

A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Alfred University

Re-evaluating how we read translations:  
Considering the problem of what is lost and gained in translation

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In Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for  
The Alfred University Honors Program

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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*Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank Dr. Redmond for all of her help, advice and support. She gave me the motivation to write about a topic I care about, and was the reason I was able to finish this thesis.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Gray, Dr. Reginio, Dr. Gagne and Dr. Churchill. I am so grateful I was able to work with such amazing professors as well as having a diverse committee. I really appreciated receiving advice from an English, Spanish, psychology and historical perspective.

I would like to give a special thanks to Dylan Sammut, a fellow Honors student, whose support helped me get through many tough moments, and who's editing skills are invaluable.

My final thanks are to my mom, who was writing her graduate thesis for English at the same time I was writing my undergrad one. Her support and editing was incredibly helpful, and we got to figure out strategies to battle procrastination together.

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Cassie Klipera

Honors Thesis

5/12/14

Re-evaluating how we read translations:

Confronting the problem of what is lost and gained in translation

**Introduction:**

Being a part of the Alfred University Honors program has taught me that what I learn from one class can influence another. Without realizing it, my clubs, the classes I took for fun, and the classes for my major led me to my thesis. I started thinking about becoming an English major because I really enjoyed my Writing II class with Dr. Reginio, where we analyzed the structure and content of photographs. Writing II really made me think about how images can affect people differently and have roots in a time and place, which affects how we view them. This class was also the reason I took the Survey of American Literature with Dr. Reginio and Dr. Ryan the next semester, which solidified my choice for my major. With my English classes my love for analyzing literature grew, and I learned the importance of learning the cultural and historical context a text was written in.

In my sophomore year I took a Spanish Film course with Dr. Kautzman, which sparked my interest in Spanish history and culture. I learned a lot about the Spanish Civil War and further began to understand the significance of not just film but any form of creative work that comes from a culture. Writing, film, and art are all connected to their country of origin but they make bridges to connect outside readers to the history and experience of that culture.

In the spring of my sophomore year I took Spanish II and I had so much fun learning the Spanish language that I continued taking the language up to Spanish IV during my junior year. I

loved Spanish III and IV because along with learning the language Dr. Redmond had us read short works of fiction and poetry in Spanish. I really enjoyed analyzing these works from both my English and Spanish perspective, and I began to realize the value of having two analyses. Spanish IV was also how I was introduced to the play *La casa de Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca, which I ended up using in my thesis. And my Eighteenth Century literature class with Dr. Grove gave me insight about the religious and nun allusions in Lorca's play.

The idea of what is lost and gained in translation actually came from my Modern American Poetry class I took with Dr. Reginio. We studied the poet Myung Mi Kim, a Korean-American writer who uses blank spaces in her poetry as a way to capture the idea that there is something more on the page than words. Those blank spaces imply the multiplicity of meaning a poem can have based on who's reading it. Some readers might pause at the blank spaces and think about the line they just read, or others might ignore it completely. This idea that everyone reads differently made me think about how reading itself is a form of translation since no one person is going to interpret a poem in the same way.

I have also been heavily involved in the club ISSO (International Student Scholar Organization) since my freshman year and have met people from all over the world. Through my friendship with international students I started to gain more insight into the experiences of other cultures. Simple differences between language and culture can go unnoticed, but I enjoyed learning about all these subtleties, such as my friend Harumi from Japan calling bangs "fringe." From interacting with people from different countries I was able to see how language and meaning can be easily misunderstood, but also how learning about those mistakes and why they are made is just as important as knowing the correct translation.

As an English major I enjoy reading and analyzing literature but we rarely read works that are translated. We have the Survey of American and British Literature, but there is so much more great writing out there that isn't in English. A translated text is not the original. It is impossible to accurately translate every word from a language and culture and capture all of its different connotations, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't study translations because of possible inaccuracies. An important aspect of learning about a culture and history is through the writing that is produced, and in my Spanish courses we read poems and short works of fiction from the countries we were studying in order to gain a more personal perspective. Poetry is participation and experience and that is a great way to get to know another culture, and other genres of writing also contribute greatly to our understanding of a nation and its people.

I am not fluent in Spanish, but that doesn't stop me from wanting to read work by Spanish and Latin American authors. We shouldn't be discouraged by the fact we can't read the original text because of a language barrier. Not everyone is fluent in another language so the best we can do is read translations critically, informed by the proper research. That is why I have decided to look into how to read translations in a new way in order to figure out both its benefits and disadvantages. In my thesis I propose two ways to read translations and use three different works of literature originally written in Spanish to test out my methods. My thesis is organized into sections of the works I analyzed and the methods I used, as well as my critiques of those strategies of reading translations. At the end of my thesis I have my conclusion on the strong points of each method and how they could be combined to create the ideal process for reading translations.

All of the factors of my classes, clubs, and more started to bring me closer to the idea of translation, and how I view the problem of what is lost and gained in translation. I am glad I had

the opportunity to explore my ideas in a thesis, as well as work with Dr. Redmond, since I no longer had room in my schedule to continue Spanish courses with her. A core value of our honors program is to be different and think outside the box, so I compiled all that I learned and took the idea of learning about the idea of what is gained and lost in translation a step further.

