

Graduate Program in Translation
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**Other Bodies: A Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Anthology from Puerto Rico and its
Diaspora**

(a translation of three texts from *Los otros cuerpos: antología de
temática gay, lésbica y queer desde Puerto Rico y su diáspora*)

by
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Translator's Preface

Introduction

When looking for a text for my thesis project, I knew I wanted to translate something that either fell into one of my favorite genres of literature or touched on subjects I am interested in and passionate about. I originally intended to translate a few chapters from a murder mystery that seemed to have the added bonus of LGBTQ+ representation in the form of a trans woman as one of the main characters. However, as the story progressed, this character turned from what I initially thought to be something positive into what was, in my opinion, a fairly negative depiction of a trans woman. There are bad people in all walks of life, but when the only representation of the LGBTQ+ community in a work is what amounts to a selfish manipulator it lends itself to casting a negative light on that community, especially given the context for this character's selfish acts in particular. As part of the community, I believe that representation—and the quality of that representation—matters. Having this in mind, I decided I wanted to translate something related to the LGBTQ+ community, but also specific to the context of Puerto Rico.

I chose a selection of three texts from the anthology *Los otros cuerpos: antología de temática gay, lesbica y queer desde Puerto Rico y su diáspora*, which gathers the writings of authors from Puerto Rico and its diaspora who either belong to or write about characters from the LGBTQ+ community. Compiled by David Caleb Acevedo, Moisés Agosto Rosario, and Luis Negrón, it was released in Latin America as the second anthology of its kind and provides a space for 44 different authors to depict situations and issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community through their writing. This anthology brings together poetry, short stories, novel excerpts, and essays that touch on issues of sexuality and gender such as homophobia, internalized homophobia, transphobia, and acceptance of the self among other issues that the members of the LGBTQ+

community must deal with on a daily basis in the context of the island of Puerto Rico and its diaspora.

An anthology like this is especially important when one takes into consideration that it was published in 2007, a time when Puerto Rico was still largely intolerant toward the LGBTQ+ community. Even though LGBTQ+ rights in Puerto Rico have progressed in recent years, its society and culture are still largely conservative as has been illustrated by the pushback from the Catholic and evangelical Christian churches, both of which are highly influential on the island, as well as religious conservatives, which has led to attempts at legislation such as what was called the “Religious Liberty Bill” in early June 2019, which would grant “reasonable accommodations” for government workers who did not want to serve people whose views might be in conflict with their religious beliefs” in an effort to cater to these religious conservative groups (Rosa and Mazzei). Thus, LGBTQ+ themes are not talked about as freely outside certain spaces and could still be considered taboo to a degree. This anthology provides a space that seeks to give voice to the concerns, motives, and desires of the Puerto Rican LGBTQ+ community; the texts therein paint a picture of what members of the community face in Puerto Rico and in some parts of the United States, but they also showcase how these people express themselves and their identity, showing the humanity of people who have often been considered “Other,” dehumanized, and suppressed in the past.

These texts, and the anthology as a whole, could be a useful tool for self-discovery, reflection, and self-acceptance for those still learning who they are, giving them the chance to analyze themselves and gain a better understanding by reading authors who have lived and witnessed these questions on identity. It could also be educational to those who consider themselves allies of the community and wish to better understand their circumstances. The

literature within contains realistic depictions of what Queer individuals can encounter in daily life as well as analyses on Puerto Rican culture and its views toward the LGBTQ+ community. Its translation would provide access and better understanding to people who are still going through their own process of self-discovery and do not know the Spanish language or are not fluent in it. It would also provide an expression of these situations that can be valuable to many audiences elsewhere.

The Authors

Each of the translated texts has a short paragraph on its author before it begins, however I would like to expand on these short paragraphs.

Frances Negrón Muntaner

A Puerto Rican writer, filmmaker, and political activist, Frances Negrón Muntaner obtained a bachelor's degree in Sociology at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, in 1986 before traveling to Philadelphia to continue her studies at Temple University, where she obtained two master's degrees in Visual Anthropology and Fine Arts in Film and Video in 1991 and 1994, respectively. She later obtained a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Rutgers University in the year 2000.

