Graduate Program in Translation
College of Humanities
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BLACK: THE COLOR THAT SUITS ME FINE

(a translation of "*Negro: este color que me queda bonito*"
by Benito Massó Jr.)

by
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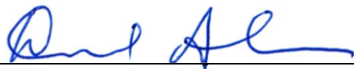

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BLACK: THE COLOR THAT SUITS ME FINE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE v

INTRODUCTION vi
EVERY NAME TELLS A STORY xix
NO, NOT ALL ARE CREATED EQUAL xxv
JUST SAYING IT LIKE IT IS xxix
CARING FOR THIN SKIN xxxiii
YOU SAY POTATO, I SAY POTATO xxxvii
IT PAYS TO DOUBLE CHECK xl
THE STORY BETWEEN THE LINES xliii
CONCLUSION xlvi

BIBLIOGRAPHY l

DEDICATION liii

GLOSSARY liv

BLACK: THE COLOR THAT SUITS ME FINE 1

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

In fulfillment of the thesis requirement for completion of the Master's Degree from the Graduate Program in Translation at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, I have chosen to translate, in part, from Spanish into English, the book *Negro: este color que me queda bonito* by Benito Massó Jr. This work, described by the author as an autoethnography and memoirs of his experiences and his healing process as a Black man, was published in 2013 by *Divinasletras* in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a first edition. My translation falls into the category of "interlingual translation" or "translation proper," terms which, in the famous 1959 paper, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," were coined by Roman Jakobson, one of the most revered linguists and literary theorists of the twentieth century. This thesis discusses the processes I have gone through in order to arrive at a finished translation of chapters 1, 3, 6, and 7 of Benito's book, focusing mainly on common issues in translation and the idiosyncrasies of this particular source text that presented some challenges, including details on how I have sought to resolve them, drawing on the ideals of translation theory and practice. It then concludes with the implications of my translation decisions in today's multicultural, diverse and globalized society.

Before discussing the preliminary matters of this thesis project, I first wish to highlight two burning concerns I have as a translator entering the pool of experience that reflect how our profession is regarded by the layperson or non-translator. There is an old saying, "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king," which for centuries has been used in a range of social and political contexts all over the world. In the translating profession, however, this proverb bears a frightening implication that inspires the need for translators to dispel this depreciating notion and prove that the one-eyed man is nowhere near king status, and by so doing, create an

unmistakable distinction between ourselves (competent, experienced and skilled professionals) and all those one-eyed tinkerers masquerading as peddlers of our craft. In fact, the task of translating is, by no means, a haphazard occurrence undertaken by any person(s) who might speak the source and target languages of the translation material in question with sufficient ease and self-assurance, and as Marisa Presas outlines, “bilingual competence, while being a necessary condition, is not in itself sufficient to guarantee translation competence,…”—a fact echoed by translation scholar Gideon Toury (Toury 1995:252), and proven time and again in studies conducted by Krings (1986), Lörscher (1991), Kussmaul (1995) and many others (Schäffner and Adab, 19). It is also noteworthy that the five qualitative parameters of translation competence (language, textual, subject, cultural and transfer competences) specified by Neubert serve to set translators apart from other language users, specifically, those with varying levels of bilingual competence, which, invariably, include that of a two-year-old (Schäffner and Adab, 5-20). Translation is a complex task, which, understandably, is difficult to define because it requires a level of expertise that demands certain cognitive abilities of the translator that far exceed those of other language professionals. We are required to possess expert knowledge of both our native tongue and the other language(s) we use to translate (bi-directional competence) as well as near-expert knowledge of the field or subject matter of our translation, then to apply this knowledge to our expert reading and writing skills. But I’m not done yet. In our capacity as readers and writers, our skills in analysis, pragmatics, semiotics, linguistics, grammar, comprehension, decoding, interpretation, communication, transfer, editing, and a host of other disciplines are challenged. This level of knowledge, versatility and creativity required to perform our job is the very essence that speaks to translational competence, and which brings me to my next point of concern: the misconception that translation is a mechanical process of mere

selection and substitution (Tymoczko 2016:278-280). The age of artificial intelligence gave way to the premise that expertise was equivalent to skilled memory and that problem-solving was equivalent to an efficient search of this collection of skilled memory. Thus, came the transformation of the information-processing paradigm when scientists sought to create mechanical systems designed to store, retrieve and regurgitate expert knowledge. Among them were the early mechanical translation programs, which were considered to be expert systems. My tone should not be misconstrued as a show of disregard for the ingenious advances in technology over the last century or so, but during that time, machine translation, on the contrary, had proven itself to be "weak" and the product of its work likened to that of "novices"—a far cry from that of experts (Toury 1995:4-7). Bearing in mind that there is no perfect equivalence between languages, the task of translation requires human qualities which include being constantly abreast of the latest linguistic and semantic phenomena inherent in both of the languages and cultures with which we operate, and an understanding and awareness of the associated sociolinguistic norms (both at the linguistic and the pragmatic levels), which oftentimes are dictated by situation, time and context—qualities of which machines are incapable. Nonetheless, the use of machine translation has become a very useful aid for translators, (especially when using a terminological data base to translate specialized texts) and helps to increase translation competence. Other resources translators rely on include bilingual dictionaries (specialized or otherwise) and collaboration with native speakers of the non-dominant language, experts in the subject matter of the translation and the author of the ST. Since translators facilitate the transfer of knowledge not only between languages, but between cultures as well, we must be regarded as interlingual and intercultural experts—a task which

goes way beyond just knowing more than one language and mechanically replacing a word in one language for an equivalent form in another.

From secondary school, I knew that Spanish was a language I wanted to pursue—that is exactly what I did, through ages eleven to sixteen. Receiving a less than commendable grade in Spanish for my school-leaving finals, however, did not deter me, and I pressed on, taking Spanish, mathematics- and science-related courses at Universidad de Cienfuegos and Universidad de La Habana in Cuba for a three-year period as part of a scholarship program. Following that experience of cultural immersion, I returned to Barbados and began a new career in law enforcement, which afforded me opportunities to interpret for Spanish-speaking prisoners in the court system and interview them in my capacity as a criminal investigator of prostitution- and drug-related crimes. I also participated in more Spanish courses, this time given locally by instructors who spoke English, and spoke it as their native language. I finally had the courage to re-take the O'Level Examination in Spanish as an entry requirement for the Undergraduate Spanish Program at the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.), Cavehill Campus in Barbados, this time earning a Grade I pass. At UWI, my courses were heavily grounded in Spanish (language and literature), linguistics and psychology. Though challenging, I graduated with a bachelor of the arts degree in Spanish, minoring in psychology. When others thought I was done, I applied for admission into the Graduate Program in Translation (P.G.T.) here at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, and the rest is an ongoing story. I believe that over the years I have acquired and accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience, particularly in Spanish language and culture (from the Caribbean perspective) and translation theory and practice, which have been invaluable to me as I worked on this final translation project for my

master's degree—knowledge and experience that will continue to grow as I pursue my dream of being a translator.

During my undergraduate studies, I developed an interest in the plight of the many Caribbean nationals, my own relatives included, who emigrated to the United States of America in search of greater opportunities not only for themselves, but also for their children, but who, instead, were met with racial and other types of discrimination. Many who have chosen to take this road and even others who haven't may identify to some degree with Benito's story. Since this phenomenon is still very prevalent today, as a translator my hope is to translate the real life experiences and beliefs of Caribbean people like Benito, sharing as well the varying elements of their dialects or language varieties in order to enlighten a wider cross-section of an American readership as to how migrants from the Caribbean are treated in their societies and how they cope with their emotional strain, and in so doing, diminish the degree of marginalization such minority groups endure throughout their migratory transition and even after they become "Americanized." Another reason for my interest in this book was the ease with which I found myself being able to personally relate to many of the author's experiences, and I am convinced that his work will have a similar effect on his readers. Moreover, in choosing this text, I believe I have achieved the best of both worlds: the opportunity to translate a memoir written by a Puerto Rican author who dares to delve into the issue of racism[1], and the challenge of expressing, not in the British English to which I am so accustomed, but in U.S. English—as this author did so compellingly in his native language—the linguistic, emotional, and cultural elements that define who he is as a Black Puerto Rican. In sharing this author's work to a readership of English

[1] A social problem which, in Puerto Rico's case, is at the center of a Black versus White dichotomy and paralleled with a general belief that the improvement of a race through racial purification can be achieved by procreating with a lighter-skinned partner. Another significant manifestation of this social issue in Puerto Rico is the persistent denial of racism's existence in society (Cruz-Janzen, 2003).

speakers, it is my hope that more people whether residing in the United States and elsewhere might come to understand the damaging effects of racism on Blacks and other peoples of underrepresented ethnicities.

