Translation as an Activist Effort in Women's Writing from the Early Twentieth Century to the Present the Literary Production of Victoria Kent, Aurora Correa, and Valeria Luiselli

TRANSLATION AS AN ACTIVIST EFFORT IN WOMEN'S WRITING FROM THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT
THE LITERARY PRODUCTION OF VICTORIA KENT, AURORA CORREA, AND VALERIA LUISELLI

A Dissertation Presented

by

Paulina Ochoa Figueroa

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DEDICATION

For my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a woman immigrant and translator, I have spent significant time contemplating the societal impact that language and literature have on all of us. My journey into translation began at the age of 15, and I became a professional translator at 21. Initially, I volunteered as a translator for a non-profit organization for several years before transitioning to a paid role following the completion of my undergraduate degree at Manhattan College. At the time, I was unaware of the theoretical field of Translation Studies and its role in providing researchers with new perspectives on literature.

Upon enrolling in my graduate studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I questioned whether translation was a profession I wanted to continue pursuing. I found myself repeatedly being drawn back to translation work, and decided to dedicate the rest of my graduate education to learn more about the practice and theory of translation, interpretation, and language access. All this knowledge culminated in this dissertation, which could not have been possible without the help of my advisor and committee members, Professor Regina Galasso, Professor Albert Lloret, and Professor Scaramella. Thank you, Professor Galasso for always trusting me with new opportunities and experiences that enriched my years as a doctoral student. Your encouragement and wisdom have been vital for the completion of this project.

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ABSTRACT

TRANSLATION AS AN ACTIVIST EFFORT IN WOMEN'S WRITING FROM THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT THE LITERARY PRODUCTION OF VICTORIA KENT, AURORA CORREA, AND VALERIA LUISELLI

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This dissertation explores the intersection of translation, literature, and activism, focusing on the works of three influential women writers: Victoria Kent, Aurora Correa, and Valeria Luiselli. I delve into the societal impact of language and literature, drawing from Translation, Translator, and Literary Studies to study the activist role of translation in the writings of the authors and highlight the transformative power of language within the context of exile, immigration, and social justice. Through a comprehensive analysis of the translators' experiences, the chapters the multifaceted relationship between language, identity, and activism, where I investigate the ways in which these women writers use translation as a tool for social and political engagement, emphasizing the agency embedded in the act of translation and interpreting. The project also underscores the pivotal role of translators in promoting cross-cultural understanding and

challenging societal norms through their literary productions. Furthermore, the dissertation sheds light on the complex dynamics of language access, interpretation, and cultural representation, offering new perspectives on the activist potential of translation in literature. By examining the translation strategies employed by Kent, Correa, and Luiselli, I reveal the innovative impact of their work on literature and education. Ultimately, this research contributes to the evolving field of Translation and Translator Studies by showcasing the instrumental role of women translators in amplifying marginalized voices, fostering intercultural dialogue, and advocating for social change. Overall, this project underscores the significance of translation as a form of activism and its profound implications for women's writing from the early twentieth century to the present day.

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> Translating oneself into the language of the host community is not only a way of understanding how that community thinks and functions but also a way of allowing oneself to become a fuller and more active member of it.
>
> — Michael Cronin
> *Translation and Identity*

Identity, migration, and language are intricately connected elements that shape individuals and their experiences as they navigate the complexities of living in a constantly moving world. In *Translation and Identity* (2006), Michael Cronin reminds us that "translation must be at the centre of any attempt to think about questions of identity in human society" (1) to gain a deeper perspective on what identity is and how it binds humanity. For immigrants, translation is a condition of their identity that never leaves their side. Cronin further postulates:

> The condition of the migrant is the condition of the translated being. He or she moves from a source language and culture to a target language and culture so that *translation* takes place both in the physical sense of movement or displacement and in the symbolic sense of the shift from one way of speaking, writing about and interpreting the world to another. (45)

Beyond the physical transfer of one's body and the change in language, migration also forces individuals to shift their way of interacting and making sense of their surroundings. The stakes are even higher and riskier if their life depends on adapting and learning a new language, culture, and way of life. In these cases, "[t]ranslation is thus not a matter of idle theoretical speculation or a hidebound classroom exercise destined to excite the jaded appetites of pedants but is a question of real, immediate and urgent seriousness" (Cronin 45). Therefore, for

immigrants who have to adapt to survive, translation is a crucial and urgent matter that must be taken seriously.

Besides being a survival tool for immigrants, translation is also key for individuals to engage with the local culture, both socially and politically. On this matter, Moira Inghilleri has examined the role of translation and translators in fostering linguistic hospitality in immigrant communities. In *Translation and Migration* (2017), she argues that:

> For newcomers to a particular sociocultural order, translation is an important means of entry into the dominant discourses of a society or alternative voices within a society, from dialogues taking place about local cultural issues to political and ideological debates. (Inghilleri 32)

Thus, translation becomes an essential part of the immigrant experience, not only as a means by which to communicate but also as a gateway to active participation in the culture, politics, and society. Through translation, immigrants have the potential to contribute politically. These activist endeavors take the form of the promotion, obstruction, direction, or mediation of societal, cultural, and political transformations in order to bring about improvements for the greater good.

According to David McReever in *Exiled Activism: Political Mobilization in Egypt and England* (2021), there have also been enough causal links among Egyptian exiles residing in England to hypothesize "that exile communities are an actor involved in international relations between nation-states" (9). McReever contends that there have not been enough studies to support the role of exile in political engagement and explain the role of activists in political mobilizations. Following McReever, I define activism as "the political participation of individuals

through the medium of social movements" (4). Participation in social movements takes form in multiple ways, such as protesting, advocating for laws, disseminating trusted and fact-checked information independently, writing on issues to raise awareness and inspire action, and, more recently, the use of social media to communicate instantly around the world.

Rather than looking at social movements themselves, this dissertation focuses on the literary production of Victoria Kent (1891-1987), Aurora Correa (1930-2008), and Valeria Luiselli (1983 -), three women writers from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Iberian and Mexican Literatures who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, speaking languages such as Spanish, Catalan, French, and English, which accompanied them wherever they went. The first two, Kent and Correa, motivated the start of this dissertation as their work has been overlooked in Literary Studies, perhaps due to their exile outside of Spain and Europe and the many challenges they endured because of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975). Another possible reason for this oversight in Literary Studies is that since they were never part of a movement in literary history, their literature was never recognized within the typical categories in which the literary canon is structured. Most significantly, their gender identity contributed to the invisibility of their translation labor. Their

prolonged displacement to Mexico[1] and the United States[2] also meant several experiences with other languages, mainly English and other varieties of Spanish.

Given the multilingual[3] and travel aspects due to their condition of exiles in the life and work of Kent and Correa, Translation Studies lends itself as the perfect backdrop for studying them as it allows for a new perspective into the literature of multilingual writers, especially as it relates to their use of interlingual and intralingual translation strategies and their connections to other networks of activist efforts in the twentieth century. These questions led me to Luiselli's literature after finding similarities to Kent and Correa in her background, multilingualism, and translational strategies,[4] and her travels around the world, to study her contributions as she advocates for immigrant rights in the United States. Each of these writers saw the value of translation in their work and took it upon themselves to use it for the betterment of society, thus I also include the potential of translation in activist efforts –and how it comes together in literature– to my above definition of activism.

Uprooted Life and Creative Writing

As Kent and Correa lived, wrote, and died in exile, I start with a commonly explored theme in Global Literature: the condition of exile. One of the earliest

[1] For both Kent and Correa.
[2] For Kent.
[3] Kent's languages included Spanish, French, and English, where as Correa knew Catalan, Spanish, and English.
[4] Such as using translator and interpreter characters in *Lost Children Archive* (2019) and writing about languages in several of her books, as I analyze in Chapter IV.

examples of exile in writing is in the Bible. Asher Z. Milbauer and James M. Sutton, in their edited volume *Exile in Global Literature and Culture* (2020), assert that "[e]xile begins with the expulsion of Adam and Eve" and that "the condition [of exile] initiates an endless journey: the exile is a traveler, a wayfarer, a wanderer, an individual whose uprooted life is defined by movement and pathway rather than by stasis and stable identity" ("Introduction"). As such, exiles keep voyaging and shifting into new borders, countries, and languages. The trajectory is also not linear, rather it "is embodied in and defined by the shuttling back and forth, the journeying, between these two points," which is represented in "mental, memorial, and creative pilgrimages expressing themselves in poems, fiction, art and music, or various types of thought experiment" (Milbauer and Sutton "Introduction"). Milbauer and Suttor refer to the various representations of exile in literature to conceptualize exiles and immigrants as travel writers since they are in contact with different cultures, languages, and literatures that eventually influence their writing or their literary production choices. The connection between travel writing and exile is not as straightforward and requires a review of these two different terms, their meanings, and applications to find their similarities.

Travel writing, as I conceptualize it in this work, is a genre of literature characterized by narratives of journeys, expeditions, or visits to different places, often recounted by the travelers themselves or by a narrator, and encompassing descriptions of cultures, encounters, languages, and reflections on the experience. It serves as a means of documenting and interpreting the world, exploring the

intersections of geography, culture, history, language, and identity. The word "exile," from the Latin "exilium" and "exul," refers to a "banished person" and is synonymous with the state of expulsion that results from political, social, or cultural factors for which an individual voluntarily or involuntarily leaves their native land.

Exile and travel writing have in common the physical displacement of an individual but intrinsically refer to two different states of being: that of an unbound traveler who writes and an exile who is bound to the place that grants him or her refuge. Travel writing frequently comes from leisure and the desire to know more about a country, culture, or language while writing for a reader back home. Exile is often brought on by force and last resort, and the physical removal of the exiled person by external forces temporarily or permanently from their home country. Although both terms have clear differences,[5] there are also similarities revealed through the translational aspect of both travel writing and exile writing: cross-cultural understanding when one's language and culture are different from the host culture, translation strategies used in textual production to represent the languages, accents, and culture of the local community, ethical considerations of power imbalances in said languages, and the reception of texts by an audience. There is currently a gap in the theorization of the role of translation in exile writing since the examples regarding exile found in the first

[5] The differences between travel writer and exile are multiple and I do not wish to imply they are simple because both of them are part of a complex network of decisions, but for the purposes of this introduction, the most significant ones include: voluntary/involuntary and temporary/indefinite displacement.

part of this section refer to migration and identity.[6] For this reason, I turn to the work of Translation Studies scholars in travel writing, and my own analysis and subsequent theorizations, as a useful blueprint for further understanding the place of language in the writing of exiles, the transformations and innovations brought about by their textual productions, their role as mediators of cultural and political aspects of society, and how it shapes their new identities and translation strategies, research matters have been part of the focus that travel writing since Cronin's study of translation in that field with *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (2000).

The Intersection of Travel and Literature

Travel writing has been examined within Translation Studies not only for its similarity to the origin of the word "translate" (to carry across) but also for its connection to language. After all, to travel is to translate, as Cronin posits in *Across the Lines*. Moreover, translation also offers transformation and innovation as powerful tools for society, as noted by Itamar Even-Zohar in his groundbreaking work "The Position of Translated Literature in the Literary Polysystem" (1978). This shift towards examining travel writing from the perspective of translation by Cronin presented an investigation into "translators as intercultural mediators [who] have for centuries experienced the creative tension between travel, language

[6] As highlighted in the beginning of the introduction, translation is an essential entry point for immigrants since it allows them to access to cultural and social debates, and thus starts their engagement in political matters if they so wish (Inghileri 32). Additionally, translation aids immigrants not only in the learning of a new language but also by symbolically, giving them a new way of speaking, writing, interacting with and interpreting their world (45).

and translation in the elaboration of culture and identity" (*Across the Lines* 6). The ethics behind the power imbalances among languages in translation are present, too, in the creative tensions Cronin mentions, especially as it relates to minority languages, such as Irish Gaelic (*Across the Lines* 26) and Persian (*Across the Lines* 46) and how they are represented in the travel writer's text.

Even though exile is not a part of travel writing, Kent and Correa could be seen in a travel writer's light since they are translating their language, their culture, and their identity for a local audience in their new places of residences while maintaining contact to their native land. One of the valuable contributions of travel writing is the translated or interpreted textual creation it produces and how it bridges connections between the host country and the home country. This is not to say that immigrants do not create literature, but what I am after is a novel way of studying multilingual immigrant writers, like Luiselli, who come from other places and know multiple languages, and how their writing reflects this by including translational elements into it. My goal in bringing exile and travel writing together for literary analysis is beneficial to understanding how these translational relationships among languages and locations occur, not only in Spanish-speaking Literatures but beyond in Global Literature.

The relationship between travel and translation has also been studied in fields such as anthropology and sociology. Anthropologists have long used travel writing as a means of gaining insights into other cultures and traditions, and the process of translating those experiences into ethnographic accounts is central to

their work, as explained by Cronin in *Across the Lines* (33, 103, 124). Likewise, sociologists have explored the role of travel in shaping social identities and constructing cultural boundaries and the ways in which translation can both facilitate and hinder cross-cultural communication and understanding, as researched by Esperança Bielsa in *A Translational Sociology* (2023), in which she analyzes the presence of translation in daily life, especially as seen in multilingual societies and how this translation aspect is key in the mediation of politics inside and outside that society.

As I argue in this dissertation, the emergence of exiled women authors during the early twentieth century marked a significant period in literary history that is overlooked in Literary Studies. This era also witnessed the remarkable achievements of women's suffrage movements in various countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Spain, and Mexico.[7] The corpus of this project began by noticing a translation and activist pattern among Spanish-speaking women writers during this time, which follow similar background stories, career paths, and migrations that transcend time and culture. In the preliminary stages of this research, I also noticed that Kent and Correa started their professional careers in the field of education and the activist efforts that they led eventually turn them into translators.

[7] Women were granted the right to vote in 1928 in the UK, 1920 in the U.S., 1953 in the entire Mexican Republic (as early as 1923 in the state of Yucatán), and 1933 in Spain. It is worth mentioning that due to the Spanish dictatorship, the right of women to vote was repressed since the Franco regime did not hold any national democratic elections while in power.

The Activist Turn in Translation Studies

Translation, as an intellectual pursuit and a practical skill, occupies a central and multifaceted role in contemporary discourse. Aside from the mere transfer of words from one language to another, translation encapsulates the essence of cultural exchange, political engagement, and intellectual inquiry. Scholars have focused their attention on two interrelated themes within Translation Studies: activism and travel. These two lenses offer illuminating perspectives on the transformative power of translation in both local and global contexts.

The analysis on Kent's translation work is framed around the theme of activism in Translation Studies and how it has been studied previously. Scholars such as Sherry Simon,[8] Emily Apter,[9] and Maria Tymoczko,[10] argue that translation, when used as a tool for change, serves as a catalyst for social resistance and cross-cultural understanding. The process of translating social and political texts into different languages plays a significant role in promoting social justice and human rights. Historically, the study of ideologies behind translation, as well as the power imbalances between languages and the politics of translating, started at the height of the cultural turn of Translation Studies in the early 1990s. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explored the intricate relationship between language, power, and representation through the lens of translation in "The Politics of Translation"

[8] *Gender in Translation. Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (1996).
[9] "Afterword: Towards a Theory of Reparative Translation." In *The Work of World Literature*, ed. by Francesco Giusti and Benjamin Lewis Robinson (2021).
[10] "Translation and Political Engagement: Activism, Social Change and the Role of Translation in Geopolitical Shifts." In *The Translator: Studies in Intercultural Communication* (2000).

(1993). Spivak proposes that translation is inherently political, and she is critical of traditional translation approaches that give preferential value to the fidelity of the original text. Instead, she focuses on the agency of the translator as a deconstructive approach that highlights the impossibility of capturing the meaning of a text in another language, especially what she refers to as "third-world languages," which include any languages spoken by people who have been traditionally marginalized, oppressed, and excluded from hegemonic discourse. Spivak explains, "I want to show how the postcolonial as the outside/insider translates white theory as she reads, so that she can discriminate on the terrain of the original. She wants to use what is useful" (222). Spivak's deconstructive approach to translation theory allows us to rethink the existing power dynamics and hierarchies as they relate to political and cultural matters and adds a more nuanced perspective to the theoretical conversation by bringing the notion of feminist writing and translation.

Related to the hierarchies that Spivak mentions, the concept of power has been closely studied by Translation Studies scholars. André Lefevere states in *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook* (1992) that "[t]ranslation has to do with authority and legitimacy and, ultimately, with power, which is precisely why it has been and continues to be the subject of so many acrimonious debates" (2). Translation plays a crucial role in shaping and maintaining the authority of a nation. It not only serves as a tool for communication but also holds the power to challenge and subvert the established norms and values of a society, as Lefevere

highlights. This is one of the reasons why translators historically have been seen as untrustworthy. But this is not always the case, as it is up to readers "to accept or reject translations" (Lefevere 5); they too, have an agency in the cultural capital of society. It is in this sphere that the true test of a translation lies since "translations have been made with the intention of influencing the development of a culture" (Lefevere 8). The role played by translators extends, then, far beyond the mere translation of written texts. Translators have the power to shape and influence social norms and values through their work. Their translations can either reinforce existing power structures and societal norms or challenge them, giving rise to either complacency or subversion within the society as we will see with Kent and her fight against dictatorship.

Building on the scholarship of Susan Bassnett,[11] Lawrence Venutti,[12] Lefevere,[13] and Spivak,[14] Translation Studies has also centered on the intersection of translation and activism, reflecting a broader recognition of the political potential and ethical dimensions of translation practice. For example, studies dedicated to the relationship between power and translation by Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler, *Translation and Power* (2002), which followed Tymoczko's study of Irish literature in English in "Translation and Political Engagement: Activism, Social Change and the Role of Translation in Geopolitical Shifts" (2000),

[11] *Constructing Cultures: Essay on Literary Translation*, 1998.
[12] *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 1995.
[13] *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context* (1992) and *Translation, History, Culture: A Sourcebook* (1990)
[14] *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 1993.

have pointed out that the "harnessing of translation for political and ideological purposes is not original to these critics and theoreticians of translation" (Tymoczko "Translation and Political" 25). In other words, the political power of translation dates to the translation of sacred texts. Tymoczko traces this ideologically motivated aspect of Bible translations to the medieval and early Renaissance periods (*Political Engagement* 25). Studies of translation and its relationship with political engagement have continued with Federico Italiano,[15] Mona Baker,[16] and Helen Vassallo,[17] yielding fruitful insights, such as the use of translation as a weapon in "propaganda, misinformation, narratives of trauma, and imagery of the enemy" (Italiano 1); how the Egyptian revolution benefited from translation as activists got mobilized and created networks of solidarity; and finally, how feminist translators in the publishing industry engage in activism to fight the "invisible mechanisms" (Vasallo 1) against women, its intersection with class, race, and ethnicity. These texts have employed a translational lens to gain new perspectives on history, politics, and culture across the globe, but often, they do not include literary translation in their object of study, as this dissertation aims to analyze.

The cultural turn of Translation Studies also allowed for scholarship to take an interdisciplinary approach to gain a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena in the globalized world. For example, the work of Loredana

[15] *The Dark Side of Translation*, 2020.
[16] *Translating Dissent: Voices from and with the Egyptian Revolution,* 2016.
[17] *Towards a Feminist Translator Studies: Intersectional Activism in Translation and Publishing*, 2023

Polezzi, *Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation* (2001), combines travel writing and translation theory to analyze how "the individual stories of a series of travel texts" as they move "through translation, from the Italian cultural and literary system to the English one" (105), shedding light on the cultural, linguistic, and political dynamics involved in the process. The interdisciplinary approach of Translation Studies plays a pivotal role in its ability to continuously expand into novel avenues of research, particularly in relation to Translator Studies and Literary Studies. This relationship will be essential to understand the work and the cultural translation strategies in Aurora Correa's literature.

A notable contribution to the field of translation as activism is the edited volume *Translation, Resistance, Activism* (2010), which features the work of leading scholars such as Tymoczko, Mona Baker, Antonia Carcelen-Estrada, Brian J. Baer, and Paul F. Bandia.[18] In her introduction to the book, Tymoczko wants to "go beyond resistance and delineate the current state of thinking about translation and activism" and open up discourses to a "wide range of cultural and political circumstances" (vii). The present work shares similarities in terms of research scopes and theories, especially John Milton's "The Resistant Political Translations of Monteiro Lobato" and Else R. P. Vieira's "Growing Agency: The Labors of Political Translation." Both studies examine the instrumental role of translation

[18] The texts highlight the crucial role of translation in shaping social and political movements, emphasizing the ways in which translation can be used to resist dominant power structures.

and translators as a political force to oppose dictatorships around the globe, which relate back to my examination of Kent's activism work and the vital role that translation had in her textual production.

In addition to the case studies of translation and activism around the world from the 18th century onward, *Translation, Resistance, Activism* also delves into the history and theory behind this subfield.[19] One such theory is the one employed by Mona Baker in "Translation and Activism: Emerging Patterns of Narrative Community" (2006), which bases its argument on narrative theory.[20] Baker argues that narrative theory allows us to "critique not only [translator's] translation practices but also their own narratives about themselves. In the process we reflect on our own values and narrative locations" (40). This reflection and critique of "activists in the translation world" strengthens our commitment to the betterment of society since the constant critical stance will avoid complacency in the narrative or ideology translators set out to challenge in the first place. Baker's theory of narrative frames my study of Luiselli, where I open up new avenues of research into the labor of feminist translation[21] in contemporary literature by investigating her activist and educational connections inside and outside her immediate community.

[19] An essential part of this theorization is postcolonial theory since it "has shaped views of ideology and power in literary and cultural studies as a whole" (Tymoczko 15).
[20] In Baker's essay, narratives "are public and personal stories that we subscribe to and that guide our behavior. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world(s) in which we live" (25).
[21] For a more in-depth analysis of transnational feminist translation, see Castro, Olga, et al. "Transnationalizing Feminist Translation Studies? Insights from the Warwick School of Feminist Translation: A Roundtable."

More recent publications show the continued interest Translation Studies scholars have regarding activism and sociology. An edited volume by Baker, *Translating Dissent: Voices from and with the Egyptian Revolution* (2016), examines the role of translation in "shaping the space of protest from a variety of perspectives that include, but are not limited to, the scholarly universe of translation studies and social movement studies" (2). Tracing central themes that intersect with history, political science, gender studies, film studies, and social media, the book outlines the ways in which translation is used as a political tool.[22] It is this interchange between movements that the present works brings to the conversation by creating new networks that have used translation to their advantage in all of the subjects of study presented here.

This multidisciplinary interest in translation and society has been further advanced with a monograph and an edited volume that studies how translations and translators shape social identities and act as political and cultural mediators in society. On the one hand, in *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Activism* (2020), Rebecca Ruth Gould and Kayvan Tahmasebian identify four types of translator-activists, "witness-bearer, […] voice-giver, […] vernacular mediator, and […] revolutionary" (2) and broaden the perspective of what is a translator activist by positing that "we consider a translation to be activist whenever and however it stirs readers and audiences to action" (4). It is the voice giver that this dissertation

[22] Each contributor analyzes "concrete experiences of activists mobilizing […]reflecting on what it means to work for justice, both within and across borders, and to attempt to effect change at home while conversing with others who are fighting similar battles elsewhere" (Baker 14).

focuses on since the three figures studied here have taken part in translation activities that call to action their audience. Additionally, Esperança Bielsa's *A Translational Sociology: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Politics and Society* (2023) brings "attention to aspects of translation that have remained more elusive to sociological interpretation and analysis, investigating translation's ubiquitous presence in the everyday lives of ordinary people in increasingly multilingual societies and its key intervention in mediating politics within and beyond the nation" (i). It is in these day-to-day activities that we find the true power of translation by uncovering the close relationship between activism and language in displaced individuals.

As seen from this historical overview of the activist turn in Translation Studies, most of the analyses included in this scholarship are non-literary translations. Taking inspiration from these contributions, this dissertation fills this void in Translation Studies by arguing that literary translators and the translation of literary texts in general also promote social justice, facilitate the representation or self-representation of the voices of marginalized communities, and bring stories to more audiences around the world through the relationship translation has with cities and the multilingual environment that they foster for immigrants, exiles, and the local communities within it.

Translation, the City, and Literary Production: A Multifaceted Relationship

Translation and travel are also further linked by the places in which they take place. For this reason, throughout this work, the ways in which cities–New York

City, Paris, and Mexico City–have served as conductors of literary production are studied. Simon has talked about the importance of translation in the city. She explains in *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory* (2011) that "each city imposes its own patterns of interaction and these emerge out of their spaces and their own narrative pasts. Contact, transfer, and circulation among languages are determined by the demographics, institutional arrangements and imaginative histories of urban life" (2). The circulation of ideas, information, and publications is a central part of this line of inquiry, one that Regina Galasso has studied in *Translating New York: The City's Languages in Iberian Literatures* (2018), as well as an edited volume with Evelyn Scaramella in *Avenues of Translation: The City in Iberian and Latin American Writing* (2019).

This subfield in Translation Studies is not only studied in Spanish-language Literatures and Cultures but also globally. Tong-King Lee's *Translating the Multilingual City: Cross-lingual Practices and Language Ideology* (2013) comes to mind in the study of translation processes in Asia. However, the current state of scholarship related to Iberian and Mexican Literatures in cities and translation has not reached the significant role played by women intellectuals in political engagement starting in the twentieth century.

The assertion of the influence of the city on the writing of Kent, Correa, and Luiselli is also based on the ideas of Walter Benjamin, specifically in his essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man" (1996). In it, Benjamin posits that the language of man (or humanity) is operated by a translation process, where the

human language is the translation of the language of things. Human language can then be used through language, such as facts, or in language, as literature or poetry, where there is a particular meaning or form not tied to the content being said. This notion is what he calls the "magical" aspect of language because what cannot be articulated in words can be expressed in form. In addition to this aspect of language, and because human language is translated from the language of things, human beings are addressed by objects through a mimetic process, which results in the environment around us transforming us, translating us into something else. Benjamin's theory of the magical element of language helps us understand the role of the city in the literature and translation elements of Kent, Correa, and Luiselli by translating and transforming not only their language but also the way in which they interpret the world around them and the experiences and how they conceive their new identities in their host countries.

Translators and Their Activist Efforts in Iberian and Mexican Literary Production

This dissertation investigates the engagement process of translators and interpreters and presents a model that furthers the theorization of Translator Studies, as presented by Andrew Chesterman in "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies" (2009). Chesterman contends that in this new subfield of Translation Studies, the theorization of Translator Studies covers sociology, culture, and cognition while "looking at the translator's agency [...] in different ways" (13). The different ways of researching the work of translators allow for a

focus on their ideologies, ethics, and history, or what Chesterman labels the cultural branch. Similarly, the cognitive branch is concerned with the mental processes, emotions, and attitudes of the translator, while the sociological one revolves around the networks, institutions, and the workplace in which they operate. Based upon this model of Translator Studies, I study Kent, Correa, and Luiselli's contributions as translators to Iberian and Mexican Literature by discovering the ways in which their histories, ethics, attitudes, and networks paved the path for their activist efforts. This dissertation aims to contribute to the growing field of Translation Studies, Literary History, and Criticism. It highlights the social and cultural significance of translation as a potential for social and political change and reveals networks of cooperation among U.S., Spanish, and Mexican intellectuals.

Organization

The four chapters, organized in chronological order based on the birth of the writers, also aim to be a starting point for more scholarly work on ignored or forgotten figures of Spanish-language Literatures and Cultures. The fierce and multifaceted Victoria Kent (1891-1987), who started her professional career as an educator before changing the course of politics in Spain by becoming the first female lawyer in the country, and the first woman to be appointed as Directora General de Prisiones, opens this dissertation. Her exile experiences in Paris, Mexico City, and New York City elucidates the role of Spaniard women intellectuals in the fight against Francisco Franco's regime (1939-1975) by focusing

on her translations of essays, news, and books in both Spanish and English to promote global recognition of the anti-fascist movement with the foundation of the Ibérica Publishing Company.

The second author of this dissertation is Aurora Correa Hidalgo (1930-2008). Correa was an educator, author, and activist who was born in Barcelona, Catalunya, and at the age of seven, she traveled with her siblings to Mexico. They were part of an initiative, which would later be known as Los niños de Morelia, part of a project in which the government of Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas invited Spanish children to vacation while the Spanish Civil War got resolved and the Second Spanish Republic came back into power. Through an analysis of her literary oeuvre and professional career, I bring to light Correa's relationship with language, translation, and activism, out of which her long stay in Mexico City allowed for the pursuit of a literary and acting career later in life.

Finally, Valeria Luiselli (1983 -) is the focus of the last chapter of this dissertation. Born in Mexico City, she has lived in numerous countries and continents, including the United States, Costa Rica, South Korea, and South Africa, since she was a child due to her father's work as a diplomat. As a teenager, she lived in India for a while and then returned to Mexico City to study at UNAM and then went on to live in Spain and France. She currently resides in the Bronx, writing and teaching at various universities, such as Harvard and Hofstra. Luiselli also volunteered as a Spanish-English interpreter and translator for unaccompanied minors in New York City and has written two books based on her

experience, advocating for immigration reform. This chapter studies the complexities of interpreting and translating ethically and the ways in which she has become an advocate for immigrant populations by investigating more about her role as a translator-activist.

Chapter Overviews

"Languages on the Move: Writing, Translation, and Activist Efforts" of this dissertation focuses on three women travel writers and translators and draws connections between their work and lives. I delve into their biographies and also provide an overview of their work. The chapter's aim is to explore the role of translation in shaping culture, politics, and society in the work of Kent, Correa, and Luiselli. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of comparable lived experiences originating during the emergence of women's rights, highlighting the necessity of translation in fostering cross-cultural comprehension and communication across boundaries. This accentuates the pivotal role of translation as a catalyst for activism and societal transformation. By examining the experiences of these three women translators, the chapter delineates the characteristics that a "voice-giver" and "translator activist" (Gould and Tahmasebian 2) share across Spanish-language literature starting in the twentieth century.

