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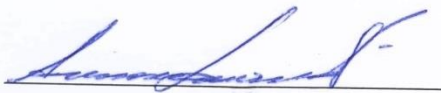
Inventory with a Family Portrait

Translation of a Selection of Narratives from
Inventario con retrato de familia by Efraín Barradas

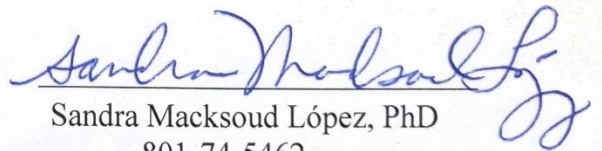
by
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Sandra Macksoud López, 2019

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Abstract

This translation from Spanish to English of a selection of narratives from the book *Inventario con retrato de familia* by author Efraín Barradas is based on an approach that seeks to foreignize the target text so that the culture of the source text is made evident to the reader. The book consists of twenty-two autobiographical narratives about the author's experience while taking charge of his parent's house when they left for a nursing home. The narratives center on objects he finds and the memories these evoke, which he interweaves with scholarly insight. The memories compose typical moments lived by the generation of Puerto Ricans who grew up during 1940 to 1960. A selection of thirteen narratives were selected for this translation project. In the Translators Preface, the challenges of translating this text are identified, namely terms that have no translation, popular sayings, wordplay, and historic, musical, cultural, and scholarly references.

Brief biography of author

Sandra Macksoud López was born in Brooklyn, NY on September 29, 1956. She moved to Puerto Rico at age 7 and has lived there ever since. Her university studies both undergraduate and graduate in Psychology were carried out at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus. She graduated with a PhD in Psychology in 2001, and after retiring as a professor of the UPR, she decided to study translation. For thirty years she worked in the University of Puerto Rico, at first in the Humacao University College as a grant writer, and later in the Resource Center for Science and Engineering, of the UPR Central Administration where she also became involved in project administration as well as grant writing specializing in science education and research. For a year, she was acting Principal of the UPR Laboratory Elementary School, after which she became Assistant Professor in the Department of Foundation of Education, at the Rio Piedras College of Education, where she was also in charge of student assessment and teacher induction programs. She finally served as Associate Director of Graduate Programs of the College of Education. After retirement from the UPR, she became involved in the cooperativist movement, and co-founded the workers cooperative CoopERA (*Cooperativa Educativa para la Reinversión y la Acción.*) which provides education consultant services for diverse organizations.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Acknowledgements

The completion of this project has been in great part due to the thorough and extensive guidance of my very wise and keen thesis advisor, Professor Aurora Lauzardo Ugarte, to whom I am so grateful. She made this process a wonderful learning process. I am also very thankful to the author, Efraín Barradas, who so generously allowed me to use his book for my project. Translating his book was also very cathartic and soothing for my own personal experience of organizing my mother's house.

Project Description

This thesis consists of the English translation of thirteen narratives by Puerto Rican author Efraín Barradas taken from his book *Inventario con retrato de familia*, a collection of twenty-two literary narratives written in Spanish by Barradas and published in 2018 by Ediciones Callejón. In these narratives, the author reflects on the personal and social meaning of family objects he came upon while in charge of organizing his parents' house when they left for a nursing home.

For my project, I have classified the selection of thirteen narratives into two specific groups: thematic and structurally determining. Thematic narratives in *Inventario con retrato de familia* deal with recurrent themes such as food and cooking and social class, whereas structurally determining narratives shed light on both the work's significance as a whole and the individual texts in the collection.

About the Author

Efraín Barradas is a preeminent Puerto Rican scholar of Latin American and Caribbean literature and art. He is part of a group of Puerto Rican intellectuals that live in the United States, and whose common focus is the study as well as the promotion of the island's literature and culture. In particular, he has contributed greatly to the study of the work of the 1970s generation of Puerto Rican writers of short stories that included renowned authors such as Luis Rafael Sánchez, Ana Lydia Vega, and Magaly García Ramis.

Efraín Barradas was born on January 6, 1946, to working-class parents in the town of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. He obtained a BA in Literature at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, followed by a PhD in Romance Languages at Princeton University. He has been awarded several research fellowships, including a postdoctoral fellowship and a grant from the Ford Foundation. As visiting scholar, he has been invited to the University of Puerto Rico, the University of Massachusetts, Princeton University, and Harvard University. Barradas was a professor at the University of Massachusetts from 1975 to 2000, where he also chaired the Department of Hispanic Studies and of the Program in Latin American Studies. Since 2001, he has been professor at the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, and the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida.

Barradas has contributed to the field of Latino and Caribbean Literature Studies through numerous publications including books, book reviews, art reviews, art catalogues, literary essays, and book chapters. His current research focuses on popular culture in Latin American literature and art, especially the iconography of Mexican artists. Among his major publications are:

Barradas, Efraín, and Rodríguez, Rafael. *Herejes y mitificadores: muestra de poesía puertorriqueña en los Estados Unidos*. Ediciones Huracán, 1980.

Barradas, Efraín. *Para leer en puertorriqueño: acercamiento a la obra de Luis Rafael Sánchez*. Editorial Cultural, 1981.

---. *Apalabramiento: diez cuentistas puertorriqueños de hoy*. Ediciones del Norte, 1983.

---. *Para entendernos: inventario poético puertorriqueño- siglos XIX y XX*. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1992.

---. *Partes de un todo: ensayos y notas sobre literatura puertorriqueña en los Estados Unidos*. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1998.

---. *Mente, mirada, mano: visiones y revisiones de la obra de Lorenzo Homar*. Ediciones Huracán, 2007.

---*Para devorarte otra vez: nuevos acercamientos a la obra de Luis Rafael Sánchez*. Ediciones Cielonaranja, 2017.