As I pondered the type of text I would choose to translate for my master's thesis project, I conceptualized one of nonfictional genre (a favorite of mine), being of social and cultural significance, yet, of tasteful appeal and intrigue. Most of all, I was searching for something that might unveil the real-life experiences and emotions of an author, with whom I could identify, being not only native to the Caribbean, as I am, but which also demonstrates a boldness to share uninhibitedly his or her most intimate thoughts, emotions and experiences surrounding a topic that many are hesitant to discuss. This, in my opinion, was my idea of a text worthy enough for my thesis project. The search led me to several bookstores in the Río Piedras area, and there I found, sitting on a waist-level book shelf at *Librería Mágica*, a memoir, written with the crudest of candor and devoid of any of the manipulative linguistic devices often embedded in so many texts intended to entice the palate of specific audiences. To encounter such a detailed and well-organized work by an author who is a born and bred Puerto Rican and who had gone through the process of assimilation in order to facilitate his transition into American society was a real godsend for me. I consider him a perfect candidate for sharing with the world the crosses he had to bear and the demons he had to fight throughout his lifetime—owed to the prevalence of racism experienced by him firsthand—oftentimes in unfamiliar territory, as he became accustomed to the winter weather and tried to lead an academic, personal, and professional life in a language that was not his native tongue. With the belief that one is seemingly condemned to suffer the impact of racism and discrimination just by virtue of being Black (Massó 24), for years he persevered through a relentless struggle to understand and manage his feelings of rage,

humiliation, depression, and hopelessness resultant from the different forms of racism he experienced, the worst of which was internalized racism—the emotional remnants of centuries of oppression and abuse suffered by his forefathers sold into slavery, and passed down to him through family lineage, and still affecting him even today.

Of Puerto Rican parentage, Benito Massó Jr. was born in 1937 in the municipality of Ponce, Puerto Rico, into a middle-class household with parents who knew what it was like to grow up poor and who knew their place in a world where Whites are the dominant race and automatically have greater opportunities in life. They raised him to be decent, respectful, and God-fearing, and instilled in him good values, always encouraging him and his younger brother to focus on their education and to always walk in the ways of the Lord. Benito pursued his tertiary education at Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, and studied management, working for about ten years as an accountant, then embarking upon studies in the field of psychology and later worked as a practitioner in that field for some thirty years before retiring in 2004. He dedicated five of his golden years to being a volunteer psychologist at a rehabilitation center to help women afflicted by drug addiction. This autoethnography I have chosen to translate has brought to reality his dreams of becoming a writer. By the time he had completed this book, he had already chartered a new course toward a master's of fine arts degree in literature at University of Sagrado Corazón in San Juan. In September of 2016, Benito published his second book titled "*Juana Agripina, la esclava rebelde de Ponce*" and is now about to begin work on his thesis about the life of Pedro Albizu as a Black man.

Negro: este color que me queda bonito is a memoir that centers around the somewhat taboo issues of race identity and racial discrimination in Puerto Rico—and even beyond its shores—as experienced by Benito Massó Jr. from his childhood days well into his adult years.

More importantly, it takes us through the author's attempts to understand and deal with the frustration and anguish he feels at some of the most significant moments of his life because of racism. This has resulted in an ongoing process of introspection and reflection to try and cure himself after discovering that he has been suffering from a condition referred to as internalized racism—a condition which causes the sufferer, both consciously and subconsciously, to possess an attitude of greater acceptability or superiority toward White people while viewing him or herself and others of the same race (in this case Black) as somehow inferior or less worthy of acceptance. The author presents the highlights of his life—childhood, adolescence, first love, living abroad, marriage, his observation of key events in U.S. history, etc.—and each reflects how this condition proves itself to be a relentless torment to him with no apparent end. With his training in the field of psychology, he goes to great lengths to cure himself by starting on a path of self-diagnosis and self-treatment, trying all types of therapies: praying, reading the bible and other forms of spiritual healing; attending scheduled appointments for psychological therapy; practicing yoga and meditation; reading books and attending conferences on metaphysics; doing introspection and reflection, and even becoming a vegetarian, running several miles each week, and lifting weights in the gym. His process of personal transformation to rid himself of a self-defeating pattern of thought and behavior created by his condition has been a long and painful one marked by some setbacks. However, his dedication and effort have succeeded in helping him overcome most of the struggles he had encountered during his lifetime and have also served as an inspiration to others. Forgiveness also played a vital role in his healing process, enabling him to let go of the pain and anger he was carrying around for so long.

The author begins this book by recounting an experience he had while growing up in Ponce. This encounter would serve as an awakening to the harsh reality of a world where he is

the object of tauntings, ridicule, humiliation and other forms of discrimination simply because of his dark complexion. As he tries to understand why this was happening to him, he seeks his mother's advice, but views her reasoning with great skepticism, doubting his own self-worth, questioning his belief in God, the pillar of his upbringing, and even trying to lighten his complexion in order to conform to a more "acceptable" construct of aesthetics created by his society. What he discovers, however, is that this cancerous festering sore known as racism manifests itself with a three-way dynamic: in the belittling words and perceptions of Blacks against other Blacks; in the rejection and discrimination perpetuated by Whites against Blacks; and in the ways in which he was continually depreciating himself and other Black people in comparison to Whites.

My discussion, no doubt, reveals the unique characteristics of this particular text, which dictate the considerations made while effecting the translation, and needless to say, each characteristic represents its own difficulty during the translation process. Throughout this expository writing, the author tends to use words and terms, with which he is familiar, some grounded in psychology, his area of expertise, and others, such as sayings and excerpts from popular ballads, are expressly Puerto Rican in nature and significance. Because of his versatility in both English and Spanish, he also tends to engage in some code-switching from time to time. Furthermore, some of the words he uses bear cultural significance referring to elements specific to Africa, Puerto Rico or the United States, which in some cases have been transposed from the ST, therefore meriting the inclusion of a glossary as part of this thesis. These references made in the author's work are characteristic of his African ancestry, his Puerto Rican upbringing and identity, while reflecting the "Americanized" Puerto Rican he has become due to his experiences in the mainland United States. Even though this author is educated, he uses a register which is

neither high nor low, but balanced enough for the appreciation and enjoyment of practically any reader. Also evident in Benito's writing is the air of comfort with which he writes, as if he were confiding in a friend, even addressing his audience personally, however, at times using the second person singular and at other times using the third person plural—a clear inconsistency with respect to the text as a whole. Specific reference is also made to different complexions of Black skin which required the appropriate treatment in translation in terms of deciding whether or not to translate or, conversely, to find suitable cultural equivalents. Another significant recurring feature in the text is the use of humor and metaphors, and even rhyme, often found in the mocking songs of juveniles, popular ballads, poetic verses, etc. These are but some of the idiosyncrasies so intricately woven throughout the fabric of this text that, undoubtedly, caused some difficulty throughout the translation process.

In light of the aforementioned characteristics of the text, my greater challenges included: (1) translating rhyme; (2) finding suitable equivalents for racially charged words meant to avoid the use of binary classifications of skin complexion such as Black and White; (3) determining whether to implement a strategy of foreignization or domestication when dealing with referents to different aspects of the author's culture for the interpretation, understanding and acceptance of the target audience; and (4) finding a fitting translation for the title of this book.

With regard to translating poetry, I considered the fact that the rhyme in itself has a specific literary purpose and I tried to maintain it wherever possible. Hans-Jörg Bittner suggests that "the challenge consists in finding a rhyming word that not only fits the meaning of the text, but at the same time also meets all other requirements" (25) (conversational tone, metrical pattern, etc.), and further states that "for a target text to match the meaning of the source text with an equally smooth syntax and approximately the same lengths of rhymed verse lines poses

an extremely challenging, if not insurmountable, task" (23). In some instances, I fell short and therefore had to compromise. The other challenge of rendering culturally charged words from SL into TL required much contemplation, and as Azizollah Dabaghi clearly points out, finding cultural equivalents can be quite challenging since some cultural concepts and phenomena are present in one culture but not (in the same way) in another, so compromises were also made in this regard. On whether or not to translate such terms, there has been a great deal of debate, specifically regarding whether to use a strategy of "foreignization" or "domestication" in translation. Lawrence Venuti, in *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, writes on these strategies, but however leans toward foreignization with the aim of avoiding "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text" (qtd. in Dabaghi, 184). Venuti further states that foreignization "can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism,…" (qtd. in Snell-Hornby 145-46). The wording of his affirmations has however been challenged by several theorists and labeled by Snell-Hornby as fundamental and generalizing (146), made from an early 19th-century perspective, and therefore cannot be judged according to the criteria of our modern world (147)—definitely something I had to keep in mind due to the risk that the reader might find the target text difficult to understand if too many foreign elements are present. Another challenge was finding a suitable translation for the title of the text. It stemmed from the multiple interpretations of the phrase "*me queda bonito*" and the various possible translations for the word "*bonito.*" Studying in Puerto Rico over the past three years has enabled me to recognize the phrase, "*me queda bonito*" with its multiple interpretations, which were fundamental in helping me decide on the most suitable translation for the title of his book. Professor, and renowned translator and author, Suzanne Jill Levine, who lectured to me as a visiting professor here on campus, shared her experiences as a translator, the varying obstacles

she encountered in translation and the techniques she devised to overcome her obstacles which oftentimes deviated from the more conventional solution paths. She outlined that immersing herself in the author's native language and culture was especially beneficial to her when translating not only the book, *Tres Tristes Tigres* by Guillermo Cabrera Infante, but also its title, which bears evidence of semantic compromise, but literary gain. Suzanne's book, *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction,* inspired me tremendously as I considered both conventional and unconventional solutions. In light of these and the other difficulties I encountered during the translation process, it remained cognizant of the style, context and tone of the text. It also helped to have a personal understanding of the author's cultural upbringing and experiences, and to consider the target audience for whom my translation is intended.