### **Thesis Introduction:**

Language is not limited to the literal meaning of words. There are many elements that contribute to weaving the meaning and experience of literature and poetry. Allusions to history, culture, mythology, literature, imagery, and more are tools authors use in their craft. Because of these added elements, the act of translation becomes a more complex task than simply translating the definition of a word. There are different theories on how to approach translation in order to combat the problems that a translation can bring up, such as the exclusion of a cultural or historical reference or the mistranslation of a word or phrase. Some methods of translating are literal and focus on making sure the translation is close to the original words, while others are thematic and concentrate more on getting the ideas of a work across. Yet, each of these methods of translation produces different results and scholars have and will debate for years over which approach is most “accurate.”

The Seventeenth-century French critic Gilles Ménage, commenting on the idea of the fidelity of translation used the phrase, "les belles infidels," meaning that translations can be either faithful or beautiful but not both, like a woman, (Amparo). With direct word for word translations there are bound to be errors in grammar and syntax, so in order to make the language flow and be beautiful the translation can't be completely faithful to the original. A lot is lost in translation such as the multiple connotations that a word may have in one language but not

another, culturally specific references, and the sound of a poem, which can't be translated properly. Yet, translations can also add to the text's original meaning. A translator augments an original text by adding their own interpretation of the more universal themes of the literature in how they craft the translation. And by universal I mean that a translation intended for a certain language audience, such as an English translation being targeted to North American readers, is fitted to reflect themes relatable to that audience. Because of the variety and multitude of different cultures there is no "universal" theme, but translations make the work of one culture accessible to another, and that is what I mean by using the term universal. There will always be something lost in translation but depending on how a translation is written or the mistakes it makes, a translation can add a new perspective on socially relevant themes in the work. I believe this problem of what is lost and gained during the process of translation should be tackled by re-evaluating how we read and analyze a translation as a separate piece of writing as well as in comparison to the original text. I propose to do this in two ways. First, I read an English translation of a poem by the Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni and of a story by the Uruguayan author Horacio Quiroga as separate universal pieces of literature and then I compare them to the originals within their cultural and historical contexts. Second I research the historical and cultural context of a play by the Spanish writer Federico García Lorca and read the translation alongside the original as a guide. Through these methods I show what is gained in translations from alterations or mistakes that multiply meanings and create a bridge between cultures connecting them through universal themes. By showing culturally-and-linguistically-specific meanings that are lost in translation, I situate the texts in time and place in order to broaden my cultural perspective.



Jorge Luis Borges, in his essay “Two Ways to Translate,” presents an idea that the two ways to translate are the Classical approach and the Romantic approach. The Classical approach is true to the text not the writer; the words are not translated verbatim, but rather they convey the themes of a text. The Romantic approach aspires to be true to the writer’s version of the story by translating the words as closely to the original language as possible, avoiding translating a word incorrectly, such as using the word “pale” instead of “white.” Borges argues that the Classical view is a more appropriate way to translate since the themes of a story are able to connect to a more universal audience and don’t get stuck in minute details of language. Yet, there is merit to both of these methods of translation. Knowing the original words the author wrote is important in analyzing the text in context with history and culture, but the meanings gained from the Classical approach appeal to a more global audience.

Stemming from Borges’s idea of there being “Two Ways to Translate,” I decided to use two methods to read translations. In order to reflect the idea presented in the Classical view, that universal themes are more important than a word for word translation, my first method of reading a translation is to read the translated text before the original. Reading the story or poem “unbiased,” meaning without knowing the cultural and historical background of the text, allows me to use my own personal history, social context, and education to analyze the text. This perspective on reading is similar to the formalist literary movement, “New Criticism,” which aimed to close analyze a work of literature as its own text, or self-contained, meaning not including historical and other references. My idea is close to this theory of reading, but I included my own interpretation and analysis from my individual perspective. After I analyzed the translation unbiased, I read the text in its original language, as well as analyze the text through the historical and culture context of the work’s production, including that of the author’s

background. From the new information I gathered from my second reading, I analyze not only where the translation is lacking, but also where the translator's interpretation or errors offers new and different perspectives on the literature. The second method I devised to read the translation is closer to the Romantic idea Borges presents, in that the original text is the main focus. For this method, I researched the cultural and historical background of the literature and then read the translation as a guide alongside the original text. Words can have different meanings based on context, so by knowing the history of the text I am able to analyze the writing in that context. Using the combination of the translation and original I analyzed the literature as a whole, translation and original as one, instead of in parts. My final step was evaluating my two methods and combining them.

The only language outside of English I have familiarity with is Spanish, so I chose three works of Spanish literature to test my theories on reading translation. I chose a poem by Alfonsina Storni, an Argentinean poet; a short story by Horacio Quiroga, an Uruguayan author; and a play by Federico Garcia Lorca, a Spanish playwright. I chose these authors to work with because of their geographical variety, as well as the diverse genres. All of the literature was written roughly within the same historical period from 1918 to 1936.