Barradas has been a speaker at numerous conferences on literature and is a member of art and literature organizations, as well as editorial boards of several academic journals. I had the privilege of meeting him in person on October 10, 2018, when he presented “*Recordar el recuerdo: sobre la escritura de Inventario con retrato de familia*,” as part of *Jornadas de la memoria: arte, literatura y escritura*, at the University of the Sacred Heart in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

About the Text

Inventario con retrato de familia is a departure from Barradas’ usual academic work. The author himself defines this book as a hybrid of essays and narratives in which he presents an inventory of objects and related autobiographical memoirs that make up a portrait of his family. Each narrative is entitled according to an object or an intertextual reference evoked by an object found in his parents’ house that connects him to scenes from his family life, moments that shaped him as a person. By evoking these memories and writing these chronicles, the author pays homage to his parents.

In the Foreword to the book, Magaly García Ramis describes how the author centers his narration on these objects: “the author allows the objects to become the protagonists to build this memory log that narrates the lives of the three of them, the father, the mother and the son, a prodigal son in more than one sense” (11)¹ [my translation]. The everyday household objects that Barradas writes about become metaphors of important parts of the individual identities of a lower middle-class Puerto Rican family of the 20th and 21st centuries. In her review of the book, literary critic Carmen Dolores Hernández points out that,

[...].when telling the story of his parents through their possessions he gives shape to a powerful story that brings to life, before our eyes, a past moment of our Island, recovered through a familiar environment recognizable—in general terms—by those who lived that same moment. (50) [my translation]

Barradas interweaves the metaphors of household objects with references to literary works by other authors, thinkers and artists which he uses to conceptualize his and his family’s experiences. As described by García Ramis in the Foreword:

Just like his mother when she made *mundillo* lace, he interweaves with unique skill each memory with the ideas of thinkers and authors that formed him as an intellectual: René Marqués, Eliseo Diego, Susan Sontag, Tomas Blanco, Roland Barthes, Clifford Geertz, and many others arrived at Aguadilla to eat *pastelón de amarillo* with Tata and Efraín father. (12) [my translation]

To select the text to be translated in my project, I analyzed all the narratives and subdivided them into two main groups: structurally determining and thematic. The

¹ Quotes from the source text are identified by the page number in parentheses.

narratives I classified as structurally determining included the first two and the last narratives because they are key to the understanding of the book. Among the thematic narratives, there are eight related to social class which is a common thread throughout the book. With the colonial and class struggle in Puerto Rico as the macrocontext of the book, Barradas writes about the hardships of his parents as they strived to overcome poverty and reach lower middle-class status. As Barradas expresses toward the end of the book: *“I see it as my duty to keep alive their ideals as working class people who struggled to survive, to stay afloat and to improve their circumstances. Each of the objects I find in my parents’ house speaks to me about that struggle.”* (100) [my translation]

I selected two additional narratives related to the theme of food and cooking, which is such a fundamental dimension in family life and cultural identity (Ortiz Cuadra 1). Thus, I selected a total of thirteen narratives for my project. The remaining ten narratives are about other important themes in the author’s family; several are related to religious beliefs and traditions, and others are related to his father’s military service, his mother’s health conditions, and his parents’ love of art and craftwork.

What follows is a summary of the narratives I selected for my project, with a few quotes to convey the flavor of the author’s style.

- *“Advertencia”*: The author explains how he began writing about the objects he found upon organizing his parents’ house, where he grew up as a child. The numerous artifacts he encounters in the house spark connections to his childhood memories and are reminiscent of a family life that is shared by so many Puerto Ricans who lived through similar historical conditions.

The objects that I found in the house told me about my parents lives as well as my own. But I think these objects that tell those stories about my family also told the stories of many Puerto Ricans who also lived the same moments and went through circumstances that are similar to ours. (14) [my translation]

- “*El tamaño de mi metáfora*”: One of the most important spaces in the author’s family house is his father’s workshop. By describing the workshop and the way it is organized, Barradas envisions a metaphor of his father’s life. While making an intertextual reference in the narrative’s title to “*El tamaño de mi esperanza*,” by Jorge Luis Borges, he exchanges the term *esperanza* or hope for the term metaphor as proposed by Susanne Langer, whom he quotes to say that a metaphor allows a “small vocabulary” to express many things (21). Since the workshop contains myriad objects rather than a single one that could serve as a discreet metaphor, the author considers that the workshop as a whole, encompassing all the objects within it, is the best metaphor, albeit of a somewhat larger size, for remembering and understanding his father.
- “*El recetario perdido, el recetario inventado*”: The author remembers his mother’s recipes, highlighting one of the dishes he loves: *pastelón de amarillos* (28). Even though he tried to learn from her how to prepare this dish, he could never get her exact recipe. Since he enjoys cooking, the author has tried out some of his mother’s recipes, facing the dilemma of adhering to the original recipes or betraying tradition by giving them an innovative twist. Quoting anthropologist Clifford Geertz, Barradas asserts that change is a cultural constant. He concludes that adapting his mother’s recipes is the best homage he can pay to her culinary talent.