As a filmmaker and writer, she has explored issues of sexuality, colonialism, migration, and nationalism with films such *AIDS in the Barrio: eso no me pasa a mí*, which she co-directed, in 1989, and *Brincando el charco: retrato de una puertorriqueña* in 1995, which is based on her own experiences after moving to Philadelphia to continue her studies (Frances Negrón Muntaner y su mirada latinoamericana). She also explores these issues in books and publications such as *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture* (2004), *The Latino Media*

Gap (2014), and *Sovereign Acts: Contesting Colonialism in Native Nations and Latinx America* (2017), among others (Francés Negrón Muntaner CSER).

Emilio del Carril

Emilio del Carril holds a master's degree in Creative Writing and a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Literature with a concentration in Puerto Rican and Caribbean Literature and is a professor at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón. He was an active member of the Pen Club International, Puerto Rico Chapter, from 2007 to 2012, leading annual awards events held by the organization during said period. He also held the positions of both vice president and president of this chapter.

Specializing in narrative theory, autofiction, and the theme of the erotic-sacred in literature and micro-fiction, he has presented papers in various Latin American countries, and his articles and stories have been published by newspapers, literary magazines and journals such as *El Nuevo Día*, *Taller Literario*, and *Editorial Norma*, as well as electronic newspapers and websites from Denmark, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico (Biografía). He is the author of such works as *Cinco minutos para ser infiel... y otras divagaciones testiculares* (2007), *En el reino de la Garúa, primera jornada: entre soles, lunas, amores y desamores* (2016), and *En el oscuro reino de la Garúa, segunda jornada* (2018).

Rubén Ríos Ávila

Rubén Ríos Ávila obtained a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Cornell University in 1983. The author of works such as *Emboadura* and *La raza cómica: del sujeto en Puerto Rico*, he was a professor for twenty-nine years in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, where he served as chair on three different occasions. In 2012, he accepted a position as director of the graduate program in Creative Writing in Spanish at New

York University where he also taught literature, film, and literary theory in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese until 2021.

Why these Texts?

As previously stated, three texts were chosen from an anthology to be translated for this thesis project: the short story “Un rayo de luz para la luna negra” by Emilio del Carril, and the two essays “Metiendo la pata” by Frances Negrón Muntaner and “Queer Nation” by Rubén Ríos Ávila. I chose these specific texts because they all discussed or addressed themes pertinent to the LGBTQ+ experience on the island in their own way, including sexuality, how it is viewed in Puerto Rico, and homophobia in the context of the island. I would have liked to include transgender issues as well, however the stories that addressed these issues were either too long—taking the word count of the texts to be translated to almost 16,000—or too short—keeping the word count around 9,000.

“Un rayo de luz para la luna negra”—the title of which I translated as “A Ray of Light for the Dark Moon”—by Emilio del Carril, originally published in 2007 in his book *5 minutos para ser infiel y otras divagaciones testiculares*, tells the story of an old man who realizes he is not as straight as he thought in his seventies while still married to the woman he has been with for decades. It touches on the subjects of homophobia and internalized homophobia, as well as the process of accepting one's identity at an already advanced age as the main character comes to grips with his initially unwanted and inconvenient attraction to another man.

Of the twenty-one short stories found within the anthology, I was drawn to “Un rayo de luz para la luna negra” in particular because, as the story of a man in his seventies who finds himself attracted to another man for the first time in his life, it gives representation to a part of the

Queer community that I have seldom seen depicted in literature, films and television. I have very rarely seen senior members of the LGBTQ+ community represented—be it in books, comics, TV shows, video games, etc.—much less the percentage of this community that discovers this part of their identity in their older years. The concept of intersectionality comes into play as a factor for this lack of representation.