For the works of Alfonsini Storni and Horacio Quiorga, I applied my first theory of reading the poem and story unbiased and then reading them informed with cultural context. Despite my education in the Spanish language, my knowledge of these authors and the cultural and historical backgrounds of their countries was lacking, which is why I chose them for my unbiased versus informed analyses. I studied Garcia Lorca's play *La casa de Bernarda Alba* in Spanish IV, so it was impossible for me to have an unbiased, purely English-language interpretation instead of an immersed cultural reading. I also have foreknowledge about the

Spanish Civil War, which was starting when the play was written, adding to my reading bias of the play. Since I do have knowledge of the historical and cultural background of the play and the history of its country of origin, I used Lorca's work to apply my second combination method of reading translations.

Each reading of a literary text, whether it is a translation or an original, is an act of translation. Each person who reads a text is going to take away something different, and their analyses won't be the same. This project is a reflection on my personal reading of Spanish and Latin American texts within the methods I use to read the translations of the originals. What is lost and gained in translation also changes from person to person, so we can't find out what was gained or lost if we don't think about how we read a translation. My personal lens influences these analyses, and I will show what is lost and gained in translation for me by using the methods of reading translations that I outline above. Through my personal lens in unbiased readings of Storni and Quiroga, I am able to connect to the universal themes and social commentary that the translations offer and see how they bridge into the culture and history of the literature's countries of origin. By, discovering what is lost in the translation I learn more about Latin American and Spanish history and culture.

### **Unbiased Reading of Alfonsina Storni's "You Want Me Pale":**

*See Appendix 53-55*

White imagery pervades Alfonsina Storni's poem "You Want Me Pale," symbolizing the absence of color, pristinely untouched by any hue, and throughout poem the speaker identifies white with idealized femininity within a patriarchal context. Other connotations associated with white are virginal, pure, clean, beauty, and cold when referring to snow. The theme of virginity is present in the first stanza, for example, in the line "Untouched among the others" (Fletcher).

“Others” implies that the person, addressed, as “you” in the poem wants the speaker to be isolated so that other people do not taint her. The “you” wants her to be in this isolation and stay pure. From this possessive tone the “you” is most likely a man, who wants the feminine poetic voice her for himself.

The idea of the man wanting the speaker to be a virgin is further enforced in the last line of the first stanza, “Petals sealed.” In many poems a flower bud can represent a woman’s virginity, and I believe it is the same for this poem. Interestingly, in other poems normally a rose bud is chosen to represent a female’s virginity, as in “To the Virgins To Make Much of Time: by Robert Herrick, which is known for its famous line “Gather ye rosebuds while ye may.” This verse implies that the virgin maidens only have so much time to remain virgins until time steals their youth away. In Herrick’s poem a rose bud is chosen, most likely a red, round rose, which correlates more with the image of the female sexual organ, but in Storni’s poem the speaker chooses the white lily to represent her virginity.

The bud of a white lily is more elongated than a rose bud, like a capsule or coffin. Also white lilies, in American culture, are most often associated with funerals and death. This deathly connotation of the white lily creates a more sorrowful tone. The speaker is being told to be like the white lily, so her virginity and purity is more like a curse or death sentence than an attractive trait. The speaker also says “Made of thinning perfume” before the line about sealed petals, implying that she must contain and dilute her appeal, isolating herself further away from society (Fletcher).

What is interesting about the overwhelming virginal imagery of the first stanza is that the second line has an allusion to the goddess Aphrodite, who is definitely not a virgin. Aphrodite was born in a wave of white sea-foam, which came from the body parts of Oranus’s that fell into

the sea after Kronos killed him. The first two lines are as follows: “You want me pale/ Made of sea foam,” implying that the man wants the speaker to be made from the same materials as the goddess of love (Fletcher). Yet she has not the freedom to love, as we learn later on in the poem with the idea of forced virginity.

The idea of sea foam brings another story to my mind: Hans Christian Anderson’s *The Little Mermaid*, which was written in 1836 before Storni was born. At the end of the tale the Little Mermaid is faced with the choice to either kill her beloved with a knife or turn to sea foam and die; she chooses the latter and becomes a child of the air and pearly white sea foam which after three hundred years would finally float to the kingdom of heaven. The Little Mermaid is an innocent, a virgin who chooses to die in the name of love; however, an outside agent wants the speaker in Storni’s poem to be pale and white like sea foam. The speaker says, “You want me” to be pale and made of sea foam, it is the “you,” the man, who is forcing the choice on the speaker. Unlike the noble sacrificial choice of the Little Mermaid, the speaker in the poem is being held to the expectations of a man, and she is not allowed to make her own decision.

Another image present in the first stanza is the mother of pearl. The mother of pearl comes with the connotation of innocence and charity, but also of the protective nurturing of motherhood. The idea of motherhood conflicts with the idea of purity; as you can’t have both. With the exception of the Virgin Mary, a virgin cannot be a mother, yet the speaker is using this imagery along with other imagery that relates to virginity. This contradiction of meaning shows that the speaker illustrates the absurdity in the idea of confinement in purity. The safe white bubble of virginity cannot last forever. Lilies will bloom before they die.

