6	chignon	moño	PS (DLE)	rodete[63]	LaS (DEA)
3.7	conference	conferencia[64]	?	congreso	TS
3.8	apartment	departamento	LaS (DEA)	departamento[63]	LaS (DEA)
3.9	become gaga	volverme gagá	PS (DLE)	ponerme senil	TS
3.10	death business	negocio de la muerte	? (literal translation)	negocio de las funerarias	TS
3.11	waterskater	zapatero	TS	patinador de agua	TS
3.12	girl with the sideline in prostitution	chica con el oficio lateral en la prostitución	? (literal translation)	muchacha que ejerce la prostitución	TS
3.13	you	tú	TS	a vosotros	PS
3.14	Uncle Harry	tío Harry	? (literal translation)	—	—
3.15	a *pleasant* last meal	una *agradable* última comida	TS	una *linda* cena	LaS (DEA)

Table 3: Spanish Retranslations of "As a Woman Grows Older"
LaS=Latin American Spanish; PS=Peninsular Spanish; TS=Transatlantic Spanish

[63] It is included in the *Diccionario del español de Argentina* because "though the term is common in Peninsular Spanish", it has "(additional, different) meanings in Argentinian Spanish which Peninsular Spanish does not have", in Günther Haensch and Reinhold Werner, *Diccionario del español de Argentina. Español de Argentina – Español de España* (Madrid: Gredos, 2000), xlvii (my trans.).

[64] *Conferencia* meaning 'congress' in Spanish is an English foreign loan based on "conference".

DA=*Diccionario de americanismos*; DEA=*Diccionario del español de Argentina*: DLE=*Diccionario de la lengua Española*: DPD=*Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*; DVE=*Diccionario de variantes del español*

	English "Original"	**Gascón's Translation**	**Sociolinguistic Landscape**	**Pérez Barra's Translation**	**Sociolinguistic Landscape**	**Marengo's Translation**	**Sociolinguistic Landscape**
4.1	old woman	vieja[65]	LaS (DA)	vieja[65]	LaS (DA)	anciana	TS
4.2	beans	frijoles	LaS (DA, DVE)	alubias	PS (DLE)	alubias	PS (DLE)
4.3	expose himself	exhibirse	TS	mostrar las presas[66]	LaS (DA)	hacer exhibicionismo	TS
4.4	next move	próxima mudanza	TS	próxima movida	LaS (DA)	próximo movimiento	TS
4.5	parka	parka	TS	*parca*	TS (parka)	campera[63]	LaS (DA, DEA)
4.6	tofu	tofu	TS	tofu	TS	queso de soja	TS
4.7	culvert	alcantarilla	PS (DLE)	alcantarilla	PS (DLE)	albañal	LaS (DA)
4.8	potatoes	patatas	PS (DLE, DVE)	papas	LaS (DA)	papas	LaS (DA)
4.9	socks	calcetines	PS (DLE)	calcetines	PS (DLE)	medias[67]	LaS (DA)
4.10	glasses	gafas	PS (DLE)	anteojos	LaS (DA, DEA)	anteojos[63]	LaS (DA, DEA)
4.11	newspaper clippings	recortes de periódicos	PS (DLE)	recortes de periódicos	PS (DLE)	recortes de diarios	LaS (Barcia 2012, 155)
4.12	Spanish estate	patrimonio español	TS	caudal hereditario español	?	finca de España	TS

[65] Whereas *vieja* (old) has a pejorative meaning in Peninsular Spanish, this is not the case in Latin American Spanish, where it may be used to address somebody affectionately, including parents, relatives, and friends.

[66] According to the *Diccionario de americanismos*, *presa* in Chilean Spanish means 'animals' organs' and 'a person's body part', which may explain why Pérez Barra translates 'expose himself' as *mostrar las presas* (literally, 'show one's parts').

[67] Whereas in Peninsular Spanish *medias* means only 'tights', in Latin American Spanish *medias* means both 'tights' and 'socks'.