"Translator Contributions to the United States Readership Victoria Kent and the Diffusion of Spanish Republican Ideals in *Ibérica* (1953-1974)" is dedicated to the life and work of Kent and analyzes her relationship with

language, journalism, and literary publications from a translation point of view, as editor-in-chief of *Ibérica: por la libertad* (1954-1974) and *Ibérica: For a Free Spain* (1954-1966). Ibérica Publishing Company published both language editions of *Ibérica* with the financial help of Kent's partner and co-translator of the journal, Louise Crane (1913-1997). These two versions of *Ibérica* are worthy of examination in Translation Studies because of the lack of mention of translational matters. The English edition is never called the translation of the Spanish one. Rather, the translation aspect of the magazine is mostly taken for granted in the English edition, except for the "translated from Spanish" that is mentioned at the end of some articles or accounts, giving no credit to its translators. Through archival research, the chapter unveils and rediscovers significant information about the production and translation of the English edition of *Ibérica* and some of the translators involved and explores the historical context that led to the creation of *Ibérica* and the political repercussions in both the United States and Spain.

In "Published Literature and Archival Discoveries: Multilingual Spain and Mexico in the Writing of Aurora Correa," I examine the life and work of Correa, a child refugee from Spain who grew up in Mexico and became an educator, writer and activist. I start the analysis with Correa's love of language and translation and how eventually, this influenced her writing and activism. With a study of Correa's autobiographies, *Te beso buenas noches* (1997) and *Cerezas* (2008), as well as her fiction writing, particularly *Misere Negro Misere* (1963, 1965), *La muerte de James Dean* (1991), and *HA: novela* (1992), this chapter goes beyond translation proper

into intralingual and cultural translation as well as transadaptation and rewriting with the theories of Roman Jakobson's "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959), André Lefevere's *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992), and Gentzler's *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies* (2017). Finally, we examine Correa's activism throughout her life, including her presence at the Masacre de Tlatelolco and her advocacy for the rights of Los niños de Morelia, which eventually led to the Spanish government's acknowledgment of their suffering and a small retirement fund. Using a translational lens from Translation Studies, the aim of this study is to contribute to the dissemination and understanding of Correa's work and the impact of translation and language on literature and activism.

The last chapter, "Translation in Writing and Interpreting in Practice Valeria Luiselli as a Writer, Educator, and Volunteer," provides an investigation of translation, literature, and activism through the works of Luiselli, an acclaimed Mexican writer and interpreter residing in the United States. Through an analysis of Luiselli's use of multiple languages, I showcase her unique perspective on literature by examining her translator characters and her incorporation of translational factors into her texts. Moreover, this study argues for the significance of Luiselli's teaching and activism for unaccompanied immigrant minors and how language and translation play a crucial role in learning about and addressing the immigration crisis in the United States. Overall, this work contributes to the ways

translation is used as a tool for political and social engagement and how literature serves as a means of mobilizing communities around critical issues.

Finally, the Coda operates as a conclusion to the relationship among translation, activism, and education in women's writing. By combining the Translation Studies' strategies and theories studied thus far, it provides a blueprint of how translation has the potential to lead bilingual or multilingual writers to activism and looks at possible individuals who can further our understanding of the power of translation in today's politicized society in the United States, paying attention to the role of literature, art, and performance to energize and engage an audience for political involvement. In addition, the coda theorizes the essential characteristics of women writers and translators, which starts with a focus on languages and texts that eventually engage the reader to advocate for those whom governments or other organizations have silenced.

Without translation, I would be limited to the borders of my own country. The translator is my most important ally. He introduces me to the world.

— Italo Calvino
"The Fantasy World of Italo Calvino"
The New York Times, 10 July 1983

Translators: Allies or Traitors?

Translation and translators, and by extension, interpreting and interpreters, have not always been perceived as allies, especially in conflict zones. Even today, in several countries and cultures, translators are synonymous with treason. Two clear examples come from the Italian phrase that labels translators as "traduttore, traditore," and the French expression for literary translations, "les belles infidèles." By likening translation and treason to women in the latter, the misogynistic attitude has had lasting effects in different societies. For example, one of the most referred interpreters in history, Malintzin, now better known as La Malinche, is regarded as a woman who sold her culture to Spaniard Conquistadors and facilitated the conquest of the territories that make up Mexico today. In Mexican culture, being called "Malinche" or "Malinchista" refers to a person who shows a preference for any elements of foreign cultures.

Nonetheless, these sayings do not show the entire picture of the status of translation or translators in society, much less women translators. There has also been recognition of the necessity of translators in literature, with authors such as Italo Calvino (1923 - 1985) mentioning the significance of translation and translators to writers' readability and fame around the world (MacShane 23).

Scholarship also points to the necessity and significance of translators for writers. Regina Galasso, in her edited volume *This is a Classic: Translators on Making Writers Global* (2023), explains:

> Dismissing translation and translators from a discussion about a literary classic suggests that a work that is a classic in one language will remain a classic in translation and vice versa. In other words, it promotes the idea that translation or translators have no role in the existence of literary classics. Failure to acknowledge a work as a translation ignores translators' contributions to making writers global. (5)

There is no doubt that the literary genius of a work contributes to achieving literary classic status, but through the work of translators, these texts gain more value in the global context. Furthermore, translation has been and will always continue to be the innovative medium by which information travels globally, including literature. Taking into consideration the significance of the rise of Translator Studies, starting with Andrew Chesterman's "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies" (2009), this chapter demonstrates how translation is a transformative tool for individuals and communities alike by studying the individuals behind it.

As Chesterman suggests, Translator Studies is the "study of translators (and of course interpreters)" (13), especially given the fact that "not all translation research takes these people as the primary and explicit focus, the starting point, the central concept of the research question" (14). While an essential part of the translation and interpreting process, the human aspect of translation, according to Chesterman, had been put aside. Writing about his previous research on the sociology of translators, he mentions that any sociological study of translators

should include "issues as the status of (different kinds of) translators in different cultures, rates of pay, working conditions, role models and the translator's habitus, professional organizations, accreditation systems, translators' networks, copyright, and so on" (Chesterman 16). Besides these matters, he also mentions "[q]uestions of a different kind under this heading are those relating to gender and sexual orientation, and to power relations, and how these factors affect a translator's work and attitudes" as well as "evidence of the public image of the translator's profession" and "translators' attitudes to their work, as revealed in essays, interviews, […] prefaces and notes, etc" (Chesterman 17-18). Not only do Translator Studies focus on the public image of the translator, but also on translators' ideologies and translation ethics (Chesterman 17). He goes on to explain that there are three branches of Translator Studies: cultural, cognitive, and sociological (Chesterman 19). The cultural branch allows for the study of the translators behind translations as agent models (Chesterman 20), which this chapter is interested in studying more in-depth. Having established that translation is culturally, socially, and politically transformative for travel and exile writing from the previous chapter, I analyze how three women, beginning in the twentieth century, became activist translators and interpreters.

The aim of this chapter is to show how the act of translation is critical for immigrants as they engage in political activism through language, translation, and interpreting. The roots of political activism are traced back to 1920, according to the *Online Etymology Dictionary,* and in the "sense of advocating energetic action"

("Activism"). Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the usage of the word "activism" has steadily risen. In the present work, I define political activism as efforts to encourage, hinder, guide, or intercede in social, cultural, and political reform with the intention of creating changes for the betterment of society. To understand the backdrop of this interdisciplinary subfield, I turn to the work of Helen Vasallo, Maja Mikula, Francisca de Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis, and Krassimira Daskalova to elucidate the ways in which the history and practice of women activism have manifested in different parts of the world and how translation has taken part on this undertaking. Looking at the ways in which women translators have been diminished through history gives a nuanced understanding of why Kent and Correa's translation labor[23] has been overlooked, while at the same time pointing at strategies some of these women activists have used throughout the last century.

Maja Mikula, in *Women, Activism and Social Change: Stretching Boundaries* (2005), presents a study of "social change from the perspective of its arguably most cogent, but nevertheless controversial, agents: women, intellectuals; artists; exiles and their returns; queer agencies; and indigenous activists" (*Women, Activism*). Although hers is not "a book about feminist activism, it is motivated by the essentially feminist desire to restore to history a range of women's experiences" by avoiding "aspects of women's agency that can be interpreted as resonating with

[23] Similarly to the emotional and physical labor that goes unnoticed on women's everyday life due to society's view on the work that women perform, my hope is to recover the literary production of Kent and Correa and give it its due credit in challenging social and political perspectives.

feminist goals" (Mikula *Women, Activism*). Instead, Mikula and her collaborators' contributions reside in the commitment and efforts women have contributed to their family, community, society, and country. In a similar vein, Francisca de Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis, and Krassimira Daskalova in *Women's Activism Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (2013) have written about "the related need for an intersectional perspective rather than prioritising gender, as the historical scholarship in this field tends to do" (2). To ensure an accurate understanding of the political and social changes, the investigation into women's activism should be studied against "the backdrop of specific political projects and the identitarian discourses that facilitate them" (Mikula *Women, Activism*). For this reason, any analysis of the history of women activists should include a biographical and historical perspective.

Before examining the activist efforts of women in translation, one also must recognize that even though there have been tremendous strides in women human rights, there is still a lot of work to be done. As Helen Vassallo reminds us in *Towards a Feminist Translator Studies* (2023), "[W]omen may be equal in the eyes of the law, but all too often legal and theoretical equality do not map onto real equality of opportunity and experience" (1). That is why, building upon Chesterman's agent translator, Vassallo advocates for a feminist action that:

> [...]is an active attempt to carve out equality, a forward-looking and inclusive response, a positive, decisive, necessary action, to throw a spanner in the invisible mechanism of patriarchy in order to bring it to a standstill and then dismantle it. (2)

The active component of her approach allows for the study of feminist translators at any point in their careers without having to respond to their place in society. In other words, women translator activists can engage with issues that do not necessarily respond to gender inequality only. Moreover, she argues that by shifting the focus from translation to translators and "by first asking questions of the agents involved in producing texts rather than of the texts themselves, we shall be better placed to bridge theoretical and practical contexts" (Vasallo 11). However, the responsibility of making feminist translators visible does not rest on translators alone but on the agents, publicists, booksellers, reviewers, and critics. Focusing on the role of translator agents, Vassallo proposes that "there can be no successful translation without feminist politics" (15). Indeed, the political engagement of women translators and writers should be studied, especially the efforts made by those whose work has often been overlooked; in the case of this chapter, by two of the largely ignored writers of the Spanish-speaking literary canon.

Starting in the twentieth century, I investigate three women agent models of translation: Victoria Kent (1891-1987), Aurora Correa (1930-2008), and Valeria Luiselli (1983 -). Following Mikula, I look at three "controversial" figures of social change who were and still are exiles, intellectuals, and engaged in activist efforts. Rather than focusing on what they accomplished for feminist movements, this chapter analyzes women creating a network of support and literature production to further advance their political engagement and recognizing that their woman identity played a main part in the disinterest scholars showed for their work.

Keeping in mind the methodology to study women activism explained by Allen et al, I examine specific political projects, introducing the three writers and giving historical context to their work. One of the main goals is to bring visibility to Kent and Correa, two forgotten writers and translators in Spanish-speaking literature. To achieve this, archival research played a crucial part in rediscovering their published and unpublished writing, along with the personal challenges they experienced because of their exile in the Americas. Although Correa and Kent cannot longer talk about their experiences as translators, their archive allows us to get as close as possible to their choices, ideas, and triumphs. On the other hand, because of the wealth of information on Luiselli through her work, interviews, and presence in the political discourse regarding immigration reform, finding information and on her role as a translator and interpreter, as well as her translation strategies and activist efforts, was much easier and allowed the present work to investigate the role of translation as education. Besides the obvious commonality among the three writers (their gender identity), their role as feminist educators takes form in the circulation and dissemination of a political cause and allows for movement across various disciplines, languages, and cultures with the aim of unearthing, recovering, and returning the focus back to the translational trajectories that birthed them in the first place.

Kent brought a new perspective of Franco's regime to U.S. readers from 1954 to 1974 as publisher and translator, positioning herself as an agent of change in the age of fascism in Spain and putting significant pressure on the U.S.

government to stop the financial support to the dictatorship. Additionally, what the chapter dedicated to her work intends to do is go beyond her political achievements and study her contributions from the perspective of Literary and Translation Studies. To achieve this, I study her only novel and her involvement as editor-in-chief of *Ibérica*.

In 1968, Correa, a Spanish exiled in Mexico since childhood, became part of a movement, el Movimiento Estudiantil de 1968, that would begin the change of the one-party rule in Mexico and later in life she would advocate for the Spanish government's recognition of children displaced due to the Spanish Civil War (1936 - 1939). Through her novels, plays, and poems, the reader discover examples of cultural and intralingual translation that conclude with her activism on behalf of the almost 500 refugee children. Unfortunately, some of her work has fallen into obscurity in recent years, but this dissertation aims to bring it back to light. The purpose of including Correa in this dissertation is the connection she brings with Kent in terms of displacement, engagement with languages and translation, and, moreover, her activism as the result of her experiences after the Spanish Civil War, and with Luiselli in her role as educator.

Finally, Luiselli, a well-known Mexican writer, has become a champion of undocumented immigrants, serving as a volunteer interpreter while at the same time encouraging her university students to engage politically for immigration reform inside and outside the classroom. Her last two books also provide a model for translation and interpreting as activism, building onto her repertoire of creative

writing that includes a translational perspective that brings visibility to translators and their work. Overall, the chapter on her translation and writing seeks to promote translation as a means of activism and social change by investigating the translators and interpreters behind transformative acts in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States and Mexico.

Translation as an Essential Part of the Displacement Experience

The act of translation has long been recognized as a critical daily process for individuals whose lives depend on crossing borders and engaging in various forms of communication and thought and plays a central role in the development of cultures and identities (Gentzler 10). For immigrants, the process of translation is particularly salient, as they must navigate diverse cultural contexts and languages every day. In her doctoral dissertation, "Translation Spaces: Mexico City in the International Modernist Circuit" (2015), Valeria Luiselli (1983-) proposes that translation spaces are "physical spaces in which some of Mexico City's modernists lived, worked, and which they sometimes designed," and they also include "the cultural practices that took place in those spaces" (11). She notes that translation spaces can be extendable to a wide range of contexts" (17). For instance, theaters, rooftops, houses, and cinemas are translation spaces where "a transfer, a transportation, a carrying over" occurs (29). The same is said about "print-spaces," such as "magazines, newspapers, catalogues, books, and photographs" (Luiselli 29). Luiselli's theory of translation spaces resonates with many immigrants who live in two languages at any given time. Their daily lives are characterized by a need to

navigate the languages and cultures of both their country of origin and their adopted country. It is also in conversation and builds upon Emily Apter's translation zone (2009) and Sherry Simon's translation sites (2019). According to Apter in *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (2006), "the idea of the translation zone corresponds in the terms of social engineering to regulated language parks, restricted areas of mixed use, demarcations of apartheid, *cordons sanitaires*" where:

> Cast as an act of love, and as an act of disruption, translation becomes a means of repositioning the subject in the world and in history; a means of rendering self-knowledge foreign to itself; a way of denaturalizing citizens, taking them out of the comfort zone of national space, daily ritual, and pre-given domestic arrangements. (6)

Although talking about conflict "zones" where translation is seen as betrayal, the translation zone, as presented by Apter, allows us to see the language resistance that is present in all translation encounters. In *Translation Sites: New Perspectives in Translation and Interpreting Studies* (2019), Simon reminds us that translation sites are "polyglot places, echoing with overlapping stories. To visit them is to experience competing versions of history and the uneven fit between present and past" ("Introduction" *Translation Sites*). These overlapping accounts also come with "counter-translations," especially in places "where the wounds of history are still legible" (Simon "Introduction," *Translation Sites*). Common translation sites with counter-translations are conflict zones, borders, and cosmopolitan cities (Simon "Introduction," *Translation Sites*). Referring to Luiselli's dissertation, Simon agrees that "situating translation directs attention to struggles for

recognition" all around us (Simon "Introduction," *Translation Sites*). In a similar way, I argue that situating translation in the immigrant and exile experience allows the reader to see the constant power struggle between languages.

As Edwin Gentzler notes in his book *Translation and Identity in the Americas* (2008), translation is "a critical daily process engaging all forms of communications and thought by those whose lives depend upon crossing borders" and for whom livelihood depends on navigating Spanish and English and Mexican and U.S. cultures (143). The act of translation is not limited to the U.S.-Mexico border. Once immigrants are on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande, they live in a constant state of translation.

The process of immigrating to the United States involves not only learning a new language but also uprooting one's whole life, changing one's culture and behavior, and essentially becoming a translated version of one's new identity. Although this is not the only way of looking at it, for example, one can think of immigration as simply adaptation to a new culture; there have been instances in Spanish-speaking literature that point to this phenomenon. A clear example is Gustavo Pérez Firmat and his book *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (1994), where he examines the three stages of immigrant assimilation.[24] For now, this chapter focuses on the first stage where an immigrant group, especially if the expatriation has been involuntary, passes through "[the] "substitutive" [stage] for it consists of an effort to create substitutes or copies of the home culture. This

[24] The three stages are "substitutive," "destitutive," and "here we are" (Firmat 6 - 9).

translation is in the topographical sense only, an undertaking that engenders all those faint doubles of foreign places that speckle the American urban landscape (Peréz Firmat 6). The term "substitutive" is a critical descriptor that aptly characterizes the process by which immigrants create new iterations or translations of their respective cultural customs, beliefs, and practices. Moreover, the translation aspect is not only topographical but also one of identity. The new persona adopted by migrants is essential for survival and to aid fellow migrants and those left behind. Families rely on children and adolescents to be the cultural and language brokers whenever they go: the store, the bank, the doctor, and the immigration office. For most of these groups, children are the unofficial translators and interpreters, and even though it is a heavy burden, they take it upon themselves to help their communities.

Displaced individuals are bound to keep finding translation everywhere they go because translation is part of the immigration experience. By extension, and as presented above, of any type of physical transfer or “transferre,” the Latin origin of “translate.” The etymology of the term translate already points to the mobility that occurs not only to languages in translation, but to the translation and translator itself. Michael Cronin has studied the link between travel writers and translation and posited that “to travel is to translate” in *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (2000). Moreover, Emily Apter’s latest research on reparative translation has opened the field of Translation Studies in a way that sees translation through a lens of activism (2021). While these publications on

translation and activism are significant to understanding their role in society, it is equally vital to engage with local communities to address the problems they face collaboratively, which is one of the main contributions of this dissertation: the analysis and theorization of the political movements of information and literature into other languages and cultures.

By studying these three women writers and translators together, it provides new considerations for multilingualism in experiences of immigration and exile. What is more, their shared interest in not only writing but also in translation and activism expands considerations of translation's impact on communities as activism by women writers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The Translation of Victoria O'Kean Siano into Victoria Kent

Victoria Kent was born in Spain and officially registered as Victoria O'Kean Siano in Málaga, as Carmen de la Guardia has found in her book *Victoria Kent y Louise Crane en Nueva York: Un exilio compartido* (2016). As de la Guardia explains, Victoria changed her last name to Kent to separate herself from her family's Irish surname O'Kean, and decided on Kent because it "sounded more English" (71) than her father's surname. This short account already points to the presence of translation in Kent's life as she translated her own name before the start of her professional career.

Kent was a lawyer, politician, writer, and editor who left an indelible mark on Spanish society. Born in Málaga to José O'Kean Román and María Siano

Gonzáles[25] in 1892,[26] she rose to fame by being the first woman to pass the Spanish bar exam and for defending Álvaro de Albornoz y Liminiana, one of the founders of the Second Spanish Republic, charged with treason. In 1931, she was appointed as the Director General of Prisons, a position of great responsibility in the Spanish government. Prior to this, she was a member of the first Parliament of the Second Spanish Republic, where she actively worked towards promoting human rights and was an active member of the newly formed Partido Republicano Radical Socialista (1929-1934).

Kent's passion for social justice was evident from the numerous activities and memberships she held throughout her life. She actively participated in various groups and organizations that aimed to bring about positive change in Spanish society, such as the Lyceum Club Femenino, the Ateneo Femenino Radical-Socialista, and the Instituto Internacional de Uniones Intelectuales. Her dedication and hard work earned her a reputation as a fierce advocate for her fellow citizens. However, she was not immune to criticism from fellow politicians for her stance against women's suffrage.[27] Kent never married, but she had a decades-long relationship with Louise Crane, a New York philanthropist and patron of the arts.

[25] Both of her parents were the descendants of Irish immigrants.
[26] There are multiple contradictions to Kent's birth year. For more on this, see Miguel Ángel Villena's *Victoria Kent. Una pasión republicana* (2007). However, de la Guardia's study (2016) of Kent's genealogy and birth record, has settled the debate as she places her birth to 1892.
[27] For a detail explanation of Kent's view on women's suffrage, see María Luisa Balaguer Callejón's "Victoria Kent: vida y obra" (2009). In it, Balaguer Callejón highlights Kent's political career, social impact on Spain, and the reason why Kent disagreement of women's suffrage proved right.

This partnership will fund Kent's political and cultural activities in New York City and would last until Crane's death.

The Political Power of Languages: From Educator to Lawyer

From the letters and articles found in Carmen Urioste-Azcorra's *De Madrid a New York: Artículos, Conferencias, Cartas* (2018), the reader sees that Kent's work as a lawyer and member of student activist groups allowed her to travel around Europe. Without a doubt this also made her experience different cultures and languages through translation. Her speeches given in Europe, as documented in the book, shed light on the conditions of Spanish students and proposed solutions to some of the issues that hindered them from receiving a better education (Kent *De Madrid a New York* 211-23). Kent's speeches were mainly centered around specific topics or themes related to law students. It was during these travels, I argue, that Kent saw the significance of translation and the power that language has to bring change into the lives of the people of her country since prior to her education, she had only been exposed to Spanish in her family home.

In the speech Kent gave in Prague on her experience as a student representative at the Congreso Internacional de Estudiantes, she mentions the two languages that were used in the journal publication of the conference, "La revista de la Confederación Nacional de Estudiantes ha sido organizada por estudiantes franceses; está redactada en francés y en inglés [...] Esta revista será el lazo de unión de todos los países" (Kent *De Madrid a New York* 222). Foreshadowing her own work as a publisher, the text mentioned above was distributed in a bilingual

edition to all the countries that belonged to the Congreso, with Kent already recognizing the necessity of language and translation as a linking element to all students. This was not the only time that she had a connection with other languages, especially English and French.

Kent had completed two academic degrees as an elementary and secondary teacher from the Escuela Normal de Málaga between the years 1906 and 1911 (Rivera Sánchez 297). María Josefa Rivera Sánchez highlights the effect of this educational background, saying "parte de su acción futura se debió a la formación adquirida en la Escuela Normal de Maestras" (302). During her time as a law student in Madrid, she also became part of the faculty at the Instituto Escuela when it first opened its doors in 1918 and worked with María de Maeztu (1881-1948) in the planning and creation of the elementary and secondary curriculum for the school. After the start of her law career, Kent would only return to teaching during her exile in Mexico and then in New York City as a personal Spanish tutor for Louise Crane in the early 1950s.

While working as a librarian and living at the Residencia de Señoritas in Madrid, Kent was in constant contact with a myriad of nationalities and languages, as de la Guardía has argued (74). It was around this time that young Kent started learning English at the International Institute for Girls, and as much as she tried to become fluent, it would be a skill that always eluded her (de la Guardia 74). She learned French while living at the Residencia de Señoritas, a language that would serve her greatly after her exile to Paris. One can also imagine that her language

learning was a political move that, in the years after the Spanish Civil War, allowed her to stay connected to the government and to Spanish citizens.

In terms of her political career, Carmen Urioste-Azcorra, in *Victoria Kent y Louise Crane en Nueva York: Un exilio compartido* (2018), and María Luisa Balaguer Callejón's "Victoria Kent: vida y obra" (2009), have compiled and analyzed Kent's work on Spanish politics, shedding light on the impact of her efforts in this field and her passion for democracy, freedom, and social justice. Balaguer Callejón concludes that, "la aportación de V. Kent a la Segunda República, además de política y jurídica, fue ética, porque sus posiciones en todo momento tuvieron la coherencia y honestidad tan escasas en otros políticos" (33). Similarly, Urioste-Azcorra calls Kent "la figura femenina más injustamente olvidada de la reciente historia de España." Their scholarship has opened a space to investigate more of her work.

Following the Spanish Civil War and the fall of the Second Spanish Republic, Kent was forced to flee to Paris in 1937, where she lived as a refugee until 1945. During this time, she documented her experiences in a short yet powerful account titled *Cuatro años en París (1940-1944)* (1978), a text that has been translated to English by Louise Crane[28] but never published. In this memoir, Kent provides a vivid portrayal of the challenges faced by refugees in Paris during World War II while also highlighting the resilience and determination of those who

[28] As I mentioned in Chapter One and as explained by de la Guardia (74), Crane and Kent met in 1951 when Crane hired her as a private Spanish tutor. They mainly communicated via Spanish since Kent's English skills were never enough to make her proficient.

continued to fight for their rights and freedoms in the face of adversity. *Cuatro años en París*, analyzed through a translation lens, highlights the substitutive element and translational aspect of exile and immigration through the development of the protagonist Plácido. The character of Plácido becomes a placeholder for the protagonist's identity, especially as she had to go undercover to avoid the Gestapo and Franco's police in France with the name Madame Duval.

During her time in the French capital, she was appointed as the First Secretary of the Spanish Embassy. In this role, she took on the crucial task of helping children and other refugees escape the war and played a vital role in their safety. Her work was to ensure that all the necessary documentation was procured, and she was responsible for liaising with various authorities to ensure that their needs were met. Her bilingual skills in Spanish and French proved to be instrumental in her work, as she was able to communicate effectively with the embassies in France. Despite the challenges she faced during the Nazi occupation of Paris in 1940, she remained committed to her work and continued to assist those trying to escape Franco's regime. In 1945, she traveled briefly to Mexico as part of her government work with the Spanish Republic in exile. She returned to France that same year and established a publishing company called Le Livre du Jour, with her friend Adèle de Blonay; without much financial success, she moved indefinitely to Mexico two years later (Urioste-Azcorra 32).

After Paris, Kent was exiled to Mexico from 1948 to 1950. While there, she worked at El Colegio de México, teaching penal law and collaborating in the

creation of the Escuela de Capacitación para el Personal de Prisiones. She also gave lectures at La Academia Mexicana de Ciencias Penales and was a founding member of the Ateneo Español de México in 1949. As Urioste-Azcorra explains, "sobrevivió malamente" (33) and decided to leave.

Kent left Mexico for New York City in 1950 with a contract from the United Nations to complete a study about the conditions of women's prisons in Latin America. Only staying one year in this position, she went on to become a minister without portfolio[29] for the Government of the Spanish Republic in exile. While in this post, in 1954 she founded and was the editor of the bilingual journal *Ibérica*. The idea for the journal started as a column within the magazine *Hemisférica* and quickly grew to its own publication. Its main objective was to provide an outlet and platform for Spanish intellectuals to undermine Spain's dictatorship. The English edition of *Ibérica* brought news about Spain to a broader audience in the United States, further exposing Franco's regime and its crimes on an international and bilingual platform.

The Role of Publishing in Translator Activism

A significant part of Kent's involvement in politics and activism in 1950 came from running and publishing *Ibérica* in New York City. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the NYC started to position itself as an industrial and cultural hub of the United States. Internal migration from the South in the 1940s, the immigration of

[29] This term is commonly used to refer to a government position without specific responsibility and it is used in countries ruled by coalition or cabinets, such as the Government of the Spanish Republic in exile (1939 - 1977).

people from all over the world from the previous century, and the Allied victory in World War II made it "the center of the world" (Ric Burns *New York*). In terms of the Spanish community, the New York already had a significant number of Spaniards who settled on 14th Street, between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, in Little Spain. As Artus Balder recounts in his documentary *Little Spain* (2010), the immigration of Spaniards to New York City was possible due to "La Nacional" (Spanish Benevolent Society) and Spain's defeat in the Spanish- American War (1898). The Spanish Civil War brought this community a golden age that only started to dwindle in the 1980s (Balder). One significant fact to mention was that the enclave never lost its language, and the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe was the first to offer mass in Latin and Spanish in Manhattan in 1902.

Besides the noteworthy presence of Spanish immigrants in New York and the Spanish language around the time that Kent was exiled there, de la Guardia also argues that she found a welcoming community that had admired and respected her ever since she became the first female lawyer in Spain (76). Highlighting the appreciation the New York society had for Kent, going so far as to demand Franco's government to release her,[30] de la Guardia says "[e]l cariño y el afecto de los estadounidenses por esta valiente mujer era una realidad y creemos que esta simpatía era mutua y tuvo mucho que ver a la hora de que Victoria eligiera Nueva York como lugar de exilio, ya en 1950" (88). It was no surprise that

[30] In 1940, there was a false rumor that Victoria Kent had been apprehended by the Nationalists. For this reason, 22 women U. S. citizens signed a letter sent to the Spanish ambassador in the United States demanding her immediate release. Some of these women were Carrie Chapman Catt, Henrieta Additon, and Fanny Hearst ("Aid for Prisoner in Spain").

finding this supportive community, along with the companionship and help of Louise Crane, Kent decided to spend the rest of her exile in a place that welcomed her and allowed her to continue working for the return of democracy to Spain, where her compatriots were prosecuted and silenced.

Kent gave a new voice to oppressed Spaniards through translation with the Spanish (1954-1974) and English (1954-1966) editions of *Ibérica* published in New York City, contributing to the dissemination of Spanish news beyond Spain and the United States. Some of the countries include Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Puerto Rico, France, Spain, Argentina, and the Dominican Republic, to mention a few. Although there are multiple biographies of Kent's life, including María Dolores Ramos' *Victoria Kent (1892–1987)* (1999), María Telo Nuñez' *Concepcion Arenal y Victoria Kent: Las prisiones, vida y obra* (1995), and Miguel Ángel Villena's *Victoria Kent, una pasión republicana*, they do not adequately acknowledge her work as translator of the magazine *Ibérica*. De la Guardia recognizes this by explaining (17):

> Esos logros de Victoria Kent y de Louise Crane a partir de los años cincuenta, materializados como editoras del boletín de noticias *Ibérica*, de la revista *Ibérica por la libertad*, de la Spanish Refugee Aid, de la editorial Ibérica, de las asesorías juridicas y del buen hacer cultural, son mucho menos conocidos que la labor previa de Victoria Kent como abogada, diputada, directora general de Prisiones y secretaria de la embajada española en París durante la Guerra Civil española, como responsable de la evacuación de niños republicanos. (17)

Kent's accomplishments in the three decades de la Guardia mentions are being studied more and more, especially her professional and personal partnership with Louise Crane. All of Kent and Crane's activities mentioned above also speak to the significance that translation played in their work. The oversight of these

achievements in contemporary scholarship could be because, chronologically, Kent was neither part of the Generation of 98 nor Generation of 27,[31] which makes it difficult to categorize her. The fact that Kent was a woman writer, along with her scant literary production, in a period where male writers dominated literature did not help to remember her as an essential Spanish writer either. Kent's work and possible translations of the English edition of *Ibérica* have not yet been studied, and chapter two reveals the ways in which she contributed to the Spanish Republican cause through translation and activism.

