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# Translating Rosalía de Castro's *saudade* into English

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> The fact that language is culture and culture is language is brought out most sharply when one tries to replace his [or her] language with another. (91)
>
> *Gregory Rabassa*

Critics of Rosalía de Castro frequently recognize her participation in the Galician revival of culture and language, known as the *Rexurdimento*, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century. Her final work, *En las orillas del Sar* (1884), has garnered particular praise for the richness of its aesthetic, linguistic, and socio-cultural aspects. Castro, however, is not widely known to readers of English, even though there are three anthologies of her poetry in translation. In 1937, S. Griswold Morley published selections in the bilingual edition, *Beside the River Sar*. Critics reviewed it favorably, but some of the translations read stiff and dated today. Charles David Ley published a selection of Castro's Galician poetry from both *Cantares gallegos* (1863) and *Follas novas* (1880) in 1964. Like the Morley translations, they seem a bit stilted to the modern reader. In 1991, a new anthology, simply titled *Poems*, was translated by Anna-Marie Aldaz, Barbara N. Gantt, and Anne C. Bromley. This collection presents a selection of poems and prologues from *Cantares*, *Follas novas*, as well as *En las orillas del Sar.* Their updated translations introduce a new generation of readers to Rosalía de Castro. These three collections, however, have been given short shrift in critical studies. Other than Joyce Tolliver's article published in 2002, which studies the construction of gender in the 1937 and 1991 editions, there are no critical studies that approach these translations.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to cast new light on Rosalian studies, by examining aspects of *En las orillas del Sar* through an interpretive framework of comparative translation analysis. Studying the process by which the translator disassembles, interprets, restructures, and rewrites the poem provides a unique approach to close reading. It also reveals certain socio-cultural impositions and interpretations of the translator that may not be present in the original. Most critics recognize the presence of *saudade* as an undercurrent that flows throughout Rosalía de Castro's poetry. This paper will briefly argue the importance of *saudade* in Castro's *oeuvre*, situating the discussion in both a socio-historical and aesthetic context. A comparative translation

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analysis will examine how the various aspects of *saudade* are translated into English, particularly in the poems "Ya duermen en su tumba las pasiones" and "¡Volved!"

In order to see how the concept of *saudade* is translated into English, we first need a working definition. The *Diccionario enciclopédico gallego-castellano* provides a general point of departure, defining *saudade* as "un sentimiento inexplicable, que no se sabe de donde viene, ni se alcanza a donde va, ni se comprende lo que sigue […] Esta imprecisión es precisamente lo que caracteriza la saudade" ("Saudade" 320). The word itself is difficult to translate into other languages because it encapsulates several emotions of the human condition within a particular cultural construction. This certainly does not imply that other cultures do not experience *saudade*, just that it is considered to be untranslatable since "it has acquired such complexities and subtleties" of Galician culture (Kulp-Hill 49). Certainly imprecision, vacillation, and ambiguity characterize *saudade*, but the concept is inextricably linked to Galician and Lusitanian culture. The *Diccionario da Real Academia Galega* provides the following definition, detailing its many manifestations:

> Soidade *s.f.* **1**. Circunstancia de estar só. […] **2**. Sentimento provocado por esa circunstancia. […] **3**. *Lit.* e *Filos.* Sentimento íntimo e estado de ánimo provocados polo desexo de algo ausente que se estraña e que se presenta baixo distintas formas, que van desde realidades concretas (a persoa amada, o amigo, a terra, a patria...) ata a transcendencia plena e misteriosa, moi propios do mundo galaico-portugués pero con afinidades noutras culturas. Tamén se di saudade. […] SIN. *señardade.* CF. *morriña*, *nostalxia.* (n. pag.)

*Saudade*, therefore, is a collection of particular feelings associated with a specific region, culture, and circumstances. Numerous studies examine this tendency in Galician and Portuguese literature, due to the inherent significance of *saudade* to each respective culture. It is nostalgia, memory, homesickness, but as Rosalian critics such as Robert G. Havard, Kathleen Kulp-Hill, Marina Mayoral, and Joanna Courteau note, the definition of *saudade* is deeply rooted in the Celtic heritage of Galicia.[1] In fact, Havard has studied the parallels between *saudade* and "another Celtic phenomenon of psychical complexity, Welsh *hiraeth*" (*Romanticism* 42 and *Paralelos*). He has dedicated extensive study to the presence of *saudade* throughout her work, particularly in *En las orillas del Sar*. Havard situates Rosalía de Castro as both "an ethnic poet, Galician to the core" and "a poet whose work coincides unaffectedly with a broader European ethos" (*Structure* 37). Her approach bears close resemblance to "Bécquer's cosmopolitan concepts in that they depict a search for something elusive and indefinable which dreams or visionary moments come closest to grasping" (*Romanticism* 37). What distinguishes her subjectivism from Bécquer's, however, is the connection to her homeland: "[T]he *saudades* complex stipulates an emotional response to the *patria chica* or small homeland, Galicia, and this leads to an evocation of the *patria* in the real terms of its landscape, topography, climate, and even aspects of the social problems which its people face" (37).

It is this connection to the *patria chica* found in *En las orillas del Sar* that sets Castro apart "as the first major Spanish poet of place, anticipating Antonio Machado in this regard"

(*Romanticism* 37). Galician *saudade*, therefore, evokes a rather specific notion of the concept. The term *morriña*, found at the end of the aforementioned dictionary entry, refers specifically to the nostalgia or homesickness one feels for his or her homeland. Certainly, this features prominently throughout Rosalía de Castro's work, but the underlying presence of *saudade* is much more expansive.