Under the professional guidance of my thesis advisor, Professor David Auerbach, I undertook a translation of this text which meets the 12,500 to 15,000 word requirement. Even though I have only translated four chapters of Benito Massó's work, the entire book consists of a 4-page introduction, 17 chapters, and ends with a 3-page epilogue. These four chapters I have selected represent, in my view, the most salient components of the entire text in terms of their culturally and racially charged content. Far from my hopes of this being an easy text to translate, I found myself with a host of dualities which engender certain implications regarding the intention of the ST and that of the TT and whether those two intentions are one in the same, dispelling any archaic notion about a translator's invisibility. One of these dualities includes a ST written in Spanish by a Puerto Rican translated for an Anglophone target audience, specifically from the United States, which in itself, presents a dominance vs. inferiority relationship in terms of the two cultures and the two languages in question, particularly because

of the colonial relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. Another duality speaks to a ST which is essentially nonfiction with distinct traits of the fictional genre. The third relates to time/context: a ST describing occurrences, customs, attitudes and prejudices emblematic of the 1940s through to the 1980s in both the U.S. and Puerto Rico as compared with a TT geared toward a receiving audience of the twenty-first century many of whom have customs, attitudes and prejudices that vary from that former period. There are other dualities present in the text that helped to determine my translation decisions and are included in the conclusion of this thesis; however, I wish to mention one last one. It hinges on the fact that the author skillfully encodes his message, using devices like metaphor and connotative meaning to tell two stories at the same time: one in the very lines of the text and another between the lines—a quality which I personally find rather intriguing and I only hope that I have done it justice.

EVERY NAME TELLS A STORY

The notion that "every name tells a story" seems to ring true in elements of fictional genre and this work, despite being nonfiction, bears a striking resemblance to fiction and, consequently, is no different. The very first line of Benny's story, in fact, tells of a name he was branded with as a child —a name, which, coupled with his paternal surname, led him on a path to discovery. Other names also appear, of people, places and things (in the broadest sense), but more than just being names, many of them carry distinct references which are religious, cultural, historical and otherwise. Let's begin with "*Negrito carabalí, tu comes mierda y yo maní*" (Massó 2013:13) which was challenging from the onset. My first instinct was to leave it and come back later, but the only quirk in that technique is that the problem would still be there afterwards. I immediately recognized that this was not just a rhyme, but the type sung by children to mock and taunt, so in order to maintain the taunting and hurtful effects created—both for the children who sang it and the unfortunate child on the receiving end respectively,—rhyme was an element that had to be preserved by all means. The problem with translating it word for word was that "*Negrito carabalí, you eat shit while I eat nuts*" was not at all viable because it lacked that essential ingredient that made it work: the rhyme. I needed to effectively transcend cultural limits to transfer the sense of the phrase, so I did some research and found out that in North American culture (1940s-50s), *maní* did not possess the same recognition among children as it did in Latin American culture and the cultural equivalent in U.S. society was actually candy. Basically, while middle-class children across Latin America and the Spanish-speaking islands of the Greater Antilles were snacking on *maní* as a matter of high nutritional value at a low cost, children across the U.S. were snacking on candy because it was cheap. It was saddening to discover from journalist Nina Martyris' web article that the mentioned period coincided with the production-

and sales boom of store-bought candy in the U.S. with advertising campaigns targeting children in a most racially dividing manner. You might be thinking, "Ah-ha! Problem solved!" But no, not quite. Though it is true that candy is disyllabic like *maní*, its U.S. pronunciation does not rhyme with the Spanish pronunciation of *maní*, which was an issue of phonology. However, strangely enough, it turns out to be a perfect rhyme if candy is pronounced with the stress on the last letter, as is done across the English-speaking Caribbean islands of the Lesser Antilles.

Now, due to the syntactic placement of *comes* and *mierda* in that very phrase, the Puerto Rican term *comemierda* almost immediately came to mind, referring to conceited people from the higher echelons of society who look down on others of darker skin color or of lower social class than themselves despite the fact that they, themselves might not be White. I do not believe that meaning was directly applicable to this particular situation, however if the reverse of the song were true, then ironically, those boys (in keeping with the literal translation of *comemierda*) would definitely represent that subset of pretentious people in Benny's society who, metaphorically speaking, of course, eat the same shit everyone else does, but act higher and mightier because of their elevated social status (in keeping with societal perceptions). Losing that "*carabalí*-candy" phonetic effect with the born and bred American reader was a small compromise in translation which I made so that I could maintain the rhyme.

There is no story better than the one of our ancestry from which we find bits and pieces to preserve and pass on to future generations. As present-day speakers of the language of their colonizers, Puerto Ricans have been able to preserve words derived from the languages of their African ancestors to this day, which are not only used in everyday speech, but encapsulated in their art, poetry and folklore as evidenced in Ismael Rivera's rendition, "*El negro bembón*." Maria Tymoczko explains that in the translation of texts written by colonized people, the

hallmark of the colonizer ideology is for the colonized to give up his or her name or something that speaks to identity (Tymoczko 1999:238). For that very reason, I sought to preserve the phonic and semantic value of Africanisms like *bembón* in the TT. Unfortunately though, that decision may have greatly limited my ability to come up with adequate rhyme for the song. Even though I decided to prioritize maintaining *bembón* in the TT, however, in my own defense, after the words leave the paper and are transferred audibly into song, it is possible to implement certain techniques to create rhyme if there is none, such as, altering pronunciations and contracting words so that excessively long lines have the required syllables, but that is another field that falls outside the realm of translation studies.

Name capitalization was also another consideration due to the existing disparity between rules of capitalization for Spanish and English with only a few similarities between them. Proper names like *Negrito carabalí*, *Isabel "La Negra,"* and *Banda Blanca* are all examples of descriptive names, common to fictional texts, often describing the physical or other characteristics of their referent. Just like any proper name in English or Spanish, I capitalized them in the TT even if they weren't in the ST as they rightly should have been, and the fact that they carry such a cultural load, I decided against using an English variant and losing the cultural references as a vital element being communicated throughout the text. That is, every cultural element from the ST was transplanted directly into to the TT: the cultural reference to nationality, as in *carabalí* (uncapitalized in Spanish), the reference to Isabel's racial origin and reference to the experience of getting a haircut, which, undoubtedly, many boys from the Puerto Rican 1940s era would well remember. Similarly, street and place names such as *Ciudad Señorial*, Calle Wilson, Cine Hollywood, *Nuevayol*, La Marqueta, El Barrio, etc., also appear capitalized, unaltered (spelling-wise) and in regular font within the TT in order to maintain the level of

authenticity and accuracy also inherent in such culture-bound names. Interestingly, the latter two have acquired a high level of recognition and acceptance in U.S. culture, not just because they are located in the city of New York, but also because they constitute a cultural hub for the large Hispanic community living in New York and by extension, the rest of the United States and Puerto Rico as well. It eludes me, however, as to why *Nuevayol* is not capitalized in the ST, but since it is a proper name, I capitalized it in the TT with italicization to reflect that despite its reference to a name in English, it is emphatically Puerto Rican. Even though the ST consistently represents these two names as **el Barrio** and **"la marqueta,"** their level of acceptability in U.S. society and culture does not merit that they be treated any less than other place names in English and that is therefore conveyed in the TT through capitalization. Sidetracking a bit to the subject of authenticity, it was important to maintain the reference to "Baldwin-Wallace College," despite the fact that Benito's Alma Mater is today known as Baldwin Wallace University. Inconsistency in the capitalization of proper names was evident in the ST as well (Earth/earth), so I corrected that in the TT with consistent capitalization in order to maintain an aesthetic consistency within the entire text. Finally, my most thought-over capitalization-related decision concerned names associated with racial and cultural identity, such as, Latino, Hispanic and Mulatto; *jíbaro* and *moreno*; and Black and White. English grammar rules prescribe the capitalization of all proper nouns (including those denoting race, nationality, culture and ethnicity) while in Spanish, capitalization does not extend to races, nationalities, cultures or ethnicities. The words *jíbaro(a)* and *moreno* emphatically belong to the Spanish lexicon and have not gained acceptance in English, so therefore their representation in the TT was reflected using lowercase and italicization as would be fitting for words of a foreign language within an English text, so with that consideration taking precedence, the rule of capitalization in this regard became nullified in