It was not until 2015 that scholars started to investigate Kent as a literary editor for the two publications she founded, Le livre du Jour in 1947, along with her partner Adèle de Blonay, and then Ibérica Publishing Company, with Crane (De la Guardia 91-92, 125-184). Like Leijte in her dissertation, de la Guardia also overlooks translation as an essential tool for the work Kent and Crane did in *Ibérica*. Although she mentions the connections that Kent had with New York society through Crane, translation is neglected as a matter-of-fact way. Writing about the newsletter that started it all, de la Guardia says "Victoria escribía el boletín en español a través de las noticias que le proporcionaban y Louise lo traducía al inglés" (135). She mentions translation again in passing, explaining that the publishing partners "vigilaban todo el proceso de edición -desde la recepción y selección de artículos, noticias e ilustraciones originales, a la traducción de obras

[31] For more information on the women writers who belonged to this movement, see Tania Ballos' *Las Sinsombrero*. *RTVE.es*, www.rtve.es/play/videos/las-sinsombrero/.

de interés, correcciones de pruebas, escritura de editoriales y la propia composición de la revista" (168). Even if both of them had to manage all of these aspects, there was not enough time to take care of everything *Ibérica* involved, and they had to relegate some of these tasks. As de la Guardia presented this information, it seems as though Crane was the sole translator for the journal when that was not the case. In fact, my archival research rediscovered some of the translators behind *Ibérica EN*. Another mention of both language editions explains that the journal "[s]e editaba en inglés y en español" (179), thus, erasing the translation labor that also happened. Although, de La Guardia admits that when the English publication ceased, "los estadounidenses y parte de la comunidad internacional quedaron privados de esa fuente de información" (180), alluding to the significance of the translation of *Ibérica*, not only because behind the English edition was the forgotten translation labor of Kent and Crane, also due to the public service that it offered the U.S. English readership.

Through her work as a student advocate, politician, and lawyer, as well as her role as an elected member of the Parliament of the Republican-Socialist Conjunction of the Republican Court in 1931, Kent gained valuable experience in decoding and deciphering complex legal language. Even though her work primarily involved laws and statutes, she used similar skills to translators, who also need to make sense of language to convey it accurately to the public. This firsthand experience gave her a unique perspective on the significance of

translation to bridge cultures. Her role as an educator is another link to Correa and Luiselli and points to a practice of translation as activism.

Kent's first professional career started as a 17-year-old when she graduated from the Escuela Normal de Maestras in Málaga with a degree in Maestra de Enseñanza Elemental in 1909 and two years later with a degree in Enseñanza Superior from the same institution (Urioste-Azcorra 32-33). My archival research also found a description of one of the courses that Kent taught at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México on Derecho Penitenciario, with topics that touched on the human rights of the prisoners. For instance, on "Anatomía del Derecho Penitenciario," there is a section on the "período humanitario," and on "Clasificación de delincuentes," there is also a subdivision on the prisoners' general and mental health ("Curso de Derecho Penitenciario"), further displaying Kent's commitment to human rights.

The Language and Translation Experience of Aurora Correa in Mexico

Aurora Correa Hidalgo was a Spanish author, playwright, educator, and activist. She was born in Barcelona in 1930, right before a tumultuous time in Spanish history. At the age of seven in 1937, she, along with her siblings, was sent to Mexico as part of a program to protect Spanish children during the Spanish Civil War created by the Mexican government and the Second Spanish Republic. She

obtained Mexican citizenship in 1963 at the age of 33, which led to her identification as Catalo-Mexican[32] later in life.

Correa is one of the most well-known figures to come out of Los niños de Morelia in Mexico. The program aimed to protect children from the violence of the Spanish Civil War, which had just begun in 1936. Her sister, Mercedes, and brother, Raúl, were part of this initiative, where 500 young refugees were sent to Mexico. Los niños de Morelia were officially invited to Mexico by Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas del Río in 1937, who described their stay as a "vacation" until the war ended and peace was restored in Spain. However, as the war dragged on and the Second Spanish Republic's power declined, it became clear that the young refugees would not be able to return home as quickly as they had hoped.

Even though she faced multiple challenges as a young refugee, Correa went on to become the chairwoman of the graphic department at Banco de Comercio and later in life became a writer known for her novels published in Mexico. Her time in Mexico, as well as her memories of the Spanish Civil War, served as inspiration for much of her poetry and other non-fiction writing. For instance, she wrote her first play *Unidos para siempre,* between the years 1941 and 1944 (Correa "Curriculum") while separated from her siblings, parents, and grandmother, at the age of 14, already showing promise of a literary style that fictionalizes historic events.

[32] The influence that Catalan had on her is prominent in her nonfiction writing, but most of all in *Cerezas* where she recounts the many happy memories that Barcelona and Catalan had on the first seven years of her life. Her poetry collection, *Odas*, also experiments with her Catalan identity after going to Spain for the first time since her exile to Mexico.

During her childhood and adolescence, Correa went through difficult experiences as she was forced to stay in many orphanages across Mexico from 1937 until 1947. She was reunited with her family in 1947 when they were all exiled to Mexico. Correa's father abandoned the family shortly after while her mother's health was deteriorating. As a result, Correa moved out on her own the following year and started working as a secretary in various commercial and storage companies to support herself. However, she was determined to continue her education and attended classes at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la UNAM. She took acting classes and a course on children's theater to pursue her passion for the arts, and learned French as an adult (Correa “Curriculum”).

Best of Both Worlds: Bilingual Professional Positions and Publications

After completing her studies, Correa’s multiple administrative positions between 1948 and 1960 were: bilingual (Spanish<>English) secretary at Bancomer, an administrative assistant for Compañía Mexicana de Garantías, executive assistant for Almacenadora, bilingual secretary, and then chief of staff at Aseguradora Bancomer (Correa “Curriculum”). In 1963, after the birth of her son, she continued her career in various administrative posts. Despite having a full-time job, Correa never gave up on her passion for writing. She continued to hone her literary and artistic skills while working as a radio voice actress, copy editor for the Consejo Nacional de Turismo, professional actress, and children’s theater director. After a hiatus due to illness, she became more involved in publishing and writing after

moving to Aguascalientes to be closer to her son, Juan Carlos Jáuregui, when she started to write professionally in 1985.

In addition to writing, Correa was also involved in literary production as a copy editor for Grupo Planeta and style editor for Editorial S.M. Between 1973 to 1976, she was a teacher at the Manuel Bartolomé Cossío High School in Mexico City. This job complemented her career as an administrator and collaborator for various newspapers and magazines. Although scant information about her time as an educator, one of her jobs before settling as an administrative assistant was teaching Spanish literature to middle school students, according to the Coordinación Nacional de Literatura ("Correa, Aurora (1930-2008)"), showcasing her passion for the language and literature, which would ultimately bring her some acclaim in the 1990s.

Correa published six books during her lifetime, four of them after her retirement. Her first book, *Agustina Ramírez: heroína del pueblo*, a biographical account of a Mexican Revolution hero, was published in 1964. Her second book, *Odas*, published in 1976, is a collection of poetry centered around loss and identity. Her third book and first novel, *La muerte de James Dean,* published in 1989, received international praise as the runner-up for the Premio Planeta de Novela (1952-). Her next title *HA: novela* (1992), was a finalist for the Premio Literario Internacional de Novela Novedades-Diana (1986-1992). Correa's life also inspired her writing with the memoirs *Te beso buenas noches*, published in 1997, and her final book, *Cerezas* (2008). Thus, her writing spanned across several genres,

including biographical accounts, novels, historical fiction, autobiographical writing, and poetry. Her works have vivid imagery, complex characters, and themes of identity, displacement, and social justice.

Despite facing numerous challenges as a female writer in a male-dominated industry, Correa's oeuvre was recognized across Mexico and Spain. These accolades were not enough to make her part of the literary canon of either Mexico or Spain. Instead of recognizing her work for the hybrid identities she develops in characters, such as the Catalo-Mexican narrator[33] in her memoirs or the Mayan-Greek mythology in *HA: novela*, and for her unique perspective as a multicultural writer, her life and work have been the subject of scant scholarship until recent years. Besides the six books aforementioned, and only re-discovered recently due to my archival research, Correa published and staged the play *Misere Negro Misere* (1963, 1965), which chronicles some of the most well-known lynchings of African Americans in a blend of factual and fictional depictions

Translation Strategies in Correa's Writing

Aurora Correa's engagement with languages, translation, and interpreting during her formative years is essential for understanding her writing. As part of Los niños de Morelia and with her parents having previously immigrated to Mexico before she was born, Correa had a life enriched with multiple varieties of Spanish. She had an advantage when she first arrived in Mexico because of her parents'

[33] As I study later on with *Cerezas*, the narrator mixes both Spanish and Catalan in her writing and memories and later on adds words from the Mexican dialect of Spanish to complement her newfound identity.

connection to Mexico City, the different dialects and languages of the Iberian Peninsula, and her father's love for other languages. Thus, her assimilation, although brutal for a seven-year-old child on her own, was eased because of language and cultural translation. There are instances in *Cerezas* where Correa mentions the languages and Spanish dialects that were at play during her time in the Morelia facility:

> Recuerdo un día en que las catalanas quisieron imponer comba en vez de cuerda, saltar la comba. Una nimiedad que nos llevó a la discusión y a los insultos. Mira por dónde se oyó la vocecita de Carmelita, la hija de la planchadora, corrigiéndonos: brincar la reata.
> –¿Qué es eso?
> Nos explicó, dulcemente, que reata era una cuerda, y nos preguntó el significado de comba.
> –Pues lo mismo, una cuerda.
> Ríe que ríe, sin más, volvimos a la diversión trilinguando nuestro juego: cuerda-comba-reata. (170)

In this short scene, Correa highlights the different ways of calling the game in Spanish, considering her use of her native Spanish dialect and the new way of calling it that she learned in Mexico.

Activism on the Page and Beyond

In 1965, Correa had a part-time administrative position at Banco de Comercio. After she completed her role as editor at the Department of Tourism in 1967, she started an engineering career as part of her contract with Banco de Comercio and attended training courses in Dallas, Texas. It was during this time that she wrote and staged her play *Misere Negro Misere*, without doubt, influenced by the news and events of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. While in Mexico City and Aguascalientes, Correa was an activist, be it in the form of protest in the

Movimiento Estudiantil that tragically ended with the Masacre de Tlatelolco de 1968; or by writing an open letter to the Spanish government requesting recognition of Los niños de Morelia, as well as a pension, to José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. These are the only two examples of Correa's activism but show the commitment she had not only for her fellow refugees, but also for the country that welcomed her as a child.

Aurora Correa's story serves as a powerful example of the challenges that displaced women face in pursuing their careers. Despite being exiled from her native country at a very young age, Correa persevered and established herself as a respected bilingual secretary, actress, writer, and educator in Mexico. Her journey with language and translation began at a young age, and she quickly recognized the integral role that languages play in facilitating cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Writing and the Place of Translation in Valeria Luiselli's Work

Valeria Luiselli is a Mexican author known for her insightful and thought-provoking fiction and nonfiction. Born on August 16, 1983, in Mexico City, Luiselli spent her formative years in South Korea, South Africa, and India due to her father's job as a diplomat. This early exposure to different cultures and languages greatly influenced her writing style and thematic concerns. Luiselli publications include three novels: *Los ingrávidos* (2011), *La historia de mis dientes* (2013), and *Lost Children Archive* (2019); and two essay collections: *Papeles falsos* (2010) and *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en 40 preguntas* (2016). Her books have also been

translated into English, and the translation of her novel *The Story of My Teeth* (2015) by Christina MacSweeney was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Best Translated Book Award, and won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Best Fiction the Premio Metropolis Azul in Montreal, Quebec. MacSweeney also translated *Papeles Falsos (Sidewalks,* 2014*)* and *Los ingrávidos* (*Faces in the Crowd,* 2012). Most recently, Luiselli's latest novel *Lost Children Archive*, her first work in English, won the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction in 2020. She was the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship in 2019 and a Guggenheim in 2020.

Luiselli has written extensively on different aspects of travel, which the reader sees in her two first books, *Papeles falsos* and *Los ingrávidos*. It is because of this aspect of travel that her characters always find themselves working on or talking about translational matters. The questions these characters explore have to do with the moral and ethical standards of translation that her later work has also explored with the work of interpreters, especially as it relates to the unaccompanied children migrant crisis at the U.S.-Mexico Border.

In addition to her writing, Luiselli is also a prominent voice in the literary community, having served as a judge for numerous literary prizes, including the National Book Award,[34] the Booker Prize,[35] the PEN America Literary Award, and the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. She has also been a guest speaker

[34] Luiselli won the American Book Award in 2018 with *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in 40 Questions*.
[35] *Lost Children Archive* was longlisted for the 2019 Booker Prize.

at various universities, including Princeton University, University of California Berkely, Hofstra University, Purchase College, and literary festivals, including the Lit&Lutz Festival, the National Book Festival, Amherst College's LitFest, among others, and around the world, where she has shared her insights on the craft of writing, translation, and the role of literature in contemporary society. Through her work and advocacy, Luiselli has become a leading figure in the global literary landscape, inspiring readers and writers alike to engage with the complex issues facing our world today.

Besides Mexico, Luiselli has lived in numerous countries. As a teenager, she lived in India for a while and then returned to Mexico City to study at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). She then went on to live in Spain and France. She currently resides in the New York City area with her husband and family.

Her fictional characters experience some of her lived experiences in cities of the world. Writing about her experience with language, she remembers:[36]

> When I returned to live in Mexico at the age of fourteen, after twelve years away, I spoke Spanish correctly but not well. I was able to say a phrase but not twist it around, take it apart. The Spanish I spoke belonged to slow, dispassionate conversations around the family breakfast table. The Spanish spoken by people in the street was a living language, rapid and vibrant, and I found it impossible to get my teeth into it. I stuttered, I trembled when I spoke, suddenly went gravely silent in the middle of a sentence. My language was full of holes. (*Sidewalks* 12)

[36] I use Luiselli's *Sidewalks*, translated by MacSweeney, because the paragraph I cite above is not part of *Papeles falsos* and can only be found in the English translation.

Her fourteen-year-old self struggling with the language, with pauses and holes, speaks to her experience with learning Spanish as a second language.

The geographical element is also tied to languages in other books. For instance, *Los ingrávidos* takes place in Mexico City, New York City, and Philadelphia. As Sarah K. Booker writes in "On Mediation and Fragmentation: The Translator in Valeria Luiselli's *Los ingrávidos,* "[t]hroughout the novel, the geographic context emerges as central to the experience of these individual characters." (275). It is this urban aspect of Luiselli's writing that showcases her multiple experiences with different cultures, languages, and translations. If *Los ingrávidos* already engages with translators and translations since the plot focuses on a pseudo-translation, her last novel, *Lost Children Archive* (2019), blends factual and fictional events that revolve around the unaccompanied children crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border and her work as a volunteer interpreter and translator in New York City.

Social Influence of Luiselli's Writing in Literature and Education

Luiselli is widely regarded as one of the most innovative and exciting voices in contemporary literature. Besides English, her writing has been translated into more than 20 languages, and her books have been published in over 30 countries. Luiselli's writing is often characterized by its experimental and unconventional approach to storytelling. In her novel *Lost Children Archive*, for example, Luiselli uses multiple narrative voices and incorporates elements of photography, poetry, sound, and music to create a complex and layered exploration of themes such as

migration, family, and memory. Her work is also deeply engaged with questions of social justice and politics, and she has been an outspoken advocate for the rights of immigrants and refugees.

A testament to her influential writing, Luiselli contributed to an unpublished manuscript to the Future Library project led by Katie Paterson (1981-).[37] In this undertaking ("The Art"):

> One thousand trees have been planted in *Nordmarka*, a forest just outside Oslo, which will supply paper for a special anthology of books to be printed in one hundred years' time. Between now and then, one writer every year will contribute a text with the writings held in trust, unpublished, until the year 2114. ("The Art")

Luiselli will be the 10th author to be included in the library. Works from Margaret Atwood, Ocean Vuong, and Tsitsi Dangarembga have already been donated. Speaking about the manuscript, Paterson said to *The Guardian*:

> Blending fiction and nonfiction, Valeria Luiselli's work explores themes of identity, migration, and the permeability of geographic borders. [...] Through compelling storytelling, she explores humanitarian crises such as the diaspora of children seeking asylum, posing profound questions on displacement and belonging. Luiselli's work is a cry for compassion and empathy, and we welcome her to Future Library for our milestone 10th year. (Creamer "'A Feeling of Total Freedom'")

The topics in this manuscript are not too detached from the issues examined in Luiselli's early work, and it would be significant to study her line of inquiry regarding languages and translation. It is up to future generations to research, through a translation lens, this unpublished work.

[37] The 2024 Future Library Handover will take place on May 26, 2024, in a special ceremony in Oslo, Norway.

In addition to her writing, she is an educator and has taught at various universities around the Northeast of the United States. Luiselli is also a vocal critic of the current administration's immigration policies, and she has worked closely with organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to challenge the government's treatment of asylum seekers and other vulnerable populations. In a 2019 interview for Guernica Magazine, Mary Wang asks Luiselli about the origins of both *Tell Me How It Ends*[38] and *Lost Children Archive*. She recounts that "I stopped writing *Lost Children* for about six months when I realized I was using the novel as a vehicle for my political frustration and rage, which is not what fiction does best. So I stopped and wrote this essay instead" (Wang "Valeria Luiselli"). The political dissatisfaction is more palpable in *Tell Me How*, but that does not mean that its fictional counterpart does not have political echos in its plot. However, this collection of essays reveals the involvement and inspiration she draws from students both inside and outside the classroom.

Luiselli has also written extensively on immigration, and her essays and articles have been published in a wide range of publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Harper's Magazine*. Her commitment to social justice and unique literary voice have made her a beloved and respected figure both within and outside the literary world.

[38] One thing to note, and as explained in the copyright page of *Tell Me How It Ends*, some essays were originally written in Spanish and then translated into English. As the Spanish version of the book, *Los niños perdidos: Un ensayo en cuarenta preguntas* (2016), also notes, some of the essays were originally written in English and then translated into Spanish. From now on, I refer to *Tell Me How It Ends* as *Tell Me How*.

Can Interpreters and Translators Be Activists?

This dissertation focuses on certain aspects of Luiselli's writing that have not yet received critical attention, for example, the themes of translation and interpretation and how she is able to capture the complexities, ethical conundrums, and heartbreak of being a court interpreter for asylum-seeking children in *Lost Children Archive*. Moreover, her essay *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en 40 preguntas* points to translation as activism.

Luiselli has garnered both scholarly and general attention, and as such, most of her biographical information and work is readily available and still in print. Although she is most well-known for her novels, short stories, and essays, Luiselli was also a scholar. Her academic research was on translation spaces in Mexico City during the early twentieth century. In her dissertation, "Translation Spaces: Mexico City in the International Modernist Circuit" (2015), Luiselli studies Mexican writers, artists, and intellectuals who embody or deal with translation spaces in Mexico City. It is not surprising that her work on translation studies eventually led to her interest in interpretation, especially as an interpreter activist, as I labeled her work with unaccompanied migrant children. Although the marker of interpreter activists sounds like a conflict of interest, there have been instances in recent times where the interpreter has to break away from their impartiality and denounce injustices. One such example is Erik Camayd-Freixas, who in 2008 wrote

an essay exposing the irregularities on an ICE raid.[39] Similarly, Luiselli's latest non-fiction book, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* (2017), recounts Luiselli's work with these children in New York City, where she adopts a tone and discourse that advocates for immigration reform. Moreover, she not only works with these children to make sure they have a fair opportunity in immigration court but also as an educator, inspiring her students to engage in activism.

In a lecture at Harvard University,[40] entitled "Sometimes and Across: Notes on Writing Under Surveillance" (2023), Luiselli shared more of her work with undocumented children. In it, she presented an unfinished piece on her experience leading a writing workshop for immigrant girls in New York (Hernandez Abud "Sometimes and Across"). As attendee and student Nicole M. Hernandez Abud recalls, "the workshop transformed into a journey for these children to use words as a medium through which they could safely explore their emotions, their experiences, and themselves" ("Sometimes and Across"). Through this short but powerful engagement with students, Luiselli's activism was revealed once again as it gave the audience a different perspective on immigration, one that they might not be exposed to at home or in other classes. It also allowed them to experience translation, as the examples she used were in Spanish with translations to English for the audience, with the title being the English translation of a young

[39] Although praised for speaking up immigrants, Sarah L. Smith one of the lawyers for the immigrants on the raids caution other legal interpreters saying: "It is not a practice that I would generally advocate as I could envision circumstances under which such revelations could be damaging to a client's case" (Preston).
[40] Luiselli is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Harvard University and Bard College.

girl's writing. Hernandez Abud writes that “the audience left the Barker Center with both an empowering sense of the freedom that words can provide and the notion that liberty cannot be taken for granted” (“Sometimes and Across”). A bilingual and translational experience that no doubt will bring a new viewpoint to students.

Concluding Notes

Given their shared background as individuals who have traveled the world, studying their bibliographical and biographical information allows this chapter to (re)introduce these writers to an anglophone audience and give their oeuvre a new perspective, especially as it relates to their work as translators and interpreters.

One of the most significant aspects that Kent, Correa, and Luiselli share is their experiences as exiled women and immigrants. Kent, a Spanish lawyer and politician, was exiled from Spain during the Spanish Civil War because of her political beliefs. Correa, a Spanish author, left her home country to escape political persecution and moved around Mexico. Luiselli, a Mexican writer, lived around the world with her family when she was a child and immigrated to the United States with her family in 2015. These shared experiences of displacement and migration are meaningful because they influence the writers' perspectives and shape their works as the individual chapters study more in-depth.

Other aspects that connect these writers are their shared passion for literature and languages, ultimately exemplified by translation strategies and elements in their writings. Kent, for example, was a translator of French, and she

also wrote a novel. Correa, on the other hand, was a poet who wrote in Spanish and translated and interpreted professionally as a secretary and head of departments in several multinationals in Mexico City. Luiselli, a writer who works in both Spanish and English, has also translated and interpreted as a volunteer for unaccompanied migrant children. These shared interests in translation, literature, and languages suggest that these writers were interested in other cultures and perspectives.

In addition to the above interests, Kent, Correa, and Luiselli also shared a passion for education and activism. Kent was a strong advocate for human rights and worked to improve the prison and education system in Spain. Correa was involved in political activism, and her work reflected her social and political concerns. Luiselli has been involved in various social and political causes, including the fight for immigrant rights. These shared passions suggest that these writers were not just interested in exploring different cultures but were also committed to making a positive change in their communities. Together, these three writers provide a deeper understanding of how different cultures, languages, and experiences intersect and influence one another and how translators' and writers' work continue to impact societal change.

CHAPTER III: TRANSLATOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES READERSHIP - VICTORIA KENT AND THE DIFFUSION OF SPANISH REPUBLICAN IDEALS IN *IBÉRICA* (1953-1974)

Somos pobres, pero agradecidos y cuando IB[É]RICA sea una adulta robusta que se sostenga sola, no seremos tan miserables con nuestros colaboradores.

— Victoria Kent
"Carta a Ramón Sender y Florence Hall"
Louise Crane and Victoria Kent Papers, 19 May 1954

The Journalistic Significance of the Ibérica Publishing Company

Although humble in its beginning, Victoria Kent (1891-1987) and partner and co-translator Louise Crane (1913-1997) built the Ibérica Publishing Company (1953-1974) into a successful journal that would last two decades. Even with Crane's financial support, the above epigraph speaks to the economic constraints of creating a new publication. Nonetheless, Kent and Crane prevailed and continued to work on their project, which brought a Spanish Republican[41] perspective against the support the United States held for Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975).

The political significance of the publishing company and Kent's efforts has been recorded through multiple studies of published texts and archives. For instance, Marianne Leijte investigated in her dissertation "La revista *Ibérica por la libertad* y su activismo antifranquista en Estados Unidos (1953-1966)" (2021) from a historical perspective, the antifranquista activism of both Kent and the journal she led in New York City. In the same vein, Carmen de la Guardia has compiled and

[41] This refers to the Republican Faction of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), not to be confused with the United States Republican Party (1954-).

published, from extensive archival research, the work that Kent and Crane accomplished during her exile in the United States in *Victoria Kent y Louise Crane en Nueva York* (2015). Both titles served the present work with valuable information and inspiration in continuing the discovery of Kent's constant involvement in returning democracy to Spain after the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and Francisco Franco's dictatorship. Nonetheless, these two scholars do not study the role of translation in this activism, rather, they only recognize the challenges posed by translating the Spanish version into English.

This chapter dives deep into the translation and political activism of Victoria Kent and *Ibérica* between 1953 and 1974. The present research uncovers significant information about the production of the English edition of *Ibérica* and the translators involved via archival research that proved fruitful in the analysis of Crane and Kent's personal and professional correspondence with Spanish and French authors, potential, and recurring translators working behind the scenes to make information readily available to an U.S. readership. It also explores the historical context that led to the creation of *Ibérica* as a publication, focusing on the U.S.-Spain relationship after the Spanish Civil War, the Treaty of Madrid, and the monetary aid to the dictatorship by the U.S. government. This investigation follows the lead of Helen Vassallo's *Towards a Feminist Translator Studies: Intersectional Activism in Translation and Publishing* (2023), where she studies the "unique position of power" women translators have not only in the representation

of their gender but also in the social movements that intersect their identities (24). Vassallo explains that this new subfield of Feminist[42] Translator Studies:

> [B]elieves that no writer should be yoked to a moral imperative to represent the entirety of their country, their gender, or even their own experience: indeed, the focus should move more towards who is writing than towards what is being written, and as such towards why a translator is choosing to champion a particular work (the *telos*) rather than what their aim is in translating that work (the *skopos*). (27, original emphasis)

The focus on the *telos*, or the reason behind the choice of a translator, has been at the core of Translator Studies since it was coined by Andrew Chesterman in "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies" (2009), where he delineates the new avenue of translator research divided into three branches: cultural, cognitive, and sociological.[43] Vassallo further expands Translator Studies to include the activist role of women translators in the publishing industry. Although Vassallo centers her argument around contemporary publishing houses and translators, her scholarship informs this work by providing "a blueprint for feminist translator studies" (148). I contribute to this ongoing theorization of translator studies by examining the role of Kent as a translator for *Ibérica* and how her political efforts benefited from translation and by studying how her gender identity and sexuality aided in her translator labor being overlooked. Rather than studying the aim of

[42] Regarding the name of Feminist Translator Studies, Vassallo preferst to use "feminist" rather than "women in translation" since the former is more politically engaged. Hoping to stray away from reproducing western feminism(s), she understands the term "as both international and intersectional" (7).

[43]According to Chesterman, the cultural branch investigates the ideologies, ethics, and history surrounding the translator (19). In the cognitive branch, the mental processes, emotions, and attitudes of the translator are analyzed (Chesterman 19). Finally, the sociological investigates networks, institutions, status, and workplace processes that not only concern the translator, but also other agents, such as editors, publishers, proofreaders, etc (Chesterman 19).

each issue of the journal, or what Chesterman and Vassallo would call the *skopos* (the intended effect of a translation), I turn to the *telos* behind the work of Kent, Crane, and the rest of the translators at the Ibérica Publishing Company to elucidate the ways in which translation helped these activist efforts.

This research also challenges the belief that translations played a minor role in *Ibérica*'s production, arguing instead that translation was a crucial component of the journal's antifranquista activism. While previous research has highlighted Crane's involvement in translating the journal after the first few years of publication (Leijte 217), the findings here reveal that Crane's translations went beyond *Ibérica* and into literary translation. As for Kent's role in translation matters, although her English skills did not make her fluent in the language, she translated articles and texts from French into Spanish.

Additionally, and analogous to the omission of naming the translators in the journal, one of the challenges in finding information about them was the way in which the archive at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where both Kent and Crane's archive was donated to, is organized. In the description of the collection, it explains that "[t]he Louise Crane and Victoria Kent Papers document the personal and professional lives of Louise Crane, Victoria Kent, and Josephine Boardman Crane, and consist of correspondence, subject files, personal papers, financial documents, clippings, photographs, and slides" ("Guide" 3). The most fruitful folders in the archive were the ones labeled "miscellaneous," which point to correspondence with several translators. These translators worked behind

the scenes of *Ibérica* and shaped what the journal would ultimately become. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of their role in this journal and its historical and cultural significance, my goal is to answer the following question: Who were the translators of the news clippings, articles, and book reviews? How were they compensated? What, if any, recognition or credit did translators receive? Would this recognition have any legal or dangerous repercussions in Spain during the dictatorship? Before delving further into the analysis of the archival research focused on the Louise Crane and Victoria Kent Papers, it is essential to understand the events that preceded the start of *Ibérica* and its political significance in Spain and the United States.

U.S.-Spain Relationship After the Spanish Civil War

Los Pactos de Madrid de 1953 were a series of accords that granted U.S. economic and military aid to Spain to allow the country to set up naval and air bases in Spanish territories. These bases were vital for the U.S. government as they permitted access to Europe to monitor the USSR during the Cold War (1947-1991). As Eric Solsten and Sandra W. Meditz's investigation found in *Spain: A Country Study* (1990), between 1954 and 1961, military aid amounted to $500 million (almost $5.2 billion today) in grants (320-21). From 1962 to 1982, the total aid was $727 million ($5.7 billion today) in loans and $511 million ($4 billion) in grants (Solsten and Meditz 320-21). Finally, the military aid decreased after Franco's death and once the Transition to Democracy in Spain (1975-1982) had settled (Solsten and Meditz 320-21). From 1983 to 1986, this aid was approximately $400 million ($1.2

billion) annually in concessional credit terms, and in the last two years, this corresponded to $100 million ($271 million) annually in 1987 and 1988 (Solsten and Meditz 320-21). Monetary aid was not the only assistance Spain received from the United States. In 1955, Spain entered the United Nations due to its relationship with the U.S. government.