Intersectionality is a term that was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1991. Within intersectional frameworks, “race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other aspects of identity are considered mutually constitutive; that is, people experience these multiple aspects of identity simultaneously and the meanings of different aspects of identity are shaped by one another” (Kang et al.). This short story brings to the forefront a population that experiences invisibility on two fronts, since even the senior population that identifies as heterosexual and cisgender account for a low percentage of the population depicted in media. For example, according to a study published in 2017 by the Media, Diversity, & Social Change Initiative with a sample of seventy-two popular television series at the time, this population comprised less than 10% of the speaking characters in these shows (Smith 2).

This lack of true representation is even more glaring in its absence when it comes to senior members of the LGBTQ+ community. Representation of the community has become broader, more open, and less taboo in recent years, and finding books, movies, comics, video games, music, etc. with good representation is much easier for certain sectors of the community than it once was. However, the same cannot be said for representation of its senior members. The aforementioned study mentions that among the shows selected there were a total of forty-eight LGBTQ+ characters that were series regulars, only four of which were seniors (Smith 2).

As previously mentioned, this text also addresses the theme of internalized homophobia. Miguel, the main character in this story, admits during the story that he had always condemned any signs of queerness in other men in the past, and that finding himself attracted to another man made him feel like life was playing a prank on him in his old age. His internalized feelings of homophobia are represented in the story by a white owl he encounters on three different occasions, which he feels is there to judge him, calling him derogatory names that in reality he is using against himself. The owl also symbolizes the beginnings of self-acceptance when in the third encounter it simply flies away once Miguel makes peace with his feelings toward this other man.

Meanwhile, the two essays that I translated tackle homophobia at a societal and governmental level, explaining how at the time of publication being in any way Queer could prove detrimental to an individual's career and future, and even their life in some cases. They use examples such as how Zaida "Cucusa" Hernández was treated by her fellow politicians when it was implied that she could be a lesbian due to how she carried herself and the amount of attention Ricky Martin's possible homosexuality got at the time. Ríos Ávila's essay "Queer Nation" uses the titular phrase to illustrate the strange position Puerto Rico is faced with when it comes to its relationship to the United States, and how this, coupled with its history as a Spanish colony, has led to what the author describes as a rather rigid idea of Puerto Ricanness. Said Puerto Ricanness is based on shared traits, perhaps even reliant on them, and leaves little space for celebrating what makes us different, which could serve to further aggravate the labeling of the LGBTQ+ community as Other by many on the island to the point where even activism related to this community hid its queerness by using a title that did nothing to advertise its purpose:

Pedro Julio Serrano's case is interesting. After a failed attempt at acquiring a legislative seat for the New Progressive Party with a gay agenda, he created a non-profit organization

to address problems of discrimination based on sexual orientation in the country. Curiously, the organization is called *Puerto Rico para Tod@s* (Puerto Rico for All). There is not even the smallest allusion in that name to the sexual orientation of the activists that compose the organization, as if the phrase Puerto Rico erases, with its magnetic power, any potentially onerous difference. (Rios Ávila 298; my own translation)

Rios Ávila also mentions Freud's ideas on the psychology of the masses in his book *Group Psychology* and his stance that all nations are the product of a foreigner, a foreign idea. According to Freud, nations often try to distance themselves from this founding idea, but they would be utterly dysfunctional without it; Rios Ávila uses this to argue that the Queer community found itself needing to put some distance between itself and Queer desire to combat homophobia:

Ultimately, the true fear from which homophobia originates does not come from aspects of homosexual communities that can be socialized, such as their ability to start a family, contribute to the state, and significantly contribute to that culture that ends in the market and in capital. ... We live in an until-recently unimagined era of gay visibility on multiple levels.

What is certain, however, is that the peak of this gay visibility is an ironic indicator of the disappearance of a Queer impulse that gay culture itself erases as it becomes socialized. Gay culture ends up defending itself and even expelling Queer passion from its sphere, especially because it intuits the violence it unleashes on communities regulated by consensus and consumption. Queer desire is the foreigner that does not fit within the gay polis, even though it is the foreigner that founded it, its secret origin. (Rios Ávila 305; my own translation)

According to this assertion, Queer desire is that foreign origin for this Queer nation, but it is also what homophobia is directed toward, thus, in order to avoid potential danger, the community must distance itself from that desire. At the time—and in many cases today as well—members of the community had to be careful who they divulged their sexuality to, and in many instances, it might have been deemed more judicious to keep that identity a secret.