the TT because they maintained their Spanish cultural and linguistic characteristics. Latino, Hispanic and Mulatto, on the other hand, are accepted words in English denoting culture and ethnicity, so in the TT, they were treated accordingly. In English, the decision of whether black and white should be capitalized in reference to race is a long-standing issue which has garnered a great deal of debate and controversy since slavery was abolished in the United States (late nineteenth century) until the present time, whereas, for Spanish, there's no such debate. Far from just being a bone of contention about whether to capitalize, for the millions of African descendants living across the United States, this is an ongoing struggle to be recognized as a race and regarded with dignity and worth just like all the other ethnic groups which are unquestionably signified through capitalization. Writing black with a capital "B" as a race signifier has been, for years, strongly advocated by linguists, academics and civil rights activists, but still there are many people, White supremacists or otherwise, who respond with fervent opposition insisting on not capitalizing either term so that reference to the Black race will continue being written with a common letter, thereby solidifying their lack of recognition of Black people as a race of human beings (Perlman 2015). Without a doubt, my decision to capitalize all names denoting race, culture and ethnicity in the TT transcends the ideals of translation theory and practice, revealing that it is just a matter of choice—either as an individual or as an entity (media houses, colleges, etc.). Also, the variation of terms used in the ST to refer to members of the Black race is evidence of a social reality in which Blacks in the U.S. still struggle to be recognized by one name which unifies them as a people, disregarding the national identity of "Afro-, Black- and African American," and the titles given to them by other cultures throughout history, such as, American *moreno*, negro, colored, and nigger. This is a social reality of indiscriminate name-changing which I duplicated in the TT to illustrate a cultural reality.

Probably the most interesting of all the names to be translated was the title of the book itself, "*Negro: este color que me queda bonito*." Though one local interpretation of *me queda bonito* denotes the use of some removable object which positively accentuates either the physical attributes or abilities of its subject, I was more drawn to the other interpretation with also includes a connotative meaning of acceptance of that object by the subject—Benito's acceptance and oneness with his skin color. Not only was the denotative meaning important in subjectively describing his appearance, but that connotative meaning also served to reveal a process of physical, mental and spiritual growth in the author as a man who had come to accept his Black heritage, manifested by his dark skin, and also greatly influenced my decision in arriving at a title for the book. I did, however, consider that the title I decided on, by its implication of Benny's acceptance of his Blackness, might have killed the suspense for readers of the TT, and what made me, as reader of the ST, want to keep reading till the very end. After weighing my options, I was convinced that I made the best decision because, in both the ST and the TT, that element of suspense never really dies because despite him confirming this acceptance multiple times, I am still not 100% convinced that he is completely cured of his condition, thereby creating a desire in the reader to read a sequel of his book, should one ever be released, even if only to know how the story really ends.

NO, NOT ALL ARE CREATED EQUAL

Finding suitable equivalents in translation is extremely important and often depends on the type of text being translated. For this highly descriptive text, communicating themes of racial conflict between Black and White, societal perceptions and misconceptions, and the personal hardships of not just the author, but his entire race, the choice of an adequate equivalent seemed to rotate on a cultural axis in terms of dominance and subordination. Some might believe that once an equivalent is found for a word in the ST, it can be used in every instance that word appears in the ST, but that assumption couldn't be more inaccurate. Take *negro*, for example. It appears rather frequently in the ST, while reflecting a range of equivalents in the TT (Black, black, the Black man, *negro*, nigger), all of which are viable depending on the context and situation in which *negro* was used on each separate occasion. As seen before, *negro*, when used as a referent to race, culture or ethnicity, had as its equivalent, Black with a capital "B" and when used in the phrase, *un trapo de negro*, the equivalent was "**n**igger." However, in the first line of the excerpt from Marcelino Canino's poetry compilation, the reference to race is maintained, meriting capitalization in English, but the situation is primarily poetic and ought to read as such, so in order to maintain the poetic flow, "the Black man" was, for me, the most adequate equivalent, referring not to just one black man, but in the generic sense encompassing the entire Black race as was implicitly deduced from the excerpt. In that very line, I was curious as to what was meant by *justa ley*. As luck would have it (or maybe not), I found several definitions, all of which alluded to the idea of some reference to a manmade code that aligns itself with actual legislative statutes. Reading it again I thought, "but this can't be right." It is not legal to make a person perform menial and degrading jobs just because he or she is Black or has a type of behavior that one subjectively disapproves of. Immediately I knew that I was dealing with the representation

of the ideals of White supremacy and I considered equivalent options other than “just law” (such as, “common law” and “in all justice”) so that the TT reader would not be as lost as I was. However, I did some more research and came across a letter written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963—sitting in Birmingham jail cell at the time—in which he explains the difference between just law and unjust law. Then it dawned on me that this wasn’t just about prejudices, but prejudices put into actual law in a somewhat implicit fashion. This was indeed a representation of the social perceptions of Black subordination and what many might recognize in today’s society as systemic racism. With this realization, no other equivalent was more fitting than “just law” due to the significance of both denotative and connotative meanings.

Other culture-bound elements in the ST included words with a plethora of English equivalents, popular sayings and quotes from the Bible. Deciding on an equivalent basically came down to what worked better with the entire text or was most logical given the situation, as in, *no todo fue miel sobre hojuelas*. Since there are two viable equivalents for this saying in English, my choice was easy because unlike “a bed of roses,” “peaches and cream,” with its chromatic association with black (in its range of shades) and white tied in perfectly. The same was also true for *todo es según el color del cristal con que se mira*, for which I decided against the alternate English equivalent “it all depends on how you look at it”, using instead, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” It was interesting to find an English version of Canino’s excerpt (Carvalho-Neto 62) which translated *tusa* as “corn cob,” clearly carrying a joke too far, so instead, I used “corn husk” in the TT since the visual and tactile properties made more sense, given the wiping action being performed.

Regarding bible quotes and sayings, admittedly, suitable equivalents for that former group came quite easy to me because listening to Sunday sermons is something I’ve been doing

my entire life, while those from the latter, not so much. Since the phrases I encountered bore traits of Puerto Rican colloquialism, I could not rely on any dictionary or experiences from my upbringing as a resource. After considering the context, I came up with an improvised equivalent for the saying since, to my knowledge, there was no established equivalent in English. In such cases it was necessary to collaborate with native Spanish-speakers within the Puerto Rican society, some of whom, were language specialists like myself. For the saying, "*el negro la hace a la entrada o a la salida…pero la hace*," My version was: "Black people either screw things up at the beginning or at the end…but they manage to screw up regardless." The TT version was a bit more explicit than the ST simply because Spanish is capable of a level of vagueness that English cannot afford without opening a window for unwanted interpretations. Another saying, "*y como el tema estaba pegado*" though while reading it in Spanish I understood what was meant, I found myself in a rut as to what equivalent to use. Ironically, the equivalent I committed to, coincidentally, turned out to be a clever bit of wordplay with synonymity between the adjective in the first line of the song, "*Mami, el negro está* ***rabioso****…*" and "craze," the TT adjective I used to describe the song. Though ill-advised, my personal preference for "word for word" translation only when effecting a first draft of the TT proved extremely helpful as I tried to unravel the mystery of ¡*Rambo era un soberano meñique a mi lado cuando me metía en ese trance tipo homicida y revanchista!* My word-for-word translation of that sentence lacked logic in the highest degree and then I knew that I needed to consult with members of the Puerto Rican community.

While it was important to keep the text "tasteful," I must mention that I came across what I believe to be a stylistic reverberance in the ST that I found less than palatable as a reader. I therefore thought it necessary, to diminish rather than completely eliminate the occurrence of

phrases such as *como ya he señalado*, *como ya he explicado* and *como ya sabemos* and I did so in the TT using phrases such as "bear in mind," "moreover," and "the undeniable fact is" in order break up the monotony of a style that is not well-received by Anglophone readers. I detected many instances of ambiguity in the ST and often, it seemed to be used intentionally as a literary device, so in finding an equivalent for the author's recurring use of the word *urbanización*, which in English can range from "housing project," "housing development," "gated community" and anything in between, I decided to use his device of ambiguity to my advantage, choosing less specific words like "district" and "community," which are more all-encompassing and agreeable to any reader whether or not he/she is familiar with the particular *urbanización* being referred to. I also took advantage of the ST use of ambiguity when I translated *eran los tiempos de estirarse el pelo, de usar las cremas…para evitar mal aliento*. The ambiguity here was whether the author was referring to the societal trend at the time or to his person regimen. I strongly believe he meant both because among Blacks and other non-Whites, that same fad had been transcending ethnic and geographical boundaries for decades, therefore, I maintained that ambiguity and generalization in the TT.