4.13	*take care of*	encargarse de	LaS (DA)	*cuidar de*	?	*encargara de*	LaS (DA)
4.14	America	América	TS? (DPD)	América	TS? (DPD)	Estados Unidos	TS

Table 4: Spanish Retranslations of "The Old Woman and the Cats"
LaS=Latin American Spanish; PS=Peninsular Spanish; TS=Transatlantic Spanish
DA=*Diccionario de americanismos*; DEA=*Diccionario del español de Argentina*: DLE=*Diccionario de la lengua Española*: DPD=*Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*; DVE=*Diccionario de variantes del español*

Differences between Spanish in the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish in Latin America are not exclusively limited to vocabulary. And yet, vocabulary is one of the most visible dimensions of variation in writing.[68] Furthermore, neither Latin American Spanish (*español de América*) nor Peninsular Spanish (*español de España*) exist as such, but are a "fact of consciousness and a mental body of values".[69] From this perspective, Tables 3 and 4 show that Pérez Barra's translation aims at literalism to the point of including loans and word-for-word translations (3.12, 3.14; 4.12), which may add opaqueness to the text for a speaker of any variant. A case in point is "Uncle Harry", which in the context of the story means 'sex offender'. Pérez translates this literally (*tío Harry*), while Marengo eliminates it.[70] In accordance with the special features of *Dos lecciones* as literary artefact, it might have been an appropriate "laboratory" in which to experiment with a translation from English into a marked Latin American Spanish. But, as already mentioned, Pérez Barra aims at a "Transatlantic Spanish", which, nonetheless, is not predominant (3.3, 3.11, 3.13, 3.15; 4.5), unless one understands "Transatlantic Spanish" as an eclectic mixture of Latin American Spanish (3.2, 3.5, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8, 4.10) and Peninsular Spanish (3.4, 3.6, 3.9; 4.2, 4.7, 4.9, 4.11). Equally eclectic is Gascón's translation. I find Pérez Barra's translation of "Americans" as *americanos* (and "America" as *América*) enlightening in this regard. This national demonym for US nationals results in excluding the rest of the Americas, as made clear by Marengo's choice of *norteamericanos* (and *Estados Unidos*).[71] In contradistinction, Marengo's translation is clearly oriented towards Latin America (3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.15; 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11, 4.13) – an aim also visible in *La muerte de Jesús* – and hence, typically Peninsular Spanish choices (3.13; 4.2) are only residually present. In short, feeling "at home in Spanish"[72], something that Simón anticipates will only be possible for David and Fidel's generation, is much more complex than simply translating from (neutral) English into (neutral) Spanish.[73]

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[68] Another visible variation is *voseo* (the use of *vos* as a second-person singular pronoun and its conjugational verbal forms), which understandably Pérez Barra does not use, whereas it might have been an option for Marengo.

[69] José Joaquín Montes G., "Lingüística, idiomática y español de América", *Revista de Filología Española* 72, no. 3–4 (1992): 343.

[70] Coetzee, "As a Woman Grows Older", *The New York Review of Books*, January 15, 2004, 14; Coetzee, *Dos lecciones*, 35. Another extreme example is the translation of "yapping *bleak*, *bleak*, *bleak*" in "As a Woman Grows Older", a phrase that Pérez Barra understands as the onomatopoeic representation of a howl and hence, phonically renders as "aullando *¡blic, blic, blic!*" (Coetzee, *Dos lecciones*, 19), which, by the way, is not how one would express a howl in Spanish. Marengo, on the other hand, translates this as "ladrando: *lúgubre*, *lúgubre*, *lúgubre*" (Coetzee, *Siete cuentos*, 46).

[71] Furthermore, Pérez Barra's choice contradicts his aforementioned definition of "America" as 'Spanish-speaking areas of the Americas'.

[72] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 107.