Throughout the rest of the poem, the speaker is making a case for herself. She wants the man to see from her perspective, see the absurdity in his expectation that she remain pure. In the

next stanza the speaker talks about how the “you” wants her to remain untouched by moonbeams, so she is even sheltered from the soft light of the moon. The moon is associated with feminine qualities, so why does the man want her to be away from other women as well? The moon is linked in some mythology with the menstrual cycle of a woman, and that implies bleeding, yet the speaker is never once associated with the color red. As in the first stanza when she is compared to a white lily instead of the more popular rose, the color red is avoided when referring to the speaker. The moon itself is a white orb in the sky, yet its connotations with females runs red, so the speaker is forbidden from being touched by moonbeams.

The next line is “Not called ‘sister’ by the daisies;” suggests he doesn’t just want her to be a virgin, he wants her untouched by everyone (Fletcher). Daisies have the connotation of being more flirtatious flowers; they are more common and bloom everywhere like weeds. The man frowns upon the fertility and abundance of daisies, and he doesn’t want the speaker to be associated with them, and the daisies will not call her their sister because of how different she is from them. Daisies have white petals but a yellow center, so although they are mainly the color white they also have the bright cheery yellow color associated with them. The speaker is not identified with yellow, and cannot be related to the daisies. The man instead wants her pale and white like snow. Snow is cold and directly contrasts with the sunny warm imagery of daisies. When the speaker switches to the image of snow from daisies, the mood becomes frozen. Snow covers flowers, and they cannot grow. The speaker is now alone in a white winter, and she feels isolated from the warmth of human companionship.

The next stanza switches into a description of the man, the “you,” and the imagery of color changes from pristine white to dark, red, and black, all the colors that were avoided in connection to the speaker. The speaker tells the man that he has had flowering fruit, which could

refer to other women that have been deflowered, so he has enjoyed the company of others and is not a virgin. And his lips were stained dark; so he was marked by his actions. He has feasted on the banquet of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine and festivities. He indulges in lavish excess.

The feast of grapes and meat reminds me of a contemporary Spanish reference, the film *Pan's Labyrinth*. There is a scene where the protagonist Ophelia, a young girl, opens a lock to retrieve something while avoiding the temptation of a magnificent feast set out before her. At the head of the table sits a grotesque pale figure whose eyes rest on a plate before him. He appears asleep, but as soon as Ophelia gives in to desire, her innocence tainted by a juicy grape, the creature awakens and tries to eat her. It was a taboo to eat from the feast, and she almost loses her life because of it. In Storni's poem the man revels in his own feast without a thought spared upon the consequences.

The man presumably thinks he is unscarred by his indulgence since in most western myths it is the women who are punished for taking the forbidden fruit. Hades, Greek god of the underworld, tricked Persephone, daughter of the goddess of the harvest, Demeter, into eating pomegranate seeds after he kidnaps her and brings her to the underworld. Since she ate the food of the dead, she is bound to spend part of the year beneath the ground with Hades for all eternity. In Genesis, Eve was also tricked into eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge and is banished forever from the Garden of Eden. These women receive violent consequences from eating forbidden food. Although the man in the poem may think he is immune to punishment, the speaker thinks otherwise. Being a man will not save him from judgment by the poetic voice.

The speaker of poem is warning the man that he is "Black with deception," his vision is clouded by darkness, and he can't see he is being deceived; there are consequences for him too (Fletcher). He is "Wearing red and/ Running into ruin"(Fletcher). There is blood, sin on his

hands, and it runs down his body; and if he doesn't notice it soon enough, it will bring him to ruin. In juxtaposition to the speaker's white isolation, the man is the opposite; he's practically bathing in sin.

In the next stanza the speaker wonders how the "you" has remained intact, his body and soul together, for so long. She is asking him after what he has done how he can he place those standards on her, and how long does he expect her to stay so innocent? She knows of his loss of innocence; she sees the red on him, and if she has this knowledge, doesn't that also taint her? She may not have committed it herself, but she cannot claim to have the unlearned innocence of a child if she can see the sins of another.

The speaker tells the man, " So flee into the woods, / Run into the mountains;" essentially to live a life of repentance like a hermit (Fletcher). In order for him to clean himself of earthly pleasure he has to return to nature. In this last stanza the speaker, along with telling the man to clean himself with earth and water, also directs him to "rejuvenate" his flesh with "saltpeter." Saltpeter is an interesting choice, since it is both a fertilizer and food preservative, but also an ingredient in explosives such as gunpowder and fireworks. By using this word, the speaker is implying two things about the man's cleansing, that he has to fertilize and preserve his soul, but since he has gone so far down a path of temptation the change inside him needs to be explosive.