JUST SAYING IT LIKE IT IS

Colloquialisms constitute a rich, colorful and vibrant element in any language that speaks directly to one's cultural identity. Binary constructions with their fixed syntactic positioning are part of this colloquial structure and native speakers tend to produce them in an almost automatic fashion, so when that format is not adhered to, it can be interpreted by the native listener or reader as unnatural. One example in Spanish is *blanco(s) y negro(s)*, which curiously, takes on an opposite syntactic positioning in English. To avoid this unnatural effect, I used the accepted binary construction "Black(s) and White(s)" in the TT. The variety of Spanish spoken in Puerto Rico is, naturally, heavily influenced by U.S. English due to the colonial relationship between the two countries which, consequentially, has made English one of Puerto Rico's official languages. This influence is also owed to the fact that New York has been for decades the largest and most rapidly flourishing element of Puerto Rico's diaspora where verbal communication is predominantly a mixture of Spanish and English called code-switching, also commonly known as Spanglish—a linguistic phenomenon also prevalent among bilinguals here in Puerto Rico. Even though this phenomenon is reflected in the ST (*uno de los* ***hits***; and *pesadillas,* ***flashbacks****, paranoia*) and preserving it in the TT would be ideal, its dynamics simply do not allow for translation into English and this element of colloquialism was unfortunately lost in translation. Another speech phenomenon in Puerto Rico that presented a similar difficulty of translatability was the use of slang, such as, *pa' nuevayol* and *to's los negros*. Disappointingly, nothing in the English vernacular perfectly or even slightly replicates this form of Puerto Rican colloquialism. However, in the case *to's los negros nos parecemos*, I settled for "us Black folk all look alike," whereas, with *pa' nuevayol*, I was unable to find an equivalent that bore any resemblance, and that very colorful part of Puerto Rican colloquialism was also lost in translation.

It is not uncommon for the translator to encounter a ST riddled with difficulty owed to the cultural elements within. Apart from its colloquialisms, the text also presented an element of humor which I tried to render with the full sense of the communication taking precedence, but without being completely self-assured that the humorous effect was being adequately transferred in the TT. I admit that some instances of humor in the ST were easier to distinguish than others because some are running jokes specific only to the Puerto Rican culture and only among its Black population. Here is an example: *pues no es extraño confundir a un negro por otro…es que to's los negros nos parecemos*. Those bits of humor that were more obvious to me included *cantidades industriales de testosterona* and *sentía que se llevaba el cuero cabelludo con todo el pelo*. I translated them all in full sense, but as to whether there was also an efficient transfer of that same level of humor evoked in the ST, I remain uncertain. In such cases, I had the benefit of meeting with the author and listening to him read those phrases to see if I could grasp the humor—a medium of transfer to the reader that is not at all possible by way of interlingual translation.

While there exists the ideal of efficiently translating the cultural components of the ST, the translator ought also to consider linguistic components, such as, style and or tone, and determine to what extent these traits should be transferred into the TT. So far, I have discussed my reluctance to repeat to its full degree stylistic traits of the ST that readers may find unsavory, while trying not to drown out the author's personal style completely. Tone is also just as crucial a consideration when analyzing the ST. The author refers to a very stressful, traumatic childhood experience during which it is reasonable to expect his temper to run high, either at the moment it occurred, or as he was writing and all the horrible feelings came flooding back. The text reads, "*y ellos, ignorantes, habrían quedado en ridículo*." My first instinct was to utilize words like

"stupid" and "idiots" that somehow reflect the author's anger and pain since it is human nature to lash out (verbally in this case) when angered or provoked or even to show disdain as per the phrase "eat shit," which was seen in the very first line of the text. However, the general tone of the entire text gave me no indication whatsoever that the author had conjured up personal feelings against the boys who mocked him continuously. Tone, in fact, also played a part in my decision to capitalize "White" when referring to race because outside of his vengeful trances in which he imagined himself as a body-dropping lunatic, I got the impression that he recognized Whites as a race of human beings just the same as he did Blacks. Also pervading in my structural consciousness, were those rules of English grammar prescribing capitalization in that respect.

Being able to understand and follow the ST and the TT in logical sequence was also essential (as both translator and reader) and sometimes that difficulty arose due to wording or syntactic positioning in the ST that failed to facilitate an understanding of what was meant (i.e., a deficiency of semantic clarity). I encountered certain instances of this and, wherever necessary, I restructured entire paragraphs to ensure clarity and coherency in the TT. Four examples are shown in the following table.

ST	TT
En los años 50, tenía 13 años.	It was the 1950s, and I was thirteen years old.
los modelos de belleza física importados, eran todos blancos	The people who fit the imported criteria for physical beauty were all White
mi padre era quien hacía la compra…camino al colmado	My father was the one who made the monthly run to the store—…delivered to him at home.
el viaje de 10 horas…paradas que hacía	My trip back to Berea was a grueling ten-hour experience…all the designated stops

Table 1

In the penultimate sentence of the paragraph of that third example, there is a double negative, which, despite being quite common and natural in Spanish, should never occur in Standard Written English (SWE) because double and triple negatives in English sentences tend to have a bewildering effect on readers to the extent that the capacity to comprehend the message (even though easily deduced through mathematical reasoning) is drastically diminished. That is exactly what happened to me as I read it. Finally, another linguistic element from the ST worth mentioning was expression—the expression of ideas or statements that could very possibly be construed by the reader as insulting or offensive despite the fact that it might not have been the author's intention, seeking only to express his thoughts without inhibition. But, since this is more an issue of translating texts with content that falls outside the bounds of propriety, I have decided to discuss this with further depth in the segment that follows.

CARING FOR THIN SKIN

The issue of sensitivity when writing or translating material for public distribution is gaining increasing concern as today's globalized society seeks to become more inclusive of women and ethnic and religious minority groups including Blacks and Latinxs, and other groups as well, like, the disabled, indigenous and LGBTQ communities, with the aim of acknowledging them as contributing and essential members of society regardless of the differences that may exist among us. Since this ST was written in Spanish and by a Puerto Rican, with a prospective readership that includes the United States in all its diversity, two binary relationships tend to stand out in terms how the text and its translation might be received: colony/colonizer and dominant culture/non-dominant culture. Straight away one should consider the sensitivity (to some degree) of the target audience regarding acceptability of the text being marketed. In the TT, I have tried to align myself as close as possible to the style, tone and literary devices used in the ST, being diligent about the inclusion of cultural elements specific to Puerto Rico, Africa and other cultures mentioned. However, there were parts of the ST which reflect notions of classism at the individual level that might be viewed as indifferent or offensive for those of the lower societal classes and those who were somehow victims of unfortunate circumstance. Here are two examples: "*Muchos murieron…Ese no fue el caso de mis ancestros directos, porque eran fuertes y saludables, y optaron por la vida….*" and "*Mi familia era muy correcta y por eso ver ese tipo de comportamiento era sorprendente…personas de la clase baja, que en la ciudad de Nueva York eran muchas*". In the first example, there is a tone of disengagement from those who died before reaching the New World, which might even be taken as indifference, and the idea that lacking or having health and strength, and choosing whether to live are what distinguished the survivors from the casualties is subject to challenge. In the second example

located in the previous paragraph, the author projects a tone of superiority and an air of classism as he describes a rather prejudicial view of the poor people from Puerto Rico in the La Guardia terminal. Now, while classism was evident in the ST at the individual level, it also manifested itself, sometimes accompanied by racism, at the societal level whether it be in utterances, popular sayings television shows or music. In fact, examples of class and racial prejudice and discrimination at both the individual and the societal level abound in the ST and I maintained them all in the TT in order to convey the reality of perceptions and prejudices of race and class within that contextual construct of time as was done in the ST. Since then, the tolerance or acceptability of such discriminatory practices has changed, with today's society openly condemning it, while there are some who, unfortunately, still maintain these prejudices. The following exemplify my resolve to demonstrate the height of societal prejudice using inherently oppressive and discriminatory language which was in common usage during that time period the author is describing: "you eat **shit** while I eat candy," "what else do you expect from a **nigger**" and "perspire and **stink like a nigger**." In other instances, rather than use traditional equivalents to denote groups of people, I took an opposite route and applied equivalents that qualify as inoffensive in order to cater to the sensitivity of all types of readers in today's diversified world and also increase the level of acceptability of the text. Below is a table with just a few examples.

SPANISH WORD FROM THE TT	TRADITIONAL EQUIVALENT IN ENGLISH	INOFFENSIVE AND MORE ACCEPTED EQUIVALENT IN ENGLISH
esclavos	Slaves	the enslaved / enslaved people
impedidos / personas con impedimentos	invalids / handicapped /disabled	differently abled
homosexuales	Homosexual	gay
heterosexuales	Heterosexual	straight
Amo	master / (slave) owner	enslaver
estudiantes extranjeros	overseas students / foreign students	international students

Table 2

On the subject of sensitivity, some might argue that it is offensive to refer to certain groups as Latinos, Hispanics, Mulattos, *jíbaros*, and *morenos*, however, for the many people who identify as one of these groups, these terms are actually embraced and used affectionately within the corresponding group or culture. A very controversial example is today's use of the word "nigga," (a time-mutated version of "nigger") which is affectionately used among members of the African American community (depending on the situation or context), but Blacks consider it highly offensive when used by Whites and other non-Blacks irrespective of situation or context. The author uses both Latino and Hispanic to refer to himself and others with whom he identifies since these two terms are used in the United States, whereas, outside the U.S. identities of nationality are more adhered to judging from the way Puerto Ricans at home refer to

themselves as *puertorriqueños* or *boricuas* and those from the countryside embrace the term *jíbaros*. The stigma of foolishness, illiteracy, poverty and lack of decorum stereotypically associated with being *jíbaro* (since that group is likened to the hillbillies in certain rural areas across the United States) is quite evident as the author's 1950s and 1970s reflection on the scene at La Guardia Airport and the TV character Chianita respectively, but today, that stigma appears to have quelled significantly. These words, though subjectively deemed offensive, were all transposed.