The U.S. military intervention in Latin America and other countries has been common since before the Truman Doctrine (1947) and has continued well into the 21st century.[44] Through the work of journalists, the U.S. public becomes aware of the military action and financial aid the government provides to other countries. Regarding the U.S.-Spain relationship at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was not much journalistic coverage of the state of Spain under the dictatorship of Franco (Crane and Kent "Advertencia"). This fact would encourage Kent to form the Ibérica Publishing Company.

Building a Voice for Democracy: *Ibérica* in the Fight Against Dictatorship

Kent founded and directed the Ibérica Publishing Company in 1953 and directed it until 1974 in New York City. As the name already hints with the Spanish accent mark, the publishing was bilingual with Spanish and English editions. Kent and Crane ran all aspects of *Ibérica*, from financial concerns to translational matters. The goal of their publishing house was to inform the U.S. public about the human rights violations in Spain at the hands of Francisco Franco's dictatorship. Although

[44] According to the Military Intervention Project, the United States has "US has undertaken almost 400 military interventions since 1776" (Kushi and Toft). Half of these interventions have taken place since 1950.

most of the publishing was in journals and books, a news section within the monthly publication kept the Spanish exiled population in Latin America, the United States, and the rest of the world updated on the latest events and information from Spain. In its conception and subsequent publications, *Ibérica* aimed to undermine the Francoist regime by fomenting political engagement against it and putting pressure on the U.S. government to stop aiding the dictatorship. Out of this endeavor, *Ibérica: por la libertad* (1954-1974) and *Ibérica: For a Free Spain* (1954-1966)[45] were conceived as the most efficient and effective course of action before and after the Treaty of Madrid was signed by President Dwight Eisenhower (1890-1969) and Francisco Franco (1892-1975) on September 23, 1953.

As Kent and Crane describe in an editor and director's note at the beginning of the collection of both *Ibérica ES* and *Ibérica EN*, the origin of the publication was to inform the English-speaking public about the circumstances of Spain. Recounting the purpose of the first volume and subsequent publications, Kent and Crane write on the first page of the collection:

> El primer volumen de esta colecci[ó]n lo componen siete números en lengua inglesa, publicados en el año 1953.
> Deseabamos informar al público de habla inglesa sobre los acontecimientos que se ven[í]an sucediendo en España, sobre los cuales guardaba silencio la prensa extranjera en aquellos años. ("Advertencia")

[45] From now on I refer to *Ibérica: por la libertad* as *Ibérica ES* and *Ibérica: For a Free Spain* as *Ibérica EN*.

This group of Spanish and U.S. intellectuals took it upon themselves to inform the U.S. public about the events happening due to the military, and economic aid to Spain rested in the hands of those running *Ibérica EN* and *Ibérica ES*. Kent, having been part of the Spanish Republican government in exile before the coup d'état in 1936, was already familiar and in contact with several political and academic figures, such as Manuel Azaña (1880-1940) and Salvador de Madariaga (1886-1978).

The first seven publications of *Ibérica EN* in 1954 corresponded to the beginning of U.S.-Spanish relations. It also dealt with the consequences of the Treaty of Madrid in Spain. Out of the amassing interest in the matter by Spanish-speaking readers and countries, *Ibérica ES* was born:

> Dado el interés que despertaban esas noticias y la deformación de la información en la prensa española, nos llevó a transformar esas hojas informativas en dos revistas paralelas, una en inglés y otra en español. Ambas aparecieron como volumen II, respetando esos siete números en inglés, que constituyen el volumen I de esta colección completa que presentamos a nuestros lectores. (Crane and Kent "Advertencia")

As Kent and Crane aptly put it, the censorship in Spain, or "the deformation of information," at the hands of the Francoist dictatorship, also inspired the editors to publish the magazine in Spanish. Significantly, the English version is the first to come out. This fact is surprising given that some of the news published in the first volume came in Spanish and thus needed to be translated. Nonetheless, analyzing the intentions of the publication to undermine the Francoist regime, there was a more pressing need to disseminate information first in English and then in Spanish.

Another aspect to highlight is the lack of mention of translation in this short note and the other volumes by the publishing company. As stated before, some news articles had to be translated from English to Spanish or vice versa. However, the only hint of translation in the above paragraph is in "revistas paralelas." Thus, there was no mention of translators, the translation process,[46] or the texts' original language.

The relevance of the two-language versions resides, then, in the fact that the English edition is never called the translation of the Spanish one. The articles in *Ibérica EN* often lack recognizing translation by omitting the translator's names. This was one of the strategies implemented even in original accounts coming from Spain, in which names were hidden, changed, or accredited to anonymous sources due to fear of political repercussions. But as I uncovered during my archival research, most of the time, the journal worked with U.S. translators who, at first glance, should not have had any fear of repercussion. These texts, translations of articles or sometimes personal accounts of anonymous Spanish citizens, only include the note "Translated from Spanish," never the name of the translator.[47] By studying personal and professional correspondence to learn more about the translation process, the reader discovers more about the translators, the overall

[46] For example, translation editors and proofreaders, which would correspond to the revision and quality assurance before the texts were printed.

[47] I recognize that not all translators would want to be credited due to safety issues. Moreover, this could be a case of auto-censorship to avoid a dangerous situation. Nonetheless, the lack of translation credit also points out to a commonly-held belief that by erasing translation, it will legitimize or give more authority to the text.

significance of language and translation to the project, and the activism of the publications.

Although there is a clear connection between translation and the two versions of the magazine, there has not been the case for a large-scale study on *Ibérica*. In her dissertation, which analyzes the anti-Francoist activism of *Ibérica*, Marianne Leijte investigates the journal's management, evolution, and content, "focusing on its objectives, the segments of the population it was aimed at, and the ways used to reach those segments" (4). In other words, Leijte focuses on the *skopos*, or "the intended effect of a translation" (Chesterman 17), to better understand the activist efforts of *Ibérica*. Her study relies on a theoretical framework that comes from a historical perspective and does not address the literary and translational elements, or the translators behind the texts. In a short paragraph on translation in the first chapter, Leijte recognizes the need for translation and translators but does not delve into the details of who these translators were, how they were remunerated, who hired them to work for *Ibérica EN* in its attempt to reach an Anglophone U.S. readership (101). On the hiring aspect, I found correspondence by Kent to an aspiring translator declining his services due to lack of skill, but nonetheless paying for the work done on the translation ("Letter to Fernando Faraldo").

In her effort to inform the audience about the dictatorship in Spain and undermine as much as possible the regime of Francisco Franco in the United States, Victoria Kent brought many voices from Spanish into English through a

translation process that allowed and encouraged activism in the United States readership. As such, I argue that Kent, like Langston Hughes (1901-1967) did with his translations of Fedérico García Lorca during the Spanish Civil War,[48] used translation as activism and through an analysis of her translation work, I highlight the significance of examining translators as key agents of political and cultural resistance by recognizing the contributions of translators to literature and history.

Fighting for Justice: Victoria Kent's Contributions to Spanish Society

Kent, most well-known for being the first woman lawyer in Spain, was also a member of the first Parliament of the Second Spanish Republic and was appointed Director General of Prisons from 1931 to 1934. Carmen Urioste-Azcorra has documented Kent's work on prison reform and published some of her most influential writing in *De Madrid a New York: Artículos, Conferencias, Cartas* (2018), which points to her commitment to social and political issues. Most recently, in recognition of her work, the local government of Madrid honored her with a posthumous plaque outside her former law firm in 2017.[49]

Her social and political commitment to the dignity of prisoners led her to abolish shackles and chains in the Spanish prison system. With the metal collected from this unprecedented endeavor, Kent commissioned a statue in honor of Concepción Arenal, another Spanish feminist pioneer who had been vocal against

[48] For more on this, see, Evelyn Scaramella's "Translating the Spanish Civil War: Langston Hughes's Transnational Poetics" (2014).
[49] "Victoria Kent vuelve al distrito con una placa en homenaje a su memoria" in *Noticias del Ayuntamiento de Madrid*, diario.madrid.es/chamberi/2017/10/19/victoria-kent-vuelve-a-chamberi/.

the poor conditions of the Spanish prisons ("Victoria Kent vuelve"). She is most well-known in Spain as the first Directora General de Prisiones to give back their dignity to prisoners by symbolically and literally breaking their chains and shackles. In this vein, she also:

> [C]lausuró 322 cárceles de partido judicial y construyó otras nueve, entre la que destaca la Prisión Modelo de mujeres de Madrid, después conocida como "Cárcel de Ventas", pues además estaba preocupada por la situación aún peor de las cárceles de mujeres, que describió como un "espectáculo de horror." [...] [A]umentó la ración alimentaria, instaló buzones de reclamaciones para los presos, autorizó la recepción de toda prensa, mejoró las condiciones higiénico-sanitarias y permitió la salida de reclusos por razones familiares. (Biblioteca Nacional de España, "Kent Siano, Victoria")

As these reforms attest, Kent's political engagement was rooted in the community when she was part of the government of the Second Spanish Republic, and from the start of her career, she was part of the reformation of social and political matters in Spain. After the Spanish Civil War and the fall of the Second Spanish Republic, Kent was exiled to Paris in 1940. Afterward, she wrote a short account detailing her life as a refugee in *Cuatro años en París (1940-1944)* (1978).

Cuatro años en París (1947): Narrator as Translator of a Story

The translational aspect of the lives of exiles and immigrants is not only related to learning a new language. In the case of Kent, she was already fluent in French when she was exiled to Paris, France. Nonetheless, immigration and exile are synonymous with uprooting your entire life and altering your culture, behavior, and even yourself into a translated copy of your new identity. Gustavo Pérez Firmat's writing comes to mind when talking about exile and immigration.

Although unconnected to Iberian Studies and Literature, Pérez Firmat's experience as an exile allows the reader to understand the assimilation process that Kent and other Spaniards went through. In *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (1994), he analyzes the stages of immigrant assimilation:

> An immigrant group, especially if the expatriation has been involuntary, passes through three states in its adaptation to a new homeland. Initially the immigrant tries to deny the fact of displacement. I will call this first stage "substitutive," for it consists of an effort to create substitutes or copies of the home culture. This translation is the topographical sense only, an undertaking that engenders all of those faint doubles of foreign places that speckle the American urban landscape. (Peréz Firmat 6)

"Substitutive" is the essential word because immigrants create new versions, translations as it were, of their cultures. Moreover, this translation aspect is not only topographical and related to language but also one of identity. The new persona immigrants and exiles put on is valuable and indispensable to survive, to help those who came with you and those who were left behind. Kent saw the importance of blending into the Parisian culture and language in order to settle and start helping more Spanish exiles.[50]

In *Cuatro años en París,* the narrator recounts the four years he[51] went into exile in France in four parts. The first one, which is the focus of this section, is centered around Plácido and the translator figure that this fictionalized version of Kent represents in the text. As Carole Vinals points out in "Reinvención identitaria y compromiso transnacional en *Cuatro años en París 1940-1944*," to be an exile "[…]

[50] This is another one of Kent's efforts that has not been studied yet. In my archival research, I found plenty of evidence of Kent's work in helping as many Spanish children escape the war.
[51] The narrator identifies himself as Plácido and uses he/him/his pronouns in the text. Following the narrator's pronoun preference, I continue to use "he/him/his" in this chapter.

es verse obligado a convertirse en otra persona" (30). The uprooting of an individual has unimaginable consequences, such as translating themselves into another person by force, as Vinals mentions.

Along with the physical transportation of the body into another land comes adapting to a new country and culture. In this sense, exiled people must find in themselves a transformative nature for settling in another country and cutting ties with their former home. No matter the political, economic, or theological reasons, humanity has always needed to adjust to new environments. Although adopting a new language is one of the most talked-about features in relation to exile and immigration, the translation of the self goes beyond speech for Kent.

Fig. 1. Victoria Kent, *Plácido*, photograph, París, 1944.

The first page of the 1997 edition of *Cuatro años*, published by the Universidad de Málaga, presents an image depicting the physical change in Kent during those four years of exile. The short hair, stern look transformed Victoria into Plácido.[52] This physical transformation has repercussions on the inside as

[52] I do not want to speculate that the reason why Kent chooses to change the gender of the narrator has anything to do with her sexuality. Instead, it might have more to do with the changes and

well. Recounting the crossing of the border into France, Plácido distances himself from the life of his former identity. In the book's first section, he ponders leaving his city. Although never mentioned, it is assumed he is talking about fleeing Madrid, where most of the Spanish Civil War fighting happened. The first few paragraphs mention the city's state after a particularly devastating attack:

> El golpe había sido rudo y aunque volvía a correr la sangre por sus arterias, su convalecencia era artificial, la sangre que regaba su cuerpo era una sangre de transfusión violenta e impura. Tenía la dignidad de un pasado y la serenidad de sus recuerdos; ambas la sostenían. Digna y serena, era cierto, pero no podía con su propio peso. Toda ella parecía envuelta en círculos de hierro; sobre el Arco y bajo el cielo, aviones de plomo. (*Cuatro años* 9)

The capital is described as having dignity but not enough strength to support itself, as if a wounded soldier. Continuing to write about the city, the narrator recounts how much it pained him to leave:

> Y le dolía aquella separación, le dolía porque el día de la catástrofe la había visto abandonada, exhausta, después de una semana de sangría ininterrumpida; había visto derramarse su vida por todos los caminos, caminos que no conducían a ninguna parte. (*Cuatro años* 10)

Although this sentence points to the narrator leaving his city and home country behind, the reader also sees the character leaving his identity. Then once again, the reader notices the deep pain of having to leave it all behind: "No puedo hacer nada por ella, pero recogió su infinita tristeza en esos momentos en que la vida había detenido su ritmo. Ese pasado que entre ellos existía hacía dura la separación: hoy él tenía que abandonarla y no había tiempo que perder" (*Cuatro*

challenges that came about with her exile that led her to retell her experiences in the foreign voice of a male narrator.

años 10). The physical separation between him and the city, past and future, is also the start of his translation and transformation, a natural occurrence for immigrants, exiles, and any other displaced individuals. The reader can really appreciate the monumental transformation that Kent went through, choosing to change the gender of the narrator to recount, maybe even translate, the events happening in French into Spanish.

The role of language in any type of displacement, voluntary or forced, will always bring a conversation about translation and how the two, or more, languages interact. In his seminal book *Across the Lines: Travel, Language, Translation* (2000), Michael Cronin explores and theorizes travel as translation and "the relationship of the traveller to language" (1-2). On a travel account, one of the first images described is of the country one leaves behind. Connecting the theorization of travel as translation to Kent's text allows us to re-interpret Plácido's story beyond the words on a page. It was not until she had been isolated from all that she knew, even her new routine in Paris, that Plácido's identity started to adapt, bringing more complexity to his identity. Cronin stipulates that:

> The multiple instances of translation found in intralingual travel accounts [...] point to the translation phenomenon being present across different scales of inquiry. Whether travel is examined across galaxies [...], continents, countries, or regions, the complexity of the translation encounter remains constant. (17)

Translation is at the core of any text that recounts physical movement. In Kent's case, translating her identity, in fiction and real life under her Madame Duval alias,

to survive being found and apprehended in Nazi-occupied France allowed her to endure exile.

From Cities to the World: Kent's Cosmopolitan Journey

After four years of exile in Paris, Victoria Kent was exiled to Mexico City in 1945, where she became an educator at El Colegio de México. While there, in 1949, she founded and directed the Escuela de Capacitación para el Personal de Prisiones in Mexico, following her work as Directora General de Prisiones in Spain. As José Luis Hernández points out in "El talón de Aquiles de la capacitación del personal de prisiones" (2013), the goal of the Escuela de Capacitación was to formalize the management of prisons that had been around since the Porfiriato (1876-1911) and then again after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917).

It was not until the administration of Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) that this project was finally started in the Mexican Republic. The creation and establishment of the Escuela de Capacitación had its beginning in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where Luis Garrido, president of the university and specialist in penal law, formed a team of experts on the matter. Such professionals included (Hernández "El talón de Aquiles"):

> Juan José González Bustamante, Secretario General de la UNAM; Javier Piña y Palacios, Jefe de la Oficina Auxiliar de la Secretaría General; José Ángel Ceniceros, Primer Director de la Academia Mexicana de Ciencias Penales; y la ex jefa de la Dirección General de Prisiones de España, Victoria Kent, quien se había exiliado en México y a propuesta de Garrido asumió la dirección de la escuela. (Hernández "El talón de Aquiles")

Garrido knew of Kent's work in Spanish prisons and the significance of her input and experience for the growing Mexican nation. Part of her responsibilities included instructing several courses on constitutional and criminal law, criminal procedure, and policy. Unfortunately, the Escuela de Capacitación was shut down after only three years in 1952 due to a lack of government funds and students.

After her short stay in México, Kent moved to New York City in 1950 as part of her new job at the Department of Social Studies at the United Nations investigating "el estado de las prisiones femeninas en el mundo y establecer un proyecto de reglamento para estas" and at the same time, she was appointed Counselor of the government of the Spanish Republic for two years ("Kent Siano, Victoria"). Nonetheless, realizing that her work at the UN would not achieve the results she expected, her priorities and career changed course, and she decided to use the power of information and language instead:

> [A]llí estuve [en México] hasta mi incorporación, en 1950, a las Naciones Unidas, donde trabajé en la sección de defensa social durante dos años; pero estimé que era un trabajo burocrático y algo sin eficacia, lo que es contrario a mi temperamento. En 1953, con un grupo de amigos americanos y españoles pusimos en marcha la revista «Ibérica», que empezamos a publicar en dos ediciones: en inglés y en español, por considerar necesaria la edición inglesa dada la falta de noticias sobre España en los Estados Unidos.
>
> (Baltasar "Encuentro con Kent")

As this short excerpt shows, Kent understood and used the potential of translation, or "the English edition," of *Ibérica* to advocate for the rights of Spanish citizens inside and outside of Spain.

The value of Kent's exile in some of the world's most prominent and cosmopolitan cities (Paris, Mexico City, and New York City) resides in the fact that these places were fertile with political and social engagement. In Paris, she was the Secretaria de la Embajada Española, helping refugees escape to France and Latin America. In Mexico City, she contributed to the Escuela de Capacitación para el Personal de Prisiones and, finally, held two positions at the UN in New York City. To understand the influence of the city on writing, translation, and activism, the scholarly work of Doris Sommer, Sherry Simon, and Walter Benjamin reveals the potential of the city as an innovator in literary and non-literary experiences as it relates to language and translation.

Sherry Simon has talked about the importance of translation in the city. She explains in *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory* (2012) that "each city imposes its own patterns of interaction, and these emerge out of their spaces and their own narrative pasts. Contact, transfer, and circulation among languages are determined by the demographics, institutional arrangements, and imaginative histories of urban life" (2). In Kent's case, New York City served as the epicenter for both language editions of *Ibérica*, where institutional arrangements between Spain and the United States expedited and facilitated the bridge between cultures.

In dialogue with the work of Sommer, Simon further states the "collective and civic benefits" of bilingualism and translation. For this reason, "hearing" the cities and urban life "introduces the observer into layers of social, economic [,] and

cultural complexity" (1). The bilingual and multilingual features of New York City became for Kent, as for many writers in the 20th century, a "source of promise, not an encumbrance" (Sommer in Simon 2). Influenced by the theorization of Simon, I focus on how Kent deals with the duality or multiplicity of languages in the city. Further, I study "the areas of negotiation, the spaces where connections are created through translation" (Simon 2) and add another layer of complexity: translation as activism. Thus, without New York City in translation as an innovator for literary and non-literary experiences and an intermediary between two different cultures (the United States and Spain) and languages (English and Spanish), Victoria Kent's activism with *Ibérica* would not have been possible.

The languages of New York, especially Spanish, were also paramount for the creation and success of *Ibérica*. As Regina Galasso explains, "[t]here is no doubt that New York is a Spanish-speaking city: almost every variation of the language along with its particular New York offspring can be heard somewhere on its streets" (1). At the same time, Spanish is not "widely recognized that this language has been spoken in the city since the mid-seventeenth century" (Galasso 1). However, from the establishment of Little Spain, along with the first church to offer mass in Spanish in Manhattan, and the formation of publications since the nineteen-century, such as *La Llumanera de Nova York* (1874-81) and *La Prensa* (1913-63) (Galasso 3), there is no denying that Spain has had a long relationship with New York. As Galasso also reveals, New York is an Iberian City thanks to the significance it has had on Iberian writers, who have shaped their careers, language,

and literature from their travels to the city. "[T]ravel," she says, "much like translation, allows the writer an opportunity to do things he has never before done with his language, to introduce new arrangements of words, new phrases, and literally a new language to the home language" (9). The invigoration that travel and translation have on writers cannot only introduce a new language to them but also a new-found purpose of activism and political engagement for those exiled. Through the publishing of both editions of *Ibérica*, Kent had the opportunity to be the translator and editor-in-chief of her own publication, an aspect I analyze below. I return and conclude my investigation of *Ibérica EN*'s translators in the subsequent section.

Translating Antifranquism: The Political Engagement of Ibérica Publishing Company

In the first English edition of *Ibérica EN*, the editors already introduce the significance of both language editions: "[w]e should also explain that because *Ib[é]rica* is published in Spanish and English language editions it serves, to a certain extent, as a bridge between Spanish and American thought" ("Announcement", original emphasis). Later, a similar wording is used to announce the foundation of the Iberian Council. Seven years after the launch of the journal, on March 17, 1961, the announcement of the "Formation of Iberian Council" was published in *Ibérica EN*. Repeating the purpose and goal of the magazine, the statement reads:

> The IBÉRICA COUNCIL will endeavor to promote the concept, as expressed heretofore in IBÉRICA, of an authentically free and democratic Spain, and to implement the wishes, as expressed by President Kennedy, that "the ties of friendship and understanding between the Spanish and American peoples be strengthened in the future."
> The Council is composed of distinguished Americans and Spanish residents in this country who are concerned about future U.S. relations with Spain.
>
> (Ibérica Council "Announcement of Formation")

Significantly, both these texts mention translation metaphors to describe their aims ("bridge" and "ties of friendship and understanding"). Indeed, the collaboration between distinguished U.S. citizens and Spanish residents makes the connection between these two societies possible. However, translation is sometimes an undervalued element in its lack of direct mention. Although taken for granted and indirectly mentioned through metaphors, translation connected both nations. Furthermore, the Council's foundation was the result of the role the translation of the magazine had regarding activism and social engagement with the U.S. readership. For this argument, the idea of reparative translation by Emily Apter allows readers to understand the significance of translation in a publication like this one.[53]

Reparative translation seeks to "challenge the status of a nationally fortressed standard language" (Apter 209). Nationality and language are powerful in the sense that they represent the essence of a country or nation-state. Still, when a country has a history of dictatorship, colonization, and genocide, as is the case with Spain and the United States, one must also look at the reintroduction of

[53] "Reparative Translation in Theory and Practice." *Seminar in Literary Translation*, Boston University, Feb 26, 2021.

languages and people in society. Drawing from political philosophy and epistemology, I also argue that the lack of translation and language access is an epistemic injustice in a period where the dissemination of information was scarce and not having access to critical information equals censorship. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus define epistemic injustice in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice* (2017) as:

> [T]hose forms of unfair treatment that relate to issues of knowledge, understanding, and participation in communicative practices. These issues include a wide range of topics concerning wrongful treatment and unjust structures in meaning-making and knowledge producing practices, such as the following: exclusion and silencing, invisibility and inaudibility (or distorted presence or representation). (1)

The participation in and reception of communicative practices that translation brings is essential to immigrants, refugees, and other displaced peoples in the United States. The sometimes-short supply and use of translating and interpreting services[54] in U.S. society reflect the structural exclusion and silencing of the Other. One of the reasons why reparative translation is fundamental in political engagement is because it reinscribes forgotten voices into mainstream society. Apter's argument and theory with the ease the city has in making collaborations possible, such as the Iberian Council, and create a new literary and informative avenue of information dissemination with the Ibérica Publishing Company. In this line of reasoning, Victoria Kent, via *Ibérica EN*, brought many voices from Spanish

[54] Although language access services have become more readily available for different languages and communities of foreign-language speakers, there is still a long way to go ensuring these communities have a basic understanding of their civil right regarding language access and actually use the services the institutions provide for them.

into English through a translation process that eventually became political activism using translation to reinstate their agency to the world in the United States, which also included testifying for a Congressional Hearing on the Spain-U.S. political relationship.

The value of the English edition is appreciated in letters, telegrams, and statements that were sent from the Ibérica Publishing Company office to the FBI, the White House, and the Secretary of Defense, to mention but a few. This type of translation activism changes the common and traditional belief that translation equals betrayal, as in the common saying "traduttore, traditore." Instead of looking at *Ibérica*'s translation activities as disloyal to one's language and culture, the translational element of the publication goes beyond this outdated phrase. *Ibérica ES* and *Ibérica EN* turn this saying around to display how language and translation are used to promote political change. What Kent and her collaborators shared with English translations of the United States is more closely related to a moral duty to establish new connections with Spain and advocate for Spanish citizens and their human rights. The political engagement of the Iberian Council reached the highest levels of the executive branch of the United States. In a 1961 letter to President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the Council wrote:

> On behalf of the Iberian Council we wish to express our sense of deep loss over the death of the honorable Anthony Drexel Biddle, who during his short term in office as United States Ambassador to Spain made such sound contributions to Spanish-American relations.
> In replacing Ambassador Biddle in this post we urge that a diplomat be selected who will maintain the independence and flexibility that Ambassador Biddle showed in dealing with the complicated and delicate

> Spanish situation. In this connection, Ambassador Ellis O. Briggs would seem worthy of your serious consideration. (Iberian Council "Letter to JFK")

Unfortunately, and despite all the efforts of the Iberian Council, Robert F. Woodward was named U.S. Ambassador to Spain on May 10, 1962, and not Briggs, as they had hoped. However, letters like the one above show the group's commitment to Spain.

In another letter to President Eisenhower in 1959, Kent wrote a letter in both Spanish and English to warn him about the lack of freedom ahead of his visit to Madrid on December 21, 1959:

> El día 21 de diciembre llegaréis, Sr. Presidente, a un país cuyo pueblo está privado de las más elementales libertades políticas, en el que el espíritu y la práctica de la Democracia están prohibidos o sustituidos por una ficción, y en el que los ciudadanos que tienen el valor de proclamar su esperanza en una vida pública regida por el ejercicio de los derechos del hombre, se ven perseguidos por las autoridades. (Kent "Carta al Presidente Eisenhower")

Due to Kent's criticism and condemnation of the Spanish government, there is a clear connection between her and the figure of La Malinche. Malintzin (Marina, the Spanish name imposed by the Conquistadores) was the woman historically known as Hernán Cortés' interpreter and translator during the Mexican Conquest. La Malinche was an Aztec enslaved woman who, through her work with the Spaniards, helped dismantle the Aztecs' control of the other indigenous communities of what today is known as Mexico. A controversial figure, she is blamed for the success of Spanish colonization. Nonetheless, in the last 30 years,

there has been a scholarly recovery and redemption of La Malinche by Chicana feminists.[55]

Even in fiction, as Denise Kripper shows in *Narratives of Mistranslation: Fictional Translators in Latin American Literature*, the representation of this contentious symbol has started to change with a clear example shown in Laura Esquivel's *Malinche: Novela* (2008), translated as *Malinche: A Novel* by Ernesto Mestre-Reed (2007), where "her fictionalized character considers both the vulnerability and power of her role as a cultural and linguistic mediator" (71). Although Kripper focuses on recent literature "that feature[s] women translators and interpreters," this defiance by women translators and interpreters is traced back to figures such as Victoria Kent and Aurora Correa. Nonetheless, I see the same vulnerability and power of cultural and linguistic intermediary with Kent and her role in the translation of information with the intent of political activism.

One likely reason why translation does not take a more prominent role in *Ibérica* is the abovementioned distrust translation carries in society. Kent, Crane, and the members of the Iberian Council, either inadvertently or intentionally, decided to hide as much as possible the translational element of the journal. Moreover, the political repercussions for the translators of the articles during the Francoist dictatorship outweighed the benefits of naming either publication the

[55] Such as Norma Alarcón's "Traddutora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure of Chicana Feminism" (1989) and Martha J. Cutter's "Malinche's Legacy: Translation, Betrayal, and Interlingualism in Chicano/a Literature" (2010).

translation of the other, and the consequences against their collaborators, inside and outside Spain, were not taken lightly.

United Languages: The Translators Behind *Ibérica*

Kent and Crane point out that the parallelism of both *Ibérica ES* and *Ibérica EN* was born from the international interest in Spanish-U.S. affairs. In this same vein, Simon explains the concomitant aspect of multilingual cities, "[t]o speak of a multilingual city is to call up an image of simultaneous, parallel conversations taking place across urban terrain" (Simon 2) Like the city, the Ibérica Publishing Company emulated the polyglot nature of a cosmopolitan environment by using three different languages in translation: Spanish, English, and French. As much as the three languages added an element of complexity to the translations, the activist component of the publishing house also served as a mediator of disagreements among the collaborators. According to John Milton and Paul Bandia (2009), and citing Juan Sager's *Language Engineering and Translation: Consequences of Automation* (1994), the agents of translation, although commonly defined as being in an "intermediary position between a translator and an end user of a translation" (Sager 321), should also include translators in this definition (Milton and Bandia 1). The translator, being in a position of centrality between two cultures, languages, and texts, holds an essential position in the production of writing. In their edited volume, *Agents of Translation*, Milton and Bandia argue for "the centrality of the position of the agent of translation in introducing new literary and philosophical concepts through translation. This agent may often play

an important role, both politically and culturally, in the given society" (2). Agents of translation, then, are essential in bringing new perspectives to society.

The political challenges that surrounded Kent and her collaborators, tied with the power of translation and the agency of translators, clearly exemplify the practice of this theoretical argument in literary history. Activism should be added to the theorization of agents of translation since, in this political engagement, much mediation happens through activism before it reaches publication. In other words, activism is also an agent of translation because it mediates between two parties when an agreement cannot be reached. The political change that Kent wanted to achieve marked every one of her decisions regarding *Ibérica*. In a 1969 letter from the editor to Madariaga, Kent explains:

> Le incluyo esos párrafos que *he traducido* de su artículo publicado en el [New York] Times, por desear insertarlos en la contra cubierta; como la traducción no será muy buena y quisiera expresar correctamente su dicción en español, le ruego haga las correcciones oportunas y me devuelva el texto purificado para su inserción. ("Carta a Madariaga 1969," emphasis added)

In this short fragment, Kent wants Madariaga's input on her translation of one of his English articles for the *New York Times*. This letter is one of the first and only confirmations I found in Victoria Kent's archive that mentions her as an English-Spanish translator for *Ibérica ES*.