- “*Pasteles*”: The title refers to the traditional Puerto Rican dish, about which the author proclaims: “*Pasteles* should be designated part of the patrimony of humanity ...” (33) [my translation] Barradas considers that his mother’s *pasteles* are extraordinary, and describes the family ritual of preparing them, in which his father participated by folding and tying each *pastel* like a true artisan.
- “*Con la música por dentro*”: Barradas narrates with admiration how his father undertook the project of organizing a digital library of his music collection after he reached the age of eighty, and how sad it was to watch him abandon it as the years passed by. While the author shares his parents’ love of music, he rebelled against their musical preferences to assert his own, very different ones. Now he has come to appreciate the music his parents loved and recognizes how much it has influenced his own love of music.
- “*Santos versus Lladró*”: Among his mother’s possessions are several Lladró figurines which, according to the author, were considered a status symbol of the middle-class in Puerto Rico. The author dislikes them and prefers his parents’ collection of *santos*, traditional Puerto Rican religious figures carved in wood. The author envisions both groups of figurines facing each other in a wrestling ring, thus the reference to the iconic Mexican wrestler El Santo. As artisans themselves, his parents had a deeper appreciation for the *santos*, and therefore he declares them as the winners in this match.
- “*Un burro con dos orejas y cinco patas*”: Another symbol of living in a middle-class neighborhood is decorating the front lawn with figures that represent a Mexican man wearing a big sombrero guiding a donkey that pulls a flower cart. While the author’s

family could only afford the donkey, it turned out to be a headache for his mother when the kids on the block would “ride” it while holding on to it by the ears. Observing the donkey now, the author denounces that apparently innocent household objects such as the donkey and the Mexican symbolize racist stereotypes.

- “*Placas, diplomas, medallas*”: The author found a drawer full of awards that belong mostly to his father, who was very active in civic, religious and political circles, which made him a popular figure in their hometown of Aguadilla. This discovery made the author feel shaken as it reminded him of bitter clashes between his paternal grandfather, his father, and himself because of deep-set differences in their political ideologies. Although he disagreed with them, he recognizes that they would have been great allies if they had shared the same ideologies. He describes how he overcame his troubled feelings and decided to postpone dealing with the awards.
- “*Licuadora*”: Along with other things acquired by the author’s parents as part of their affirmation of social mobility, his mother had an Osterizer blender. Even though she hardly ever used it, owning one was a sign of having achieved the dream of progress promulgated by political figures during the industrialization of Puerto Rico in the 1950’s and 60’s.
- “*¡Hurra, hurra hurra! ¡Que viva la hucha!*”: In their struggle to make ends meet, the author’s parents had a few piggy banks where they would save their pocket change. Among the coin banks he finds one that is different from the classical piggy: a rooster. Because his parents considered the rooster to be an ornament rather than an actual coin bank, it reminds the author of his parents’ aesthetic appreciation, a quality he values highly.

- “*Desconocidos*”: Since having a camera was a luxury for his parents, few pictures are found in the author’s childhood house. He classifies these pictures into four categories: his father’s military service, scattered photos that do not belong to any group, photos of official ceremonies with extended family and friends where everyone is posing, and snapshots of his parents by a friend. His favorite is the second group which contain images of people who the author is not able to recognize. These strangers spark his curiosity and imagination, leading him to give them fictional identities and make up stories.
- “*La víspera del libro*”: According to the author, there were very few books in his parents’ house, except for those his father brought home when he was pursuing graduate studies in Education, and the ones Barradas himself acquired as a student at the University of Puerto Rico. He remembers the book he read as a teenager, one of his father’s, *La víspera del hombre* by René Marqués, as he identified with the main character’s coming-of-age narrative in rural Puerto Rico, and it marked the self-discovery of his passion for literature.
- “*Tesoros perdidos*”: As the author reflects on the objects he found in his parent’s house, he also thinks about objects that he does not find which are so significant that he remembers them vividly. Such is the case of a shoebox full of tiny storybooks which he calls his first library. Among the storybooks, the one that seems to have influenced most his parents’ life, as well as his own, was the *The Three Little Pigs*. Barradas sees the struggle of the little pigs to protect themselves against the Big Bad Wolf, as the struggle of his parents to overcome

the conditions imposed by historical circumstances and achieve some degree of financial stability.

Justification

I consider *Inventario con retrato de familia* to be an important contribution to the autobiography genre of contemporary Puerto Rican literature, one that should be available for English speaking readers, especially Puerto Ricans and other Latin Americans who will probably relate to many of the author's memories. For the Puerto Rican diaspora connected to Puerto Rico through their parents or grandparents, this book provides the opportunity to reclaim and reflect on personal family histories, to understand and affirm their own cultural heritage, and make sense of their current reality as individuals and as a collective people.

Books such as *Inventario con retrato de familia* represent an important contribution to the construction of a collective memory *vis-à-vis* official versions of history (Werstch & Roediger III 320). Barradas presented the book in the conference *Jornadas de la memoria: arte, literatura y escritura*, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities at the University of the Sacred Heart in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on October 11, 2018. His presentation was included as a contribution to Memory Studies, an emerging interdisciplinary field that examines the social, cultural, cognitive, political and technological conditions that affect how, what and why individuals, groups and societies remember and forget (van Dijck 262-263). As Barradas stated during *Jornadas*, the Humanities can also have a practical sense. In his case, the experience of meditating upon the objects found as he organized his parent's house and connecting

these affective experiences to critical ideas allowed him to understand his parents as protagonists of the collective history of their social class and generation. For Barradas, the gathering and preservation of these memories through his book served as a catharsis that helped him survive the trauma of family disintegration while honoring his parents.