Finally, “*Metiendo la pata*” tackles homophobia expressed through censorship of LGBTQ+ subjects in the media. Negrón Muntaner depicts her own personal experiences of having two different articles censored because they tackled the mere possibility of prominent Puerto Rican public figures being part of the LGBTQ+ community and how that should not have been an issue at all, much less one that could cost someone career opportunities or their career in its entirety. However, at the time homosexuality was still something that could be used against an individual as a sort of Achilles’ heel, as illustrated by the campaign used against Zaida “Cucusa” Hernández when she ran for mayor of San Juan in 1996.

When Cucusa herself, a capable woman, aspired to the post of mayor of San Juan during the 1996 elections, she was the victim of what cyber-activist Georgie Irizarry has called a “disgusting campaign” summarized by the terrible slogan, both for its homophobia and its insidious cleverness, of “no metas la pata en San Juan” or “don’t put a dyke in San Juan.”

(Negrón Muntaner 348 ; my own translation)

Things have improved since then, and the fact that several individuals who are openly part of the LGBTQ+ community were elected during the Puerto Rico 2020 elections would seem proof of that. However, the efforts toward acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community must continue, for there are still many obstacles and possible setbacks to consider. For example, there was a situation as recently as 2019 regarding leaks of a group chat between the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo

Rosselló, and other government officials where discriminatory attitudes were prevalent, homophobia and transphobia among them (Jackson). We are also now faced with various government officials, such as members from the *Proyecto Dignidad* party, who are actively trying to roll back LGBTQ+ rights on the island.

The Translation and its Challenges

The Titles

As an anthology that seeks to give Puerto Rico's LGBTQ+ community a space for expression, it is unsurprising that the title chosen for this anthology was *Los otros cuerpos*. This title alludes to how this community has been historically relegated to the role of the Other by society and the prejudice, discrimination, and mistreatment that it has faced—and in many cases still faces—as a result of that. The term *Other* is often used to designate those who do not conform to or do not fit society's preconceived ideas of what is and is not acceptable or the norm. I knew that the translation of the title needed to capture this the same way the original did. However, my original attempt was too literal a translation, as I rendered the complete title as “The Other Bodies: Anthology of Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Themes from Puerto Rico and its Diaspora.” I considered “The Others” for the anthology's main title; however, the body of works compiled within the anthology revolved around Queer characters, their experiences, and their bodies. Therefore, I felt that the word *bodies* needed to remain as part of the title, thus the anthology's title was rendered as *Other Bodies: A Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Anthology from Puerto Rico and its Diaspora*.

The texts I chose for this thesis project were titled “Queer Nation,” “Metiendo la pata,” and “Un rayo de luz para la luna negra.” Of these three texts, the one that posed most of a challenge was the last. The translation “A Ray of Light for the Dark Moon” may seem like a literal

translation, however there is symbolism in the source title that I considered needed to be carried over in the translation. As an aspiring writer, titles are usually a story's final touch—the story's essence condensed into a short phrase—therefore it was also the last thing I translated for this text. As the earth's only natural satellite, the moon illuminates the night, but it is not in itself a light source, instead reflecting the light of the sun. Because of this, it is often thought to symbolize a reflection of indirect knowledge (Carrillo de Albornoz and Fernández) or the following:

...the type of knowledge that comes to us and insight, rather than the kind we can actively search for in the world. ... The parts of our experience that are not immediately obvious to those around us or even ourselves. Indeed, the Moon symbolizes things such as our inner feelings and desires, our shadow self, and things that we are yet to discover about ourselves” (What Does the Moon Symbolize?)

This is the story of Miguel, a seventy-year-old man who meets a man named Rolando in a home for the elderly and finds himself attracted to another man for the first time in his life and his struggle with internalized homophobia. Rolando is described as “vestido de soles,” or “dressed in suns” as I translated it, at least once in the story in page 113 of the anthology—as well as having a white aura. Rolando's arrival shines a light on a part of Miguel's identity that he had been previously ignorant to. Thus, Rolando was a “ray of light” for Miguel's “dark moon.”