Mayoral dedicates a chapter on the study of *saudade* in her book, *La poesía de Rosalía de Castro*. She offers a broad overview of the concept, while fine-tuning a definition of Galician *saudade* and *morriña*, which she then applies to her readings of *Cantares gallegos* and *Follas novas*. For some, *saudade* is a "deseo de lo lejano inconcreto" while *morriña* is more specifically a "deseo de lo lejano concreto, de la tierra" (Mayoral 198). Responding to Rodríguez Castelao's *Sempre em Galiza*, Mayoral wonders if Galician *saudade* is not a struggle between two diametrically opposed aspects: that of being and not being in the land (199). She then concludes that the Galician people confront "dos tensiones opuestas: la que le lleva a emigrar, a conocer mundo, y la que le impulsa a volver siempre a la tierra" (199). Here, Mayoral references the mass emigration of the Galician people that began in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century and continued into the first decades of the Twentieth Century. Other aspects of *saudade* include a desire to recapture the lost innocence of youth or to return to the earth upon dying (199–200). These depictions of *saudade*, or *morriña*, are a driving force in a number of poems in *En las orillas del Sar* but they only describes one half of the overall notion. The other is the ontological anguish that results from the loneliness of the self. Mayoral, referring to the work of Ramón Piñeiro, explains this fundamental aspect of *saudade*: "Por su condición de ser singular, el hombre siente su soledad ontológica, se siente a sí mismo. Este sentirse a sí mismo en su propia singularidad original es sentir saudade. La saudade carece de significación psicológica; es un puro sentimiento ontológico" (200).

When the individual experiences feelings of sadness or melancholy, this is actually *morriña*. According to Piñeiro, the opposite of *morriña* is euphoria, whereas the opposite of *saudade*—loneliness of the self—is mystical ecstasy, a result of deep self contemplation (17). Piñeiro's conceptualization of *morriña*, as interpreted by Mayoral, differs significantly from that of other critics, in the sense that he does not highlight the connection between the homeland and its inhabitants ("Pra unha filosofía" 17). He calls this *nostalgia*.[2] In spite of his divergent interpretation of *morriña*, Piñeiro brings up an important aspect of *saudade*. It is much easier to study its presence when there is a connection between the self and something else, be it a loved one, a memory, the divine, or one's homeland.[3] It is much more difficult to study the ineffable and amorphous quality of the ontological emptiness that exists within the self when it is not connected to some external element. Rosalía de Castro, nevertheless, explores the full spectrum of feelings and emotions associated with *saudade*—whether ontological, metaphysical, or psychological. Havard adroitly observes: "Rosalía's search is for her unconscious and for her true self, and the dilemma her poetry describes, intensely personal as it is, has compelling psychological universality" (*Romanticism* 69-70).

Some characteristics of *saudade* are easily definable while others elude definition. Perhaps the best way to approach Castro's usage of *saudade* is to envision two sides of a coin. On

one side, we have the readily apparent aspects that converge around connections between the self and some external element, be it *patria*, childhood, or God. From this perspective Castro's poetic voice speaks to others, and, in some cases, serves as spokesperson, speaking their words through her voice. On the other side resides the introverted, reticent, and concealed poetic voice, evoking the deeply personal, reclusive, and ontological nature of *saudade*. The introverted, personal manifestation of the poetic voice expresses this solitary emptiness while the extroverted, universal poetic voice conveys the feelings of nostalgia, homesickness, melancholy, and *morriña*. With a circular approach to these oscillating tendencies, we can account for the multi-faceted, plurivalent, and ever-shifting nature of *saudade*. There is an ebb and flow between the ontological, metaphysical, psychological, and physical. The oppositional nature, as proposed by Mayoral and Havard, is somewhat resolved since the poet retains the ability to call upon each and every distinguishing feature at multiple levels. This fluctuating and fluid paradigm allows for all the preceding definitions of *saudade* to operate concurrently.

In the case of *En las orillas del Sar*, Castro never uses the word *saudade*, or a derivation thereof, as she does throughout *Cantares gallegos* and *Follas novas*. Kulp-Hill and Mayoral outline numerous instances in which she uses *soidás*, *soidades*, or *saudade* in those works. In *En las orillas del Sar*, however, she invokes the underlying mood of *saudade* by referencing specific themes and elements without specifically writing about the feeling. This proves particularly challenging when translating a plurivalent concept, especially when the word itself is literally absent in the original text. A particular word or phrase could invoke any number of facets of *saudade*. In Saussurian terms, one signifier potentially refers to multiple signifieds.[4] The situation is complicated further by the fact that Castro conveys ideas, thoughts, and feelings that are culturally Galician, but she does so in Castillian. There are several elements at play in this situation. In order to appreciate fully this radical break with tradition, a brief summary of her publications is in order.