Approach to translation

In his construction of the inventory for his family portrait, Barradas writes about the significance of objects in his family history and interprets each one within the cultural framework in which identity is formed and must be understood. Given the nature of the text as a literary work that is deeply rooted in Puerto Rican culture and history, there are numerous cultural references throughout the narratives. As pointed out by Wallace (84), “When encountering such specific cultural references, the translator is always faced with the dilemma of when to explain, when to leave it to the reader to figure it out, and when to give up on the reference entirely.” I decided to follow an approach to translation that recognizes the role of the translator within the complex political relations between the source and target cultures as is the case of Puerto Rico and the United States of America. I adopted the perspective of theorists of translation studies such as Venuti (19), Bassnett & Lefevere (8-9), and Alvarez & Vidal (4-5), who define translation as a political act that has implications for either the promotion, preservation, and affirmation of the culture of the source text, or its invisibilization and neutralization. In adopting this stance towards translation, the process is not reduced to the search of equivalents in the target language but requires the analysis of the text within its cultural context and the consideration of a range of strategies to optimize the communication between cultures (Leppihalme 78). As

I encountered culturally charged terms or expressions, I decided whether to translate them into English, or keep them in Spanish. I approached translation problems encountered in the text from a critical perspective, opting for solutions that preserve the source culture over equivalent translations in English. For terms that are culturally loaded and those that do not have a straightforward translation, instead of seeking semantic equivalences, I preserved the original term in Spanish and in some instances expanded the text by including an approximate translation or an explanation in English. In keeping the Spanish term or word, I intend to preserve the culture of the source text (Spanish, in this case Puerto Rican Spanish) instead of seeking equivalents that respond to a dominant language and culture (English). Therefore, I sought to foreignize rather than domesticate the translated text to reaffirm the author's Puerto Rican voice instead of silencing, neutralizing or making it invisible; to emphasize rather than blur its cultural origin and meaning. Thus, the reader will be confronted with the "difference." For example, I keep terms in Spanish such as *pastelón de amarillo*, *bolerista*, *trullas*, and *santos* in the translated text.

Translation challenges encountered and decisions made

General style

A general challenge in the translation of the narratives from Spanish to English was due to the intrinsic differences between both languages which, coupled with the author's style, presents an abundance of long sentences and frequent use of commas. Throughout the translation, I decided to preserve the length of the sentences, when I considered they were not too confusing. On occasion, I did alter the order of phrase clauses within sentences to

ensure the fluidness of the text. I also decided to use contractions, which do not exist in Spanish, because the register of the narratives is more informal and personal than scholarly.

Spanish terms with no equivalents in English

One of the most frequent challenges I encountered in the translation was the use of cultural terms that have no direct translation. This was the case with terms related to food that are found mostly in the narrative in which the author remembers his mother's cooking, where he writes about Puerto Rican dishes—*pastelón de amarillos* (28), *almojábanas* (29) and *pasteles* (33). Given the importance of culinary history in the construction of cultural identity (Ortiz Cuadra 1), translating these names is no trivial task.

To identify existing translations, I researched books on Puerto Rican gastronomy and found two recipe books as references: *Puerto Rican Cookery* by Carmen Aboy de Valdejuli, and *Puerto Rican Artisanal Cookery* by Emma Duprey de Sterling translated by Susan Homar and Aurora Lauzardo. While both books present many names of dishes and ingredients in both English and Spanish, making the source culture visible, they do it in different ways. In Valdejuli's book, I found *pastelón de amarillo* translated as "Cheese-Plantain Pie" (Aboy de Valdejuli 121), and "Meat-Plantain Pie" (Aboy de Valdejuli 122), with the English name used as the title of the recipe and the Spanish name below it in italics "*Pastelón de Plátanos Maduros (Amarillos) con Queso*" (Aboy de Valdejuli 121). I found this pattern throughout the recipes presented in the book; all recipes present the English translation first and placed the name in Spanish underneath. The book also includes an excellent glossary of food terms at the end.

In contrast to the translation of the Aboy de Valdejuli book, for the translation of Duprey de Sterling's cookbook, the Spanish names of the dishes were presented as the

main titles of the recipes, with the English translation following in parenthesis, thus highlighting the source language. For example, “*Apastelado* (Rice with green plantain baked with plantain leaf)” (Duprey de Sterling 125); “*Sambumbia* (Sweet and savory chunky soup)” (Duprey de Sterling 74); and “*Almojábanas* (Rice flour fritters)” (Duprey de Sterling 46). Some titles were hybrids, combining English and Spanish terms, such as “Breadfruit and Broccoli *Pastelón* (Pie)” (Duprey de Sterling 89).

A third reference on the translation of food terms that I consulted is *Eating Puerto Rico: A History of Food, Culture, and Identity*, an English translation of *Puerto Rico en la olla: ¿somos aún lo que comimos?* by Ortiz Cuadra, which presents a historical analysis of Puerto Rican food as an essential element of cultural identity. Throughout the book, the translator usually names the food or dishes first in Spanish, followed by a comma and an approximation in English, although sometimes the Spanish term appears second. For example, the term *pasteles* appears followed by an explanation in parenthesis “(resembling tamales, *pasteles* are made of plantain dough that are filled with meat and other ingredients and boiled in salted water)” (Ortiz Cuadra 1). The translator included a Selected Glossary at the end of the book.

In my translation, because of my preference towards preserving the source culture, I decided to keep many of the terms related to food in Spanish. I kept *arroz con pollo*, *carne guisada*, *almojábanas*, *requesón*, and others. This way, I will promote the recognition of Puerto Rican culinary traditions as part of a world cuisine, in the same fashion as numerous others like *tamales*, *hummus*, *bouillabaisse*, and *ceviche* which have been incorporated into the English culinary vocabulary. So, rather than following the pattern I found in the researched books in which the Spanish terms appear usually with a

translation or an explanation next them, I decided to leave the terms in Spanish in italics with no English version within the text. One food related term which although I kept, I did include an English translation was the term *ciegos* (34) which describes those *pasteles* that lack the sufficient amount of ingredients that are included as filling, such as meat bits, olives, pepper strips, and raisins. After the term *ciegos* I did include the English term “blind,” because the author makes a joke about how the *pasteles* he was eating had a serious vision impairment.

There are other terms which I decided to keep in Spanish even though they could be translated, such as *viejo* and *casita*. While *viejo* can easily be translated as old man, the context in which the author used the term was to convey how others would dismiss the importance of the story he was about to tell about his father—“*Otra historia más de un anciano, de un viejo se me dirá*” (20). He used two terms to refer to his father, so I translated the first term, *anciano*, as old man, and left *viejo* in Spanish to accentuate the connotation of the word used to refer to elders in Hispanic culture, which is oftentimes pejorative (Batchelor 586).