Throughout this last passage the speaker is making a point that such a change inside the man is far from possible:

And when your body has returned to you,  
 When it's become entangled  
 In the bedroom of your soul,  
 Only then, good man,  
 Can you expect me to be pale,  
 Expect me to be snow,



Expect me to be untouched. (Fletcher)

The image of his body entangled in the bedroom of his soul implies the message of a sexual entanglement in bed sheets, and his encounters with multiple women. He believes it wasn't sinful for him to have sex, but he is oppressing the speaker by insisting that she preserve her white and virginal state. By juxtaposing the drastic differences in their behaviors, the absurdity of the double standard is clearly outlined. The man in this poem has absolutely no right to demand that the speaker remain pure when his hands are filthy with sin. In a patriarchal society a man can remain respectable and give into the temptations of his body, but a woman cannot.

This poem points out the double standard between men and women. Men are allowed to do whatever they wish, especially when it comes to sex, but women are expected to remain innocent and pure for these same men. The speaker rebels, and points out the absurdity in this social construct. The man in is personally connected with the speaker, but he could also be a representative of the patriarchal society that was in power almost all over the globe during this time period. In reality, for a woman to retain the extreme purity this man is demanding that she must forever be cloistered away isolated from society, and learn nothing of the world. By pointing out the difference between the sexes, the speaker is illustrating that there is no balance. Men must hold back, and women should be able to dip their feet into life, and the two should be able to meet in the middle.

### **Informed Reading of Alfonsina Storni's Poem:**

*See Appendix 51-55*

"Tú me quieres blanca" was the first poem in Storni's second collection of poems, "*El dulce daño*" or "*Sweet Injury*," that was published at the conclusion of World War I, a time of

change and controversy in many countries. The rise of radicalism in the Argentinean government was influenced by the victory of the Communist party in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. In Argentina there was mandatory male suffrage, but not female suffrage, and that was only one of many inequalities between the genders. Storni is one of Latin America's best-known feminist poets since her poetry takes on an identifiable female perspective and points out the flaws in the patriarchal society.

Storni was influenced by Latin America's first feminist poet, Sor Juana Ines De la Cruz, a Mexican nun whose writing contained feminist themes in the late seventeenth century. In Part I of Sor Juana's poem "Redondillas" she makes an accusation of men that is similar to Storni's in "Tu me quieres blanca." In the first line of the poem she writes: "Hombres necios que acusáis / a la mujer sin razón, / sin ver que sois la ocasión / de lo mismo que culpáis," or in English "Foolish men that accuse / women without reason / without seeing that you are the cause / of the same thing that you blame" (De la Cruz 80). Like Storni, Sor Juana points out the double standard of patriarchal society: the oppression of a woman's sexuality and men's freedom to embrace it. Sor Juana points out that women and men who commit the same deed share the same blame, and it is foolish to think that one gender is immune to fault.

Sarah Fletcher's translation of "Tú me quieres blanca," which I originally enjoyed, turned out to be riddled with direct word translation mistakes. The first most prominent discrepancy is the title itself. The English translation titles the poem "You Want Me Pale," when in the original Spanish it is not "pale," but "blanca," or white. In Western society skin color has become a major indicator not just of race but also of class. To be pale is to be privileged, free from hard labor in the sun, and during this same time in American culture it was a coveted trait to have woman be pale, because it symbolized wealth and purity from the hard work of the lower classes. Despite

understanding why the translator chose to make this change, it still alters the theme of the poem. The word white carries more weight as a universal tone that isn't specific to a certain culture. Because of my own basic knowledge of Spanish, I disregarded the word "pale" in my analysis because it was an obvious mistranslation. I knew automatically that pale did not fit, but re-looking at it the word "pale" might have been chosen to make the issue of race more prevalent.

Argentina is considered the "Paris of South America," and it is often seen as more European than Hispanic. Storni was born in Switzerland and had a very pale skin tone and looked European. If the issue of race now becomes a part of the poem, the translator is suggesting that desiring pallor, or whiteness is wrong. The speaker of the poem doesn't want to be defined by that color or race. During this time period in Argentina, immigrants from a whiter Europe were encouraged to settle in Argentina, and there was heavy discrimination against the darker-skinned indigenous and mestizo people of Argentina. Like America during this time period, whiteness was a desirable trait to have. The mixed race American author Charles Chesnutt uses the race and the color themes in many of his stories, pointing out the absurdity of the differences much like Storni does about gender. Chesnutt could have passed for white, but he chose to be indentified as African-American. Storni's poem is dealing with the issue of race as well as woman's rights. Storni makes it clear in her poem she does not desire whiteness, but rather rejects its implications of purity and confinement. The translator takes this concept and applies it to race as well.

Continuing with the Romantic mistranslation of the word "white," it is important to re-visit and compare other white imagery of the original Spanish to the translation. The first line of the poem is not "you want me white," but "tú me quieres alba." "Alba" can be used as white, and in English I think of alabaster white, but in Spanish it also means dawn. Dawn is full of oranges,

and pinks, and is not white at all, so it is interesting to wonder why Storni chose this word over “blanca,” which she uses in the title. Dawn is the symbol of new beginnings, a new day. If the man in the poem wants the speaker like the dawn, a fresh new day, how can he expect her to stay like the dawn? Dawn only lasts for a short period of time; the day has to go on, and transition into noon and night, but the man wants to deny these other experiences to the speaker by forcing her to stay as an eternal dawn that doesn’t grow into anything else. By adding the connotations of dawn to the poem, the idea of oppressing the woman as a sexual being is strengthened. Being white means pure, but the dawn is the start of the new day, and the man wants to stunt the speaker’s development so she doesn’t progress further than this particular moment in her life.