As for the titles of the other two texts, I immediately thought of “Screwing Up” for “Metiendo la pata” by Francés Negrón Muntaner. This translation was supported by the content of the text, as Negrón Muntaner describes her attempts to represent LGBTQ+ themes in the context of Puerto Rico, such as writing for periodicals or the screening of the movie *Brincando el charco* on the island, as screw-ups that got her in trouble because she thought these themes were no longer so taboo that their inclusion in the periodicals she was writing for at the time would be declined

outright. Instead, the two articles she mentions in her text were censored from publication due to the combination of subject matter and the personalities they spoke of. There was one section of the text, however, that made me momentarily doubt that decision. The author references a political campaign against Zaida “Cucusa” Hernández that used the slogan “No metas la pata en San Juan,” which, given the context, would translate roughly to “don’t put a dyke in San Juan.” However, as mentioned previously, a title should capture the essence of the text as a whole and should not be dictated by a slogan that is mentioned once in the entirety of the text.

Capitalization of the Term Queer

An issue encountered when translating these texts, specifically “Queer Nation,” has to do with the term *queer*. Originally used as a synonym for *strange* or to describe something that differed from the norm, according to its entry in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, it developed a new meaning in the early twentieth century when it started becoming a slur against homosexual individuals. The term has been reclaimed by some members of the LGBTQ+ community as an umbrella term for those who do not identify as heterosexual or cisgender, however it is not a term that is universally accepted within the community (GLAAD Media Reference Guide; Language & Pronouns). Both definitions are used throughout the “Queer Nation” text, however, there seems to be a third meaning analogous to its newest definition where it is used to describe a country that does not fall neatly under the categories of either nation or colony. This is applied more specifically to Puerto Rico, which is described as “... in many ways, a queer colony for its national ambition or a queer nation for its colonial preferences” (294; my own translation) in this text.

The issue, which was pointed out by my advisor as part of the revisions for the translation of this text, as I did not originally think this would be an issue, was whether or not this term should

be capitalized when it is used with the newest meaning assigned to it. The ninth edition of the MLA Handbook states the following in terms of the capitalization of inclusive language:

The dictionary includes many terms that denote identity, generally capitalizing them only if they derive from proper nouns (e.g., Egyptian, Mormon, but bisexual, retiree). When the dictionary gives both capitalized and lowercased forms as options, choose one and be consistent. When the dictionary notes that one form is the more commonly used one, as Merriam-Webster does for Black, generally use the more common form. But when you are working directly with an author or discussing a person or community whose preferences are known, follow that preference. For example, some writers use Deaf to refer to the Deaf community and Deaf culture but deaf to refer to hearing loss, and individuals who strongly identify as culturally Deaf may prefer Deaf. (145)

As indicated here, the first thing I did was check Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary—as well as various others—where there was no capitalized entry for the term. Therefore, I started researching what usage the community preferred, but I was unable to find anything that could be denominated as an official stance. The only sources I was able to find that stated that this term should be capitalized were the website for Las Positas College, which stated that “*Queer* should follow the capitalization rules for proper nouns (the *Q* in *Queer* should be capitalized),” and the Wikipedia article for the term, which mentions that it is sometimes capitalized in a manner similar to how Deaf is capitalized in the example given by the MLA Manual, “the term may be capitalized when referring to an identity or community, rather than as an objective fact describing a person’s desires, in a construction similar to the capitalized use of Deaf.” However, other than these two, every other source I checked either did not mention anything on the capitalization of the word or simply used it in lowercase.