The term *casita* (17) can be directly translated as “little house,” yet I kept it in Spanish to convey the meaning given by the author’s mother as he states that she was “revealing her imperial domestic intentions in her denomination,” (my translation) to his father’s workshop, which was a separate structure behind the house, and which she called “*la casita*”. In Spanish, the use of the suffix *-ito* to modify a noun creates a diminutive expression which could have various effects, mostly that of affection, but also of irony, or both simultaneously (Mendoza, 153-154). There is no English equivalent of this morphological modifier and adding the adjectives “little” or “tiny” to the noun “house”

does not have the same effect as “*la casita*” (Wallace 81), which is why I keep the Spanish expression, followed by the addition of the English version “little house”. I also kept “*terracita*,” which could be translated as “little terrace,” although in this case the diminutive is used as a form of endearment.

In several of the Barradas’ narratives he uses terms related to Christmas traditions that are typical in Puerto Rican culture. There is a marked difference in the way winter holidays are celebrated in tropical Puerto Rico versus English-speaking, or even other Spanish-speaking countries. For example, when Barradas mentions *trullas navideñas* (46), he is referring to a type of traditional music played during Christmas celebrations, which is very popular in Puerto Rico and is closely tied to the Puerto Rican identity. While I did not find an adequate translation for this term, I found the use of another term that appears in English texts on Christmas in Puerto Rico, *parranda*, which is almost synonymous with *trulla*, and was explained as Christmas caroling, for example in the *New York Times* article by Rodríguez on the celebration of Christmas on the island. Since these traditions are markedly distinct, I keep the term in Spanish in my translation.

Another term pertaining to Christmas traditions in Puerto Rico used by Barradas is *reyes* (52), a shorter version of *Los tres reyes magos*, which are known in English as the Three Kings or Three Wise Men, related to the Nativity in Christian tradition. In the narrative “Santos versus Lladró,” Barradas elaborates on the *reyes* that his parents collected. These are part of the tradition of the *santos*, a term also used by the author (49), which refers to carved wooden figures of Catholic saints, as well as of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Three Kings. The traditional figures of the *reyes*, and the Nativity are a favorite decoration in Puerto Rico during the Christmas holidays, including the

celebration of the 6th of January as Three Kings Day. In the search for a translation of *reyes*, I used the book *Sampler of Puerto Rican Crafts: From Puerto Rico to the World*, published by the Puerto Rico Office of Economic Development in 1997, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. The book presents a dual language text, with Spanish and English side by side. According to this reference, the term *santos* is used to describe a craft that is considered a very important tradition in the Puerto Rican culture, developed during the sixteenth century to provide religious imagery for people to pray to at home (Fomento 13). The artisans of this craft were known as *santeros*, some of whom became masters. In this reference, *los tres reyes magos* is translated as “the Three Wise Men.” When Barradas refers to the *los reyes* in his parents’ house, he emphasizes that they are *los reyes de Cabán*, making a cultural reference to renowned Puerto Rican artisan Florencio Cabán. In my translation, instead of using the English translation, I keep the Spanish terms *reyes*, *santos* and *santeros*. In this narrative, there is also a wordplay with the name of the Mexican wrestler “El Santo” that I explain further ahead.

While the term *plazas del mercado* (75-76) is translated as “marketplace” in several dictionaries, it does not convey the cultural significance of these important venues in Puerto Rico. Ever since the Spanish colonial times, each town in Puerto Rico has its own *plaza de mercado*-- a center where local farmers sell their goods, and other common household items can also be purchased. In my research, I found that the term appears in Spanish with an English version in parenthesis “(the market)” in the book *Silencing Race: Disentangling Blackness, Colonialism, and National Identities in Puerto Rico* by Rodriguez-Silva (103). I consider that keeping the term *plazas* in Spanish in my translation is important given the value of these settings in local history until recently when they began to decline because of

their displacement by supermarkets and mega stores such as COSTCO and Sam's. Finally, in pointing out the Spanish terms I keep in my translation, there is the term *santería* (59), which I found in several books on religion in the Caribbean, capitalized as a proper name (Gregory, title).

While I preserved various terms in Spanish in my translation, I did translate a few that are typical of Hispanic or Puerto Rican culture when I deemed that leaving them in Spanish would not really add to the meaning of the text but would rather be distracting. This was the case with *soroco*, which is a term Barradas used to describe sets of drinking glasses that are missing some pieces (70). According to the *Tesoro Lexicográfico del Español de Puerto Rico (online)*, "*soroco*" is a common adjective that describes a person that is missing a leg or foot, and by popular use its meaning has been extended to apply to sets of objects that are incomplete. So, in my translation I used the term "incomplete" instead of the Spanish *soroco*.

Another term that has no direct translation is "*cocinoso*" (29). After looking it up in various sources (Oxford, Collins, Word Reference, Cambridge), I conclude it was invented by Barradas to describe himself while referring to his love for cooking. Barradas creates this word by adding the suffix *-oso* to *cocin-*. According to Díaz García and Martín Velasco (285), the suffix *-oso* is used to modify nouns into adjectives, and among other meanings it signifies possession or abundance of something, or likeness and relation with the root word. So, *cocinoso* could be interpreted as the possession of a liking or relation with "cooking," which does fit within the context of the narrative. I attempted to create an equivalent in English by seeking suffixes that have the same function as *-oso* in Spanish (Lieber 412-415) to attach to "cook," yet they sounded awkward (cookful, cooksome,

cookile, cookist) and would interrupt the reader unnecessarily. I decided to substitute the term with a phrase that preserves the meaning and does not interrupt the flow of the text: “I am so into cooking.” I found under the entry of “into” on the online Cambridge Dictionary, that “to be into something” is an informal expression of being very interested in that something, and given the informal register of the text, I consider it as an appropriate substitute, even though not as witty as the author’s expression.