Although the knowledge of the symbolism of *alba* adds to the analysis of the poem, it is important to remember that this is the Fletcher’s interpretation. Using the word pale over “blanca/white” and then “white” over “alba/dawn,” Fletcher is interpreting the poem to be about race as well as gender, which is an added meaning that is not present in the original. The poem is very much a critique of a patriarchal society, but the translator is taking it a step further. Knowing the history of Argentina at the time I found that race is just as an important issue as women’s rights and that new level of interpretation wouldn’t have been present if I had only read the original poem.

There are more changes from the translation to original from examples that I analyzed in my unbiased reading. The line “Not called ‘sister’ by the daisies” has been mistranslated. In Spanish the line is “ni una margarita se diga mi hermana,” which more accurately translates to “not even a daisy can call herself my sister” (Storni 328). In Spanish, it is not the daisies that are excluding the speaker from being their sister, but the speaker who is positioned above the daisies because of the man’s insistence on her whiteness. The line in Spanish makes it seem as if the

speaker wants to be called a sister by the daisies, have companionship, but because of her isolation she can't relate with them. Also the yellow of a daisy's center looks like the sun during the middle of the day, but the speaker is associated with a never-ending dawn that can't transition into day. The daisies are white and yellow, but the man wants the speaker to be only white. Yet the feeling of exclusion by the daisies that is presented in the translation has a heavier implication of the results of the man's forced isolation of the speaker. By retaining the state of a never-ending purity the speaker can't grow, so she cannot relate with other people. If the speaker continues in her isolation she will not only be removed from society but society will not accept her. Whether the mistranslation of this line was an error or intentional, it contributes to the social commentary of the idea of purity isolating the speaker. By augmenting this social commentary Fletcher is opening up the text to a more universal theme of isolation that bridges between cultures.

Another mistranslation is the line regarding the man's body being "entangled in the bedroom" of his soul. In Spanish the words are "Y cuando las carnes / te sean tornadas, / y cuando hayas puesto / en ellas el alma, / que por las alcobas / se quedó enredada, / entonces, buen hombre, / preténdeme blanca" (Storni 329). These verses are extremely different from the English translation Fletcher gives us on both word translation and syntactical levels. For reference, the translation was: "And when your body has returned to you, / When it's become entangled/ In the bedroom of your soul, / Only then, good man, / Can you expect me to be pale" (Fletcher). A closer translation would be along the lines of "And when your flesh / is returned to you / and when you have / placed in it your soul / that through the alcoves / remained entangled / Then, good man, / aspire to call me white." In Spanish it is not the man's body returning to him but his flesh. Flesh is a more visceral noun than body because it connects deeper with the man's

corporeal self, which has feasted at the banquets of sin earlier in the poem. Also the man's body is not entangled in the bedroom of his soul at all; it is his soul itself that is tangled. The man thought that he could separate his soul and body. He thought he could be morally pure but be able to delight in sins of the flesh such as gluttony and sex and the speaker is telling him otherwise. Because of his actions his soul, every little alcove, has become twisted. The word "alcobas" can mean bedroom or alcoves, and in this case alcoves is more appropriate than Fletcher's choice to use bedroom, as it adds a indication of the man's sexual exploits. Also the verb "preténdem" has several interpretations in English and "expect" is not the best choice. The root verb of "preténdeme," is *pretender*, which means to try and do something, to aspire to do something, or to claim. When using the verb correctly the speaker has a more judgemental tone to her voice. She is telling the man how twisted he is and that when he realizes how corrupt his own soul is he will have to re-think his decision of forcing purity on her.

Despite obvious translation discrepancies both the translation and the original Spanish convey the idea of double standards. Fletcher's translation of the words connect the man's soul to his physical actions of having sex with multiple women by having his body become entangled in a figurative bedroom in his soul. The Spanish however, is more direct in pointing out the corruptness of the man's soul by implying that he can't separate the actions of his body from his soul. In both instances the speaker is pointing out how in society men can and do get away with sins, such as having sex outside of wedlock, while women would not be able to. The speaker highlights this double standard to questions men's right to force purity on women when they are so impure themselves. Although I personally enjoy the vividness of the original Spanish, Fletcher's translation choice makes a clearer connection between the man and his actions than the Spanish by using the "bedroom" instead of "alcoves." Bedroom is a more concrete image that

creates a physical tie between the man and his sexual nature. This translation change ended up adding to the social commentary of the poem, as well as making it relatable to a more universal audience.

### **Unbiased Reading of Horacio Quiroga's Short Story:**

*See Appendix 55-63*

From the city of Buenos Aires to the jungles of Misiones Uruguay, we come to the short story "El hijo" (The Son), written by Horacio Quiroga in 1903. In my first reading of the story, without its cultural context, I examined how the loss of a son equates to the loss of the future. Quiroga's short story "El hijo" shows that even a great father is helpless against the environment. Living in the wilderness is a constant risk for both father and son despite the many precautions they take.