Besides this, the work of translators behind the scenes is also revealed. Most of the time, as Leijte discovered, "[a]l principio, se contrataron traductores externos. Pero más adelante, una vez que la revista empezó a ir sobre ruedas y ellas tuvieron más tiempo —según le comentó Louise Crane a uno de los traductores—,

decidieron asumirlo ellas" (102). Although editorial assistants Vernon Brooks (1936-2013) and Robin Cook (1931-1994) translated most Spanish-English texts, some authors did their own translations (Leijte 101). However, Leijte, due to the historical scope of her research, does not concern herself with the analysis of the significance of translation in *Ibérica* or finding the identities of the translators who made the publication in both Spanish and English possible. Moreover, it overlooks the articles from the French language, which gave more credibility to the publication, with collaborations from renowned intellectuals.

Ibérica included news articles that came from exiled Spaniards in France and Latin America. However, it sometimes also included articles from distinguished authors. Such is the case of Albert Camus (1913-1960), the French philosopher, author, dramatist, and journalist. Kent, realizing the significance of having Camus as a collaborator of the journal, explains the relevance of including his work on *Ibérica*:

> En mucho estimamos que hiciera un esfuerzo y nos enviara un artículo para el segundo número de la revista, en el que aparecerá en el próximo mes de enero, ya uno de Madariaga y otro de Jean Creach - el expulsado de España. El de V. sería la piedra angular del número de febrero, pero tendría que estar en nuestro poder antes del 25 del próximo mes de enero. ¿Puede V. hacer un esfuerzo? ("Carta a Camus Nov. 1953")

After the multiple requests from Kent, Camus collaborated with the magazine with a couple of articles in favor of democracy in Spain. The translation task of his articles was passed on to Kent as Camus did not provide *Ibérica* with his Spanish translator's name and contact information ("Carta a Camus Dec. 1953"). In a May 12, 1954, letter to Camus, she explains that "[l]a traducción española queda en mis

manos, trataré de guardar con la mayor fidelidad el fondo y la bella dicción que sus páginas contiene; la inglesa creo que será buena" (Kent "Carta a Camus May 1954")

In this correspondence, I discovered that Kent oversaw the French-to-Spanish translations for the journal. Correspondingly, Louise Crane worked on the English-to-Spanish ones. In a December 10, 1953, letter from Madariaga to Kent, he writes about a revised article in English that would appear in *Ibérica EN* and *ES* the following month:

> Mil perdones por el error, puramente manual, que queda subsanado con el adjunto envío. En cuanto a la traducción del artículo que le mandé, tendrán que hacerlas Vds. ah[í], porque aquí verdaderamente ahora no tengo tiempo. Lo único que le pido es que como yo escribo mucho en inglés se ponga explícitamente al pi[e] que se trata de una traducción del castellano.
>
> (Madariaga "Carta a Victoria Kent Dic. 1953")

It is clear that Madariaga had an understanding of the translation process, and the usual accuracy check that translations went through, and wanted to clarify to his usual readers in English that the text had gone through a translator. Nonetheless, he was also an author who wrote in English, French, German, and Spanish and would often self-translate his work into other languages.[56] Examining the Louise Crane and Victoria Kent Archive, I discovered that Crane was in charge of translating Madariaga from Spanish into English when he could not provide them with one. In a November 24, 1964, letter from Kent to the former diplomat, she reassured him that he need not send articles in both languages:

[56] "Salvador de Madariaga, Writer, Ex-Diplomat, Dies." *Washington Post*. 15 December 1978. Retrieved 11 May 2023. Also see Madariaga, Salvador de. Letter to Victoria Kent. 18 November 1964. Box 26, Folder Madariaga. YCAL MSS 473 Louise Crane and Victoria Kent Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven, CT. 12 December 2022.

> No se lamente de que cuando hace un artículo para nosotros lo tiene que hacer en dos lenguas, muchas de las charlas que radia que hemos publicado las ha traducido Luisa y creo que no estaban tan mal.
>
> (Kent, "Carta a Madariaga Nov 1964")

Although Crane had no training as a translator at the start of the journal's publication, she improved and became more comfortable in translation matters with practice. This is common in the translation field, where one finds translation out of necessity to communicate with another audience or by chance if one is bilingual. Another example is Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish diplomat, writer, and historian, who translated most of his articles, as seen in his previous quote. However, due to his changing locations across Europe, some texts were translated by Crane or other translators if there was a time constraint. Likewise, my investigation also uncovered that Crane translated Kent's book *Cuatro años en París* into English. I found the first chapter, "Las cuatro paredes (1940-1941)" [translated as "Four Walls (1940-1941)"], which was never published and is currently unstudied. The only identifiable credit to Crane is a handwritten note on the first page that says:

> "Cuatro <u>años</u> en París"
> Traducción de Luisa. ("Four Walls")

This short translation credit speaks once again to the paradoxical relationship between translation and the Ibérica Publishing Company. The journal's activism work could not have been accomplished without translation. Nonetheless, by hiding this feature of *Ibérica EN* and *Ibérica ES*, the publishers avoided the very common belief around the period of translation as a betrayal.

Another find in the archival research is the significance that Florence Hall Sender had for *Ibérica*. Florence Hall married Ramón Sender in 1943 and worked closely together with him until their divorce in 1963. She translated the work of her husband and other writers sent to her by Kent. Writing to Sender, Kent thanks him for the new article sent, along with a check for Hall's translation of the said article ("Carta a Ramón Sender y Florence Hall"). Hall also worked with Kent in the translation of Spanish to English pieces. In a letter to Hall,[57] Kent explains, "Ramón me ha dado permiso para hacerle el ruego que hoy le hago, y es, como puede adivinar, la traducción de esas páginas al exelente inglés que Vd. posee" (Kent, "Carta a Hall"). Through her experience working as a translator with *Ibérica*, I identified how some of the translators worked for the publishing house. Since they had no guidelines or style guide to follow, this made some of the translation decisions complex. It was up to Kent and Crane to resolve any of the stylistic choices that were ultimately published.

Another complication was the fact that the translators were not always familiar with the subject matter, producing translations that took a long time to finish. On this aspect, Hall wrote to Kent describing, "[s]iento mucho no haberle devuelto antes este artículo que me ha hecho trabajar un poco, es verdad, aprendiendo algo de historiologia[…] Siento también lo "awkard" que resulta y queda […] Pero con su trabajo como editora espero que sea usable" (Hall "Carta a

[57] Given Florence divorce from Sender, I have decided to revert to her maiden name when referring to her to avoid confusion between her and her then-husband.

Kent"). In the reply to this letter, Kent agrees that the subject was difficult and thanks both Sender and Hall for their work ("Carta a Sender y Hall"). Also, for the first time, this letter shows the financial compensation given to the translators of the publishing company, as the epigraph alludes to in the beginning.

Although *Ibérica* did not have a lot of money to translate the articles they needed, Kent prided herself in saying that they always paid for the help they received from their collaborators. Kent acknowledges that this is not the amount they should be paid for their services but that it was all she could afford, saying, "[e]l cheque adjunto no es más que una muestra de nuestro agradecimiento, que no lo tome Florence, por favor, como remuneración" ("Carta a Sender y Hall"). Besides this correspondence between Kent and Hall, the archival research conducted on the Crane and Kent papers provided more information about other translators.

Correspondence between Kent and Fernando Faraldo from 1963 sheds light on the fate of translations that did not meet the desired standards for publication in *Ibérica*:

> En el número de este mes de nuestra revista [...] encontrará Vd. el artículo sobre el que ha trabajado. No ha sido posible atenernos a su traducción, como verá, y hemos tenido que rehacerla. Quizá los conceptos contenidos en él son difíciles, sobre todo para el profano en la materia, pero es obligado traducir lo más claramente posible el pensamiento del autor. [...]Adjunto encontrará un cheque por la suma de $30, con el que deseamos compensarle su labor. ("Carta a Faraldo")

This exchange provides valuable insight into the translation process and its importance for the journal's success by emphasizing the quality the translations

needed to have. It also points to the commitment that the publishing company had to translators by paying them regardless of publication.

A trusted translator for Kent and Crane was C.R. Escudero.[58] Part of his assignment was the translation of an article by Madariaga into English and some others into Spanish. As Kent indicates, "no tengo que encarecerle la escrupulosidad y el cuidado en la traducción, uno de los artículos es del Sr. Madariaga y él mismo escribe a la perfección el inglés" ("Carta a Escudero 1953"). In this same writing it is revealed that Kent was also working on a French to Spanish translation, otherwise she would have translated said document from English into Spanish, underlining once again her dedication and passion to the project.

One last thing found was a mention of the omission of translators' names. In a 1956 letter, two years after the launch of *Ibérica*, Sender writes to Kent to propose one of his short novels for publication, "[s]i se publica en revista pueden quitar los nombres de los traductores (no les gusta en general, darlos). Si no, cuando se publique en libro los pondré" ("Carta a Kent 1956"). It is up to us to infer if the translators' reasons for omitting names reflected the publishing industry's standards at the time or for fear of repercussion. Notwithstanding, all the political and social efforts Kent wanted to accomplish in the United States would not have been possible without the work of translators and translation.

[58] The letters in the archive never point to a full name, only initials and a last name. As such, I was not able to find any more biographical information about him.

A year before the discontinuation of *Ibérica EN* in 1966, Crane authorized the reprint request of Ramón Sender's *Los cinco libros de Ariadna* (1957) from a professor in Wisconsin who used them for Spanish-to-English translation exercises. In her reply, she mentions, "[i]ncidentally, I wonder if you are familiar with our monthly publication, lBERICA, which is published in both Spanish and English editions. That is, the English edition is practically entirely a translation of the Spanish original" (Crane "Letter to Opdahl"). This instance is one of the only ones where the English edition is called a translation of the English one.

Although the translators and their work are not explicitly acknowledged on the cover or in the journal in general, *Ibérica* is indebted to translation for the impact it had on U.S. society and its role in bringing attention to the antifranquista struggle in Spain. The translators involved in *Ibérica*'s textual production allowed the journal to reach a wider audience and amplify its message.

Translation as an Act of Empowerment

As this chapter has shown, the translation and political activism of Kent and *Ibérica* between 1953 and 1974 played a significant role in the antifranquista movement and the fight for democracy in Spain. Despite the economic constraints and challenges posed by translating the Spanish version into English, Kent and Crane persevered, and with the help of their collaborators, translators, and subscribers, the publication endured for 20 years thanks to the funding provided by Crane and her family inheritance. The findings of this research challenge the belief that translations played a minor role in *Ibérica*'s production, successfully

showing that translation was a crucial component of the journal's antifranquista activism.

The historical context surrounding the U.S.-Spain relationship after the Spanish Civil War, the Treaty of Madrid, and the monetary aid to the dictatorship by the U.S. government sheds light on the political significance of the publishing company and Kent's efforts. Without the translation of articles and texts from Spanish and French, the vital role of Kent's activism against Franco's dictatorship would not have had as much impact on U.S. society.

Overall, the information found in the archival research highlights the significance of translation in political activism and the dissemination of ideas across borders. The work of Victoria Kent and Ibérica Publishing Company serves as a powerful example of the role that translation and translators play in social and political change. By continuing to study and appreciate the contributions of translators and activists like Kent and Crane, Translation Studies and Literary History gain a deeper understanding of the power of language and communication in shaping our world.

CHAPTER IV: PUBLISHED LITERATURE AND ARCHIVAL DISCOVERIES MULTILINGUAL SPAIN AND MEXICO IN THE WRITING OF AURORA CORREA

Qué clamoreo traducir calzones por bragas, rancho por cortijo, chaparrita por bajita, Pancho por Paco, milpas, no, pues, no, milpas por nada.

— Aurora Correa
Cerezas

From Spain to Mexico

Aurora Correa (1930 - 2008) grew up looking for cherries wherever she went, but her favorites were always the ones in her childhood home's backyard. After her exile to Mexico as a seven-year-old because of the violence of the Spanish Civil War, she kept looking for cerezas everywhere she went. Unfortunately for her, none of the places she visited had them, or at least as she remembered them, and this motivated her to collect words in other languages. During stays in several orphanages throughout Mexico, Correa discovered her love for palabras. In her first memoir, *Te beso buenas noches*, written during the early '90s, but first published in 1997 in Mexico, Correa speaks of her love for her faithful life partner, "[m]e enamoré de las palabras. Todavía no encuentro lectura de historias y cuentos que superen la historia y el encanto de las palabras [...] Palabras. Mi pasión deleitable" (146). Although written in Spanish, her words did not exclusively refer to Spanish. This chapter explores Correa's multilingualism along with her practice as a translator that helped her to develop a conscience that flowed from the page to activism. Such actions were not only emphasized in the character choices of her

novels, plays, and poems but also in the political efforts she was involved in at the time.

The first section of this work offers a historical overview of the 50,000 Spanish children, of whom Correa was one, who were displaced between 1937 and 1939. Then, it introduces the translational elements of Correa's life as expressed in her two autobiographies, *Te beso buenas noches* and *Cerezas* (2008). This chapter also studies her fiction as transadaptation and rewriting in *Augustina Ramírez: la heroína del pueblo* (1964), *Misere Negro Misere* (1963),[59] *La muerte de James Dean* (1991), and *HA: novela* (1992), and concludes with a look at Correa's activist endeavors, from her presence at the Masacre de Tlatelolco on October 2, 1968, which she barely survived unharmed, to her advocacy for the rights of Los niños de Morelia.[60]

Spanish Exiles in Mexico and the Program that Saved Them

Los niños de Morelia, as they are known in Spanish, were a group of 464 children who arrived in Mexico in 1937 as some of the first Spanish exiles to that country. The Mexican and Spanish governments established this program in 1936 to save Spanish children and send them to the Mexican Republic. As Aurelio Velázquez Hernández explains in "El proyecto de casas-hogar para Los niños de Morelia (1943-1948)" (2014), the most efficient way the organizers found was to separate the

[59] Staged for the first time in 1965.
[60] Los niños de Morelia were eventually acknowledged and received a small retirement fund established by the policies of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) under the leadership of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (2004-2011). Until this day, there continues to be a debate around historical memory and the legacy of the Spanish Civil War in contemporary Spain.

children by age and place them in orphanage-like buildings (141). The council in charge of this project was the Comité Iberoamericano de Ayuda al Pueblo Español, an organization that promoted Spanish Republican ideals in the Americas. Victoria Kent (1891-1987) was part of this committee as a representative of the organization in Paris while she was exiled there. Also, part of this group was Amalia Solórzano, wife of Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940. The Secretaría Mexicana de Relaciones Exteriores agreed with the Spanish government to send children affected by the Spanish Civil War to Mexico. Both Solórzano and Cárdenas were from Michoacán, with the latter having served as governor of the state from 1928 to 1932. As a result, the ideal city for the children was Morelia, Michoacán, in a place called "Escuela España-México."

Initially, the children were told that this was an invitation to vacation in Mexico made by President Lázaro Cárdenas. However, most of them and their families were exiled to Mexico or relocated to other countries after the defeat of Spanish Republicans by the Nationals. Los niños de Morelia was not the only program that allowed Spanish children to escape the war. More than 50,000 children between the ages of five and 15 were evacuated from Spanish territory from 1936 to 1939. The host countries included France, Great Britain, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). According to the Archivos Estatales, part of the Spanish Ministry of Culture:

> Muchos de estos niños volvieron con sus familias, otros no regresaron nunca a España. Una suerte especial la corrieron los niños evacuados a la URSS, ya que el estallido de la Segunda Guerra Mundial y la absoluta falta de relaciones diplomáticas entre la España de Franco y el régimen soviético

> los dejaron sumidos en un limbo legal de imposible solución. La mayoría se quedó a vivir allí. ("Muestra sobre los niños" n.p.)

Like Los niños de Rusia, as they are known today, the children who were displaced to Mexico had a parallel fate. The Mexican government, having sided with the Second Spanish Republic, did not recognize Franco's regime as legitimate; therefore, it put multiple roadblocks to the children's return to their country.

A similar experience to that of Los niños de la guerra[61] was the Kindertransport in World War II, "the informal name of a series of rescue efforts between 1938 and 1940" (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum n.p.). Similarly to the joint Spanish and Mexican initiative, the Kindertransport sent 10,000 child refugees from Nazi Germany to Great Britain, most of them Jewish. The main difference between these two projects was the host country's support for the children. Although the Mexican measures for the care and education of the children were less than ideal,[62] there was more of a sense of acceptance by the Mexican government and population, whereas, in the Kindertransport, it was up to private associations to provide the economic means needed to care for the children. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

> Private citizens or organizations had to guarantee payment for each child's care, education, and eventual emigration from Britain. In return, the British

[61] I use this term to designate all of the Spanish children displaced between 1936 and 1939, regardless of their exile location.

[62] There are multiple articles and books that recount the many shortcomings of the Mexican government caring for the child refugees. I do not intend to go into detail in this investigation given that my particular interest is the language use in Correa's fiction and nonfiction work. For more details on Los niños de Morelia, please see Aurelio Velázquez Hernández' "El proyecto de casas-hogar para Los niños de Morelia (1943-1948)" in *Tzintzun: Revista de Estudios Históricos* (2014).

> government agreed to allow unaccompanied refugee children to enter the country on temporary travel visas. It was understood at the time that when the "crisis was over," the children would return to their families.
> ("Kindertransport, 1938–1940")

This payment was £50, equivalent to £2,000 pounds or $2,480 dollars today, which covered the care, education, and the expense of re-emigration to the children's home country. There were two reasons for the end of the Kindertransport program. First, the escalation of the conflict and beginning of World War II with the occupation of Poland by the Germans, and secondly, the high unemployment rate in Great Britain, and thus the end of the donations for the visa process. As with Los niños de Morelia, most of the Kindertransport children stayed in the United Kingdom or further immigrated to the United States, Canada, or what eventually became Israel (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum n.p.). In some cases, if the children's families survived, they were united once again in these countries. For those escaping Spain, Mexico was one of the nations that welcomed parents and relatives so they could reunite with their children.

Early Life: Education and Career Pathways

Aurora Correa was an author, translator, educator, and activist born in Barcelona, Spain, to Demetria Hidalgo and Miguel Correa. Correa's childhood and part of her adolescence were spent in governmental institutions for children in Morelia, Puebla, Orizaba, and Mexico City until her family was reunited in 1947. As she explains in her Curriculum Vitae (circa 1997), now part of her archive, the family reunification in Mexico failed after being separated for almost 11 years. Correa

writes in her CV that "[…]educaciones, ambientes, costumbres y hábitos diferentes los han convertido en extraños" ("Curriculum Vitae" 2). Although they tried to make it work, the years of estrangement and the new customs and traditions were a catalyst for their separation. To exacerbate the situation, Correa's father abandoned them while her mother's health was declining. Eventually, Correa also moved out in 1948, held various jobs, continued studying, and audited classes at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and took acting classes and a course on children's theater.

Through dedication to her education, Correa graduated from the Colegio Van Dyck Comercio y Secundaria in 1947 as an accountant and worked as a "secretaria parliamentaria," a governmental position within the Mexican Senate. She had various administrative positions at multinational companies, such as Compañía Mexicana de Garantías, Almacenadora, Algodonera Longoria, and Aseguradora Bancomer, where she served as bilingual secretary (Spanish<>English) often, as her son mentioned in a personal interview (Jáuregui). After the birth of her only child, she worked for Radio Universidad as a voice actor and as a Redactora de Prensa in the Consejo Nacional de Turismo. This is particularly significant to my study of her life and work since she was in close contact with foreign correspondents from all over the world based in Mexico as she traveled all over the country with them.

In 1967, she settled into a full-time job with Banco de Comercio, where she started a "carrera técnica," or a degree program in software engineering.[63] She reached the position of Jefa del Departamento de Procesamientos Gráficos, the highest company title at the time for a woman. Due to health problems, she retired at the age of 50 in 1980 with a pension from the Mexican Social Security office and one from the bank's retirement fund. As her son recounts, she traveled a bit more during the early 80s but had to return to work as a freelance writer for the Mexican publications mentioned above until she eventually started to write novels professionally in 1985 (Jáuregui). In 1989, Correa started a position as a copy editor and first reader for Grupo Planeta and a proofreader for Editorial S.M. During this time, she was also a proofreader of graduate thesis. It was not until she moved to Aguascalientes to be closer to her son, Juan Carlos Jáuregui (1968 -), that she once again started being more prolific in her writing and as a copy editor.

A big influence in Correa's work and life was her family. Her parents and grandparents had immigrated from Andalucía to Catalunya. They represented a socioeconomic phenomenon in Spain that led to massive immigration rates from impoverished regions of the country into Catalan cities. This immigrant population became essential for the economic growth of Catalunya as an epicenter of industrial development, which attracted more migration in turn in the 1960s and 1970s (Pau n.p.). At the start of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, these

[63] This is according to her Curriculum Vitae where Correa explains and lists all the courses and training she had to undergo for this new position.

newcomers had established relationships with other immigrants as well as with Catalan natives, and their children developed a bicultural identity that changed depending on the place (private vs. public life), as exemplified by Correa family's experience as immigrants to Catalunya:

> Abuela se burlaba de los cacareos de mi padre de sentirse más catalán que san Jordi, con todo derecho, porque llegó niño a Barcelona, lo mismo que Mitzi, nacida en México, que tenía un año cuando mis padres regresaron a España y vivieron en Madrid y luego se establecieron en Barcelona, donde nací yo.
> Abuela y mi padre provenían de las hambrunas geográficas y las insolaciones anímicas andaluzas del Mediterráneo pobre, y yo de la Cataluña del Mediterráneo rico. Como quiera, los dos Mediterráneos son los clavos hundidos en la herradura de la emigración en que cabalga la España trashumante. (*Cerezas* 43)

These two experiences, the Andalusian and Catalan, merged completely with Correa, who was bilingual from a very young age, having learned Catalan from her father and at the playground and Spanish from her entire family. Her Catalan roots would be lost when she exiled to Mexico, dissipating as the years went by without passing the language on to her only son (Jáuregui). Referencing the other immigrants in her community, she remembers her neighbors: the Galicians, the Basques, and the "trapaire cuní" (the trapero local or local junkman) (*Cerezas* 30-31). The latter individual made an impression on young Aurora, who saw this alienated Catalan individual who had been cast aside from the rest of the Catalan community for reasons unknown and resorted to living with the immigrant population in Barcelona.

Although exposed to multiple languages and varieties, the language of Correa's home was Spanish, and her father helped the most in her education:

> Yo no iba a la escuela y lo que sabía me lo enseñaban padre, abuela, madre, las amigas y la calle, mayormente a contar cuentos, no cuentas, que no es lo mismo.
> Mi padre había viajado mucho y leído lo suyo. Él decía que los romanos eran lo mejor del mundo y que la España moderna se debía a ellos, un poco mezclada con otras civilizaciones y culturas, la más importante la de los árabes.
> [...]
> Mi padre, más que árabe y romano, era catalán. Mi madre nunca fue catalana. No lo quiso ser. No lo sintió, ni por mi padre, al que adoraba más allá. Ella era castellana nacida en una aldehuela de Zamora. (*Cerezas* 57-58)

Correa's childhood was full of a mix of cultures: zamorana, catalana, and andaluza, which eventually added one more, perhaps the one that had the most influence on her autobiographical writing. Her two memoirs portray the relationship between Catalan and Spanish in her early years, and how both languages were essential for her identity as Catalo-Mexican, which is how, according to her son, she identified at the end of her life.

The Multilingual World of Aurora Correa

David Evans concludes his chapter "Meaning: From Inner Structure to Post-structure" from *Language, Identity and Symbolic Culture* (2018), saying that identities are constructed over time and from a place of "difference and deferral" (23). In a similar fashion, Correa developed her identity through time and, most importantly, by noticing the differences among the cultures around her. Correa's education was cut short when the Spanish Civil War started in 1936. Nonetheless, as a six-year-old, she already knew how to read and write, thanks to her father's lessons. In *Cerezas* (2008), she writes:

> Yo solía acompañarlo tirada en el piso, pero mi siesta, brevísima, me resultaba insoportable, de modo que me levantaba a leer líneas y líneas del periódico. Ni ajo. No sabía leer. Lo que sí es que interrumpía la siesta de mi padre.
> –¿Qué dice aquí, padre?
> –Que la guerra está muy gorda.
> –¿Y aquí?
> –Que la vamos a destripar.
> Fue así como se convirtió en mi primer maestro.
> –Demetria, ven a ver cómo lee de corrido.
> De la enseñanza de la lectura, mi padre pasó a la escritura, con resultados parecidos. (Correa 26)

The knowledge Correa acquired from her father went beyond Spanish since he also knew Catalan and Galician. Correa was exposed to different languages and poetry from a young age, which allowed her to develop a deep love for literature and writing.

When Correa was seven years old in 1937, she traveled to Mexico with her siblings, Mercedes and Raúl. They were part of Los niños de Morelia, and as the war escalated further and the Spanish Republic's power diminished, it was clear that the 464 children would not return to Spain. The heartbreak of this separation eventually led the author to write her account of this ordeal. This transatlantic voyage brought her on an intralingual and interlingual translation experience, where she navigated from the different varieties of Spanish she had known since she was a child and her learning of English through her several positions in her career.

Unlike my study of *Ibérica* (1953-1974) and Victoria Kent, and since most of Correa's writing is in Spanish, the intralingual translation lens lends itself as an effective tool to understand how she used the different languages and varieties of

Spanish she knew in her work. As defined by Roman Jakobson in "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959), there are different types of translation (233). Interlingual translation, or translation proper, is the written interpretation of signs in one language using another (Jakobson 233). Intralingual translation, defined by Jakobson as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language" (233), is a useful way of reading Correa and understanding her international experience and writing. In Spanish, Correa engaged in translation with the different languages and varieties she knew: Catalan, the Spanish spoken in Spain by her parents and grandmother (from the south of Spain), and the varieties of central and western Mexican Spanish. While using a theoretical framework of translation theory gives a new perspective to text by multilingual authors, my second focus is to highlight the mediating process that transcends the page and show the unique style of Latin American and Iberian writers using translation strategies shaped by their historical and cultural contexts.

First, I define terms. Cultural translation was coined by postcolonial scholar and critical theorist Homi Bhabha in his influential book *The Location of Culture* (1994). Since then, the term has been used widely in Translation Studies, and as Susan Bassnett summarizes in *The New Critical Idiom: Translation* (2013):

> For [Homi Bhabha], postcolonial migration is a translational phenomenon; it is a space in which meaning is constantly remade, the opposite of colonialism where the objective was to reproduce an original culture through the imposition of its social, political, aesthetic and ethical frameworks onto another culture altogether. (55)

As Bassnett explains, Bhabha coined the term "cultural translation" from the concepts of postcolonial migration and translational phenomenon to describe encounters between cultures where interlingual translation was part of the occurrence. One of the criticisms of using Bhabha's to interpret these types of interactions is by Harish Trivedi (2007), who worries in "Translating culture vs. cultural translation," society will "end up with a wholly translated, monolingual, monocultural, monolithic world" (286). However, I differ from Trivedi's view that cultural translation can potentially turn bilingual and bicultural life into monolingual or monocultural ones. On the contrary, cultural translation has the potential, just like translation, to innovate a language and culture. One must also remember that cultural translation is present in different ways throughout texts, but without translation, culture, language, and literature would become stagnant.

Translation Studies scholar Itamar Even-Zohar described in his influential 1976 essay "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem" that he conceived "translated literature not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as a most active system within it" (46). According to Even-Zohar, the position of translation depends on the state of the literary system within a national literature. When a national literature is young, weak, or going through a critical turning point in its history, translation takes center stage as a reinvention that brings new life into the literary polysystem. Even-Zohar's theory still stands when one looks at how cultural translation has shaped popular media

in light of globalization and the rise of information, knowledge, and connection brought by the Internet and social media.

Memoirs of Multilingualism and Culture

Although I agree with Bhabha's definition of cultural translation, my use of the term derives more from the work of Denise Kripper. She explains in *Narratives of Mistranslation: Fictional Translators in Latin American Literature* (2023) that "[d]omesticating and foreignizing approaches, creative and literal translations, can serve different purposes in different cultures and contexts" (6). Although Kripper does not use cultural translation here, her understanding of the purpose of translations in each period is how I center my study of Correa's writing. In other words, I focus on the use of translation strategies for literary purposes. Following Kripper, who explains: "[m]igration, exile, and displacement are understood as cultural translational experiences that challenge the very meaning of national identity and belonging, much in the same way translation does" (9), I also explore the cultural translational experiences in Correa's writing. As seen with Edwin Genzler in *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory* (2008) and Gustavo Perez Firmat's *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (1994) in previous chapters, exile, migration, and translation are closely linked to the everyday lives of displaced individuals. Correa's experience proves that the different varieties of Spanish she knew allowed her to be in contact with translation strategies.

The displacement and the travels that came because of exile also permitted Correa to play with language in a way previously unknown to her in Spain. As Regina Galasso explains in the introduction to *Translating New York: The City's Languages in Iberian Literatures* (2018):

> Translation is also an opportunity to abandon, if only momentarily, the restraints of the culture and language surrounding the translation language. Thus, travel, much like translation, allows the writer an opportunity to do things he has never before done with his language, to introduce new arrangements of words, new phrases, and literally a new language to the home language. (8-9)

The benefit of using translation as an analytical lens to study literature allows for the inclusion of new ways of writing and interpreting the world around the writer. Beyond being a constrain of not choosing one language over another, or a text not being completely in Spanish or in English, Galasso proposes "to look at how Spanish might carry traces of English, or how English might sound in Spanish, or how any of the other spoken, visual, or musical languages of New York touched a sample of Iberian literatures" (7). Using translation is then beneficial to elucidate how multilingual writers use different interlingual and intralingual translation strategies to represent the multilingual and multicultural identities around them.