Eventually, I stumbled upon the book *Language, Gender, and Sexuality* by Scott F. Kiesling. In this book, the author made the decision to capitalize the word as a way of differentiating its use as an identity from its use as a slur (6). In the “Queer Nation” text, this term is used with both of its meanings throughout, *queer* meaning *strange* and *Queer* as the umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ community. Certain instances of its usage can prove difficult to discern which definition is being used while in others the word could encompass both definitions given the context. I decided to capitalize the term Queer in a manner similar to the capitalization of *Deaf* by the Deaf Community. Not only is it an umbrella term for the LGBTQ+ Community and the culture that the community participates in, but it is also an identity in and of itself for those who find that they do not fit under the other descriptors within the community (GLAAD Media Reference Guide). Additionally, the capitalization of the word helps differentiate it from the other iterations of the term used throughout “Queer Nation.”

The Use of Derogatory Language

Another challenge that arose when translating these texts was the use of derogatory language toward members of the LGBTQ+ community; it is not used in a prolific manner, but it is present in all three of the texts. In the essay “Queer Nation,” this language is only encountered in the second paragraph of the text in the phrase “una nación maricona.” I originally changed the language to a more respectful term and rendered it as “a gay nation,” however my advisor brought to my attention that this would sap some of the energy and anger from the text. After rereading the text, I changed it to keep the original language used by the author and kept the phrase as “fag nation.”

In the essay “Metiendo la pata” there are two instances that call for derogatory language in the translation. The first of these is an instance where the phrase *mujer de pelo en pecho* was used

to describe Zaida “Cucusa” Hernández by other politicians. This is a roundabout way of calling a woman a dyke, which is the term I originally used in parentheses after the Spanish phrase to explain it since I was unable to find an equivalent phrase in English. However, the sentence where this is first mentioned continues with “...in other words, a lesbian” which would make keeping the parenthesis somewhat redundant; therefore I decided to use the expansion technique and rendered it as follows, “*mujer de pelo en pecho*, in other words, a lesbian but more specifically a dyke.” The phrase itself also posed another challenge that will be discussed further on in this preface. The second instance of this is the aforementioned campaign slogan “No metas la pata en San Juan,” where I explained in a footnote how it could be interpreted as “don’t put a dyke in San Juan.” The term *dyke* may have been reclaimed by the lesbian community, often used by lesbians who present in a more masculine manner; however, it is still a controversial term for many as it is still used as a way to attack a woman’s femininity and according to the GLAAD Media Reference Guide its usage is discouraged except by those who identify themselves with this term. The masculinity attached to this word is why I used it in both instances, as it is explained in “Metiendo la pata” that the politicians who resorted to these kinds of phrases and insults were targeting Zaida Hernandez’ femininity and womanhood specifically to devalue her political opinions and campaigns as well as her personal integrity.

Finally, carrying over the derogatory language in the short story “Un rayo de luza para la luna negra” has to do with keeping Miguel in character. Miguel, the main character, admits to past homophobia on his part and is dealing with internalized homophobia during the story. This results in three separate instances of language that is considered by many to be derogatory; the first of these is where the text shines a light on the character’s past homophobia, “...toda la vida he rechazado cualquier indicio de mariconería, el mínimo vestigio de patería enmascarada” (del Carril

110), while the other two are instances where the character is berating himself for his sudden attraction to another man:

Intento encontrar una explicación científica, kármica, humana, pero no llego a obtener conclusiones, y los pocos vestigios de lucidez se pierden en el eco de mi conciencia que me repite sin cesar; pato, pato, pato...

...

De pronto apareció el ave blanca en el borde de una de las ventanas, parecía una estatua de arcilla con ojos burlones que me gritaba: maricón... (114 – 115)

I rendered these two passages as follows:

I kept trying to find a scientific, karmic, human explanation, but I didn't arrive at any conclusions, and the few traces of lucidity that remained became lost in the echo of a conscience that ceaselessly called me pansy, fairy, queer...

...

Suddenly the white owl appeared on a windowsill; it looked like a clay statue with mocking eyes that screamed at me: you faggot!