At the start of the story there is strong trust between the father and son, father with himself, and with nature itself. The description of nature begins with, "The wilderness fully open, feels satisfied with itself" ("El hijo" English Translation). This implies that on this day the wilderness is content with itself, like an animal that has just finished a meal has no need to hunt. Nature seems peaceful, posing no danger to the man and his son. The wilderness's openness is a sign of welcome, or invitation, which makes the reader feel safe in the environment. The father himself "also opens his heart to the wilderness," placing his trust in the woods, placing his son's life in its hands. This is the first foreshadowing of danger. The "calm of the environment" is a lure into a false sense of security. But although it may seem like the father is dropping his guard, he still tells his son to be careful, and his son simply replies "Yes, father." The exchange between them is like a routine. Extra words are not needed to express concern or caution because there is

a solid mutual trust between the two characters. The father has done well to teach his son, and his son knows to follow his father's advice to stay safe.

The repetition of the routine, and its success up to this point, also contributes to a false sense of safety in the boy and his father. Every day the father and son are careful and encounter no problems, but that doesn't mean safety is a constant. It is expected, but both are disappointed. The loss of trust is the tragedy. The father trusted his son, his son trusted his father's advice, and both trusted the wilderness that day, and all of those bonds are broken.

The father in the story is a widower, but the loss of the mother in the family dynamic doesn't rob the son of having a motherly figure because the father takes on both roles. The father in his role as a father teaches his son how to hunt and the responsibilities of a being a man, but he also cares for him and nurtures him so there is a mutual respect between the two. The stereotype of mothers and fathers is that the father is stoic and gives structure while the mother is emotional and nurturing. The father in this story does not hold back his emotions when it comes to his son:

“It isn't easy, however, for a widowed father, without other faith nor hope invested in the life of his son, to educate him like he has done, free in will, sure of the small feet and hands he has had since four years of age, conscious of the immensity of certain dangers and the weakness of his own strengths.” (“El hijo” English Translation)

The father pays very close attention to his son, and invests a lot of time and energy into his education. He is not ashamed of how much he cares for his son and is open about his affection.

Yet, the father also questions his ability to raise his son because of his own limitations, and by admitting this, the father differs from other male figures in literature whose pride would have never have allowed them to admit weakness. The father is worried about the “weakness of his own strengths,” which is a reflection of his dwindling physical ability from his age, since we are told his hair is grey, and also of his mental state. Mental afflictions, such as hallucinations during the early twentieth century were more attributed to women than men, so having the father



associated with a mental illness can be viewed as feminizing his character. Nervous disorders, like neurasthenia, were associated mainly with women and were used as proof that women were the weaker sex. Misdiagnosis of neurasthenia was what Charlotte Perkins Gilman used in her story "The Yellow Wallpaper," first published in 1892, to show the part it played in the oppression of women. The woman in the story was even deemed unfit to look after her own child. In Quiroga's story the father does experience hallucinations and in fact has done a great job in caring for his son. The father is not perfect; he has a weakness but works hard to fight against it in order to care for his son.

The father at the start of the story controls his hallucinations, but loses control when panic sets in, which brings the idea of trust and betrayal back into play. The father's mental condition must have been difficult to deal with considering that little research had been done during this time period, and the father lives an isolated life away from society. He has no support to lean on; he and his son are alone in the jungle. In the morning when the jungle seems satisfied, and the bond between the father and son is solid, the father was able to feel confident in his mental capacity for the day. His own mind betrays him at the end of the story when he finds his son dead from an accidental shot. His body knows what has happened before his mind: "even though his body and soul cry out in sorrow, he smiles in happiness" ("El hijo" English Translation). The father has experienced hallucinations of his son's death before; but the normal routine and calmness of the day set his mind up to expect safety. When that expectation was not met, he can't cope, allowing his hallucinations to take over. The father organizes his life in order to keep control. The routine of telling his son to be careful, and his son's "yes, father" reply all are a part of the father's way to control his mind. His daily chores may help him concentrate in order to keep his mind from wandering into delusion.

The father is aware of his son's innocence, but is confident in what he taught him. There is a contradiction early on in the story when the father admits to himself "Even though he is very tall for his age, he is only thirteen years old. And it would seem like he is younger, judging by the purity of his blue eyes, still fresh with childlike surprise" ("El hijo" English Translation). The son's body may seem older and more adapted to his environment, but his physical abilities are useless unless his mind has matured. His eyes still hold the wonder of a child; he doesn't yet know the harsh realities of the world, and he doesn't have enough experience to survive. The father is aware of this vulnerability but doesn't express worry at his son's lone hunting trip.