The interlingual and intralingual translation examples in *Cerezas* and *Te beso buenas noches* are almost always highlighted by textual markers in italics. These are some of the cases where italics are used, "me puso *como camote*" (*Te beso* 22), "*miss,*" "*shorthand,*" "*güerita*" (*Te beso* 30), "*hijole*" (*Te beso* 34), "*me echaban aguas*," "*nos cayeron*" (*Te beso* 36). Some of these words and phrases are colloquially used in Mexico. For example, "güerita" is an affectionate way to refer

to someone with fair skin or blonde hair, which Correa learned through her interactions with the indigenous population of Morelia, "Güerita define ambiguamente a personas de piel blancablanca o blanca-tostadita, de cabello rubio-rubio, rubio-castaño o rojizo. Güerita, tan semejante a sus hermanos ahorita, orita, ya mero, ya merito, al ratito, un momentito, prontito" (*Cerezas* 175).

However, there are instances when some of these words have no marker at all, such as "sustazo" (*Cerezas* 97, 266), "desmadres" (*Cerezas* 88, 152,175, 195). The lack of markers signals the adoption of these words into Correa's vocabulary. One tangible aspect of the narration in both memoirs is that Correa is looking back at her memories as a grown woman. The reader also finds cultural translation examples; for instance, the confusion between a Mexican "tortilla" and a Spanish "tortilla" is explained to the reader in detail (*Cerezas* 161-162).

As Juan Carlos Jáuregui explains in a video honoring his mother's work, most of the novels, poems, and plays that Correa wrote were never published (Televisión Universitaria), but thanks to the family donation of the archive, researchers now have access to previously unseen documents, as well as the different versions of the texts that were published in Correa's lifetime. For example, in the archival research for this project, I found several manuscripts of *Cerezas* where she had made revisions as she remembered more details about her time in Catalunya and Morelia. Her writing is characterized by her attention to detail regarding languages. As her son remembered during our interview, her favorite book was the dictionary.

In both of her memoirs, Correa was particularly interested in the different languages surrounding her neighborhood in Barcelona,[64] the different accents she encountered on the voyage to Mexico, the endless varieties that she was exposed to in Morelia, Puebla, Guadalajara, and Mexico City as a child and adolescent. No matter the genre of her writing, language takes center stage, with rich detail about the linguistic relationships of the others around her. An example of this is her second autobiography and last published book, *Cerezas*. For instance, remembering her Galician friends, she writes:

> Mi padre conversaba con ellos para oírlos hablar maravillosamente pueblerinos, en ese idioma suavecito sin jotas ni ges, que Maruxiña no hablaba pero sí entendía, pues sus padres se habían empeñado en que hablara catalán y castellano sin acento. Maruxiña había nacido en Barcelona como sus hermanos y como yo. (*Cerezas* 30)

Correa continues to explain her grandmother's use of Catalan, "[a]buela Dolores presumía de hablar catalán sin acento andaluz. Su desparpajo era como un cucurucho de risas y carcajadas marineras del Sur" (*Cerezas* 42). Speaking a language without an accent is nonetheless hard, but it was an essential aspect of Dolores' adaptation to a Catalan identity, which would get instilled in Correa. Most of the time, the memories of Abuela Dolores are accompanied by song verses in both Catalan and Spanish, such as:

> A contracorriente de su origen andaluz, abuela cantaba: *Yo soy catalán y porto barretina y el que diga res le tallo la sardina*.
> Muy otro era el sentimiento con que expresaba su nostalgia
> *Pajarillo que vas por los aires*
> *cantando en las ramas de la libertad,*

[64] In *Cerezas*, Correa calls her neighborhood "Villa María Teresa." However, my search for this location within Barcelona did not yield any results.

di al hombre que quiero que venga a mi reja
por la madrugá. (*Cerezas* 47, original emphasis)

Here, Correa expresses the feelings of immigrants trying to assimilate into a host culture but simultaneously having a sense of disconnection and longing for their culture. Gustavo Perez Firmat, in his study of Cuban American culture, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (1994), analyzes the stages of immigrant assimilation. The first is "substitutive," which comes from a place of denial, where displaced people try to create "substitutes or copies of the home culture" (Perez Firmat 6) As the years in exile increase, the "destitution" stage arrives, wherein exiled people feel as if they do not have "a place to stand on" (Perez Firmat 9). Finally, and when "nowhere" begins to feel like home," exile brings the last stage, "here we are" (Perez Firmat 9). The concluding stage has finally established "a new relation between person and place" (Perez Firmat 9). These three stages give the reader an example of how immigrants start their journey into a new country. The first stage is filled with "copies" and "translations," as Perez Firmat calls them, but according to him, they only stay on the surface. More than superficial, translation is an omnipresent force, and once you start looking, you cannot stop seeing your identity as mediated by different layers of translational forces. A clear example of the impact of translation is the generational identities inherited by Correa.

In the excerpts cited above from *Cerezas*, the reader finds two of the stages that Perez Firmat mentions. In the first instance, Abuela Dolores has a new-found pride in her Catalo-Andalusian identity. However, on other occasions, she still longs for a part of her that will never come back. The "substitutive" aspect is an

essential term that I focus on because immigrants, no matter their origin, create new versions, translations as it were, of their cultures. Moreover, the translational aspect is not only topographical but also one of identity, as Perez Firmat declares. The new persona that migrants put on is valuable and indispensable to survive to help those who came with you and those who were left behind.

While in Mexico City and Aguascalientes, Correa engaged in activism. As in other countries, political activism is sometimes synonymous with violence. Mexico's history is no different, with the Matanza de Tlatelolco in 1968, led by the Mexican government as a response to the Movimiento Estudiantil de 1968. This social movement was not only led by university students, professors, and intellectuals; it also brought together different populations: housewives, blue-collar workers, farmers, and other professionals from Mexico City, Coahuila, Durango, Michoacan, Nuevo León, Puebla, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, and Veracruz.

What led up to the Movimiento de 1968 was the dissatisfaction of the Mexican population over the three decades of one-party rule. From 1930 until 2009, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) held the power of the presidency and most of the courts. This social movement was one of the first to destabilize the party's political grip over the country. Declared an international communist ploy to overthrow the democratically elected Mexican government,

Gustavo Díaz Ordas deceived the CIA and the general public, which led to the catastrophic result of the Matanza in 1968.[65]

Aurora Correa's Activist Legacy

Correa's passion for knowledge allowed her to have a multifaceted education. Between 1948 and 1970, Correa's career took her to several institutions of higher education, such as Instituto Francés de América Latina to learn French, the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM), where she studied literature and philosophy, the Instituto Nacional de las Bellas Artes y Literatura (INBAL), where she took acting classes, as well as Mexican media in the form of newspapers, magazines, and radio. She collaborated on publications such as *El Nacional*, *Novedades*, *El Día*, *Brecha*, *Excelsior*, *Siempre*, and *Revista Universitaria* ("Curriculum Vitae"). On September 24, 1963, Correa became a Mexican citizen. Her citizenship was granted by Adolfo López Mateos, Mexican president from 1958 to 1964, the first self-declared left-wing politician[66] since Lázaro Cárdenas.[67] After her citizenship, Correa traveled around the world on many trips from 1967 to 1983,

[65] For more on the investigation of the state crime committed by Díaz Ordaz, see an indepth archival research study conducted by the National Security Archive and *Proceso* magazine: "The Dead of Tlatelolco" (2006).

[66] Alejandro de Anda also reminds us in "La histórica popularidad" that López Mateos "[a]demás de conseguir un crecimiento económico del 78.7% anual [sic]; conseguir para la base trabajadora el beneficio del aguinaldo como prestación obligatoria; obtener la realización de los Juegos Olímpicos de 1968 en suelo mexicano, también era conocido como el presidente viajero" (2018).

[67] According to Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez, "[p]ese a la oposición de la derecha y las presiones de la izquierda, que le demandaban terminar o profundizar algunas medidas gubernamentales, López Mateos logró serenar los ánimos y controlar a los grupos políticos y económicos del país" (qtd from Amador "Adolfo López Mateos: ¿El mejor presidente?"). Before becoming president, he was also the director and politics professor at the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Mexico (UAEMéx).

when she visited Spain, Guatemala, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, the United States, Greece, Italy, France, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Egypt. Around the late 1960s, Correa also became interested in student political movements. She eventually joined the Manifestación del 2 de octubre in the Plaza de las tres culturas, which tragically ended in the Masacre de Tlatelolco. Historians have debated the casualties of this tragic event since the aftermath of the state crime. The most widely accepted numbers are 300-400 deaths on October 2, 1968, and more than one thousand wounded (NPR).

Jáuregui recalls the story his mother told him that day, saying that the only reason the Mexican military did not kill her and the rest of her group was because they were older than the students at the protest (Televisión Universitaria). After this brush with death, Correa stepped away from political activism for several years until 2002, when she demanded justice and remembrance for Los niños de Morelia from the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, opposition leader of the Spanish government from 2000 to 2004. In a letter to Zapatero, Correa writes:

> Señor de mis simpatías claras:
> Usted sabe que los exiliados son como galeotes, sin barco ni remos, en desiertos, polos y mares muertos, y que los niños de la guerra exiliados, además, son despojos de lo que no serán, en perpetua rencarnación de lo que dejaron de ser.
> [...]
> Yo quiero que usted sepa que algunos de estos niños regresaron a España; que la mayoría fue asimilada en México, y que los que aún viven son como heridas viejas del dolor reciente de España, porque ninguno de sus gobiernos democráticos los ha reconocido como niños de la guerra.
> Yo quiero –se lo suplico– que usted se interese e intervenga para que España sea justa y generosa con los sobrevivientes.
> ("Carta de Correa a Zapatero" n.p.)

Correa's letter alludes to the fact that the 464 niños de Morelia had not been recognized as part of the 50,000 children evacuated during the Spanish Civil War. Being recognized as "niños de la guerra" was significant to the exiled Spaniards in Mexico because it finally brought awareness to the group after 66 years of neglect by the Spanish government. It also meant that this cohort could access the benefits of a law established to financially aid to "los ciudadanos de origen español desplazados al extranjero, durante su minoría de edad, como consecuencia de la Guerra Civil, y que desarrollaron la mayor parte de su vida fuera del territorio nacional" (Jefatura de Estado). Implemented on April 1, 2005, and signed into law by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, this statute gave Los niños de Morelia and many others governmental aid of up to 6,090€ annually, depending on the retirement benefit of each individual residing in other countries.

However, the letter to Zapatero was not the first time that Correa had been critical of how the Spanish government had handled Los niños de Morelia's situation. In a series of undated and unknown newspaper columns circa 1955, I uncovered three articles in which Correa explains the plight of Los niños de Morelia with a homonymous title. These three texts were introduced to the reader as: "una serie de artículos histórico-sociológicos de los primeros refugiados españoles que México acogió, durante la Guerra Civil Española[…]" (Correa "Escritos").[68] This first text grounds the reader for a historical and sociological

[68] Although undated, based on the subject matter and her involvement in various newspapers and magazines, Correa could have written these articles between 1962 and 1998.

analysis of why Correa believes the Spanish government failed the children that they sent to Mexico, France, Holland, and Russia.

In the second article, she asks "¿Hasta qué punto afirmativo, el Gobierno de la República Española estaba seguro de perder la guerra, en 1937?" Correa explains that she dares ask this question because for the Spanish government to try and save all these children meant that they accepted their eventual defeat at the hands of the Fascists.[69] The third and last text focuses on the Mexican experience of the children and how they were baptized "huérfanos de la guerra." She goes on to refute the common misbelief that they were orphans when most of them had parents waiting for them in Spain.[70] Lamenting the fate of the children, she explains how the Spanish population, households, fathers, mothers, "ellos jamás sospecharon –ay, no– que perderían a la mayoría de los quinientos "niños de Morelia", bautizados como "huéfanos de la guerra", cuando no lo eran todavía" (Correa "Escritos"). Although most of Los niños de Morelia would go on to join their families, others, as Correa wrote, indeed became orphans after the end of the Spanish Civil War. Writing these articles, then, became her tool to tell her story as one of Los niños de Morelia, thus becoming the first time that she spoke in favor of those who had been silenced or ignored by Spanish or Mexican institutions.

[69] "De ahí que la República al aceptar la responsabilidad de expatriar a su niñez, de perder su futuro, no solo para la República, sino para España, haya temido -después de seis meses de guerra civil- haya aceptado su derrota." (Correa "Escritos").
[70] Although they were not orphans, most of the institutions that housed them in Mexico were orphanages.

Aurora Correa's Writing

After her articles criticizing and contextualizing the feeling of alienation and abandonment by her birth country, Correa went on to publish six books in Mexico: *Agustina Ramírez: heroína del pueblo* (1964), *Odas* (1976), *La muerte de James Dean* (1991), *HA: novela* (1992), *Te beso buenas noches* (1997), and *Cerezas* (2008).

Te beso buenas noches, although fiction, has close ties to Correa's life. It follows from when she was transferred from the Morelia facility to a Catholic orphanage in Puebla, Mexico, through her professional career as a bilingual secretary. The book is told from the point of view of a grandmother sharing the story with her grandchild, and it is, therefore, a look back from years of solitude, suffering, and yearning for family reunification. In an interview with *Revista leer y leer* (1998), she explains that "[e]l libro [*Te beso buenas noches*] es básicamente autobiográfico, sin embargo, lleva la belleza de la fantasía. De la historia real voló la fantasía" ("Entrevista Aurora Correa" 2). This strategy aligns with Correa's virtue with language(s) and how translation was present in her language choices by interpreting her life in a fictional narrative.

To complete the account of her exile experience, she published *Cerezas* in 2008, which narrates, from the point of view of a six-year-old Correa, the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, from the destruction of her neighborhood to the departure of Los niños de Morelia to Mexico. These two books comprise almost a complete autobiography of her childhood and adolescence and how much language influenced her writing.

Additionally, Correa published and staged the play *Misere Negro Misere* (1963), which chronicles some of the lynchings of African Americans in a blend of factual and fictional depictions.[71] She wrote this play based on the injustices and subsequent lynchings happening in the southern United States. Although most of the writing is taken from news of what happened to well-known lynching victims from the decades of 1900 and 1950, Correa takes literary liberty and presents them as poems and even prayers, sometimes including events that are not historically accurate for that time. For example, in her rendition of the Birmingham campaign, Correa predicted the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, saying:

> Hijo de sacerdote,
> nieto de sacerdote,
> sacerdote tú mismo
> CORO: MARTIN LUTHER KING
> serás acuchillado,
> serás acribillado,
> serás despedazado,
> serás incinerado
> ahorcado, negro, sí,
> CORO: MARTIN LUTHER KING
> por haber levantado tu voz
> en la jungla epidérmica de Norteamérica. (*Misere Negro Misere* 54)

In this short excerpt, the reader can see Luther King Jr.'s impact on Correa and to see civilians coming together against injustice, racism, and systemic violence,

[71] Although her fiction work and play-scripts have not been the subject of scholarly research, Katia Ibarra Guerrero has studied her collection of poetry Odas in "Poéticas soterradas: mujeres del exilio menor en México" (2020) and *Cerezas* was one of the texts analyzed by Biagio Grillo in "El niño y la Gorgona. La mirada ficcional de la niñez sobre la guerra civil como contradiscurso literario en Campobello, Calvino y Correa" (2021). Although Grillo studies one of the memoirs, this dissertation is the first one to study and analyze Correa's use of translation strategies and elements in her memoirs, novels, and plays.

which influenced her involvement in the Movimiento Estudiantil de 1968 mentioned in the section above.

Right after her debut as a playwright, she delved into history and wrote *Augustina Ramírez: la heroína del pueblo* (1964), an account of an overlooked figure of the Mexican Revolution, followed by her first and only published poetry collection, *Odas* (1976). This last book's theme reflects on her memories from Barcelona and how much it had changed since she was exiled as a seven-year-old. In "Bisonte de Altamira," she laments the city's transformation, which eventually led to her decision to stay in Mexico and not return to Spain:

> Olfateada la tarde descompuesta,
> busco el dintel de mis mayores,
> el familiar osario entre la miel silvestre,
> la antropomorfa seguridad calcárea,
> donde llevar a descansar a los fósiles futuros
> [...]
> Regreso.
> No quiero convertirme en automóvil.
> No quiero transformarme en avión o en chorro.
> No quiero alimentarme de petróleo.
> No quiero estimular mi espíritu en el oro. (*Odas* 15)

The Bison of Altamira that Correa alludes to is one of the most famous prehistoric paintings in the north of Spain in the Altamira cave. In an anthropomorphized version of the bison, she pictures him as having human senses and even rejecting all aspects of modern life. Similarly, a personal interview with Juan Carlos Jáuregui, recounted her mother's dislike for a Barcelona that she did not recognize as her home anymore because of the modernization that had occurred in the last 31 years

since Correa's departure. Analogous to her return to her birthplace, the Bison suffered a similar distrust and disdain when he failed to find a familiar land.

My archival research also unearthed a poem written by Correa in her return to Barcelona in 1980. Titled "Barcelona: La búsqueda que no encontré" the narrator laments that she is following an invented childhood:

> No es fácil entender
> esto de estar aquí sin mí
> persiguiendo una infancia
> que yo no sé si invento o si viví
>
> Volver al punto de nacer
> sin ser. ("Barcelona" n.p.)

Coming back to the place where she was born evokes overwhelming feelings, so much so that even Montjuïc and Montserrat cannot center her path.[72] The memory of her cherry tree is also not good enough to deliver catharsis, and in turn, it only brings "infantiles sombras familiares" (Correa "Barcelona," n.p.). It is the feeling of alienation that leads her to conclude that:

> Con el cuerpo prestado de un adulto,
> uno más entre otros,
> vago por la ciudad,
> el mar recorro,
> busco por la montaña
> el ser en que me agobio
> por no encontrar la infancia
> amada de mis ojos.
>
> No soy.
> No fui.
> Y no seré.
> Historizo la vida

[72] "El Monjuit es la gran cuesta que / asciendo en busca de mi infancia. / Ruta extraviada cada paso / de ese rompeilusiones que es vivir" and "exprimo la ubre del recuerdo / en Monserrat"

que aprendí de mi ser. (“Barcelona,” n.p.)

As these verses exemplify, it is common for a child to dissociate from trauma experienced during and after armed conflict. The American Psychiatric Association defines dissociation as “a disconnection between a person’s thoughts, memories, feelings, actions or sense of who he or she is,” in which during “a traumatic experience such as an accident, disaster or crime victimization, dissociation can help a person tolerate what might otherwise be too difficult to bear” (Drescher). As Biagio Grillo has written about *Cerezas,* Correa’s narrative “cumple[sic] con una búsqueda de significados individuales y colectivos (búsqueda que une en un diálogo a los autores “reales” como a los narradores, a los niños que en la ficción de la novela viven el evento historíco […])” (9). In this sense, Correa could only recount and tell her story from a place of both individual and collective memory. However, I disagree with Grillo’s use of the word “novela” as it implies that all the text is a fictional narrative, so I have opted to call both *Cerezas* and *Te beso buenas noches* memoirs.[73] Correa’s fiction work, on the other hand, showcases this blend of fiction and historical events that Grillo proposes in his thesis.

Rewriting in the Fiction of Aurora Correa

After a literary hiatus from 1970 to the late 80s, Correa returned in 1991 with her first book of fiction, *La muerte de James Dean* (*JD* from now on), a novel that, like

[73] I found proof in her archive that Correa did think of *Te beso buenas noches* as an autobiographical account with “fantasía” (“Entrevista Aurora Correa” 2). Here I argue that she had that feeling because looking back to a traumatic event can bring about fantastical elements that allowed the person to survive. That is why, for most of the book, Currecha, the protagonist, is characterized as a hero for surviving dangerous experiences.

her play, is inspired by factual l accounts of the Hollywood actor. translation strategies resulting from writing about famous U.S. and English-speaking cultural figures in Spanish. Already on the novel's second page, the reader notices the play between Spanish and English. Although the conversation between James Dean and Guadalupe is in English, the narrator presents it in Spanish since it is the main language of the book. However, there is still a mention of the difficulty that native-English speakers have with Spanish names, thus pointing out that the conversation originally happened in English:

> —[…] ¿Cómo te llamas?
> —… Dean
> —Yo me llamo Guadalupe –se ufanó, pronunciando cada sílaba, divertido porque conocía la dificultad que representaba para los gringos pronunciar su nombre. (Correa *JD,* 10)

More explicitly, in one of the last chapters, the interlingual translation strategy comes up again, this time in a flower shop with two of Dean's fans:

> —¿Me das tu autógrafo?
> —Encantado. Es un honor –agregó en español y Mechita suspiró. (Correa *JD,* 184)

The addition of "es un honor" and the clarification that this was said in Spanish further proves that the conversations with Spanish speakers happen in English but are translated into Spanish, the language of the book. These scenes bring attention to the interlinguistic nature of Correa's writing, and there are also textual markers in other sections that point to Mexican regionalism and words in another language. For example, there are words in italics, such as "*orita*" (Correa *JD,* 12- 14) and in quotation marks to emphasize the auditory feel "Tiguana" (Correa *JD,* 11), or

to make reference to Spanish or English words: "kid" (Correa *JD,* 15), "catarro" (Correa *JD,* 16), *system star* (Correa *JD,* 30), "esporman" (Correa *JD,* 94), "*Orbi et urbi*" (Correa *JD,* 125), "puritito gusto" (Correa *JD,* 165), "*lord*" (Correa *JD,* 167, 168, 169, 170), "bujeritos"[74] (Correa *JD,* 174), *Sunset Boulevard* (Correa *JD,* 181), "*amigo*" (Correa *JD*, 190).

The publication success of *James Dean* led Correa to become a finalist in the Premio Planeta Internacional and to publish another novel the following year. *HA: novela* (from now on *HA*) is an account written from the point of view of Mayan children that incorporates Mayan mythology and the devastating effects an epidemic has on a Yucatec Mayan community. The significance of these two texts resides in the fact that they directly and indirectly talk about languages, English and Spanish in the former and Spanish and Yucatec Mayan in the latter.

The novel's name, "HA," already points the reader to Mayan, in which this term means "water." There are other textual references to Spanish, English, and Mayan, and the mix of factual and fictional events so characteristic of Correa, regardless of genre. For example, before the novel's start and after a dedication to her only son, there is an untitled section with a glossary of Mayan words used in the text. However, the lack of naming the language from which these words come from causes confusion among readers. It is not until the word "CHAMÁN — Autoridad maya" (Correa *HA,* 9) that one identifies the language. Also important

[74] From the word "agujero" ["holes"], or in this case "agujerito," but spelled "bujerito" to stay closer to the pronunciation of the word in Mexico.

to highlight is that this variety of Mayan is Yucatec Mayan. There are other words omitted from the glossary, such as "Abreu-kin" (Correa *HA,* 14), "Can-Ha" (Correa *HA,* 30), "xtabentún" (Correa *HA,* 39), "ixtle" (Correa *HA,* 43), "Xel-ha" (Correa *HA,* 45), "henequén" (Correa *HA,* 47), "Haan-cab" (Correa *HA,* 53), and "ixtabentún" (Correa *HA,* 68). There is also a loan word from English, "yip" [Jeep] (Correa *HA,* 45), and multiple mentions to different languages "—¿Habla español o maya? / —Castellano" (Correa *HA,* 16), "No hablaban el maya de los antepasados ni el castellano de hoy" (Correa *HA,* 61- 62),[75] "Maldecía en maya" (Correa *HA,* 73) and other indigenous communities of Mexico, "Se parecerá a aquel largo tiempo del translado de los yaquis" (Correa *HA,* 79). There are also instances when one of the characters recounts stories from Mayan mythology with names of Roman or Greek historical or mythological figures, such as "El rey maya Pericles" (Correa *HA,* 48), "El rey maya Leónidas" (Correa *HA,* 60), "La princesa maya Olimpia" (Correa *HA,* 93), "El rey maya Homero" (Correa *HA,* 130). Although none of these have textual markers, they nonetheless have an auditory feel that confronts the reader with different words, languages, and their varieties that make the story seem plausible among all the fictional narratives.

In a 1993 review, Beatriz Donnet alludes to Correa's literary style by asking "[p]ero ¿es *Ha* una novela cien por ciento literaria o el producto de la ficción, en la cual Aurora Correa recrea acontecimientos que podrían o no ser ciertos?"

[75] In this section of the novel, there is also a mention to an interpreter, which then gets confused with a translator: "Se valían del intérprete, el traductor. […] El traductor lo repetía, despacito, y los extranjeros respondían" (*Ha* 62).

("Reseña" 114). Indeed, just like the readers do not know if a factual event really happened, they do not know if the fictional story is based on real experiences. But why is this the case for most of Correa's writing? If one looks closely at the literary tools at her disposal, using different languages mimics the reality of everyday encounters, such as in the examples presented in this chapter. By using two or three dialects or languages, Correa captures the beauty of speech with textual markers in italics or quotation marks, and sometimes, the lack of these normalizes something speakers and writers participate in but seldom think about: the beauty of language contact and its evolution through time.

Correa is not the first Spanish author to write and fictionalize this literature contact between Iberian, mestizo, and Indigenous cultures. In 1940, Ramón Sender published *Mexicayotl: Viñetas de Darío Carmona*. Once again, the title already hints at an Indigenous language. In Nahuatl, "mexicayotl" refers to the "essence of the Mexican." Although unrelated to Sender, the word was also used during a Mexican cultural movement in the 1950s that had as its goal the reviving of indigenous religion, philosophy, and traditions of ancient Mexico.[76] To study the creation of this new hybrid identity in Iberian writers, a new avenue of research would benefit from a Translation Studies perspective to elucidate the ways in which these authors adapt and rewrite indigenous myths, legends, and histories.

[76] As a movement, Mexicayotl falls under? the same label of cultural appropriation since the traditions they claim not only have nothing to do with the realities and challenges of being part of an Indigenous community in Mexico, but also exclude Indigenous populations.

A Sweet Multilingual Gift to Literature, Culture, and Society

Correa's life and work demonstrate the power of language and translation in shaping one's worldview and activism. As a child refugee in Mexico, Correa discovered her love for words and languages, which she later used to create impactful literary works with hybrid language narratives and characters. Her use of translation elements and strategies, as well as her rewriting and transadaptation techniques, allowed her to express her political and social views through her writing. Moreover, her activism extended beyond literature, as she participated in political efforts and advocated for the rights of Los niños de Morelia.

By studying Correa's work through a translational lens, Translation Studies gains a deeper understanding of the impact of translation in shaping literature and activism, such as how multilingual writers use several languages in their text, the significance of travel in experiencing and interpreting hybrid realities around their home culture and beyond, and finally, giving voice to silenced or forgotten populations and communities. Her life and work inspire future generations to use language and translation as tools for promoting social justice and advocating for marginalized communities. In addition, her story reminds us of the importance of acknowledging and preserving the histories of refugees and migrants and the impact of displacement on their lives.

CHAPTER V: TRANSLATION IN WRITING AND INTERPRETING IN PRACTICE VALERIA LUISELLI AS A WRITER, EDUCATOR, AND VOLUNTEER

A ratos es confuso y abrumador, y no son pocas las veces que nos perdemos en el área gris en la que termina la traducción y empieza la interpretación.

— Valeria Luiselli
Los niños perdidos: Un ensayo en cuarenta preguntas

Immigrant Advocacy in Translation and Interpreting

"[N]arrative provides a basis for shared language and values, thus enabling the movilization of numerous individuals with different backgrounds and attributes around specific political, humanitarian, or social issues," argues Mona Baker in "Translation and Activism: Emerging Patterns of Narrative Community" (2010) tying translation, power, and activism for political engagement. The relationship between translation and activism may not be immediately obvious to readers, especially the ones who inadvertently overlook the acts of translation around us, but it can be observed in numerous instances when one pays close attention to the politics of literature. As the above quote from Baker points out, the use of narrative theory in acts of political translation has the ability to mobilize and politically engage readers, while at the same time presenting a critical approach to studying the role of translation in activism

Translation as activism can take multiple forms in literature. One of which is the subject of study in this chapter, and materializes in the value and influence translation has had in the life and work of Valeria Luiselli (1983 -). Her linguistic background and the fact that she has lived in multiple countries with numerous

languages before finally settling in the United States 10 years ago[77] have shaped her writing. It is not only the use of multiple languages in her writing, but more so, it is the magnification of the translational matters that bring together or separate the languages, such as the use of characters who are translators and the incorporation of multiple languages into her texts. What sets her apart from other authors who also write about translation and translators is the role that her teaching and public persona has had on both her writing and political involvement. From her collaboration with Jumex workers[78] or the writing workshops she has led for unaccompanied minor girls,[79] to the public denunciations of the treatment of migrants on the border,[80] and the encouragement she brings to students in the classroom,[81] the role of the translator as mediator and advocate has been an active element in her writing. By converging translation, education, and activism, Luiselli brings a new age of translation as activism to literature and allows this dissertation to study her work from Translation and Literary Studies perspectives.

In 2011, Siri Nergaard and Stephano Arduin proposed in "Translation: A New Paradigm" that translation "has become a fecund and frequent metaphor for our contemporary intercultural world, and scholars from many disciplines, for

[77] As James Wood writes in "Writing About Writing About the Border Crisis" (2019) for *The New Yorker*, Luiselli received her greencard to permanently reside in the United States after the summer of 2014.
[78] Which eventually led to the bilingual publication of *El cazador y la fábrica / The Hunter and the Factory* (2013).
[79] Luiselli talked about her experience to Harvard students as reported by Nicole M. Hernandez Abud in "'Sometimes and Across': Exploring the Power of Words in the Midst of Child Detention with Valeria Luiselli" for *The Harvard Crimson* in 2023.
[80] For more on this, listen to "Valeria Luiselli on the US immigration crisis" in *The TLS Podcast* (2017)
[81] As exemplified on *Tell Me How It Ends* (2017).

instance, linguistics, comparative literature, cultural studies, anthropology, psychology, communication and social behavior, and global studies have begun investigating translational phenomena" (8), so that in this way it can evoke different conceptualizations "to promote the idea of a multiple transdisciplinary concept of translation" (10). This chapter follows Nergaard and Arduin in that it approaches translation as a process, not a result, in which it reveals the ways Luiselli engages not only with different languages but translation in general. I analyze her last two books, *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en 40 preguntas* (2016) and *Lost Children Archive* (2019), and make connections to her doctoral dissertation to describe the way she uses translation as activism. Lastly, I detail the significance of her teaching to her task as an activist to newly arrived immigrants to Long Island, New York. Through her activities, the aim is to describe how communities can learn, engage, and help in the immigration crisis in the United States, which goes beyond understanding the problem and, in turn, finding solutions. Language and translation are vital for this study since they reveal the significance of different languages and cultures have on readers and how translators and interpreters take on political and social engagement to be of service to their community.