Kulp-Hill explains that *Cantares gallegos*, published in 1863, was inspired by "the poetry, songs, dances, and folklore of Galicia" (Kulp-Hill 38). As an extension of the enthusiasm for *costumbrismo* that grew out of Romanticism, patriotic Galician writers were filled with a desire "to revive, enhance, and defend their unique culture, and to foment their political aspirations" (38). Castro's husband, Manuel Murguía, was at the forefront of this movement, known as the Galician revival, or *Rexurdimento*. Although not of the folk, these intellectuals sought an authenticity in the language and traditions that set Galicia apart from other regions in the Iberian Peninsula (38). While in Simancas, feeling homesick for Galicia, Castro composed *Cantares gallegos* as a tribute to her home and to her people. Employing the technique of *leixa-pren*, she would take the first line of a popular refrain or lyric and elaborate upon it with variations of her own (Kulp-Hill 39, Havard *Romanticism* 41). The publication of *Cantares gallegos* was met with immediate success. Although reluctant, in 1880 she published *Follas novas*, a collection of poems written over a ten year period. Written in spiritual and physical exile, Castro notes "the suffering of Galicia, particularly of the Galician women, fused with the poet's own suffering" (Kulp-Hill 54). In the prologue, she reveals that her poems are the "probes enxendros d' a mina tristura" (269). The poems are born of a deeply personal sorrow: "Escritos n' ò deserto de Castilla, pensados e sentidos n' as soidade d' á Naturaeza e d' ò meu corazón, fillos cativos d' as

horas de enfermedade e d' ausencias […]" (*OC II* 269). Although written in Galician, it is not a "regional work," rather a "universal poetic achievement and harbinger of a new introspective age" (Kulp-Hill 54).

Between the years of 1878 and 1884, Rosalía de Castro composed and carefully arranged the order of the poems that would constitute *En las orillas del Sar*. Although at the time her metrical innovations were unappreciated, critics later viewed her as a precursor to the Modernist movement. By the time she wrote these poems, and already during the period of *Follas novas*, she had "freed herself from adherence to *costumbrismo*, or local and popular themes" (Kulp-Hill 78). In this final work, she composes in the literary language of Castilian, directed toward a wider audience, as Kulp-Hill notes: "The Castilian she commands is a conscious, poetic language, dignified and literary. It is natural, but not colloquial, a more formal artistic medium in keeping with the profound and universal message it contains" (78). Likewise, Havard states:

> As to Rosalía's reasons for turning to Castilian in her last work which, ironically, expressed her *saudades* most fully and profoundly, briefly it could be said that these might have included an ambition to reach a wider audience, but almost certainly uppermost in Rosalía's mind was the need to discover her own poetic voice free from the trappings of *folklorismo* […] But the surprising point is that Castilian was to prove a wise choice aesthetically too, for while Galician had been apt for poems about the *patria* written in exile, Castilian was now apt for poems written in her homeland by a poet who had come to feel distanced from the very things she had once loved. (*Romanticism* 45-46)

In this collection of poems, Castro distances herself from the aesthetic expectations of the Galician revival and carves out a space for her unique voice. Although she strikes a much more personal tone, she revisits familiar themes as seen in her previous collections: nature, *patria*, love, depopulation and emigration, spiritual suffering, religion, solitude, sorrow, and death. Moreover, she exhibits maturation in style and restraint in her effusiveness. Kulp-Hill recognizes "an intellectual and philosophical detachment, a relinquishing of life, a quiet preparation to die" (79). Familiar themes take on deeply personal yet universal meaning. The allusions to *saudade* become an undercurrent upon which these themes rise and fall. It is an undertone that resonates throughout the rich, textured, and achingly beautiful poems of *En las orillas del Sar*. Transferring these undertones and tensions from Castilian to English proves challenging.

In the fourth chapter of his seminal study *After Babel*, George Steiner recapitulates the prevailing theories on translation from antiquity up to the 1970s. He observes that much of the theory of translation "pivots monotonously around undefined alternatives: 'letter' or 'spirit', 'word' or 'sense'" (290). Admittedly, translators have endorsed the dichotomy posed by St. Jerome for centuries: *non verbum e verbo*, *sed sensum exprimere de sensu* [not word for word, but sense for sense]. For the native speaker, the sense or meaning of a given word is imbedded with cultural specificities. It is the task of the translator, therefore, to decipher this inherent meaning and transfer it across linguistic and cultural barriers: "The

translator must actualize the implicit 'sense', the denotative, connotative, illative, intentional, associative range of significations, which are implicit in the original, but which it leaves undeclared or only partly declared simply because the native auditor or reader has an immediate understanding of them" (Steiner 291).

This issue is of particular import in the case of polysemy, when a word or phrase has multiple, related meanings. We have seen that in regards to the concept of *saudade*, a reference to homesickness can also convey ontological anguish and metaphysical sorrow. Moreover, the concept of *morriña*, while inextricably linked to the land, can also refer to a more transcendental spiritual longing or yearning. How then do we go about analyzing the translation of an abstract concept from one language system to another? Perhaps there is no foolproof method, but a few general concepts will guide our reading. We will first examine the relationship between style and content. Style is largely understood as diction and syntax, as well as more formal structures, such as rhyme and meter, although euphony and semantics also come into play. Subtle shifts in style can drastically alter the transmission of the content, or the overall message.

Morley's *Beside the River Sar* and the selections of *Poems* make for good comparative translation analysis since they are separated by over five decades. When Morley first translated Castro, as Aldaz and her colleagues note, "the prevailing notion that poetry must rhyme influenced his work to such an extent that today his translations seem quaint and old-fashioned" (17). Even when Castro's poetry does not adhere to a strict rhyme or meter, Morley imposes structure upon his translations even though he claims otherwise: "[The translator] has tried to preserve as nearly as possible the direct, untrammeled thought of the original, and to avoid inserting those pests, adjectives needed to eke out a foot" (xiii). At the time, however, Professor Torres Rioseco reviewed the translations favorably, claiming that Morley "has improved on the original, supplying the polished cut of the line, not commonly found in the Spanish" (83). He was not alone in his estimation. Another reviewer observed that "Professor Morley's translations frequently surpass the original in artistry" (Coester 285). In his adherence to form, however, Morley occasionally alters or simply leaves out important words, phrases, and thoughts, thus significantly changing the meaning of the original poem. In contrast, Aldaz, Gantt, and Bromley decide not to mimic Castro's rhyme schemes, "partly based on the problem of translating from a romance language into English." Romance languages are rich in rhyme, they observe, whereas English is not (17). Included in the introduction of *Poems* is a section of notes on the translation process itself. The translation team includes a mission statement, as it were, in their approach to the task:

> We have tried to move from the realm of literal translation to that of poetry, hoping that the final version will provide a similar effect on the reader as the original. Our main concern has been to achieve a balance between the demands of accuracy and aesthetics in order to produce translations that are pleasing to modern poetic taste and at the same time faithful to Rosalía's poetry. (18)

Although translation by committee presents its own set of problems, this particular endeavor has produced a revitalized poetic effort. They also highlight notable stylistic changes in syntax and punctuation in their translations. Nevertheless, they preserve the poet's stylistic traits, such as "her experimentation with line lengths, indentation, and free verse," elements that other translators have overlooked (20). Extremely important to their translation efforts is the recovery of the feminine voice and the equalization of gender:

> Rosalía used both masculine and feminine personae in her poetry, and usually the speakers are clearly identified. In a few poems, however, there is no internal evidence (such as modifiers ending in "o" or "a") to reveal the speaker's gender. […] In these cases we have had to make a decision about the speaker's gender, and, in contrast to other translators, we have decided to make the speaker feminine unless there are definite indicators to the contrary. (20)[5]

Aldaz and her colleagues offer translations for the contemporary reader, reestablishing the feminine voice, whereas Morley's translation comes across as stilted, antiquated, and imbedded with masculine forms. This does not mean that Morley's efforts have no redeeming qualities, nor does it mean that the translations found in *Poems* are free from problematic passages. Indeed, both translations present formidable challenges when examining the way in which a cultural concept, such as *saudade*, is interpreted, reconstructed, and rewritten.

One of the prevailing themes found in *En las orillas del Sar*, is inner turmoil and suffering. As we have seen, the concept of *saudade* manifests itself thematically in a number of ways. Nonetheless, in "Ya duermen en su tumba las pasiones" the poetic voice strips away the overt thematic elements found in other poems and attempts to describe her deep, empty, and paradoxical pain. Ultimately the poem asks the question, "What remains in the absence of all feeling?" The semantic structure of the metaphors employed in the poem creates a space in which the uncertain and ambiguous nature of *saudade* prevails. Although Morley and Aldaz offer adequate renderings of the original, they fall short in conveying the syntactic slipperiness, which results in a weakened sense of *saudade*:

> Ya duermen en su tumba las pasiones
> El sueño de la nada;
> ¿es, pues, locura del doliente espíritu,
> o gusano que llevo en mis entrañas?
> Yo sólo sé que es un placer que duele,
> que es un dolor que atormentando halaga,
> Llama que de la vida se alimenta,
> Mas sin la cual la vida se apagara. (*OC II* 480)

The image of the first verse invokes death and separation as well as the inevitable and finite nature of existence. The second verse further reinforces this notion with the image of the dream of nothingness. The word "passion" is multi-faceted. It applies to an emotion that is "deeply stirring or ungovernable," an "intense, driving, or overmastering

feeling or conviction." In the plural, passions are "the emotions as distinguished from reason" (Merriam-Webster). Whether by her own volition or by some external force, the poetic voice is disconnected and detached from her strong emotions at this point. What remains when there is no emotion? A cursory reading would suggest *el sueño de la nada*, but this phrase does not answer the implied question; rather, it describes the emotional state in which the poetic voice finds herself. If nothing remained in the absence of her *pasiones*, the poem would end after the second verse. However, the ruminations continue and in a slightly paradoxical twist; she must endure the feeling that remains when detached from her emotions:

> My passions in their tomb are soundly sleeping
> The sleep of nothingness.
> Is it, then, a madness of my ailing spirit,
> Or a worm within my heart? (*Beside the River Sar* 45)
>
> In their tomb, passions now sleep
> their dream of nothing—
> then, is it the aching soul's insanity
> or a worm that gnaws at my heart's core? (*Poems* 139)

In the first verse of the English translations, both Morley and Aldaz end the phrase with "sleeping" or "sleep" whereas the original ends with *pasiones*. This is due to the fact that English requires a subject-predicate syntax. Morley opts for the present progressive, which is not found in the original. He also adds the personal possessive to "passions," which the original does not indicate until the fourth verse. Likewise, the Aldaz translation includes the arbitrary possessive pronoun "their dream" in the second verse. These slight changes to possession add extraneous clarification, whereas the nature of *las pasiones* is ambiguous in the original. In this aspect, the English versions provide a concrete interpretation, whereas the original leaves it open. This is also seen where a Spanish word is rendered differently in the two translations. This is a good example of where one signifier can result in two signifieds, depending on the interpretation of the translator. We see this in the translations of *sueño* (sleep/dream), *locura* (madness/insanity), and *espíritu* (spirit/soul). In my estimation, Morley better reflects the original in these examples. Perhaps Aldaz and her team were influenced by Morley's translation and wanted to offer a new interpretation. Both translate *entrañas* as "heart," where "entrails," "bowels," or even "insides" would be more accurate, but not nearly as poetic.