[73] I note an extremely illustrative example of this complexity in the following passage of "As a Woman Grows Older". The original in English reads: "no one seems any longer to be aware that the verb 'may' has a past tense – what is the world coming to?" (Coetzee, "As a Woman", 11). Pérez Barra chooses a literal translation – "ya nadie parece estar al tanto de que el verbo 'poder' tiene un tiempo pasado (¿adónde vamos a ir a parar?)" (Coetzee, *Dos lecciones*, 14–15), which requires a footnote that provides the Spanish-speaking reader with a grammatical explanation for the distinction may/might in English. In contradistinction, Marengo replaces it with a grammatical mistake in Spanish: "nadie parece darse cuenta ya de que no se dice *aplicar* a una beca, ¡a qué hemos llegado!" (Coetzee, *Siete cuentos*, 42). *Aplicar* means 'to apply' in Spanish, but it is not equivalent to one of the word's most typical uses in English, "to apply for a job, fellowship, etc.". The latter use is becoming pervasive in certain areas due to the influence of English. I take Marengo's choice as a perfect example of the multipolarity and linguistic diversity within Spanish for it aligns Peninsular Spanish and Río de la Plata norms against other norms from the US,

3. "WE MAY HAVE TO LEARN CHINESE"

In the fictional world of the Jesus trilogy, there is a sharp awareness of "global languages". By "global language" I am referring to David Crystal's vision of a language which "develops a special role that is recognized in every country" whereby said language is "taken up by other countries around the world" by giving it "a special place within their communities, even though they may have few (or no) mother-tongue speakers."[74] I qualify Crystal's definition in the sense that the "clean" process he names as "taking up" is the result of imperialism and epistemic violence. Both David and Simón mistake German as English, perhaps because the latter is a global language in their fictional world, though they do not speak it. David asks Simón "Why do I have to speak Spanish all the time?", a question impregnated with some anxiety – "I hate Spanish … I want to speak my own language" – typical of how a global language makes "all other languages unnecessary".[75] Global languages may even extend their power to the afterlife, as when Simón reassures David they will not have to speak Spanish in the next life, though "[o]n the other hand, … [they] may have to learn Chinese."[76]

In my reading, I claim there is some correspondence between, on the one hand, the territory of Spanish as tensioned between "the Castilian plateau" and the land "across the ocean" in which Coetzee's latest fiction takes place, and, on the other hand, Coetzee's deliberate choice of Spanish as *in primis* target language for *Siete cuentos morales* and *La muerte de Jesús*. The reception of such a choice by the Spanish-speaking world has been enthusiastic on both sides of the Atlantic. I have already mentioned Abdala's article for the Argentinian newspaper *Clarín* in which she states that Coetzee "writes in English but an Argentinian translates his books and these translations are considered the original version." Antonio Rivero Travillo, on 4 July 2019, published an article in the Catalan newspaper *Crónica global*'s online cultural magazine in which he claims "the translation by the Argentinian Elena Marengo is considered the original version, as strange as it may seem. … translations into all other languages are based on the Spanish. Even the English will be based on the Spanish".[77] Such enthusiasm will surely be tempered by more rigorous scholarship.

In contrast to the case of *The Death of Jesus*, current translations of *Moral Tales* into Japanese, French, Italian, and Dutch are not based on *Siete cuentos morales*, but on the manuscript of "Moral Tales" in English.[78] A rather different issue is whether Coetzee might be introducing changes in his manuscript in English as a result of his collaborative work with translators. A relevant anecdote in this regard is what happened when Spanish translator Miguel Temprano García pointed out "a very slight inconsistency in the text [of *The Childhood of Jesus*]" to Coetzee. As "the English version had already been published", Coetzee told Temprano García "to translate the passage as it stood, adding

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Honduras, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, and Colombia, amongst others, where *aplicar*, meaning 'to apply for something', is correct.

[74] David Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3 and 4.

[75] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 186; Crystal, *English*, 15.

[76] Coetzee, *Childhood*, 158.

[77] Antonio Rivero Travillo, "Coetzee, en español", *Letra Global*, 4 July 2019 (my trans.).

[78] I will discuss elsewhere the specificities of the translation into Spanish of the Jesus trilogy, whose third volume represented, according to Marengo, an "unique experiment", namely, transforming the Spanish version into the "source text" (e-mail message to author, 21 August 2019).

that he 'would have to live with the contradiction the rest of his days.'"[79] The longer the time lapse between translations and the publication of the source text in English, the more likely the introduction of changes in the latter will be.