Moreover, by looking at the ways in which Luiselli engages with translation, this chapter also contributes to the ongoing research in Translator Studies and the continued development of Feminist Translator Studies. On the one hand, Andrew

Chesterman explains in "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies" (2009) that there are three branches of Translator Studies:

> The cultural branch deals with values, ethics, ideologies, traditions, history, examining the roles and infl uences of translators and interpreters through history, as agents of cultural evolution. The cognitive branch deals with mental processes, decision-making, the impact of emotions, attitudes to norms, personality, etc. The sociological branch deals with translators' / interpreters' observable behaviour as individuals or groups or institutions, their social networks, status and working processes, their relations with other groups and with relevant technology, and so on. (19)

These three branches allow for a comprehensive understanding of translators' attitudes, history, and emotions toward the text and the groups of institutions around them. This sociological perspective, Chesterman argues, "forces us to adjust our traditional models of the object of our research" and instead focus on the agents involved in translation (20). Changing the object of study from translations to translators permits us to bring the activist efforts of the agents into the spotlight. On this, and although investigating the role of feminist translators in publishing, Helen Vassallo in *Towards a Feminist Translator Studies* (2023) has studied the bias not only against translated literature in the United States but also the disproportionate number of women translators in the industry (146). "Rather than thinking or theorising about how to translate," Vassallo concludes, "feminist translator studies is concerned with how translations occur and how we can change for the better the processes and practices that bring translated literature into circulation" (147). Furthermore, she encourages feminist scholars and activists to adopt and expand the approach she has created, "using case studies of agents

rather than texts to showcase good practice and to advance models that could become more widespread" (Vassallo 152). The translator activist model, as I have opted to call it, could start by looking at contemporary writers to elucidate the way in which they perceive the work of translators and interpreters and how their political engagement is informed by this work.

Building on the notion of feminist translators as agents of change presented above, this chapter investigates "the impact of emotions [and] attitudes to norms" (Chesterman 19) as well as translators' and interpreters' observable behavior as individuals and their relations with groups around them, taking as object of study Luiselli's experiences as a translator and interpreter. Beyond a descriptive approach to her work in translation and interpreting, I demonstrate that her practice of these two interpretative acts as an immigrant woman displays characteristics that further advance the model of a women translator fighting for social justice.

Luiselli's Linguistic Background

Born in Mexico City in 1983, Luiselli has lived in seven countries, connecting with multiple languages and cultures. She spent her childhood in Mexico, but during her adolescence, she moved to the United States. From 2006 to 2008, she traveled extensively all over the world. She speaks and writes in Spanish and English and has encountered French, Italian, Portuguese, Hindi, Korean, and some of the languages of South Africa, such as Afrikaans. Luiselli began writing at the age of 19 when she enrolled at the National Autonomous University of Mexico to major in

philosophy in 2002. Her multilingual background is appreciated in the characters of her novels and short stories as they either have an immigrant background, speak different languages, or are translators. She received her doctorate degree from Columbia University, where she was a student from 2008 to 2015. During these years, she taught Spanish-language classes and comparative literature courses to university students, which impacted her interaction with immigration processes. Luiselli's publications to date include three novels: *Los ingrávidos* (2011), *La historia de mis dientes* (2013), and *Lost Children Archive* (2019); and two essay collections: *Papeles falsos* (2010) and *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en 40 preguntas* (2016). She has received several awards and nominations for her work, most notably the translation of her novel *The Story of My Teeth* (2015) by Christina MacSweeney was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Best Translated Book Award, and won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Best Fiction and the Premio Metropolis Azul in Montreal. Most recently, her latest novel *Lost Children Archive*, her first work in English, won the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction in 2020, and she was the recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship in 2019.

Luiselli's writing and activism for unaccompanied immigrant minors is vital for the interpreting and translation work she does for them. She translates documents for families or interprets their legal interactions. Her scholarly writing has translation as a center that studies Mexican modernism from a translational lens. Luiselli's role as a writer and interpreter is significant since her previous

writing is more closely related to translation. However, it is in this intersection between writer and interpreter that her activism comes to light. Although she is not active in Academia, she has opened a new path in which she is both a practitioner and a writer, which opens new and unique avenues of inquiry.

Like Victoria Kent and Aurora Correa, Luiselli offers her translation, language skills, knowledge, and creativity to help those in need. Reflecting on her role as a volunteer translator and interpreter, her 2016 non-fiction book, *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en 40 preguntas*, and her 2019 novel *Lost Children Archive*, grapple with the moral and ethical qualms of the translation and interpreting profession and her willingness to help immigrants. In *Lost Children Archive*, the female protagonist gives an account of how she followed the migrant crisis at the U.S. border:

> Terrible news.
> Now, inside the car, when we drive through more populated areas, we scan for a radio signal and tune in. Whenever I can find news about the situation at the border, I raise the volume and we all listen: hundreds of children arriving alone, every day, thousands every week. The broadcasters are calling it an immigration crisis. A mass influx of children, they call it, a sudden surge. (39)

Luiselli, like the rest of the United States, heard about the border emergency of unaccompanied children in the same way, through television news, radio shows, or newspapers. However, her previous experience with immigration and the fact that her daughter was roughly the same age as the children, made her have a deeper connection to the situation at the border. Luiselli's experience with the migrant crisis is similar to the fictionalized account of how her protagonist followed the

news during her road trip through the desert in *Lost Children Archive*. Just as Luiselli, the mother in the novel, who the reader never gets to know her name, is an immigrant who has a daughter and is aware of what is going on in la frontera because she had been interpreting for a mother waiting to be reunited with her daughters. The characters in the novel wait anxiously for any new developments in the news, but in reality, this is the same way she felt since the fictitious circumstances are similar to her real life.

In parallel to her life, Luiselli's character encounters a mother who asks her to be the translator of her two daughters' documents and later their interpreter in a meeting with potential lawyers. Correspondingly, in *Los niños perdidos: un ensayo en 40 preguntas* (*Los niños* from now on), Luiselli explains how she got involved in volunteer translation and interpretation. While waiting for her Green Card, Luiselli's lawyer left her case for a non-profit organization: "Creo que gracias a la Green Card perdida, y gracias a que mi abogada abandonó mi caso, me pude involucrar con un problema mayor al mío" (*Los niños* 21). Because of this, in March 2015, Luiselli got involved with the American Immigration Lawyers Association and The Door. The task was simple enough for the lawyers:

> El plan era que, a lo largo de ese primer día, para aprender a hacer las entrevistas del cuestionario de admisión, acompañáramos cada quien a una abogada. Eran cuarenta preguntas, y simplemente había que traducírselas a los niños, tomar nota, y luego traducir sus respuestas a una abogada. (24-25)

The phrase "simplemente había que traducírselas a los niños" erases all the complexities that translation and interpreting bring to their practitioners. But as

Luiselli explains in her account, the reality is more intricate and involves many skills, with the knowledge of a language being only one of them. One of the issues of her work as an interpreter and translator for these unaccompanied children is that their stories do not follow a linear timeline of events. Most of the people she interprets for have suffered tremendous trauma traveling from their countries of origin to the Mexico-U.S. border and then to the New York City area where she works. As she explains, "[e]l problema es que las historias de los niños siempre llegan como revueltas, llenas de interferencia, casi tartamudeadas. Son historias de vidas tan devastadas y rotas, que a veces resulta imposible imponerles un orden narrativo" (*Los niños* 5). Therefore, the children's stories are convoluted, difficult to understand, and sometimes even broken. This aspect of their stories turns her work as interpreter and translator into a challenge since her job is to maintain the essence of the narration while being unbiased. At the same time, her experiences with immigration courts and offices –she was waiting for her Green Card while writing both books— make her want to aid these children in the best way possible so that they can reunite with their relatives on this side of the Río Grande.

"Pretoria" (2010): Luiselli's Early Writing

Although her publishing career began in 2010 after moving to the United States in 2008, Luiselli's life has been influenced by several languages and countries around the world. As a ten-year-old, she moved to South Africa with her father, Cassio Luiselli Fernández, who was there as the first Mexican ambassador after apartheid (Guimón n.p.). In Pretoria, or what is now called Tshwane, she lived with him and

experienced firsthand South Africa's transition to democracy (Luiselli, "Pretoria" 44). She attended Saint Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, Daughters of the King and was fluent in English by then. While in that country, Luiselli was exposed to Xhosa, Zulu, Sesotho, and Afrikaans by her father's chauffeur, Sam Bomba ("Pretoria" 45). Since adolescence, she had a keen sense of awareness of how discrimination is perceived, especially since her father had a privileged position and they were newcomers to South Africa. Luiselli attributes what she calls "class guilt" to her mother. Talking about her first day of school in "Pretoria," she explains:

> Había un chofer que me esperaba afuera de la casa, Sam Bomba, a quien chantajé desde el primer día para que me dejara a una cuadra de la escuela porque gracias a mi madre sufría cierta culpa de clase –y andar en un volvo conducido por un negro con guantes blancos, me parecía, era equivalente a formar parte de la Inquisición. (45)

As a foreigner to the country, she understands the change that the nation was facing at that moment and tries to better the situation. It is also this awareness that makes her realize that while she has privilege as the daughter of an ambassador, she is nonetheless an immigrant to the country. Luiselli writes:

> ¿Tú qué eres?, me preguntó el primer día una niña de ojos enormes que se sentaba detrás de mí, ¿griega o libanesa? Yo griega, le dije–porque no sabía qué significaba libanesa. Yo también, me dijo ella. Así que desde el primer día me gané un pase de admisión al grupo de las inmigrantes ni-blancas-ni-negras" ("Pretoria"45).

From a young age, and despite her privileged position, she recognizes what it is to be an immigrant, something she explores after moving to the United States.

Luiselli's Immigration to NYC and Comparative Literature Research

In 2008, Luiselli arrived in New York City from Mexico. Since then, she has engaged with the city in multiple ways. In 2014, she volunteered as an interpreter and translator for unaccompanied immigrant minors. Just as she writes about foreign artists' influence on Mexico, I study her last two books have put forward a new perspective on immigration using translational strategies and activism. I argue here that her dissertation sets the foundations of all her later translation work. In this way, translation and interpreting interact with the spaces she inhabits not only as a writer in the city but as an interpreter who advocates inside and outside of her volunteering work. A study later in the chapter, Luiselli's last two novels bring space alive in an audible way through textual markers. Hence, her approach to writing shows new ways of interacting with space, which leads to activism. What differentiates her style of writing and using translation is that it goes beyond paper and the way of hearing and listening. Thus, she engages with languages in specific spaces, such as her volunteering location or her classroom, in which she develops a safe space capable of great transformation.

Although most known for her creative writing, Luiselli has engaged in Translation Studies and the practice of translation and interpreting for some of her projects. Her dissertation, *Translation Spaces: Mexico City in the International Modernist Circuit* (2015), included several Spanish texts that she had to translate into English. As any academic text, Luiselli gives a note on translations and images saying:

> This dissertation carries over work from Mexican modernist writers into English. Although a few texts that I use here have been translated to English, the great majority have not. All the translations from Spanish or French into English are therefore my own, unless otherwise specified.
> (*Translation Spaces* viii)

Even in this short fragment, the reader understands the significance of translation to the overall project. The use of "carries over" has a translational element dating back to the origin of the word "translation," "transfero" ["carried across"] from Latin, which is present not only in her scholarship, but also in her creative writing.

Luiselli's dissertation draws "from translation theory, architectural history, transatlantic modernism, and the spatial semiology and hermeneutics" to study different architectural spaces to analyze "specific translation practices that took place in them, such as literary translation, film dubbing and subtitling in modern sound cinemas, urban photography, adaptations of architectural languages to local needs, as well as literary representations and discussions of modern spaces" (*Translation Spaces* n.p.). She studies not only the work of Mexican authors and artists but the work of foreign nationals, most of them from the United States, who arrived in Mexico City and "engaged with it in ways that began to transform its image, both inside and abroad" (*Translation Spaces* 4). Her research, I argue, sets the foundation for all her later work not only in translation, but also in volunteer interpreting and in activism. I analyze, as she does in her dissertation, the ways in which translation and interpreting interact with space. As mentioned above, I am not interested in the results of the task, but rather the way in which translation can bring a place alive, not only graphically, but also in an audible way. To

understand how this works in Luiselli's world, I examine the places she has written about, the spaces where her translation or interpreting work happens and how she interacts with them, starting with her first published books.

Multilingual Writing and Translation Elements in Fiction: *Papeles Falsos* (2010), *Los ingrávidos* (2011), y *La historia de mis dientes* (2013)

Examples of Luiselli's writing include the previously mentioned use of translational strategies in both non-fiction and fiction texts. Textual markers indicate different voices in literary texts, but readers also expect them whenever a text calls for a special way to show the uniqueness of a character or situation, such as foreign languages or stream of consciousness. In these works, one often finds translations in italics or in between quotation marks. One of the most used strategies is italics. This translational approach signals the reader to pay attention to the text, such as *saudade* in *Papeles falsos*. The use of italics is one of the keyways to bring attention to a word or a phrase as well as other techniques authors use. Luiselli's oeuvre is not the exception as using text in italics is not the only translation strategy in her writing.

Luiselli makes use of quotation marks throughout *La historia de mis dientes* to give a more auditory feel to the text. In a particular instance, when Gustavo and the priest are talking about how to maximize the profit in one of his last actions, the *cura* says "Teníamos que aprovechar al máximo el foro y contexto de la misa para sacarles unos «moneys» –así dijo, en inglés y en plural" (*La historia* 26). The way the fragment written with the English word in quotation marks makes the

reader pause and think about how a Mexican character might pronounce the word or phrase. However, the English language and Japanese are not the only ones present in the text. French is also used in the auction to try and convince the public that a pair of dentures belonged to "el señor Montaña, o Montaigne en buen francés." Gustavo recalls that:

> ¿El secreto de sus longevos dientes? El señor Montaigne decía: «J'ay aprins dés l'enfance à les froter de ma serviette, et le matin, et à l'entrée et issue de la table». O sea, que aprendió desde la infancia a frotárselos con su servilleta en la mañana, y también antes y después de la cena.
>
> (*La historia* 34)

The use of both languages, Spanish and French, is an example of interlingual translation or translation proper. Interlingual translation, first coined by Roman Jakobson in "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959), refers to the translation of writing in one language into another (233). On the other hand, intralingual translation is the translation of writing in one language into the same language (Jakobson 233). The reader finds examples of both types of translation in Luiselli's nonfiction writing about her volunteering work.

Lastly, and most recently, Luiselli guest-edited a book of 20 short stories for The O. Henry Prize, an award given to short stories of exceptional merit. The main reason why she decided to edit *The Best Short Stories 2022* was because The O. Henry Prize is now open to "any [authors] not only "American" ones" ("A Fertile Contamination" n.p.). Even as an editor, Luiselli upholds the same stance toward translation as in her writing. Out of the 20 short stories, selected 10 were in translation. She states that this serves as a recognition of "a moment in which we

are beginning to open the doors and windows of this old locked-down house, letting new light and air come in to stir us powerfully into movement" (Luiselli "A Fertile Contamination") This metaphor of the newly opened house has been used in the past to describe the revitalizing effect that translation has on literary cultures. The polysystems theory, coined by Itamar Even-Zohar, seeks to describe the way in which cultural phenomena occur. As Anthony Pym describes in *Exploring Translation Theories*:

> Rather than focus on literary systems in isolation, Even-Zohar has sought to see cultures as "polysystems," roughly as large, heterogeneous and complex systems (such as "Israeli culture," "French culture") within which there are smaller systems like literature, language, law, architecture, family life, and so on (hence the "poly," meaning "many"). (224)

As such, the polysystems theory then investigates the influences of foreign systems on specific areas. Although the theory could be used to describe a myriad of systems, Even-Zohar focuses on the literature and the complex but circumscribed relationship it has with translation. On the innovative force of translation, Even-Zohar argues that:

> To say that translated literature maintains a central position in the literary polysystem means that it participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem. In such a situation it is by and large an integral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary history while these are taking place. (46)

Although common to assume that these changes happen in the periphery, Luiselli's edited book proves Even-Zohar's theory in that a very prestigious award is now recognizing the significance of translation and translators. The change in perceptions has not only been welcomed by institutions, but also by the general

public. *The Best Short Stories 2022* was on the bestseller list of *Los Angeles Times* twice since its launch (The California Independent Booksellers Alliance n.p.)

The way in which Luiselli approaches and engages in translation is varied as presented in this section. Her writing uses both translation proper and intralingual translation as a means to show that translational elements are all around us. In this sense, her approach is not merely translation proper from one language to another, but it also reveals the process of translation. The objective of these strategies, I argue, remains the same in all her writing since the texts continually make the reader aware of the different languages or language varieties at play and how translation and interpretation ultimately bridge them together. Textual markers are essential for this goal as they show translation at work while giving the text a more unique and auditory feel. New changes in award policies, such as the O. Henry Prize now accepting stories in translation, reflect the increase in interest in translation and translational elements in literature, which in turn brings more literature that focuses on translational matters.

Luiselli's writing is partial to translation and languages due to the myriads of characters who have a bilingual or multilingual background. This fact is nothing new to fiction as writers have been inspired by multiple cultures and languages. Luiselli's style is different in that it is in constant conversation with translational matters. Nonetheless, current scholarship focuses on other aspects of her writing, such as her avant-garde adaptation of the flâneur in *Papeles falsos* (Liesbeth François 2019), the duality of characters and metafiction in *Los ingrávidos* (Regina

Cardoso Nelky 2014), and the transactional power of the story[82] in *La historia de mis dientes* (Marco Ramírez Rojas 2018). To elucidate Luiselli's translational strategies, I propose to look at in depth the ways in which the role of the translator and themes are presented in her work.

Papeles falsos (*Papeles* from now on) transports readers to different settings and cultures. One place is the grave of Joseph Brodzky in Italy and another is more of a feeling. Luiselli transfers readers to the imaginary, allowing them to wonder about a single word. *Saudade*, she says, "es una de esas palabras intraducibles que sólo comprenden quienes aman, gozan y sufren en portugués" (*Papeles* 45). It is not uncommon for languages to have inequivalent words, but the narrator of the essay seems fixated on the word, not so much for its definitions, but more for the emotion that it carries with it. Later on, in *Papeles*, the narration continues with the translations of *saudade* into different languages, something which is reminiscent of travel writers and their accounts. Loredana Polezzi writes in *Translating Travel: Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation* about this comparative translation phenomenon that "[t]he final, all-encompassing 'translation' operated by travel writing pervasive act of representation and interpretation of the Other, [is] aimed at making alien places and people first intelligible and then familiar to the home culture and reader" (97). In this book

[82] Ramírez Rojas explains that by enumerating multiple Mexican and Latinamerican writers in *La historia de mis dientes* via multimedia elements in the novel, Luiselli does a "recopilación y organización de saberes que no se limita a la dimensión del papel sino que aparece como una dimensión híbrida, permeable, en permanente
renovación y que se adapta a cambios históricos, sociales y tecnológicos" (346). The novel itself can be seen as the archive that brings new intellectuals to the cannon of Latinamerican literature.

Luiselli writes about the specific place (the grave) or people (Lusophone speakers) and tries to bring the reader to the Lusophone culture by way of translation. She explains that:

> La *saudade* no es *homesickness* ni es *heimweh*. El *kaihomielisyys* finlandés, aunque recuerde a *home* y a *miel*, expresa sólo su dimensión más invernal. El *söknudur* islandés es seco; el *tesknota* polaco apenas la toca;. al *lack* inglés le falta algo; el *stesk* checo se encoje; y en el *ihaldus* estonio la «h» es helada. La *morriña* rueda hacia ella como una piedra de trayectoria asintótica. Los brazos largos del *longing* no la alcanzan. En *Sehnsucht* se demora demasiado una «e». (*Papeles* 46)

This short fragment demonstrates two aspects of Luiselli's writing. First, she uses her vast knowledge of languages to recreate both the sound and visual elements of a word that the reader might not know. A knowledge that is not only appreciated in her non-fiction writing, but also in novels and other texts she has worked on. Secondly, this excerpt also displays her interest in translation and translatability. It is the latter that is more prominent in her subsequent publications and as she continues to write, the focus on translation becomes more essential to the themes of her books.

In her first novel, *Los ingrávidos* (*Ingrávidos* from now on), the central topic is the authenticity of a translation accredited to Louis Zukofsky, an American poet born in New York City's Lower East Side and founder of objectivism.[83] In the novel, there are two narrators: Gilberto Owen, the Mexican poet and diplomat, and a female narrator living in Manhattan. The novel gravitates around her and the

[83] Modernist poetry movement where the poem is treated as an object to emphasize the poet's look at the world.

haunting presence of Owen in her life. Although the protagonist's name is unknown, the rest of the narrator's life is explained at the beginning:

> En esa ciudad vivía sola en un departamento casi vacío. Dormía poco. Comía mal y sin variar mucho. Llevaba una vida sencilla, una rutina. Trabajaba como dictaminadora y traductora en una editorial pequeña que se dedicaba a rescatar «perlas extranjeras» que nadie compraba –porque al fin y al cabo estaban destinadas a una cultura insular donde la traducción se abomina por inpura–. Pero me gustaba mi trabajo y creo que durante un tiempo lo hice bien. (*Ingrávidos* 11)

Here, the narrator addresses the fact that only about three percent of all books published in the United States are works in translation ("*Three Percent"*) and how translators' work is seen as "impure." This impurity is the driving force behind the pseudotranslation that the narrator creates since she manages to get the fake translation by Zukofsky published by her publishing house. It is at this point that the reader notices a line has been crossed between what is ethical and what is not.

However, the history of pseudotranslations plays a significant role in any literary culture. As Gideon Toury points out in *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995), "[g]iven the fact that translations tend to be assigned secondary functions within a cultural (poly)system […], there can be no wonder that deviations occurring in texts assumed to have been translated often meet with greater tolerance, and for this very reason" (48). Although there are more functions to pseudotranslations[84] in literature, such as avoiding censorship as Cervantes does in *Don Quijote* (1605), the narrator of the novel brings an

[84] The pseudotranslational aspect of Luiselli's writing is another element that is yet to be explored. A more indepth study of this feature would contribute to the growing scholarship of Translation Studies, especifically descriptive translation studies and polysystem theory.

overlooked author –Gilberto Owen– to the spotlight with the translation accredited to Zukofsky.

La historia de mis dientes (*La historia* from now on), Luiselli's third book, tells the autobiographical account of Gustavo Sánchez Sánchez, a man living in Ecatepec, Mexico. The central idea behind the novel is Gustavo's denture, through which the narrator uses multiple strategies to convince the reader that the events, in fact, happened. One such strategy is the use of translations to validate Gustavo's account of having traveled and met all sorts of people. Throughout the description of Sánchez's experience, he mentions the languages he knows and shares some examples to prove he does understand them. For instance, at the beginning of the novel the narrator says, "Sé contar hasta ocho en japonés: ichi, ni, san, shi, ko, loko, sichi, hachi" (*La historia* 10). Later on, he also says that traveling to the United States "valió la pena porque regresé de Los United hablando bastante inglés y hasta un poco de francés; palabra de honor" (*La historia* 19). One last thing to point out is that at the start of every section of the book and at the very end, there is always a translated fortune from a fortune cookie that relates to teeth, such as, "當牙齒被關閉時，舌頭是在家裡。 [Cuando los dientes se cierran la lengua está en casa]" (*La historia* 65). It is not coincidental that Luiselli chose the strategy of translation to try and authenticate Gustavo's account. This approach is not new when it comes to translators and travel writers. On the significance of truthfulness among travel writers, Polezzi states that:

> [T]ranslators and travellers are suspect mediators who must constantly strive to prove the reliability and good faith of their tales, the truthfulness

> of their words and their own trustworthiness in the face of an audience who can only access 'the original' vicariously, and thus both requires and resents the presence of an intermediary. (79)

Gustavo can be considered a traveler because of his experiences in the United States. As Polezzi explains, the translator or traveler is always looking for ways to prove their account, to make it valid and true to the readers. In the same way, the protagonist of the novel is constantly trying to prove his side of the story, repeating on multiple occasions the phrase "palabra de honor" and giving the readers translations of phrases to make him trustworthy. At the end of the novel, Gustavo hires a ghostwriter for his autobiography and in the last pages of the book he recounts his life as it really happened, revising and modifying events. It is at this point that the readers realize that Gustavo's life was not full of money, women, and success as he made them believe. Rather, he was on the brink of death without one *peso* to his name, abandoned by his wife and only son. The last pages read as a correction of a translation, constantly re-telling the reader how events took place, but once again using the same translational strategy to validate the story.

Interlingual and Intralingual Translation in *Los niños perdidos* and *Lost Children Archive*

Jakobson's definition of the different types of translation (1959) also helps to understand what happens in *Los niños perdidos*. The narrator alludes to intralingual translation when talking about the task she performs when volunteering. She states that she must translate the children's answers to the questions to create a "relato coherente" (*Los niños* 9). However, there are two

types of translation taking place. The interpreter translates the questions from English to Spanish and then records the answers in Spanish with the notes she took, which she then translates into English. In this scene, the interpreter uses interlingual translation from English to Spanish for the questionnaire. Then, she uses intralingual translation to create a "coherent account" in Spanish from the answers given by the Spanish-speaking children. Finally, she translates this account in writing into English and uses interlingual translation.

Lost Children Archive (from now on *LCA*) also introduces interlingual translation when talking about the favor the protagonist does to another mother. Manuela asked the narrator to translate several documents to support the immigration application of her two daughters. The central character reveals that:

> First it was just translating legal papers: the girls' birth certificates, vaccination records, one school report card. Then there was a series of letters written by a neighbor back home and addressed to Manuela, giving a detailed account of the situation there: the untamable waves of violence, the army, the gangs, the police, the sudden disappearances of people—mostly young women and girls. (*LCA* 17)

The documents mentioned here are the most common examples of interlingual translation, especially for immigrants completing an immigration procedure. However, there are also instances of intralingual translation in the book. When the protagonist's daughter and stepson are learning about the Chiricahua tribe and their bands, she has a dialogue with the young boy and his father, saying:

> But did an Apache children band exist? the girl interrupts my husband.
> What do you mean?
> I mean, did they also have a children band? she says.
> The boy rephrases her question, translates for her: I think she means: Were there any bands that were only made up of children? (*LCA* 73-74)

The young boy shares a similar skill to the narrator in *Los niños perdidos* in that they both must interpret the words of children so that other people understand what they mean. The text itself refers to the intralingual translation by stating that the boy "translates for her," which signals the significance this theme has on the book. Above all, the example points out that translation is a common occurrence in everyday life and that translators and interpreters are not the only ones who take part in this task. By showing the different ways translation manifests itself in our lives, *Los niños* and *LCA* promote not only an awareness of translation and interpretation to the reader, but also a better understanding of how they work.

Luiselli's Educator and Volunteer Interpreter Career

Luiselli began teaching as an assistant professor at Hofstra University in 2015. In November of that year, she began writing *Los niños*, where she puts together not only the story of the unaccompanied minors at the border, but also talks about her role as an educator. Since her Green Card had not arrived yet, and her temporary work permit had expired, she had to quit her job at Hofstra and leave her students in an academic limbo, Luiselli writes: "[r]enuncié temporalmente a mi empleo en la universidad, justo antes de la época de exámenes finales" (*Los niños* 55). The thought of leaving her students at the end of the semester is something that weighs heavy on her, and she investigates whether she can go back to teaching in a volunteering capacity. As she explains, the laws of immigration in the United States are very strict and "[n]o está permitido trabajar de modo «voluntario» en un

empleo antes pagado mientras se resuelven los papeles de migración de una persona" (*Los niños* 55). Ironically enough, Luiselli had taught a course at the university centered around immigration.

Out of the 50 students that she left when she quit in 2015, ten of them had taken a previous course with Luiselli in 2014, Advanced Conversation. She states that "Como no sabía de qué hacerlos hablar, empecé a hablarles, desde el primer día, de la crisis migratoria de 2014 –el único tema actual del que sabía lo suficiente, y que me parecía lo bastante inagotable y urgente como para dedicarle al menos una clase" (*Los niños* 55). The classes began with only her talking about immigration, but it eventually became a "migration think tank" (*Los niños* 56) as the students called it. One of the conclusions that her students arrived at, which is essential for understanding this crisis in the United States, is that immigration cannot be "concebida como un problema de relaciones internacionales o de política exterior, sino como un tema local" (*Los niños* 56). It is this idea that would later bring Luiselli and her students to organize a group to help new local high school students adapt to their new life in Long Island, New York.

The students of Luiselli's Advanced Conversation course started La TIIA, or Teen Immigrant Integration Association, a club where Hofstra students mentor "local Latino youths in middle and high school" (*Hofstra Magazine* n.p.). *Los niños* recounts the creation and organization of this new association. In a particular class in October 2015, Luiselli's students told her that they knew what to do to help with the immigration crisis. Adapting the ideas from Nimmi Gowrinathan's lecture

earlier in the semester, the students decided to transform emotional capital, such as anger, sadness, and frustration, into political capital (*Los niños* 57). As the narrator explains:

> Su idea era sencilla, como son las ideas brillantes. Si la crisis migratoria empezaba en la frontera, alrededor de Arizona o Texas, pero se había movido ya hasta la corte de migración de Nueva York, no tenía por qué terminar ahí. Ahora hay niños y adolescentes migrantes viviendo en Long Island, y la crisis va a seguir y va a empeorar. Todo se va a ir a la mierda y nada va a mejorar para nadie si todos esos niños y adolescentes se quedan aquí pero sin integrarse a sus nuevas comunidades. (*Los niños* 57)

The students' motivation went beyond waiting for the government to do something; instead, they started using the resources of private institutions, such as Hofstra University, to offer "servicios gratuitos, contínuos" (*Los niños* 58). The services include: "clases de inglés, clases de preparación para la universidad, deportes, un programa de radio, y un grupo de debate sobre derechos y responsabilidades civiles" (*Los niños* 58). These types of resources are a great way to help not only local newcomers, but also immigrants who have been in the area longer and might not know their rights in the country.