This character is a seventy-year-old man, which, if the story takes place during the year 2007 when it was originally published, would mean that he was born in the late 1930s and lived through a time period when sentiments toward homosexuality were anything but favorable, as it was criminalized, and then considered a mental health issue. Some states decriminalized homosexuality in 1962, but it was still illegal in many states up until 2003, and in many places of the world homosexuality is still illegal (Cano Camaras and Rodríguez Fischer). Thus, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that a character such as this would use derogatory terms against himself after realizing that he is one of the people he once condemned. All of this led me to making

the choice of using *queerness* and *queer* in their use as derogatory language—therefore the term *queer* remained lowercased—as well as the terms *pansy* and *fairy* when the character is berating himself by calling himself “pato, pato, pato” instead of using the term *queer* three times in a row. Because this last text is a short story, it allows for more creative freedom when translating it, thus, I used these antiquated slurs as a means to emphasize the character’s age and perhaps even the time period he is most likely to have grown up in. Meanwhile, I chose the term *faggot* as a translation for the term *maricón* as both of these terms have stronger derogatory connotations than the others used in either language.

Intertextuality

Next, I would like to briefly address the intertextuality of the essays “Queer Nation” and “Metiendo la pata” where Ríos Ávila and Negrón Muntaner quote other authors directly. Most of these quotes already existed in English, with the exception of one instance in Negrón Muntaner’s essay where she quotes Alexandra Pagán Veléz’s thesis, *La construcción del travesti en Sirena Selena vestida de pena*, which is written in Spanish and has not been translated. In this instance I provided my own translation of the quoted passage and added a translator’s note to the reference at the bottom of the page.

Problematic Terms and Phrases

I encountered various problematic terms and phrases across all three texts, including wordplay, poetic language, and expressions that I had never heard before. The first phrase that I consider troublesome can be found in the “Queer Nation” text, and it is the official title of “Estado Libre Asociado” given to Puerto Rico. The literal translation of this title would be Free Associated State; however, this is traditionally translated as Commonwealth instead. According to the Merriam-

Webster online dictionary a commonwealth is defined as “a political unit having local autonomy but voluntarily united with the U.S.—used officially of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands.” However, this definition does not truly apply to Puerto Rico, as the island was first conquered by Spain, then eventually invaded by the United States during the Spanish-American war before being ceded by Spain as spoils of war and has since remained an unincorporated territory of the U.S. with limited autonomy. There is irony in the way Rios Ávila refers to Puerto Rico with its official title and status as he points out what the relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico truly is. Therefore, I felt that the literal translation was more fitting than the traditionally used Commonwealth.

Two more examples of expressions I had trouble translating can be found in the Negrón Muntaner’s text, “Metiendo la pata”. The phrases *mujer de pelo en pecho* and *siete machos* were problematic not only because I had never heard or seen these before, but also because the first of the two is not written how the common saying goes and the second of the two is incomplete. The original expression from which *mujer de pelo en pecho* comes from is *hombre de pelo en pecho* which would literally translate to “a man with hair on his chest” and refers to a man who is strong, virile and bold (Algesa). Meanwhile the expression *siete machos* is not complete, which was clarified by a colleague who explained that the complete expression is *se le meten los siete machos* and how it is used when someone becomes aggressive toward others. For the first of these two phrases I used the previously mentioned term *dyke*, as it has a connotation of masculinity and has been used as a slur to attack a woman’s femininity and womanhood, and it is still used in this manner today. For the second, I used the adjective *aggressive*, which is often used for women in positions of leadership or when they show what would otherwise be described as assertiveness (Rao Gluckman). In these two instances, I opted to leave the expressions in Spanish and add the

meaning behind them in parenthesis due to the fact that I was unable to find phrases or idioms in the English language that capture the meaning and intent behind these two expressions, and since these were expressions spoken against the politician Zaida “Cucusa” Hernández by her colleagues, leaving them in Spanish could serve as a reminder for the reader that the context for this is the political sphere of a Spanish speaking country, more specifically Puerto Rico. However, I am not particularly satisfied with this solution. Given the anthology’s purpose as a place of expression and understanding for those that have been and are still considered the Other, I believe that the foreignization technique of leaving certain phrases in Spanish would go against that purpose, as this technique could be seen as a way to exoticize, to other, the Puerto Rican culture and people.