YOU SAY POTATO, I SAY POTATO

Being a translator whose entire formal education in English was based on the British system, I must admit that even with a lot of exposure to U.S.-English speech patterns and culture through books and television, I was challenged a bit when conveying certain parts of Benito's story to a U.S. readership. Things I had to be cognizant of were (U.S. vs. U.K.) usage variations in terms like TV vs. television; store vs. shop; restroom vs. bathroom; candy vs. sweeties; etc. Spelling was also something to be careful with (color vs. colour; flavor vs. flavour; traveling vs. travelling; etc.). It was helpful to be able to collaborate with born and bred North Americans, my thesis advisor included, regarding the accepted U.S. equivalents that I was unfamiliar with. This was one case in which my aim was to have the TT meet the standards of acceptability of the U.S. target audience.

Also, with the abundance of foreign terms within the ST (many of which I maintained the TT), there was a constant fear of the target audience not understanding or even the fear that I would resort to over-explaining. One thing I certainly did not want to do is insult the intelligence of the target audience. To explain how I tried to avoid offending the target audience, I have selected some ST/TT examples in the table below.

ST	TT
Mi mamá fue mi modelo de consuelo (no era por casualidad que su nombre fuera Consuelo)	For me, my mother epitomized consolement (it wasn't just by chance that her name was Consuelo)
banda blanca	*Banda Blanca*
negrito carabalí	*Negrito carabalí*
"La Negra"	"*La Negra*"

Table 3

The first example was especially ticklish because I was considering explaining the fact that Consuelo was the Spanish word for consolement. I decided against it and decided that the use of consolement as a visually compelling cognate (as opposed to solace) would suffice. In the second and third examples, however, it was very helpful indeed that the author did all the explanation himself in the ST. In that last example, I replaced the name in the TT and offered no explanation whatsoever, reason being that even for an Anglophone readership with little to no knowledge of Spanish, there are some words in Spanish that, for them, need no explanation in order to be understood, whether it be due to exposure to music, television or some other media source in their everyday environment. Such words needing no explanation are cognates (e.g. television vs. *televisión*) and elementary vocabulary words like *blanco* or *negro*. Just to assure myself that this was in fact true, I upped the odds a bit with a gender change and asked some of my friends in Barbados (a predominantly monolingual society) if they knew what the English equivalents were for *blanca* and *negra*. It wasn't surprising that they answered correctly. On the contrary, there were some foreign words in the TT which were not explained either implicitly or explicitly in the TT and therefore had to be explained by way of a glossary accompanying the

TT. Those words included *Chango, bembón,* and the names of typical dishes eaten in Puerto Rico.

IT PAYS TO DOUBLE CHECK

The inevitability of challenges arising during the tedious process of translation often has to do with the type of textual content of the ST. In this particular case, nonfiction, the content is descriptive, informative and historical, therefore, careful attention had to be paid to content accuracy since the author relied heavily on his memory, historical information from archives, literature or databases, and included quotes from the bible and other published works, such as, books, lyrical and poetic compilations relating to Puerto Rico. Unlike fictional literature which is based on a purely subjective reality, it was essential to verify and corroborate everything purported to be factual. Because no text is perfect, and as would be reasonably expected, there were quite a few deviations that had to be made from the ST in order to ensure transferal of accuracy in the TT. Below are some examples of source content I found to be inaccurate from which I had deviate in one way or another.

ST	TT
miles de otros	millions of others
—Marcelino Canino	[Canino, 1968—anonymous author]
[1]*Eleuterio Derkes Martinó (1836-1882), nació en Guayama y fue el primer escritor puertorriqueño negro.*	[1]Eleuterio Derkes Martinó (1836-1882) was born in Guayama and is one of Puerto Rico's first Black authors.
Obispo **Colson**	Obispo **Corson**
Madeline **Williamson**	Madeline **Willemsen**

Table 4

Though much of the textual information was accurate, everything still had to be verified. In addition to research, I contacted people directly. Dr. Eduardo Durán confirmed that his

surname indeed carried an accent, though none of his published work reflects that. Marcelino Canino was also very helpful in explaining the meaning behind the epigraph in chapter 1, which I believed was his work, however, according to him, has been popularized in folklore across Latin America having no known author. I subtly reflected that information in a TT footnote so as not to mislead the target audience into believing that he was the author. Some ST errors were orthographical like spelling, as seen in "Williamson" and "Colson," while others, though not errors technically, had to do with punctuation, which could not be duplicated in the TT simply because the rules of punctuation in Spanish are different from those in English. That was something I had to be very careful of. Care also had to be taken with the ST reference to Wilfrido Vargas' Dominican nationality, which if not translated cautiously, could create a dilemma of interpretation since though with a different pronunciation the citizens of the small island of Dominica are also known as Dominicans—something that would not be distinguishable through interlingual translation due to the absence of auditory media transferal to the target audience. I also had to be very careful with my chosen equivalents for occupations like *director de orquesta* and *declamador*, and names like Narciso, which, had I been careless, might have been translated as "orchestra director," "orator" and "Daffodil" respectively. Though it might seem hilarious, sometimes such outlandish equivalents can indicate to the translator that something was overlooked.

Double-checking is also a vital part of the revision stage and also included the omission of redundancies, and the translator's own addition of necessary information, by way of square brackets ([]), that ought to have been part of the ST but was not. Also during this stage, the complacent mistranslation of ST words with false cognates and alternate meanings in English should be detected as well as misspellings in the ST which could lead to errored translations.

Though incorrect spelling is primarily an issue or orthography, in cases like this where the author is versatile in both the SL and the TL, it revealed a case of language interference, which could prompt the translator to erroneously place the ST spelling in the TT. The possibility of this happening might seem farfetched, but nonetheless, it can occur. Finally, care was given to ST material which might have been a translation from a source in the TL. In this case, I located the original version in English and replaced it in the TT, because the risk of doing a back-translation of ST information that varies from the original source can prove disastrous. Below are some examples from the ST that required some type of double-checking to ensure an adequate translation.

EXAMPLE FROM THE ST	TYPE OF ISSUE TO CONSIDER
Decepción	false cognate
Hawaii	incorrect spelling due to language interference
dissorder	typographical error
excerpt from the song, New York, New York	risk of back-translation being inconsistent with the original

Table 5

THE STORY BETWEEN THE LINES

As anyone having a read of at least the first chapter of Benito's book might conclude, he's basically telling a personal story about his own condition of internalized racism. But what many readers might not realize, and what I haven't seen mentioned in any of the summaries written of this book, is that there's also another story being told, and it begins in that very first chapter with the enslavement of Benny's forebearers who were perceived by the Europeans as primitive beasts and uprooted from their homes in Africa and brought on the rough seas to the Caribbean under the most vile conditions, only to endure a life of continued misery, hardship and suffering in order to increase the monetary gain of the White race who had devised a system of mass production fueled by the blood, sweat tears and ultimately the lives of those millions of enslaved African men women and children.

Remarkably, for those who haven't yet read Benito's book, this might all sound suspiciously familiar, and deservedly so, because this is a parallel representation of the social reality we are living in today. For each chapter, Benny skillfully handpicks an epigraph to tie in perfectly with the text. The content in these epigraphs as well as other choice words and phrases within the text help to weave the two stories together. The secondary story, which is being told between the lines as it were, speaks essentially to the present social reality and which many are blind to—classism; the silent war ensuing between Blacks and Whites; racism, not just in the three forms Benny specifies, but systemic racism against minority cultures like Blacks and Latinos; systemic oppression of other minorities groups like women in general, lesbians, gays and the disabled. This is a reality that is ordained by a system that keeps race and class inexplicably related, allowing for loopholes in the legal framework to keep large numbers of Blacks and Latinos in debt and living in the Projects, and denies women and gays the right to

earn the salaries that they deserve and denies them their right to make fundamental choices that affect their own lives.