With her work as an educator to college students and her volunteering as an interpreter and translator to unaccompanied children at the border, Luiselli's activism has achieved a real impact on the lives of both immigrants and college students looking for solutions to the current migration crisis at the border. She accomplished these tasks by not only traditional means, but such also as writing op-ed articles about the issue for *The New York Times* and talking about it in interviews for Democracy Now! (Luiselli "The Littlest Don Quixotes", "Mexican

Writer") but also by using translational strategies in both *Los niños* and *LCA*. These texts highlight the significance of adding a translational lens to the contentious debate on immigration in the United States.

The Confusion of Translation and Interpreting

Translation and interpreting, although similar in nature are two different, but sister professions that are generally confused as the same one. Academically, translation and interpreting are also two separate areas of research. On the one hand, translation is the art of bringing a text from one language to another in the written form. Contrastingly, interpreting is the art of bringing an utterance from one language to another orally. Confusing these two professions would be the equivalent of mistaking writing for speaking. A translator and interpreter both work with two different languages, but the work they do is different. For example, translators usually have more time to do their jobs since their deadlines occasionally permit it. Interpreters do their job at the moment, i.e. in a conference, a meeting, or a trial at the different courts. To try and blend these two jobs into one is misleading and devalues the work of translators and interpreters. Luiselli's volunteer interpreting work has also been mislabeled in the press. In a book review for *LCA*, Stephanie Elizondo Griest of the *Texas Observer*, mentions that "[i]n 2017, [Luiselli] published the slender but devastating *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions*, which chronicled her work as a translator for child migrants caught up in the U.S. court system" (Griest, "Valeria Luiselli" n.p.). Anyone familiar with the court system in the United States, or any other country, would know that

interpreters are the ones who work in the courts. The mislabeling of interpreters as translators has started to change in recent years. With all the disruptions that the COVID-19 pandemic brought in the last two years, remote language access for English language learners (ELLs) has become as significant as ever (Cindy Long n.p.). The interpreters and translators at schools and other government services have been a source of education for the general public, who is now more familiarized with these terms and can use them correctly.

In the novel *LCA*, the narrator expresses that she first started translating documents for Manuela, the mother of two unaccompanied children, in exchange for letting the protagonist record her speaking in her native language. The mother told her that she "needed someone to translate their documents from Spanish into English, at little or no cost, so she could find a lawyer to defend them from being deported" (*LCA* 17). However, things change when Manuela asks her to go to a meeting with a potential lawyer. They met in a room in the New York City Immigration Court where "[t]he lawyer followed a brief questionnaire, asking questions in English that I translated into Spanish for Manuela" (*LCA* 17). As mentioned before, it is common for those who are new to the field of translation and interpretation not to know when to use which term. What I argue here is that the novel itself tries to point out how easily this mistake is made, even for those doing the actual job of an interpreter.

Similarly, *Los niños* chronicles Luiselli's volunteer work as a court interpreter and translator. Although she was dealing with written documents with

the questions she needed to ask the unaccompanied minors, the service she provides is closer to sight translation and interpreting. Sight translation is an area within interpretation in which the interpreter transmits the message of a written document orally to another person. Talking about her job, the narrator states about the questionnaire:

> El cuestionario se utiliza en la Corte Federal de Inmigración, en Nueva York, donde trabajo como intérprete desde hace un tiempo. Mi deber ahí es traducir, del español al inglés, testimonios de niños en peligro de ser deportados. Repaso las preguntas del cuestionario, una por una, y el niño o la niña las contesta. Transcribo en inglés sus respuestas, hago algunas notas marginales, y más tarde me reúno con abogados para entregarles y explicarles mis notas. (*Los niños* 9)

As the reader notices, it is easy to mistake translation and interpreting since both deal with the transfer of one language into another. However, this excerpt clarifies that the job of the narrator is to interpret for the children and then create an account of the facts for the attorneys to decide. After these notes are sent to the lawyers, they determine whether the children have a case to stay in the United States. These notes could be considered a work of translation since the result is a written document. Nonetheless, there is a clear ethical dilemma in Luiselli's work: that of accuracy.

The Ethics of Translators and Interpreters in *Los niños perdidos* and *Lost Children Archive*

Speaking of the skills needed for the job, Luiselli says that "[h]ay que traducir esas palabras a otro idioma, trasladarlas a frases sucintas, transformarlas en un relato coherente, y reescribir todo eso buscando términos legales claros" (*Los niños* 9).

This task in itself is an example of intralingual translation that immigration interpreters have to experience inside and outside judicial courts. One of the problems is that the children's stories are complex and filled with mental gaps. Due to the traumatic events that these minors witnessed in their migration to the North, it is not surprising that their accounts are confusing and difficult to understand. Nonetheless, an interpreter is bound by a professional code of ethics. The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators has as its first canon accuracy, in which "[s]ource-language speech should be faithfully rendered into the target language by conserving all the elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language" (NAJIT n.p.). The accuracy canon causes a challenge for interpreters such as Luiselli who must find ways to deal with this quandary since "toda traducción de las historias de los niños es una imagen fuera de foco" (*Los niños* 28). Although Luiselli's text does not give a solution to the problem of accuracy in the accounts of unaccompanied minors, it does highlight the significance of interpreters and translators in the immigration court system and gives an insider perspective on the immigration crisis, which calls readers to engage socially by participating firsthand in these proceedings.

Although interpreters should not advocate for their clients, if ethical considerations come into play, they might choose to intervene because they deem it moral and appropriate. This situation is especially possible in legal interpretation, where immigrants might not know or understand the real reason

why they are being charged and processed for various reasons. In her chapter, "Ethical Communication," part of the monograph *Interpreting Justice: Ethics, Politics and Language* (2012), Moira Inghilleri states that "[the interpreter's] duty to remain impartial is normally understood as a duty to remain silent, even in the face of injustice, as presumed outsiders to the legal system" (69). Nonetheless, there have been cases in which interpreters decide to speak up in the face of injustice, such as Erik Camayd-Freixa with his experience on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid in Postville, Iowa.

Camayd-Freixa decided to go public about certain aspects of his job as an interpreter for the immigration court that did not follow a proper legal procedure, such as the lack of information on who the parties were, what languages they spoke and what their situation was at that time (8). Writing about his experience working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in "Court Interpreter Ethics and the Role of Professional Organizations" (2011), he mentions that one of the challenges of the immigration procedure, in this case, was the fact that many of the defendants did not speak Spanish and the interpreters could not do their jobs since they could not communicate with them (Camayd-Freixa 4). This was in part due to the "fast-tracking" that ICE wanted to follow to finish the cases as soon as possible.

Similarly, Luiselli's example emphasizes time since most of these cases have a time limit before the deportation order takes effect (*Los niños* 9). In addition to time constraints, there are the other aspects in this section: accuracy of accounts

and the trauma suffered by the children. Even though interpreters should not interfere with the stories of the defendants in immigration court cases, Luiselli's example shows that sometimes, this is necessary to follow due process and to help the unaccompanied children obtain legal assistance. *Los niños perdidos* not only shows another perspective on the immigration crisis but it also reveals the ethical nuances that interpreters must navigate to secure legal assistance for the children.

Fiction and translation have a very close relationship in terms of the significance translation has on bringing new text into a literary culture. However, this correlation is sometimes lost to the point that readers do not know a book they read was a translation. With this, of course, I am referring to the traditional view of the translator as an invisible part of any written text. Over the years, and especially after the Cultural Turn in Translation Studies, there have been texts that seek to understand this aspect of translations. The most notable one is Lawrence Venuti's book, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995). Despite its tremendous influence on the field, Venuti's work lacks the human touch that fiction brings to the awareness of translation and translators. That is why the analysis thus far has used fictional writing as a theoretical framework for understanding translation and interpreting and the individuals behind those works. By doing this, this chapter contributes to the subfield of Translation Studies, in which fiction is studied through a translational lens, and adds that activist efforts play a significant part by exemplifying ways to engage politically. I have also presented how the narrator in *Lost Children Archive* engages in and with translation and how this embodies

translation and interpreting as activism. To this end, this analysis is in conversation with prominent theoretical Translation Studies scholars regarding translation as activism, such as fiction as theory (Rosemary Arrojo), activism in interpretation (Mona Baker), and fidelity of resistance (Michael Cronin).

Rosemary Arrojo, in *Fictional Translators: Rethinking Translation through Literature* (2018), starts her argument by stating that literature that focuses on translation or translators:

> [C]an provide a more nuanced frame of reference as they introduce us to translator characters that oftentimes reveal their inner struggles while facing the ethical conundrums associated with their work and the relationships they are expected to establish with author and/or reader figures that also have a stake in the process. (1)

The relationship between fictional characters and translation is invaluable to elucidating the way in which translators and interpreters work. The translators and interpreters' inner struggles are at the forefront of the narration, which opens a space where they can freely and safely express their thoughts and emotions without repercussions. Such is the case of the main character in Luiselli's *LCA*. Like its counterpart in *Los niños*, the narrator conveys her point of view regarding the volunteer work she does for the mother of two unaccompanied children, and through a journey of discovery, the text advocates for better treatment of immigrants at the border. On this point, Arrojo mentions that:

> [S]tories about translators and their work tend to reveal conflicting points that are typically represented by the different voices that usually frame fictional plots and, as a consequence, offer a privileged perspective into the ways in which translators and their translations have been treated throughout history. (34)

Historically, the invisibility of the translator has been prevalent in all cultures, but as Arrojo argues, fictional accounts of their life and work have changed the way in which they are seen. In this sense, fiction works as a theory since it shows how translators and interpreters should work. Although the theory and scholarly works I have mentioned thus far only deal with translation and translators, these ideas and arguments could be used for interpreting and interpreters. *LCA* lends itself as the perfect example for analyzing "the inner struggles" and "ethical conundrums" of interpreters since the protagonist must come to terms with her volunteer work and the advocate role the unaccompanied children need from her.

Just as the narrator in *Los niños*, the protagonist in *LCA* interprets the immigration questionnaire that helps lawyers determine whether immigrants have a solid case to present in court. Correspondingly, in the fictionalized version, the narrator creates an account that interprets all the answers to the questions into a report. The central character's job in the interview is to convey the meaning from Spanish to English, and she does. She explains Manuela's story as she did to the attorneys:

> She told her story, and the girls' story. They were all from a small town on the border of Oaxaca and Guerrero. About six years ago, when the younger of the two girls turned two and the older was four, Manuela left them in their grandmother's care. Food was scant; it was impossible to raise the girls with so little, she explained. She crossed the border, with no documents, and settled in the Bronx, where she had a cousin. She found a job, started sending money back. (*LCA* 17)

The challenge, in this case, is the closeness that the interpreter has to the person she is interpreting for in the meeting. Like Manuela, who comes from the Mextec

indigenous community, she is also an immigrant who had to learn a new language and repress her Omití roots (*LCA* 16). Although the reader does not find out more about the central character's autobiography, the fact that both share similar life experiences is imperative for understanding the role that the protagonist has in the text.

The role of the interpreter is not always impartial, and in fact, sometimes interpreters act against the rights of those whom they are interpreting. About this, Mona Baker, in an interview with Chesterman on "Ethics of Renarration" (2018), insists on a "more engaged, committed translation practice and translation scholarship," especially now given the fact that "translators are heavily engaged in mediating a wide range of political conflicts and are themselves being targeted for killing and arrest, where some translators have participated in torturing prisoners" (12-13). Interpreters should not only follow a code of ethics that tells them how to act, but also a moral sense of when to step outside of these norms. Michael Cronin has also written about this topic in "The Empire Talks Back: Orality, Heteronomy, and the Cultural Turn in Interpretation Studies" (2002) and concludes that:

> The role of interpreters throughout history has been crucially determined by the prevailing hierarchical constitution of power and the position of interpreters in it. In this respect, if you or your people are seriously disadvantaged by the hierarchy, the most ethical position can be to be utterly "unfaithful" in interpreting in the name of another fidelity, a fidelity of resistance. (58-59)

While this "fidelity of resistance" will look different in each case and for each interpreter, it is significant to point out that it gives flexibility to interpreters to act as they see fit in any interpreting event. This is the type of activism portrayed in

LCA since the interpreter protagonist advocates for the disadvantaged and breaks away from being "faithful"[85] to the institution.

Lessons on Being Young and Bilingual Today

In this chapter, I addressed two translational sides of Luiselli's work. First, the impact that translation and different languages have had on her writing, and second, her work as a translator and translation scholar. I revealed how her exposure to several languages as a child and adolescent not only gave her a rich linguistic background but also exposed her to other cultures where she realized her privilege. As an adult, this is represented in the diversity of languages Luiselli includes in her texts, with multiple characters taking up translation as their work or as their form of volunteering for their community.

I showed that Luiselli's dissertation work has influenced how she interacts with different translational spaces, where she goes beyond presenting the reader with a new perspective and adds an element of social engagement that has had a lasting impact on her students and readership. I argued throughout this work that her use of translational strategies in her last two books humanizes not only the immigrant children crossing the border but also the interpreters. To this end, I also contended, following the scholarship of Arrojo, Cronin, and Baker, that fiction informs the approach that interpreters take when advocating for the people they

[85] In this case, I am referring to the screening meeting with lawyers in *LCA*. Fidelity of resistance will look different in an immigration court. An example would be the Erik Camayd-Freixas's exposé of ICE in 2008.

are interpreting for, allowing them to be more flexible when it comes to following the interpreters' code of ethics.

Looking at Luiselli's work from a translational perspective has also revealed the political and social engagement that translators and interpreters have to take on in their work. This advocating takes place not only where the interpreting act happens, but also outside of it, which Luiselli illustrates so poignantly in *Los niños* with the narration of her role as an educator. With the initiatives that materialized out of her classroom, the reader sees her political activism outside of the page and might even inspire them into social engagement as her students. This aspect of her writing leads me to propose a new avenue of research in the future, such as: How does translation as activism intersect with the field of socio-politics? How does the text reception of a translationally themed book transform into activism and other social engagements on the part of the reader?

A significant aspect of her role as a professor is that the students she was teaching were part of Generation Z (people born between 1997[86] and 2012). Luiselli, through her writing and teaching, has allowed a new generation of socially active bilingual students to approach politics from a local level, which, as she argues, gives rise to a more noticeable change.[87]

[86] In the 2020 U.S. census, people born in 1996 were also included in this rage.
[87] Although a more detailed study into the influence of Gen Z voters is needed, the 2022 midterm elections did see a significant rise in Gen Z voters. As Andrea Alexander mentions in *Rutgers Today*, this new generation might have stopped a Republican red wave in November. As Mark Beal explains to Alexander in the news article, each year, "[Gen Z] will have increasing influence on election outcomes at the local, state and national levels. As the purpose generation, Gen Z is focused on societal issues such as the environment and women's rights" (Alexander "Did Gen Z Voters").

As Luiselli's writing demonstrates, this younger generation is also very invested in immigration, and as such, it would be essential to study the ways in which they socially engage in that side of politics. A translational lens would be ideal for analyzing this phenomenon since it would help understand how they learn these topics by opening new perspectives. Finally, readers would learn more about what it means to be bilingual and young and how translational elements are applied to activism in other social aspects such as racism, sexism, or LGBTQ+ discrimination.

CODA: A MODEL OF WOMEN TRANSLATORS AND THEIR ACTIVIST EFFORTS

I tell the stories of immigrants because I am a proud immigrant. The stories I strive to tell are the love stories of mothers and their children.

— Paola Mendoza,
"Author"
IamPaolaMendoza.com, undated

This coda offers a model for the study of women translators and their potential for activism. Having established in the previous chapters that the intersection between literature, translation, and political engagement has always been a powerful one for individual's activist efforts in the case of Spanish- and English-speaking communities, the crossroads between translation and activism has led to the creation of works that inspire and lead to greater civic engagement. Victoria Kent (1891-1987), Aurora Correa (1930-2008), and Valeria Luiselli (1983-) have served as catalysts for transformation, inspiring people to act in their communities and beyond. With the goal of contributing to Translation and Literary Studies, this dissertation has showed a different perspective on what translation is for immigrants and exiles and how it is integrated into historical events and contemporary culture.

In recent years, the work of these writers has become increasingly important as the political climate in the United States has grown more divisive. The looming threat of another Trump administration has made the need for engagement and education more urgent than ever. Fortunately, there are more authors like Luiselli who continue to inspire and educate young people about the

significance of being bilingual and making their voices heard. It is illuminating to recognize that Luiselli comes from a tradition of women, including Kent and Crane, who have also been a model of translation that leads to civic engagement, but there are a myriad of new immigrant voices in the U.S. publishing industry that are giving voice to various sections of the population, such as immigration, indigenous rights, language advocacy, and body positivity that I refer later on as possible new avenues of research through translation and activism.

"Translator Contributions to the United States Readership: Victoria Kent and the Diffusion of Spanish Republican Ideals in *Ibérica* (1953-1974)," examined the role of translation in the anti-Franco activism of Victoria Kent and the Ibérica Publishing Company in the United States from 1953 to 1974 was crucial in expanding the relationship between audiences in the United States and Spaniards exiled around the world, bringing democratic hope to Spain. The chapter examined the historical context that led to the creation of *Ibérica* as a publication, and analyzed the unique position of power that Spanish-speaking women translators have had in the resistance to a fascist regime and the fight for human rights, emphasizing the significance of women translators in the fight for democracy in Spain. Through the theorization of Translator Studies and Feminist Translator Studies by Andrew Chesterman and Helen Vassallo, respectively, this dissertation opened a new direction to Literary Studies by showcasing a different method for the analysis of translated literature and multilingual writing in today's globalized world.

"Published Literature and Archival Discoveries: Multilingual Spain and Mexico in the Writing of Aurora Correa" discussed the work of Aurora Correa, starting from the perspective of a child refugee to her later years in Mexico, where she found her voice in fiction and memoir writing. Her autobiographies,[88] and her fiction work,[89] looked at through a translational lens, show the translation strategies that multilingual writers use in literature,[90] and her writing in general reveals the power of language in shaping identity in exile narratives. Cultural translation, rewriting, and transadaptation theories by Homi Bhabha, Susan Bassnet, Denise Kripper, André Lefevere, and Edwin Gentzler show the impact that translation has on writing. Literary Studies also benefits from these theorizations since it allows for a more nuanced understanding of multilingual writing, as appreciated in Correa's Catalo-Mexican hybrid writing. The complexities found in multilingual writers also challenge the notion that a text must be one language to be understood within a certain literature. Wishing to go beyond this view, this dissertation has found alternate connections between writers through translation for the literary analysis of their works. Although Correa did not engage in interlingual translation of documents, articles, and other texts to resist fascism like Kent, her experience with translation as a multilingual person, a bilingual secretary and her position as an educator for high school students were a fundamental part of her life experience fighting for social justice.

[88] *Te beso buenas noches* (1997) and *Cerezas* (2008).
[89] *Misere Negro Misere* (1963), *La muerte de James Dean* (1991), and *HA: novela* (1992).
[90] Quotation marks for auditory feel, italics to mark changes in languages, intralingual and interlingual translation.

Finally, in "Translation in Writing and Interpreting in Practice: Valeria Luiselli as a Writer, Educator, and Volunteer," I offered a final example of a woman translator who has actively been involved in activist efforts with author Valeria Luiselli. She embodies the three characteristics presented before as an educator and creator of literature that has translation at its core while she advocates for immigration reform. With the backdrop of Translator Studies and Literary Studies, I studied Luiselli's literature, where I argued through the theorization of Mona Baker regarding narrative theory that acts of political translation have the ability to mobilize and politically engage readers while presenting a critical approach to studying the role of translation in activism. Taking literature as one of these acts of political translation, by first outlining how Luiselli's linguistic background and life experiences have shaped her writing –particularly the use of multiple languages and the magnification of translational matters– I then proposed that her work stands out from other authors who write about translation and translators due to her role as an educator and public persona, which in turn has influenced her political involvement. The investigation into Luiselli's last two books,[91] not only has translation and interpreting at its core but also connects these texts to her doctoral dissertation, "Translation Spaces: Mexico City in the International Modernist Circuit" (2015) where translation is seen as part of the architecture of a city. Finally, I detailed the significance of Luiselli's teaching to her role as an active promoter of her students' community work to help newly arrived immigrants to

[91] *Los niños perdidos: Un ensayo en 40 preguntas* (2016) and *Lost Children Archive* (2019).

Long Island, New York, and how communities can learn, engage, and support in finding a solution to the immigration crisis in the United States.

The outreach initiatives studied in Luiselli's case –for instance, the informal lectures with the active participation of the younger generation, her lectures at different universities in the United States, her writing workshops for unaccompanied immigrant children, and her in-classroom encouragement for undergraduate students to engage in their community– opens the way to research similar writers and how they have impacted not only the United States but also Latin America.

As we move forward into an uncertain future, the work of artists, writers, and translators will continue to be essential. Their voices in different languages have served as a beacon of hope in dark times, inspiring people to come together and fight for a more just and equitable future. Subsequent contributions to this model will be inspired by other multilingual authors, performers, educators, and activists, such as Yesika Salgado (1984-), Natalie Diaz (1978-), Fernanda Melchor (1982-), Guadalupe Nettel (1973-), and Cristina Rivera Garza (1964-). These writers embody the multilingual aspect in their writing as presented in this dissertation or have been translated into other languages, have a strong commitment and connection to universities and outreach events for the young generation, and have used their literature and public persona for the advocacy of language, body positivity, and the representation of ignored voices in society.

One contemporary example is Paola Mendoza (1981 -), who has engaged in political activism since the start of her acting career but whose connection to translational matters has not been studied. As an emerging writer and established actor,[92] Mendoza is an esteemed figure in the field of immigrant advocacy and activism. Her work as a filmmaker, author, and activist has shed light on the experiences of immigrants and has contributed significantly to the dialogue surrounding immigration issues. Additionally, her efforts in elevating the voices of marginalized communities and advocating for social justice make her work relevant and impactful for a wide audience in the United States. Born in Bogota, Colombia, in 1981, Mendoza immigrated to Los Angeles, California, when she was three years old, along with her mother and older brother (Venugopal Ramaswamy).[93] After high school, she enrolled in a community college for three years before eventually graduating from UCLA with an acting degree; she also received a master of fine arts degree from Sarah Lawrence College with a focus on acting and theater direction.

Mendoza's first project out of college was *On the Outs* (2004, directed by Lori Silverbush and Michael Skolnik), which follows the lives of three young adult women trying to survive drug use, trafficking, and teen pregnancies in an

[92] Her acting credits include *Goodbye Baby* (2007), *One Night* (2007), *Last Call* (2008), and *The Undying* (2011).

[93] Knowing only Spanish when they immigrated left them struggling to survive in a new country with a different culture and language, especially after the abandonment of her father (Webster). The family fell into homelessness for a while until her mother found a job. When Mendoza became part of a gang at the age of 12, her mother sent her back to Colombia, and she eventually returned to the States three years later (Venugopal Ramaswamy).

impoverished New Jersey neighborhood. *Autumn's Eyes* (2006) was the first documentary she co-directed,[94] along with Gabriel Noble, and grapples with women's incarceration, poverty, and foster care. Her feature film directorial debut[95] *Entre nos* (2009), for which she also served as a scriptwriter, recounts a fictionalized version of her family's immigration story into the United States. *Entre nos* takes place in New York City, in the borough of Queens. Although, initially, Mendoza and her family arrived in Los Angeles, the change of location is understandable given that Queens has the largest concentration of Colombians in the United States (McGowan). The audience appreciates the myriads of accents and advertisements in Spanish within the City. Most significantly, the film itself is almost entirely in Spanish, except for a few lines toward the end when the protagonist must seek an abortion from a neighbor. Although English subtitles provide the public with the dialogue and the plot, the lines of the movie transcend interlingual translation and, instead, is the performance, I argue, that takes center stage in an intersemiotic translation, or transmutation. "Intersemiotic translation," as coined by Roman Jakobson, in "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959), is defined as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (233). The interpretation of utterances can be converted into images, mimes, or performances, in the case of *Entre nos*. The plot of the movie is

[94] She was also the director of *Still Standing* (2006), a documentary about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the injustices that followed in regard to home insurance claims.
[95] More recently, Mendoza has directed three films, including *La Toma* (2010), *Half of Her* (2012), and *Broken Tail Light* (2014).

translated again with the adaptation of the movie into a novel, but this time the translation is an interlingual one where instead of Spanish, the book is in English.

Mendoza's first published novel, *The Ones Who Don't Stay* (2013), which earlier that same year was translated and published in Spanish as *Los que no se quedan* (translated by Mariajosé Salcedo), is a prequel and sequel to *Entre nos.* She wrote it at the request of Penguin Books after they watched her movie (Erazo). In an interview with Vanessa Erazo, Mendoza explains the publication timeline and why the Spanish translation was published first:

> I wrote the book in English and then had the book translated into Spanish. I was very involved in the translation as I wanted to make sure nothing was lost in translation.
> Writing in Spanish is something I am not comfortable with. I normally write everything in English and then translate it into Spanish. I speak and dream in Spanish but writing in Spanish is something I have yet to conquer. (Erazo)

As such, the novel is a translation and transadaptation of the movie, especially given that the latter is almost completely in Spanish and the former was written by the author in English, thus revealing the importance that bilingualism has had in her life.

In terms of art exhibitions and performances, Mendoza has been involved in various causes that inform her work.[96] The types of projects she decides to join

[96] These include "Dream Killers" (2017), "The Caravan" (2018), "I Am a Child" (2016), "Family Separation Art Installation" (2019), "Rosa's Miracle" (2020), "Mourner's Walk" (2020), "Immigrants Are Essential" (2021), "Resistance Revival Chorus" (2021), and most recently, "La Marea Verde (The Green Wave)" (2023). The main goal of her art is to show the consequences and destruction Trump's policies had on DACA recipients, unaccompanied immigrant children, separated families, the mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the overruling of Wade vs. Roe for abortion access.

show her commitment to human rights, immigration reform, and resistance in the face of political adversity. One of her most famous undertakings happened after President Donald Trump's 2016 presidential win and eventual inauguration in 2017.[97] Like Luiselli, Mendoza was critical of Trump's administration (2017-2021), especially the mistreatment of immigrants, minors, and adults at the border. After joining a caravan of immigrants from Central America, she was inspired to write her next novel, this time with Abby Sher, *Sanctuary* (2020).

Set in a dystopian future where the United States is under the dictatorship of the "President," and everyone has been implanted with chips that monitor their every move, *Sanctuary* is a warning of what could happen to undocumented immigrants and everybody else if the country were to close off all contact with the rest of the world. Written as a Young Adult (YA) novel, the book has had success[98] with the younger generations of readers. With a mix of English that sounds like Spanish, and Spanish words intermingled on all pages of the book, the text and narration require an in-depth study of how the use of translation strategies achieve a hybrid writing style that sounds and feels Spanish and English at the same time.

As part of her outreach events, Mendoza regularly attends colleges and universities, which serves as her educator connection, or at least encouraging students to be more politically active. In one such university appearance at the

[97] Mendoza served as the artistic director and a national organizer of the Women's March on DC (Molina; Felsenthal).
[98] A sequel will be published in the fall of 2024, a month before the U. S. presidential election.

then-named Iona College in New Rochelle, NY, Denise Hopkins, Vice President of Student Life, explains why the College decided to invite her:

> We felt she would have a rapport with the students, a strong woman who shows up and takes action and who believes in the importance of engagement [...]Because we're in a presidential election year, we're pushing really hard to educate the students about the importance of civic engagement, particularly in the political process. (In Ramaswamy)

The education of younger voters was essential for the voter turnout seen across the United States in 2020.[99] There's no doubt that the political activism in which Mendoza was involved and continues to be part contributed to the Democratic presidential win. Although not connected to the younger generation directly as an educator, like Kent, Correa, and Luiselli, Mendoza nonetheless inspires and encourages political engagement through her art,[100] performance, and literature. The potential for activist efforts and the connections that it brings to immigrant communities is made possible by the relationship between Spanish and English in translation. Translation as a tool for analysis reveals these relationships by showing the reader how these strategies work and presenting a new way of studying not only literature, but also film, culture, art, as exemplified by Mendoza.

[99] Given that in previous years, young voters made up around 11% of votes in 2018, the 2020 election saw an increase to 15%, with nearly half of Biden's voters younger than 50 (Hartig et al).

[100] Even in art pieces where translation is not explicitly present, the audience can still see vestiges of it in it. For example, her art exhibition "Immigrants Are Essential," which consisted of seven portraits of undocumented immigrants who died because of the pandemic, shows quotes as halos around them. Some of these quotes are in Spanish, others in English, and all of them include a recording of their loved ones remembering them, and interpreting what they meant for their families and communities in their own languages. The exhibition also linked audiences to a form from the National Immigration Law Center to write to Congres and urge them for a pathway to citizenship.

As Chesterman concludes in "The Name and Nature of Translator Studies" (2009):

> we can now return to our preliminary definition of Translator Studies and offer an expanded version: Translator Studies covers research which focuses primarily and explicitly on the agents involved in translation, for instance on their activities or attitudes, their interaction with their social and technical environment, or their history and influence. (20)

This definition of Translator Studies opens new avenues of research not only for the translators behind the work of translation but also for the collaborations from other "agents" that participate in the production or process of translation. As such, even if Mendoza is not herself a translator, the connections between her community, her literary translators for her fiction writing, and her transadaptation of a Spanish-speaking movie into an English-language novel, allow us to see her as a type of agent model of Translator Studies. Moreover, her example of community commitment, activist efforts in immigration, and her constant rapport with younger generations, in the form of YA novels or university appearances that champion inclusivity, justice, and equity from our government institutions, permit us to conceptualize the continuation of the women translator model involved in activist efforts as presented throughout this dissertation.

The new model of women writer that engage in translation and activism via education has the potential to transform the world in several ways. First, by engaging with younger generations through literature and educational outreach, these women inspire and encourage political engagement, leading to a more informed and active society. Their work also promotes inclusivity, justice, and

equity within communities and government institutions, influencing policies and decisions made at the federal, and even global level. Additionally, through their efforts in translation and transadaptation, they bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, fostering understanding and empathy across diverse communities. Overall, this model has the power to shape a more connected, empathetic, and engaged global society and presents both Translation Studies and Literary Studies with a comparative and interdisciplinary analysis whose goal is to bridge the gap between literary research and tangible change in a constantly evolving society.

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