Wordplay

A characteristic of Barradas’ narrative style is humor, often displayed through his witty wordplay, which is a challenge to translate because these words do not have the same meaning in the source language as in the target language. One instance of his wordplay is with the term *santos*, the traditional wooden saints his parents collected, which stand side by side to Lladró figurines as decorations in their living room. While Barradas likes the *santos*, he detests the Lladró figurines, and imagines a scene in which he places both sets face to face in a wrestling ring, which adds a new reference for the term *santos*, particularly as he also mentions “El Santo” (53), a masked Mexican wrestler who became a comic book hero during the 1940s to the 70s. In the title of the narrative *Santos vs Lladró*, Barradas is alluding to the myriad movies in which the iconic wrestler was protagonist, which were titled *Santos vs whomever* was the opponent at the time (Mancera 2016).

The term “*osteraicer*,” which Barradas presents in quotation marks (69), is spelled the way in which his mother, as well as so many other Puerto Ricans, pronounced the name of the food blender with a Puerto Rican accent. According to the Oster company’s website, the blender is spelled “Osterizer” and would have a different pronunciation. Wallace (77) points out the use of English words written as they would be pronounced in Spanish with

a Puerto Rican accent is a humorous strategy that has been highly developed by Ana Lydia Vega in her stories. The humor of the term “*osteraicer*” will be lost to Anglo readers that are not from Puerto Rican descent, but might not be to Puerto Ricans that were born or lived in the US mainland, so I kept the original version in the translation.

Other instances of wordplay I found in Barradas’ narratives have to do with alliteration, as in the phrase “*pescado sin pecado*” (28) which loses its effect when I translated it into “sin-free fish.” When narrating about his mother’s cooking, Barradas notes that fish is not part of her repertoire, and he attributes this absence to her puritanism which causes her to associate the term “*pescado*” with “*pecado*” since the words are spelled almost exactly the same, with the exception of one letter. So, in this case, I decided to leave the phrase in Spanish followed by my translation in parenthesis.

Another use of alliteration by Barradas is in the title of the narrative “*¡Hurra, hurra, hurra! ¡que viva la hucha!*,” (75) and its ending sentence- “*¡Hurra por la hucha por que como ella ya no hay muchas!*” (76). This alliteration is a humorous allusion to a line enunciated by famous Mexican actor, Mauricio Garcés, from the film comedy *Modisto de señoras* (1969), in which he played the role of a Don Juan fashion designer who seduced his customers while pretending to be homosexual to fool their husbands. In an exaggerated tone, the character would say “*hurra, hurra, hurra, muchachos a la lucha, no somos machos pero somos muchas,*” which became a somewhat famous quote in popular culture. My solution to this problem was to substitute the Spanish title for “Hip, hip, hurray! Long live the piggy bank” which loses the alliteration between *hurra* and *hucha* but does convey the sense of celebration of the object. According to the Collins Dictionary and Manser (82), “hip, hip, hurray” is an expression shouted out, usually in a crowd, to show appreciation or

approval, to celebrate. For the translation of the ending sentence, which in Spanish presents even more alliteration- *hurra- hucha- muchas*- I decided to substitute it for an expression that conveyed the meaning and had some alliteration: “Long live this rare rooster coin bank!” The humorous allusion to the *Modisto de Señoras* expression is lost, but the essence of the meaning conveyed through the narrative, which was the esthetic value of the coin bank, is preserved.

Another wordplay by Barradas was the phrase “*chino de placer*” (99), one that is not understandable even for Puerto Rican readers, since it refers to a very personal anecdote of the author’s childhood which I found out when I read one of his articles where he explains the incident and the meaning of the term (Barradas 2013). It refers to his phonemic misunderstanding of the phrase “*henchida de placer*”, from the lyrics of a famous bolero “*¿Y tu qué has hecho?*” by Delfín Eusebio, which he would hear playing on the jukebox in a local bar in his neighborhood. A literal translation of the term would make no sense. I attempted to come up with an equivalent, and considered including an explanation, since it refers to an important discovery of the author about himself, but it seemed that such an explanation would turn out to be lengthy and distracting, and I finally decided to omit the sentence.

Popular sayings and idiomatic expressions

In various narratives, the author uses popular sayings or idiomatic expressions, including “*lo que se hereda no se hurta*” (19); “*con la música por dentro*” (45); “*se juntaron el hambre y las ganas de comer*” (45); and “*buscarle la quinta pata al gato*” (58). As sayings and idiomatic expressions often consist of metaphors which convey meanings indirectly, a direct translation into the TL would not work. The first step to translating an idiomatic

expression, according to Baker (2011), is to ascertain its meaning in the SL, which I did by looking them up in texts on popular sayings in Spanish. Afterwards I searched their counterparts or similar expressions in several sources on English sayings, including dictionaries by Carbonell Basset (2000) and Torrents del Prats (1979). It is cumbersome to research references on popular sayings and idiomatic expressions as many times they are organized in alphabetical order according to the saying's starting word, which makes the search very painstaking and often unproductive. Even sources that are organized by topic were not helpful in finding equivalent expressions. I found that my own knowledge as a native English speaker and my thesis advisor's knowledge as an experienced translator were the most productive sources for solving these challenges. In most cases, we did find expressions in English that convey similar meanings, looked these up in dictionaries on English popular sayings, and evaluated each one within the context of the source text to make sure that the connotation of the selected English terms are appropriate.