The first two verses establish a space of nothingness in which passions are dead. The poetic voice then asks the following question in the third and fourth verses: "¿es, pues, locura del doliente espíritu, / o gusano que llevo en mis entrañas?" She expresses doubt and uncertainty and her question destabilizes the reader with its unsettling and ambiguous imagery. Likewise, the syntax subverts the structure of the sentence. Initially, the subject of the verb—*es*—is not present. Unlike Spanish, English requires an overt subject, and in both translations we see the third person, singular neuter pronoun "it" as the subject. In this case, "it" is used as a placeholder pronoun since it refers to an unknown abstraction. The syntax requires and necessitates a subject which results in a

slight loss of the destabilizing ambiguity of the original. The usage of *pues* conveys a sense of vacillation and uncertainty that the word "then" does not exactly transmit. Whatever she carries in her *entrañas* refers to a multiplicity of aspects of existence. It is at once physical (*gusano*), metaphysical (*doliente espíritu*), and psychological (*locura*). The poetic voice is incapable of classifying or defining whatever *it* is. Perhaps it is none of these things, or all of them. It is, therefore, amorphous. Although both translations adequately convey the sense of the original, the destabilizing element of uncertainty and ambiguity of the first four verses of the original is lost due to the specificity of the possessive pronouns and the necessity of using the pronoun "it."

The poetic voice poses an unsettling question in verses three and four that deserves a forthright and definitive answer. But, she responds with additional ambiguities and paradoxes in the following verses:

> Yo sólo sé que es un placer que duele,
> que es un dolor que atormentando halaga,
> Llama que de la vida se alimenta,
> Mas sin la cual la vida se apagara. (Castro, *OC II* 480)

Initially the statement begins strong and resolute. She declares her presence and her apparent understanding: "Yo sólo sé […]." Whatever certainty may have been established in the beginning of her declarative statement quickly dissolves into a quagmire of contradictory metaphors. She offers a list that is not only paradoxical in nature but antithetical in structure. First, "un placer que duele" and "un dolor que atormentando halaga" are both paradoxical in nature. Second, the syntactic structure in the nouns and verbs is antithetical. The nouns *placer* and *dolor* and the verbs *doler* and *halagar* are paired. This inverted parallelism is known in classical rhetoric as chiasmus, or, more specifically, as antimetabole since there is repetition of words. The noun of the first phrase *placer* corresponds to the verb of the second phrase *halagar*, which in this case means "agradar, deleitar" (RAE). The correlation between the verb of the first phrase and the noun of the second is much more apparent since they are derived from the same root word: *duele* and *dolor*. Although the last two verses do not form a strict antimetabole, the subject/verb pairings are antithetical. Usually the noun *llama* is associated with the verb *apagar(se)* and *vida* with *alimentar(se)*. Even though the flame consumes life through burning, the message of the poetic content does not convey antithesis, rather symbiosis. The flame derives its nourishment from life, but life would cease without it. In verses five and six, the antimetabolic structure transmits a sense of paradox in the antithetical subject/verb pairings. Verses seven and eight depict a symbiotic relationship. These antithetical doublings in syntax and content create an unsettling sense of doubt and uncertainty. We see these same structures in the two English translations:

> I only know it is bliss that pains me;
> It is a pain that tortures and delights me;
> A flame that feeds on life,
> And yet without it life would be extinguished. (*Beside the River Sar* 45)

> I only know it is a painful pleasure,
> a pain that torments yet gratifies—
> it is the flame that feeds on life
> and without this flame, life would die. (*Poems* 139)

In Morley's translation we see the doublings of "bliss" and "pain," "tortures" and "delights." Interestingly, he includes the object pronoun "me," which is not present in the original or in the Aldaz version. As a result, his translation creates specificity where the original is devoid of such. The Aldaz translation contains the brilliant antithesis of "painful pleasure." The second, "torments" and "gratifies," also conveys the sense of the original quite well. The seventh verse of each translation is nearly identical, although Aldaz includes "it is the flame" whereas the original does not include a verb. In the eighth verse, Morley retains the figurative nature of the verb *apagarse* with "would be extinguished," although Aldaz and her colleagues provide a literal interpretation, indicating that the extinguished flame represents death. In spite of these subtle changes, both translations convey the sense of the original. Once again we see, however, the necessary usage of the pronoun "it." The ambiguous, uncertain, and amorphous nature of that which remains after all emotion is gone, is concretized and specified due to the demands of English syntax.

Nevertheless, these observations strictly pertain to the syntactic transmission of the message. These four verses also form a complex and ambiguous metaphoric structure. According to I. A. Richards, in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, a metaphor is composed of two aspects: the tenor and the vehicle. Attributes are borrowed from the vehicle and ascribed to the tenor. The meaning of the metaphor is derived from the space where the two semantic fields overlap. The problem with the metaphors in this poem is that the tenor is not apparent. The structure of the metaphors is not A = B, rather ? = B. In the fifth and sixth verses, much like the third verse, there is no apparent subject of the verb *es*. Because Spanish can subsume the subject in the conjugations, there is an interminable abyss between subject and verb in the apparently simple *es*. In the third and fourth verses, the tenor is likewise absent, but because the phrase is an interrogative, the ambiguity and uncertainty is not as jarring as it is in the last four verses. The fifth and sixth verses form part of an affirmative statement. The poetic voice declares what it is that she feels in the absence of *las pasiones*: "Yo sólo sé que es […]." But to what does she refer? What is *it* that she knows? As shown above, that which she knows is composed of paradoxical and antithetical images—contradictory yet symbiotic. These images, however, make up only one half of the metaphoric structure. They are the vehicle from which attributes are borrowed and ascribed to the tenor. But the tenor is absent. Consequently, the metaphors lose their grounding and collapse in on themselves. Absence, therefore, is paradoxical. In the absence of all passion and feeling, the poetic voice attempts to describe what resides in her when there is nothing. This emotion is formless and unstructured. It defies categorization, organization, and structure at the syntactic and metaphoric levels. Does it also defy interpretation? The poetic voice alludes to the feeling that remains in the vacuum created by the absence of *las pasiones*. It is all of these things and it is none of these things. It is paradoxical. It is antithetical. It is ambiguous. It is amorphous. It is doubtful. It is, or simply, *es*. What ultimately remains in the absence of all feeling is the poem itself.