The transfer I have been describing here from English into Spanish by Coetzee is therefore a transfer between two global languages, however different their power might be.[80] Though it is tempting to read this transfer in terms of the last stage in Coetzee's career,[81] the interplay between J.M. Coetzee and John Coetzee plays a prominent role. Coetzee read his short story "The Glass Abattoir" in Buenos Aires on 11 September 2017 at the international conference "La obra de John Maxwell Coetzee en Latinoamérica" (John Maxwell Coetzee's Work in Latin America), which was organised by the Cátedra Coetzee "Literaturas del Sur" (Coetzee Chair "Literatures of the South") at the Universidad Nacional de San Martín. Such a reading represents a characteristic example of the (con)fusion, deliberate or not, between the writer, the public intellectual, and the scholar. The aim of the Coetzee Chair is to foster communication and exchange between writers, critics, researchers, and professors from South Africa, Australia, Latin America, and other southern regions. In such a context, Coetzee read (in English) a short story featuring the Australian writer Elizabeth Costello as she spent her last days in Castile and discussed one of her obsessions, animal rights.

The Argentinian Coetzee Chair is another scholarly initiative either led or motivated by the writer in connection with the literatures of the Global South. It sits alongside "Forms of World Literature", a project at the University of Adelaide, and "Transnational Coetzee: Revisioning World Literature through the Margins", a project at Macquarie University. The link established between the Global South and world literature deserves further investigation, both theoretical and empirical. In this latter regard, the publishing house El Hilo de Ariadna's collection "Biblioteca Personal" (Personal Library), which includes twelve classics in Spanish translation of *literatura universal*[82] selected and presented by Coetzee, is a case in point. As in the case of *Siete cuentos morales* and *La muerte de Jesús*, Coetzee celebrates the fact that "this 'library' will be published first in the Spanish-speaking world".[83] Whether the chronological pre-eminence of a global language (Spanish) in relation to another global language (English) is really instrumental in challenging language politics in our global world is a matter for contention. Likewise, imitating Coetzee's neutral English with a Transatlantic Spanish from within Latin America might result in "arriving to the empire from language … [and] imagining first the transfer from natural resource to economic resource", and hence,

[79] Miguel Temprano García, "'A Watery Content': Some Observations about Translating *The Childhood of Jesus* by Its Translator into Spanish", in Michael Hollington, "Translating Coetzee: A Panel Discussion", *Writers in Conversation* 5, no. 1 (February 2018): 9. In contrast to the first translation (into Dutch), here it is the Spanish one that achieves an authoritative status insofar as it may have corrected the English original. But the primacy Coetzee allocates to the source text in English introduces serious doubts to any argument about the privileged role performed by "originals" in Spanish.

[80] One may read in a similar light the fact that the text on the back cover of the book is written by Anna Kazumi Stahl, a US writer who has lived in Argentina since 1995 and writes in Spanish.

[81] Coetzee himself has referred to such an end (see Abdala, "La revolución"), while Domingo Ródenas de Moya titled his 2010 article on the writer "El estilo tardío y la autorrepresentación" (Late Style and Self-Representation), following Edward W. Said's concept.

[82] *Literatura universal*, coined from the French *littérature universelle*, is the academic term for the international corpus of literary classics in the Spanish-speaking world. Both its genealogy and frictions with the Anglophone term "world literature" are yet to be explored.

[83] The quote comes from the description of the collection on the publishing house's website <https://editorialelhilodeariadna.com.ar/colecciones/detalle/9> (my trans.; accessed 10 July 2019).

contradict David's desire that "Don Quijote debería venir *aquí* y … deberíamos hacer buenas hazañas *aquí*".[84]

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[84] Josefina Ludmer, *Aquí América Latina: Una especulación* (Buenos Aires: Eterna Cadencia, 2010), 190; Coetzee, *Muerte*, 103 (emphasis in original; Don Quijote should come *here* and we should perform feats *here*; my trans.). Here I am correlating David's desire (*deseo*) with Ludmer's argument about "two Latin American desires" (*dos deseos latinoamericanos*) – her desire for Latin America to have its own language academy and to be a confederation of nations (Ludmer, *Aquí América Latina*, 191 and 212–15n15).

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