For example, for "*lo que se hereda no se hurta*," which translated literally translates as "what is inherited is not stolen," meaning that children acquire personal traits from their parents, I decided to translate as "like father, like son," which I believe works to certain extent although it does not carry the same force as the saying in Spanish. Something similar happened with "*se juntaron el hambre y las ganas de comer*," which I translated as "two wrongs don't make a right." This choice is not an equivalent or even close in meaning but at least it does convey the message required within the context of the narrative. The saying "*deja de buscarle la quinta pata al gato*" literally translates as "stop looking for the cat's fifth foot," and means to avoid complicating things unnecessarily, or wasting time looking for something that doesn't exist or is irrelevant. I searched more than ten sources on

idiomatic and popular sayings in English and Spanish, and could not find an adequate equivalent, or even an expression of similar meaning. I thought of “splitting hairs” and found in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus that it means “to argue about small details of something,” and in the Collins Dictionary it is defined as “making unnecessary distinctions between things when the differences between them are so small they are not important.” Again, the idiom in English seems to lose the force of expression of the original, but it does convey the essence of the meaning. Yet in the case of this last expression, I decided to present the literal translation accompanied by the equivalent in English in parenthesis, because it is necessary for understanding the title of the narrative “A donkey with two ears and five legs,” which refers to the metaphor of the object around which the narrative is centered, the donkey, which he uses in the saying instead of “cat.” If I had just kept the English saying “splitting hairs,” the reference made by the author, which I consider to be very important, would be lost.

I found equivalents for other expressions such as “*sin ton ni son*” (78), which I translated as “without rhyme or reason”, “*por carambola*” (53), which I translated as “by chance,” losing the popular connotation, and “*borrón y cuenta nueva*” (47) for “start with a clean slate.” Finally, I translated the saying “*con la música por dentro*” as “the music in me.” While the Spanish version has at least two possible meanings, one is more literal which is congruent with my translation, when said of a person that loves music or has musical talent, and a second meaning that refers to a person whose calm appearance contrasts with a hidden wild side. In the reading of the narrative that carries this saying as title, I consider that it refers to the first meaning, which is conveyed adequately with the translation “the music in me,” although the sound of the popular saying is lost.

Cultural references: Musical

Another important type of cultural reference found in *Inventario* is related to music, most of these are in the narrative entitled “*Con la música por dentro*” (45). Barradas explains how his father collected musical recordings of certain genres and mentions the term *bolerista* (45), which refers to the singer of *boleros*, a well-known Latin musical genre. I found that the Spanish term *boleros* is used in English texts (Storm 86), although sometimes the term ballad is used. While I could have translated *bolerista* as crooner, which according to Merriam Webster and Cambridge is a singer of popular songs, specially men that sing love songs in a gentle murmuring manner as is done with *boleros*, to me it would not do justice to a musical genre of such monumental importance in the Spanish speaking world. I therefore kept the term in Spanish. I also keep the terms *plenas* (47) and *rancheras* (57) in Spanish for the same reasons.

I researched several references to music artists named by the author for accurateness. I verified that Toña la Negra (47) was a Mexican *bolerista* from Veracruz, Mexico. I also looked up Agustín Lara, a Mexican *bolerista* (Grant Wood 2014) whom Barradas refers to when he mentions “*un agasajo postinero con la crema de la intelectualidad*” (47) which I found difficult to translate. When I researched “*agasajo postinero*” on Internet, I found that the line is from the song “Madrid” (Vázquez 143) in which Lara sings about how he will celebrate in Chicote, a well-known cocktail bar in the capital city. I decided to translate the line, because I believe that it might not be so well known, and the paragraph already had several references in Spanish, which could be an overload. I translated the line as “a lavish feast with the intellectual crème de la crème” within quotation marks to denote that it is a quotation. The author states that Lara dedicates

the feast to *la Doña*, which I found to be an alias of his wife María Félix, one of the most famous and iconic Mexican actresses (Grant Wood 133). I kept the alias in Spanish.

When visiting his mother in the nursing home, Barradas uses music to stimulate her memory which has been affected. In particular, he hums her the verse “*soy la arena ...*” (48) from the famous bolero by Sylvia Rexach, “*Olas y arenas*,” which I verified on the website of *Fundación Nacional para la Cultura Popular*, as well as the audio version on the online musical archives of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. The bolero “*Olas y arenas*” is so well known and has been sung by several artists, that simply singing the quoted verse will elicit immediate recognition and evoke an aura of nostalgia. It would make no sense to translate the verse to “waves and sands” as it will lose its musicality and cultural impact, so I decided to preserve the Spanish version.

Cultural references: Literary

As a literary scholar, Barradas invokes numerous authors and their works throughout his book. He mentions several of them and includes quotations, such as: Francisco de Quevedo’s verse from his poem “*En breve cárcel*” (21) of which I found the translated version in Olivares (68); Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’ words from her “*Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*” (30) which I found translated by Trueblood (199); a quote from *Platero y yo* by Juan Ramón Jiménez (55) which I found translated by Roach (128); a verse from a poem by Eliseo Diego, Cuban poet (80), which I found was translated by Weiss (147); and a verse from the poem “*Sonatina*” by Rubén Darío (98), which I found translated in Tapscott (36). The author also uses two terms, *fama* and *cronopios* (99), which were coined by Julio Cortázar in his book *Historias de cronopios y famas*. I looked up the English

version of Cortázar's book (Blackburn 1969) and found that these terms are kept in Spanish, as in the book's title, which I also did in my translation.