The syntax of the English translations demands a specific subject/verb structure, thus requiring the usage of the neuter pronoun "it." Likewise, we find the same ambiguity and destabilization in the structure of the metaphors. The tension that results in the absence of the tenor of the metaphors and the lack of a determinate subject of the verb *es* evokes the most common yet tantalizing quest of all ontological inquiries: "What is it?" Certainly, this poem can be read without the trappings of *saudade*, but the ambiguous and paradoxical nature of sorrow that Rosalía de Castro explores in this particular poem, is most fully appreciated with a full understanding of *saudade*, an undercurrent that flows throughout all her works, and, as we have seen, with particular strength in *En las orillas del Sar*. As Piñeiro, Mayoral, and Havard have discussed, *saudade* conveys both concrete and formless qualities. Here we see one of the best examples of the ontological tensions of *saudade* in Castro's work. The translations, however, do not convey the sense of *saudade* to the same extent as the original for at least two reasons. First, as we have noted, English demands greater syntactic structure, which limits the amount of ambiguity that can be expressed in the language. Second, the translators are forced to make certain interpretive decisions when faced with a signifier that contains multiple signifieds. The end result is a mood that approximates the original but is unable to sustain the level of ambiguity and uncertainty in style and content.

Whereas the previous poem explores the ontological loneliness of *saudade*, Castro presents a much more concrete aspect of the concept in "¡Volved!" The first part of the poem deals with the Galician emigration. The theme of exile, exodus, and emigration are recurring themes throughout her poetry, although it is more pronounced in her Galician works. She writes about the men who leave and the women who are left behind. The emigrant portrayed in her poetry leaves home, many times never to return, leaving behind loved ones, experiencing sorrow, coupled with an intense longing for home. Within the Galician cultural context, the overwhelming desire to return, especially to die in one's homeland, most closely relates to *morriña*. (The poem, "Los robles" is perhaps the best representation of these themes, but neither Morley nor Aldaz include it in their translations.) Kulp-Hill sees the theme of emigration in *En las orillas del Sar* as a parallel of the poet's own spiritual exile: "Galicia has become symbolic of the poet's withdrawal into self, her physical and spiritual estrangement from the vitality and bustle of the world. The folk element has almost entirely disappeared" (81). Thematically, Castro refers to *morriña* in "¡Volved!," yet she also evokes the deeper nature of *saudade*:

> Bien sabe Dios que siempre me arrancan tristes lágrimas
> aquellos que nos dejan,
> pero aún más me lastiman y me llenan de luto
> los que a volver se niegan. (Castro, *OC II* 491)

In this first stanza of the first section, a discursive space is established between the poetic voice and two other groups of people, with a reference to God. We see the presence of the first person, in both the singular and plural as seen in the object pronouns "me" and "nos," as well as an undetermined "aquellos." It is this last group that serves as the subject of the verbs that perform actions toward the poetic voice. There is an aspect of violence in this relationship as seen in the phrases "me arrancan tristes lágrimas," "me lastiman," and

"me llenan de luto." The poetic voice is a victim, or, at least, a motionless recipient of the actions of "aquellos." In only one case do they perform an action that is not directed toward the poetic voice, "se niegan":

> Always tears come into my eyes, God knows,
> For men who quit their native land to earn;
> But deeper pity fills my heart for those
> Who care not to return. (*Beside the River Sar* 59)

In Morley's translation, his choice of syntax alters the connection between these groups. The original "aquellos que nos dejan" establishes that one group abandons another. In Morley's rendering, he assigns a gender to the third person group, calling them "men who quit their native land […] Who care not to return." Although he still conveys the idea of abandonment, he removes the object pronouns "me," in three cases, and "nos" in one case, thus diminishing the active role of "aquellos." In fact, he removes the presence of the first person plural entirely. Morley's translation effectively silences the role of "aquellos" in the violence perpetrated against the poetic voice and the group with which she identifies. The relationship shifts to one of an objective observer that witnesses this process of abandonment. Morley places emphasis on the result of the action, rather than maintaining the direct and active connection between the poetic voice and "aquellos." Morley's decision to remove the object pronouns significantly changes the relationship between the various groups present in this opening stanza. Likewise, his lexical alterations affect the overall sense of the stanza. The verbs "arrancar" and "lastimar" evoke violence while "llenar de luto" refers to death. Morley, however, creates a passive tone in which "tears come into [her] eyes" and "pity fills [her] heart." Overall, the English translation alters the relationship between the poetic voice and "aquellos":

> God knows all too well that those who leave
> make me shed sad tears—
> but those who refuse to return
> hurt and grieve me even more. (*Poems* 147)

Like Morley, Aldaz and her colleagues remove any reference to the first person plural. This translation, however, maintains the relationship between the poetic voice and "aquellos" much better than Morley's. As in the original, the poetic voice is on the receiving end of the actions. "Those who leave" make her cry and "those who refuse […] hurt and grieve" her. Although the phrase "make me shed sad tears" does not convey the same level of violence as "me arrancan tristes lágrimas," the final verse, "hurt and grieve," is an adequate rendering:

> ¡Partid, y Dios os guíe!..., pobres desheredados,
> para quienes no hay sitio en la hostigada tierra;
> partid llenos de aliento en pos de otro horizonte,
> pero... volved más tarde al viejo hogar que os llama.
> (Castro, *OC II* 491)

In the second stanza of the first section, we see an abrupt change in the discursive relationship. In a series of exhortations, the poetic voice now directs her attention to those who have left their homeland. The use of the imperative in the second person plural (*vosotros*) and the invocation of the guidance of God evokes a scriptural tone. The antithesis of "partid" and "volved" creates a certain tension, which is reflected in the use of ellipsis in the first and fourth verses. In the first case, the ellipsis represents departure into the unknown while in the second, it evokes return. On one hand, the poet wants her people to leave with boldness and with God's guidance, but on the other, she urges them to return once more. Her role among her people is almost like a prophet and seer. She observes their disinherited state, and understands that they no longer have a place in their homeland. She invokes the blessing of God to guide her people as they depart. Perhaps this paradoxical tension is what causes the pain she feels in the first stanza:

> Poor disinherited, God guide you as you roam,
> For whom your harried country has no place;
> Go, strong of spirit, to a wider space,
> But—heed the call of your ancestral home,
> Return to your own race. (*Beside the River Sar* 59)

Morley succeeds in maintaining the feeling of exhortation, although the antithesis of "partir/volver" is diminished by not employing the ellipsis and by softening the imperatives. He translates one of the two usages of "partid" as "go," which fails to convey the tone of urgency of the message. In the imperative statements, he does not employ the second person plural, which is usually associated with King James English and, consequently, a biblical tone. The meaning of the second verse shifts slightly, as if the people are not welcome in their country and that is why they must leave. The word choice is quite different, but the transmission of the sense of the original stanza is adequate. Although the imperative "return" is part of the original, Morley has to add extra words at the end to maintain the rhyme scheme he has imposed on the stanza. This editorial addition may seem harmless on the surface, but the underlying message casts a slightly negative tone on the poem that is not present in the original. Taken out of context, the phrase "Return to your own race" could be read with a negative connotation, something Morley probably did not originally intend. Overall, Morley's translation softens the urgent tone of the original, thus diminishing the prophetic role of the poetic voice:

> Depart, you who are disowned
> and have no place in your ravaged homeland—
> depart boldly, and may God guide you in your search for other horizons
> but ... return once more to the old hearth that calls you. (*Poems* 147)

In the Aldaz translation, the syntax is modified, moving "and may God guide you" from the first to the third verse, but this change does not significantly alter the sense of the stanza. The translators maintain the repetition of *partid* with a more accurate translation, "depart." In the third verse, the poetic voice pronounces a blessing upon the people: "may God guide you in your search." They also choose not to employ the second person

plural, but the strength of the imperatives and the blessing invoked aid in sustaining the prophetic tone of the original. Although they remove the ellipsis from the first verse, they maintain the usage in the fourth, which approximates the *partir/volver* pairing, although not with the same strength as found in the original poem. The usage of "hearth" for *hogar* is quite interesting since the hearth, a stone- or brick-lined fireplace evokes an image of physical warmth as well as the warmth of family. Moreover, as Kulp-Hill notes, the Galician word for "hearth" has deep cultural connotations: "The word for hearth is *lar*, after the Roman familiar deities, the *lares*, and the fire is considered sacred" (22). Galicians are close to nature, "associating it with mysterious supernatural powers [and], invisible beings" that inhabit the forests. In a form of syncretism, they blend their "[m]yths, superstitions, folk medicine, and magic rites of ancient origin," fusing and confusing them "with elements of Christianity" (22). Although we will not analyze it here, the second section mentions the "genios misteriosos" that inhabit the land. Whether by design or chance, Aldaz and her colleagues allude to a significant aspect of Galician culture. Overall, they provide a much more faithful translation of this stanza than Morley offers:

> Jamás del extranjero el pobre cuerpo inerte,
> como en la propia tierra en la ajena descansa. (Castro, *OC II* 491)
>
> A poor stark body never rests so sound
> In foreign soil as in its native ground. (*Beside the River Sar* 59)
>
> In a foreign land the weary body cannot find
> the same rest it finds at home. (*Poems* 147)

In the final stanza of the first section of "¡Volved!," the poetic voice reiterates the antithetical doubling of "partir/volver" by invoking an image of *morriña*. The body has a physical connection with the homeland that it simply cannot achieve elsewhere. For the most part, each of the translations is quite good. Morley renders the hyperbaton found in the original quite nicely, and in this case his imposition of form actually produces a quotable refrain. Overall, each translation conveys the sense of the original, although specific changes in diction or syntax result in a slightly skewed rewriting. With regard to transmitting the undercurrent of *saudade*, the untrained reader would be unaware that these references to emigration and exile are also culturally embedded images of *morriña* and *saudade*. The introductions to both translations briefly mention the plight of the emigrant and Morley even discusses the Celtic influence in Castro's poetry, but neither specifically mentions *saudade*. Since sorrow, longing, homesickness, grief, melancholy, and nostalgia are part of the human condition, is it necessary to label it or to designate it to a particular culture or ethnicity?