The text “Un rayo de luz para la luna negra” provides examples for a phrase that utilizes play on words as well as problematic terms. When Gabriel is describing his son to Rolando, he ends his description as follows “...sabe tanto que sabe a mierda” (del Carril 113). My original translation for this was very literal and lost that play on words, which is why I opted to change it for “...he knows so much he thinks he’s hot shit.” Meanwhile, one particularly problematic term in this text was “aceitillo.” My first attempt at finding a translation for this term was to search for it in the FaoTerm term base as well as various others, however this yielded no results. I was only able to arrive at the translation sandalwood by first finding the tree’s scientific name, *Zanthoxylum flavium*, and then searching for its common name in the English language.

Lastly, there is the fact that one of these texts falls into a different genre than the other two. All three can be considered prose works, however, as a short story, “Un rayo de luz para la luna negra” has more instances of poetic language than those present in the two essays I translated. This required a change in mindset from that of an essayist writing about LGBTQ+ issues directly to that of a storyteller tackling these issues in the form of a narrative. An example of the

aforementioned poetic language can be found in the following passage, “YO SIENTO TUS AMARRAS COMO GARFIOS COMO GARRAS ...*son barrotes suaves que se introducen en mi espalda y me mantienen erguido*, el viento sopla fuerte...” (del Carril 117). This is part of a longer passage where the main character’s thoughts follow the lyrics of the song *Luz de luna*. The song’s lyrics remain in Spanish in the main text of my translation—even though there are translations available in websites dedicated to the translation of song lyrics—and this is meant to ground the story to the setting of Puerto Rico and remind the reader that it is set in a Spanish-speaking country. There are not many other instances where this can be done, as the location of the home for the elderly where the story takes place is never mentioned, a translation is provided in the form of a footnote instead. I rendered this passage as follows: “‘YO SIENTO TUS AMARRAS COMO GARFIOS COMO GARRAS...’ ...*strong moorings keep me upright*, the wind blows strong...” I used the expansion technique here, as I needed to add the term *moorings* as a translation for *amarras* to compensate for not providing a translation for the song’s lyrics in the main text; otherwise, the translation would leave the reader questioning what exactly is keeping the character upright and potentially take them out of the story if they don’t read the translation for the lyrics provided as a footnote.

I originally rendered “...*son barrotes suaves que se introducen en mi espalda y me mantienen erguido*” as “are soft bars that have inserted themselves into my back,” a very literal translation that I was not satisfied with. At one point I thought of changing it to “your moorings are pillars at my back that keep me upright,” however this would not work with the term *moorings* as it is used in the song. Merriam-Webster’s second definition of the term states that moorings are “2a: a place where or an object to which something (such as a craft) can be moored; 2b: a device (such as a line or chain) by which an object is secured in place. The lyrics of the song are translated

as “Your moorings are like hooks, like claws...” The translation I thought of could work if the song were using definition 2a, but it is using 2b, therefore, I originally settled for a translation that is closer to the source text. However, the translation “strong moorings keep me upright,” was suggested by my advisor, and I came to the conclusion that I was clinging too tightly to the source text for this passage. Stories give more leeway for creative translation after all, and even though the song appears to be using one meaning, that does not mean that the character cannot use the other.

Conclusion

Each of these texts posed varying degrees of challenge during the translation process and I have organized them in order from the one I found most challenging to translate to the one I found the easiest. The text I found the most challenging to translate—and therefore took the most time—was “Queer Nation” by Rubén Ríos Ávila due to his writing style and his use of layered meanings throughout the text, as well as the research needed to accurately translate it. This is followed in difficulty by Negrón Muntaner’s essay, “Metiendo la pata” and the text I found the easiest to translate was the short story by Emilo del Carril, and it was also the last text I translated. I have been writing stories and short stories since childhood, which helped me translate this text once I made the switch in mindset from essayist to storyteller even though I mostly write for the fantasy and horror genres. I found that translating “Un rayo de luz para la luna negra” allowed for stretching my creative muscles in ways that the other two texts did not truly allow.

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