There are two references to the titles of literary works which are modified by Barradas and used as the titles of two of the narratives. One of these titles is "*El tamaño de mi metáfora*," (17), which is a modified version of *El tamaño de mi esperanza* by Jorge Luis Borges. The second is "*La víspera del libro*," (83) in reference to *La víspera del hombre* by René Marqués. In the title "*El tamaño de mi metáfora*", Barradas uses the first part of the title of the essay by Borges- "*El tamaño de mi esperanza*" and substitutes *esperanza* for *metáfora*, in reference to the concept used by Susanne Langer (21) whom he later quotes to describe how language "even with a small vocabulary, manages to embrace a multi-million things" (Langer 141). In this narrative, Barradas narrates how he uses the image of his father's workshop as a metaphor to describe and explain him. He explains that although the size of his metaphor is not as small as he thinks it should be, making reference to the poem by Quevedo "*En breve cárcel*", it will have to do for the time being.

For the translation of the title of the narrative "*La víspera del libro*" (83), I searched in WorldCAT for an English translation of the book by René Marqués, and found one dated 1974 by Editorial Cultural, but the title is kept in Spanish. Hortas (196) presents a translated version of the title as "The eve of manhood," in his article on Rene Marques' work. In Barradas' title for the narrative, he substitutes "*hombre*" for "*libro*." In this narrative, Barradas makes an analogy of the title of the book by Marqués, which is about the coming of age of Pirulo, with the author's discovery of his love for literature as he read the book. I chose to make a direct translation of the original title of the narrative in Spanish to "The eve of the book" and I included an English version of the title of the book by Marqués

within parenthesis when it is mentioned within the narrative, so that the reader may make the connection with the title of the narrative. Finally, Barradas also includes a reference to the titles of two other publications: *El cocinero puertorriqueño* (31), a title which I found in the University of Puerto Rico's general library catalog, a publication from 1859 of which there is no known author, and *Los cinco sentidos*, by Tomas Blanco (85). Neither of these works have English versions, which I verified in WorldCat.

Cultural references: Academic scholars, artists, and historic terms

As a literary critic who frames his analyses within a social perspective, Barradas cites numerous academic scholars from the Social Sciences and Humanities whom he invokes throughout various narratives to explain his interpretation of the objects he finds and his memoirs. Besides Susanne Langer which I already presented, he quotes Jules David Prown (14) and Clifford Geertz (31), whose quotes I corroborated in the original texts (Prown 4; Geertz 32). Other scholars he mentions are Foucault, Sontag, Virilio (47), Marx, Roland Barthes (80), Harold Bloom (86), and Bruno Bettelheim (100). I researched each one of these to ensure that they were written correctly and that the mentions fit with the themes for which they served as reference.

I also researched the term “*orientalizado*” (56), which Barradas uses to describe the concrete donkey in his parents' front lawn, since the meaning of the word I found in the Oxford Dictionary — “of oriental style or characteristics” — did not seem to fit with the vision of Mexican culture the author was referring to. I found that “orientalism” is a term used by literary critic and political activist Edward Said in the title of his book on the study of the patronizing and stereotyped ways in which the imperialist societies of the West tend to portray the cultures of colonies and countries in the East which serve to justify

domination (Said 1979). In this context, Barradas applies the term “*orientalizado*” to denounce the view of Mexican culture that has prevailed in the United States and that is embodied in the figure of the donkey, which is usually accompanied by a Mexican taking a siesta, wearing a *sarape* and *huaraches*. When Barradas elaborates about the influence of Mexican culture in his life and in Puerto Rico, and how the icons have changed over time, he mentions “*El Chavo del Ocho*,” (57) which was an extremely popular television program. I left the title in Spanish in my translation and expanded by mentioning that it is a TV show.

Among other types of cultural references, I found some are related to art, including the painting “*El rapto de las Sabinas*” by Picasso (51). I found its translation as “The Rape of the Sabine Women” in the official Pablo Picasso website. He also mentions Puerto Rican painters Martorell, Tufiño, and Manuel Hernández Acevedo (59), whose names I verified. Historic references made by the author when writing about the political preferences of his ancestors, include the mention of the *PNP* which is the acronym for the Puerto Rican pro-statehood political party (60) and is translated as “New Progressive Party (NPP)”. Muñoz Marín (60) was the first elected Puerto Rican governor, and a term used to refer to his policies “*muñocismo*” (101) I found translated as “Muñocism” (Villaronga 175). *La Coalición*, which Barradas points out was also known as *La Colchoneta* (61), refers to the union of two political parties of diverging ideologies through a coalition for the elections of 1924 in Puerto Rico (Scarano 533). I left the titles of the last two terms in Spanish, because they are proper names.

Two retail establishments in Puerto Rico are mentioned by the author: *González Padín* (98), a very important department store that I personally visited, which disappeared

in the decade of 1990 (Rodríguez), and *Zayas School Supplies* (98), which was the store where the author bought his first books as a child. In the translation, for *González Padín*, I expanded the text by adding Department Stores as part of the name, since it was also called that way. I found a reference to *Zayas School Supplies* as a store in Arecibo, in *Anuario bibliográfico puertorriqueño: Índice alfabético de libros, folletos, revistas y periódicos publicados en Puerto Rico*, 1956.

Conclusion

The translation of a literary text that contains abundant linguistic and idiomatic phrases as well as various types of cultural references (traditions, literary, culinary, musical, historic) has been a challenging experience. As a translator, I have strived to avoid domesticating the source text and to preserve the national identity and the author's voice as a Puerto Rican native. I aimed for a translation that reads as a translation, not in the grammatical but in the cultural sense, a translation that confronts the reader with the differences between his or her culture and language, and those of the source text. In this experience, I have learned something about the foreignization approach to translation, and how to operationalize this approach by making decisions on which terms to preserve in the source language and how to choose from among translation techniques. In my research on how to foreignize, I found that much work has been done in the field of translation studies and that there are no straightforward rules, but rather many debates and complex issues. I hope to have produced a text that is clearly understandable to Anglo speakers while at the same time making them aware of its foreignness and inviting them to learn about and appreciate the Puerto Rican culture.

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