In this process of comparative translation analysis we have seen how subtle and not-so-subtle changes in diction, syntax, and form result in considerable shifts in meaning. We have examined the challenges of transmitting the cultural concept of *saudade* in another language. This difficulty, moreover, is emblematic of the greater issue of translating culture from one language to another. In the past two decades, Susan Bassnett and André

Lefevere have labored diligently in developing the field of translation studies, specifically regarding cross-cultural translation. Their work examines translation as rewriting under the service of power structures. While rewritings can "introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices […] rewriting can also repress innovation, distort, and contain" (*Translation* ix). We have seen how Morley, Aldaz, Gantt, and Bromley have rewritten Castro and, in some cases, distorted the original. This is the overwhelming reality of translation, as Robert Frost noted in his quip: "poetry is what gets lost in translation." In contrast, contemporary theorists take a much more optimistic approach to the translation of poetry. Bassnett uses the following quote from Shelley to support the translatability of poetry: "It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its color and odor, as to seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed, or it will bear no flower—and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel" (qtd. in *Constructing* 58).

On the surface, it appears that Shelley would be in agreement with Frost, that it is impossible to translate poetry. Bassnett, however, reads the passage differently:

> The imagery that he uses refers to change and new growth. It is not an imagery of loss and decay. He argues that though a poem cannot be transfused from one language to another, it can nevertheless be transplanted. The seed can be placed in new soil, for a new plant to develop. The task of the translator must then be to determine and locate that seed and to set about its transplantation. (58)

In the case of Rosalía de Castro, therefore, the translators must transmit that which is essential to create the kind of poem she would have composed, if she had written it in English.

For all the theorizing and intellectualizing that Lefevere and Bassnett have done to establish translation studies, Rosario Ferré encapsulates the difficulties of cross-cultural translation with greater concision in a single essay. Ferré poses the following question: "Is translation of a literary text possible, given the enormous differences in cultural tradition in which language is embedded?" (38) Based on her experience, she observes the following: "Translating has taught me that it is ultimately impossible to transcribe one cultural identity into another" (35). She lists the following as impossible cultural transcriptions: wordplay, humor, and culturally specific images and connotations. Culturally informed words and phrases, she argues, fall flat in other languages and other cultures. In the case of poetry, however, this may have more to do with its nature. While Bassnett confidently asserts that translating poetry is like planting a seed in different soil, Ferré does not share her optimism: "Poetry, where meaning can never be wholly separated from expressive form, is a mystery that can never be translated. It can only be transcribed, reproduced in a shape that will always be a sorry shadow of itself" (38). Are the Morley and Aldaz translations simply "sorry shadows" of the originals? They may only approximate the original, but even a poor translation is usually better than none at all. Morley's numerous changes in "expressive form" severely alter the overall meaning, as we have seen. Likewise, Aldaz, et al., many times, sacrifices literal translations in favor

of more felicitous and lucid renderings in English. Not only is poetry inextricably linked to its "expressive form," it is also linked to its cultural context. As a practicing writer and translator, Ferré finds the task of the translator multiplicitous: "Translation is not only a literary but also a historical task; it includes an interpretation of internal history, of the changing proceedings of consciousness in a civilization" (34). Castro, therefore, stands at the cusp of modernity between two languages and two cultures: Galician and Castilian. In addition, she stands at these borders as a female writer of privilege and education. That she embeds her personal poetic expression with historical and cultural allusions is simply part and parcel of her role as a poet. Lacking a proper explication, many of these references are lost on the non-specialist reader. Without an introduction to the Galician emigration, for example, "¡Volved!" loses much of its cultural impact. Although not inherently culturally specific, "Ya duermen en su tumba las pasiones" takes on new meaning when read through the lens of *saudade*.

In the end, the drive for understanding supersedes the overwhelming challenges of translation in all its forms. We should heed the example of Rosalía de Castro. Much of her poetic production rests on the concepts of linguistic and cultural translation. *En las orillas del Sar*, in many ways, is a translation and interpretation of earlier themes of her Galician poetry. In the case of *saudade*, she succeeds in conveying the underlying quality of the concept without directly stating it in words. Even without an explicit explanation of *saudade* in all its forms, the reader of either one of the translations will still come away with the sensations and emotions that *saudade* evokes. Fully transcribing one culture to another may be impossible, but the reward is in the effort.

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## Notes

[1] Teixeira de Pascoaes, however, argues that the origin of *saudade* can be traced to the union of the carnality of Greco-Roman paganism with the suffering of Judeo-Christian spirituality. See Teixera de Pascoaes.

[2] Piñeiro differentiates and discusses at length the concepts of *saudade* (*soidade* or *suidade*), *morriña*, *nostalgia*, and *angustia* in "Pra unha filosofia da Saudade" (13-20) as well as "A saudade en Rosalía" (100-10).

[3] In *Romanticism*, for example, Havard focuses much of his attention on the physical attributes of Castro's *saudade*, establishing a triangular diagram that encompasses the major themes in *En las orillas del Sar*: Galicia, love, and God. Throughout his study he provides ample textual evidence that demonstrates the occurrence of each thematic element and how it relates directly or indirectly to other aspects. Nevertheless, his highly structured schematic imposes an artificial construction upon his reading, which actually limits the potential of his argument.

[4] See "Sign, Signified, Signifier" in Ferdinand de Saussure's "Course in General Linguistics" (77–79).

[5] As mentioned before, there is only one critical article that examines translations of Castro's work. In "Rosalía between Two Shores: Gender, Rewriting, and Translation," Joyce Tolliver examines the crucial role of gender in the aforementioned translations. She contextualizes her study within the framework of contemporary translation studies and the work of Venuti, de Beaugrande, Spivak, and Lefevere.

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