One of the phrases that reveals this underlying storyline is *justa ley*, alluding to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s confirmation of the existence of unjust laws that give "the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority"—an unfortunate meltdown of human logic that lends to the twisted belief that because such unjust laws have been enacted into the statutes, that they automatically should be accepted as being just. Another unifying phrase is *cantidades industriales de testosterona*—a direct reference to the system of capitalism designed to trap the poor and working class society, and entice them to buy into ideas they don't want or need and which offers them no real benefit. Benny also mentions the *"gran tragedia africana"* which most readers might immediately associate with the absolute worst tragedy to ever befall the Black race: slavery. But far deeper than that, Benny is alluding to the teachings of Prof. Dr. Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba that point out the differences and similarities of the Black man's past and present circumstances—a past where slavery was a story of our ancestors being shackled, beaten, raped and mutilated and murdered with the survivors of that ordeal taken by force to dominant cultures and put to work as slaves to fulfill the foreign interest versus a modern-day story depicting the same characters, only this time, instead of being dragged off in chains to foreign and dominant cultures, these protagonists are going willingly, enduring insult and humiliation at U.S. embassies, risking and losing their lives on makeshift boats in order to cross the turbulent seas just so they can reach foreign soil and become slaves in a capitalist system designed for their entrapment and ultimate demise—a very graphic distinction, and an enduring message that "we are co-authors of our own misfortunes"—transmitted to the reader in code. All this being said I incorporated as much as I

could, metaphors used by the author, appropriate equivalents, and in some cases, I even made additions which I believed were necessary in the particular context. Below is a table of ST/TT examples.

ST	**TT**
Yo no quería pagar ese precio	I didn't want to pay that price
Cantidades industriales de testosterona	Industrial-grade quantities of testosterone
No todo fue miel sobre hojuelas	It wasn't all peaches and cream
El viaje de 10 horas de regreso a Berea fue largo, frío y solitario	My trip back to Berea was a grueling ten-hour experience: a long cold and lonely ride
la "gran tragedia africana"	the "great African tragedy"
mi gente "de pueblo"	"*mi gente de pueblo*" [My people—the ones I belonged with]
Pero el mero hecho de tener la epidermis negra propiciaba el que uno, de entrada, estuviera condenado a sufrir el impacto del racismo y el discrimen.	But, imagine living life knowing that the mere fact you had black skin condemned you from the very onset to suffer the impact of racism and discrimination.

Table 6

CONCLUSION

Surely, there is no mistaking the fact that language and culture are so intricately intertwined or the fact that the task of translating culturally charged texts is difficult to render to a target audience. The acceptability of translations in the past, seems to have been judged consistently on how fluently they read in the target language, which unfortunately, often signifies conformance to target culture and target language ideologies and values that are inherently monolingual and unreceptive to the foreign, thus allowing target audiences to relish the utterly narcissistic experience of seeing their own culture play out in a cultural other (Venuti 1995:15), and the global domination of English and Anglo-American culture has been at the root of the problem.

According to Venuti, since translation can be categorized as rewriting, its intention reflects a particular ideology in which literature is manipulated so it can function in a given way within a given society, and through the introduction of new concepts, new genres and new devices, it has the power to trigger an evolution, thus fulfilling its long legacy as a force of literary innovation capable of bringing cultures closer together (1995: vii-viii). In addition to proving itself to be a way of breaking through language barriers for the expansion of knowledge, translation has also become a means of empowerment and recognition for non-dominant cultures in rebellion against the oppressive structures of imperialism, racism and classism which are the pillars of dominant-culture societies which hold fast to their ideals of drowning out the foreign element.

As a translator, I firmly believe it is important as an issue of social inclusion and civil rights to avoid any conformity with dominant culture ideals that breed fear, hatred, and lack of

acceptance of people from other cultures. We have a responsibility to share knowledge of all cultures through our work in order to facilitate acceptance of all people irrespective of their origins. Regardless of how individuals feel about discrimination, and regardless of how societies create statutory loopholes to ensure that it continues, there is nothing correct or just about it and it ought to be exposed with the motive of reducing its continuance in societies. Undertaking this translation literally drove that point home for me, and though I was unable to discuss every detail that led to the finished translation, I mentioned what, in my estimation, were the most important considerations: the treatment of referents, finding equivalences, compromises with colloquialisms, whether to adhere to political correctness, caution with language variations, benefits of doing research, and decoding the message being communicated. I learned that depending on the type of text and the information being communicated, subjectively, I needed to make decisions—some more difficult than others—and employ the techniques that worked best for me as an individual translator.

The stage of translation that was especially time-consuming for me was reading and analyzing the text. I found myself not being able to read through the entire text without simultaneously translating it in my mind, so by the time I began my final translation, I had already translated it in some form, several times before. Through analysis, I was also able to determine the dynamics at play within the text, which included constructs of dominance and subordination in terms of culture, language and race even to the point at which the very translation would become part of that dynamic in the way it is viewed in comparison to the ST and how it would be received by a dominant-culture target audience.

According to Lawrence Venuti, “the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences,

basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there" (Venuti 2003:468). I found his assertion to be true, but only to a point and one must never disregard the fact that the source text has an agenda to fulfill and that agenda was to not just to tell a story about a young boy growing up in a racist world, but to create awareness about a twenty-first-century social reality of imperialist, racist and classist oppression in which we are all living in and to inspire positive thought and positive change. From there I came to see Venuti's point that from the foreign text, any one translation could be created having a variety of semantic possibilities on a provisional basis of varying cultural assumptions and interpretive choices, in specific social situations, in different historical periods. For me, this meant that who I am as an individual; combined with other social factors like the way I had been socialized, my target readership; the social, political and economic dynamics of my society and that of the target readership; and time as a construct of context would invariably influence, in some form or other, the decisions I would make while translating this text.

Needless to say, it was a lot to think about and I asked myself the following question: If the final creation of a translation is influenced by so many factors and the mere variation of any of them can result in a completely different translation, would that not be enough to justify a translation being an original work in its own right? Now, whether that is true is debatable, but from the onset, I decided that in order for my translation to be effective, it had to have an agenda of its own—one that aligned itself with that of the source text. But, that agenda could not be fulfilled if I, as a translator, stifled the cultural differences within the foreign text to ensure that the TT be well received by the dominant culture. My agenda therefore involved a strategy of transposing most of the foreign cultural elements from the ST into the TT in alignment with the author's oneness with his cultural identity or what Maria Tymoczko termed, "a dialectal

strategy" constituting a translation posture that is a "significantly divergent response to cultural difference" (1999:175). She also mentions Simon's view of translation involving "the materialization of our relationship to otherness, to the experience—through language—of what is different" (1999:176).

Admittedly, this TT acts in rebellion to dominant-culture norms, and in so doing commands acceptance, not just for itself, but for the cultures represented within. An interesting report by the 2010 U.S. Census showed a Hispanic population of over 50 million and an African American population of just under 40 million as among the largest racial minorities in the United States out of a total U.S. population of just over 320 million. The numbers of such racial minorities have grown considerably since then, spurring an ever-increasing exposure among the extended population to aspects of minority and immigrant cultures through different media. But despite the influence of dominant-culture norms and ideals, isn't it ironic that the current social reality of cultural diversity in the United States, by its very nature, creates the necessary environment for the acceptability and viability of this TT and other translations of texts written by authors from non-dominant cultures?—proof that the collaborative effort of individuals like us constitutes a mere fraction of the driving force in effect to change perceptions and promote acceptance and inclusion of all people regardless of their differences.

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DEDICATION

Thanks be to God

for all His blessings bestowed upon me.

To my mother Veneta,

the greatest source of inspiration anyone could have.

Thank you for believing in me even when I failed to believe in myself.

Thank you for keeping me grounded and encouraging me

to pursue my dreams.

To my granny Silvina,

always faithful, loving and wise.

I am honored to know you're my biggest fan

and I love you, Gran.

Ours is a bond that surely never dies.

To Benito Massó Jr.

and all others

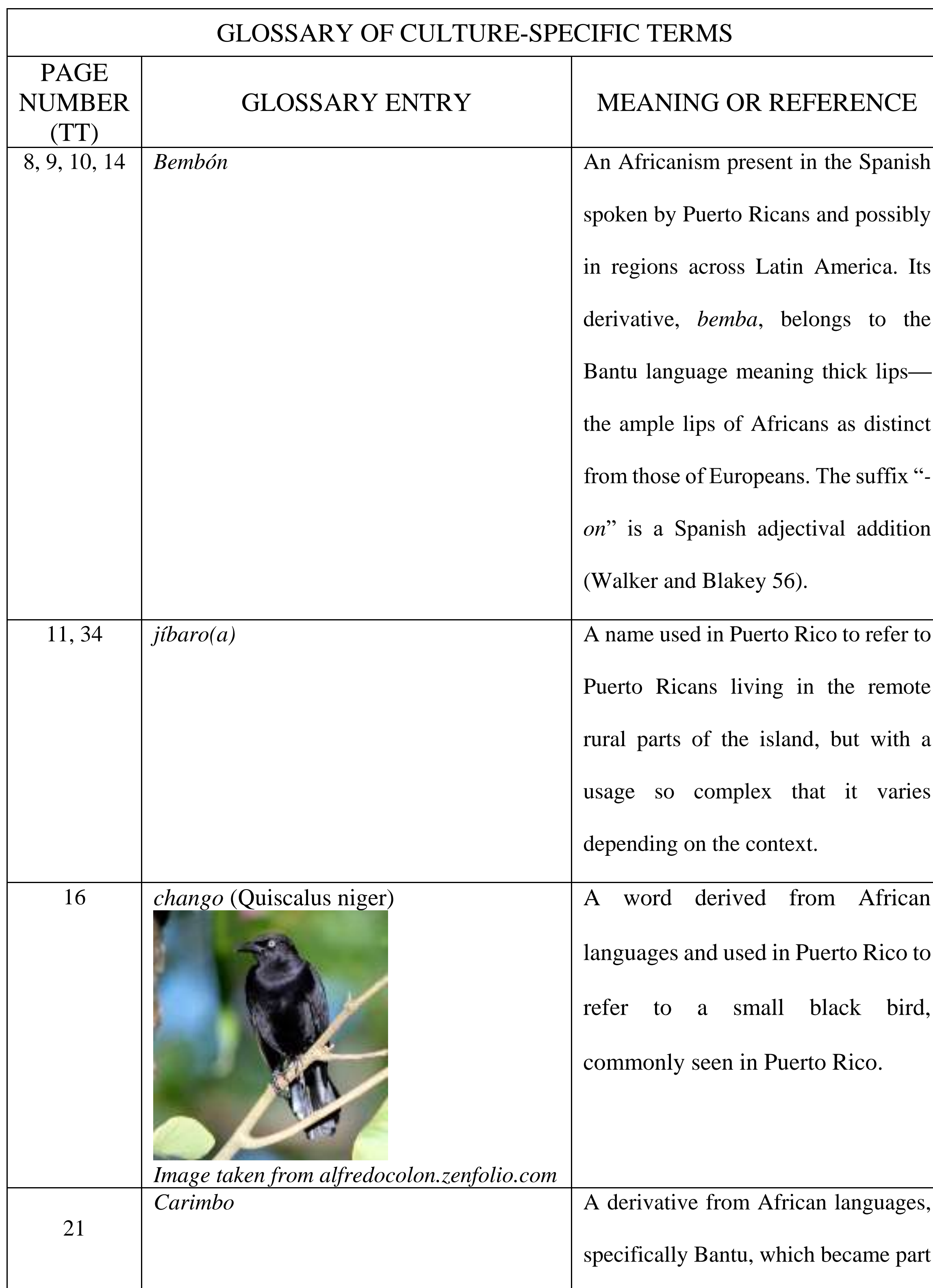
who, in some way, contributed

to this journey toward my attainment of this

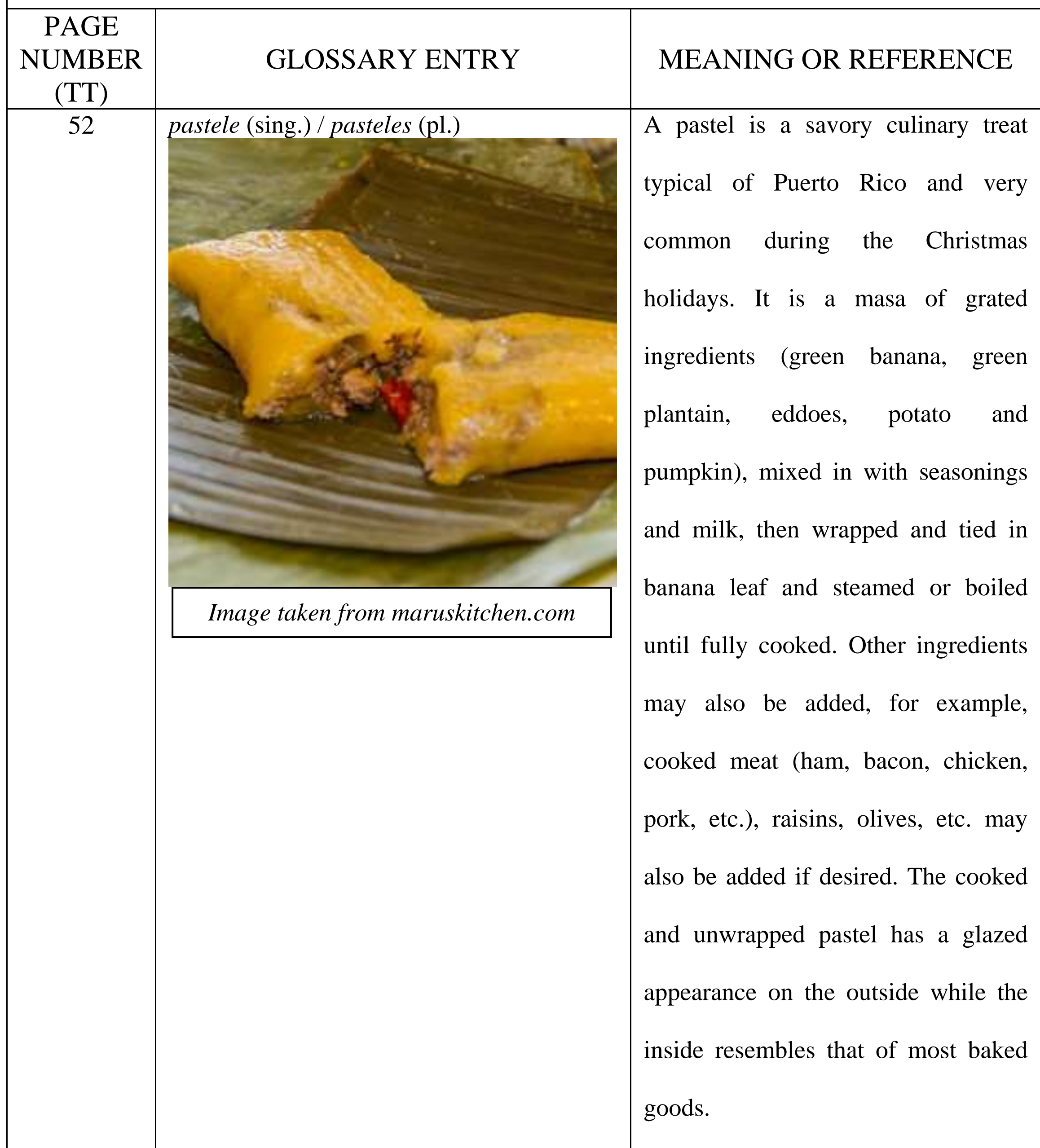
Master of the Arts Degree in Translation,

thank you, and God bless you.

<u>GLOSSARY</u>

GLOSSARY OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC TERMS		
PAGE NUMBER (TT)	GLOSSARY ENTRY	MEANING OR REFERENCE
8, 9, 10, 14	*Bembón*	An Africanism present in the Spanish spoken by Puerto Ricans and possibly in regions across Latin America. Its derivative, *bemba*, belongs to the Bantu language meaning thick lips—the ample lips of Africans as distinct from those of Europeans. The suffix "-*on*" is a Spanish adjectival addition (Walker and Blakey 56).
11, 34	*jíbaro(a)*	A name used in Puerto Rico to refer to Puerto Ricans living in the remote rural parts of the island, but with a usage so complex that it varies depending on the context.
16	*chango* (Quiscalus niger)  *Image taken from alfredocolon.zenfolio.com*	A word derived from African languages and used in Puerto Rico to refer to a small black bird, commonly seen in Puerto Rico.
21	*Carimbo*	A derivative from African languages, specifically Bantu, which became part

GLOSSARY OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC TERMS		
PAGE NUMBER (TT)	GLOSSARY ENTRY	MEANING OR REFERENCE
		of the Portuguese and Spanish lexicon, referring to the branding iron used during the colonial period to mark African slaves as property (Phaf-Rheinberger and Pinto 83).
36	*arroz con pollo*	Rice with chicken, a dish of great cultural significance for Puerto Ricans.
36	*habichuelas rosadas*	Pink beans, a popular accompaniment for many Puerto Rican dishes.
36	*amarillos fritos*	Fried ripe plantains, a popular accompaniment for many Puerto Rican dishes.
36	*ensalada de lechuga y tomate*	Lettuce and tomato salad.
52	*arroz con gandules*	Rice and pigeon peas, a dish of great cultural significance for Puerto Ricans.

GLOSSARY OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC TERMS		
PAGE NUMBER (TT)	GLOSSARY ENTRY	MEANING OR REFERENCE
52	*pastele* (sing.) / *pasteles* (pl.)  *Image taken from maruskitchen.com*	A pastel is a savory culinary treat typical of Puerto Rico and very common during the Christmas holidays. It is a masa of grated ingredients (green banana, green plantain, eddoes, potato and pumpkin), mixed in with seasonings and milk, then wrapped and tied in banana leaf and steamed or boiled until fully cooked. Other ingredients may also be added, for example, cooked meat (ham, bacon, chicken, pork, etc.), raisins, olives, etc. may also be added if desired. The cooked and unwrapped pastel has a glazed appearance on the outside while the inside resembles that of most baked goods.