Although it appears to the reader that the father was not suffering from any hallucinations when his son is leaving, he still creates a perfect scenario in his mind: "His father follows him with his eyes for a while and then returns to his task of the day, happy with the happiness of his little one" ("El hijo" English Translation). He sent his son off with a smile and happiness and is expecting to see him at noon with the same smile. The father doesn't linger on his son's image as he leaves their home his eyes don't linger because he feels confident his son will return home at noon. Despite the hints of danger that are given, the father disregards them and expresses no worry, even when a gunshot sounds: "At that instant, not very far away, sounds a gun shot. 'The Saint-Etienne . . .' muses the father at recognizing the detonation. 'At least two doves in the jungle...' Without paying more attention to this insignificant event, the man abstracts himself anew into his chore" ("El hijo" English Translation). The father pictures his son hunting, despite his love and concern for his son, he cannot imagine the other possibilities of what the gunshot could mean. The sound of the familiar Saint-Etienne rifle is even comforting for him; he recognizes the sound and is able to further immerse his mind in his work because he feels confident his son is enjoying his time hunting. In an attempt to prevent his mental illness from

taking over, he lets it fool him into a false sense of security.

Commonly in father and son stories, the father tries to live his life vicariously through his son, and this trend is present in "El hijo." The father mentions how he would have at age thirteen "given his life to possess a shotgun. His son, at that age, possesses one now; and the father smiles" ("El hijo" English Translation). He is proud that he can provide his son with an object that he desired as a child, and he has taught his passion of hunting to his son. And as a widower his son is his only hope for the future; he is "invested in the life of his son" ("El hijo" English Translation). As an older man with various ailments, he accepts that his life will be spent raising his son, but that is taken away from him by an accident. The loss of his son is the loss of his own future. He loves his son, and by living through his son wants his son's own personal happiness to grow, but his own life is still connected to that of his son. The tragedy of his son's death also represents the death of the future, and of the father.

Dangerous animals and the landscape itself pose a threat in the jungle but neither of these elements is the cause of the son's death. Barbed wire and a gun, man's influence on trying to control the jungle, are what kill the son. The instrument of the death is the misfiring of another man-made object, the gun, so this story could also be interpreted in an environmental perspective, or another form of human versus the environment conflict. The jungle was a beautiful place until the father's frantic search for his son. At the start of the story, it was "powerful summer day," but when the father is searching we have this description: "There are so many wires there, and the jungle is so, so unclean!...Oh. so dirty!" ("El hijo" English Translation). The wires are not natural, and they infect the purity of the jungle.

Because of the wires, the jungle is being unclean, and it becomes an enemy. The father and son live off the land. Despite its natural dangers, the jungle still provides them with food and

water, and in the end it is not the jungle that kills the son but man's influence on nature. The last image we get at the end of the story is the son's dead body with his legs tangled in the wire. The environment is not the enemy; it is man. An accident is an accident, but there wouldn't have been one if it hadn't been for the wires.

### **Informed Reading of Horacio Quiroga's Short Story:**

An author's life is not always reflected in their work, but in the case of Horacio Quiroga, there is a strong correlation between the tragedies in his life and in his stories. Known as the "grandfather of the Spanish American short story," Quiroga's many collections of short stories have similar themes that "exemplify the all-powerful and soulless cruelty of nature and inhuman fate" (*The Columbia Encyclopedia*). In his life Quiroga experienced one tragedy after another: His father died in a hunting accident, his stepfather committed suicide, he accidentally shot and killed his best friend, and his first wife committed suicide by poison, suffering for a week before her death. When Quiroga himself was diagnosed with cancer he committed suicide as well.

"El hijo" was written only two years after Quiroga accidentally killed his friend when a hunting rifle misfired. The echoes of his recent loss and guilt seem haunt this father-and-son story. The guilt he had over his friend's death stayed with him. As much as it was an accident, it seems he still placed blame on himself. The father in "El hijo" was not directly responsible for his son's death, but he still felt guilt. An intense hallucination that prevented the father from processing his son's mangled body indicates that other emotions needed to be repressed, such as guilt and sorrow. The father knew his son was still innocent, but he let him leave that morning on his own; he even smiled as the boy left.

Part of the last line of the story in English reads: “his beloved son lies before the sun, dead since ten in the morning,” but in Spanish the word “lies” is “yace” which is used in the phrase “here lies” on gravestones. The absence of the gravestone connotations of *yace* takes away from the cultural context of the death. It is clear the son is dead, but the idea of a final resting place comes with the use of *yace*. The father might never return for his son’s body; we as readers don’t know how long his hallucinations will last, but *yace* makes his son’s body’s location more permanent. Although the father is struggling to accept the death of his son, Quiroga uses this word to symbolize that there is some closure on this subject. The place where his son died becomes a grave, whether the father realizes it or not. This could represent Quiroga’s own closure on his friend’s death, since the innocent son’s death is an accident. Perhaps Quiroga is letting himself feel guiltless for his own accident.

From all this tragedy it’s no surprise that Quiroga’s outlook on life wasn’t hopeful. According to one biography of Quiroga, for Quiroga “hope is foolish illusion, a lie to which we cling even knowing full well the awful and mortal truth it hides” (*The Columbia Encyclopedia*). For Quiroga hope got him nothing; he only experienced more and more death. In his own life the weakness of man and dangers of nature always won out in the end. This lack of hope can be seen in the tragedy of the son’s death in “El hijo.” The son is hope for the future. As a symbol of hope the son is killed by the flaws of human nature, and nature itself. According to the same biography, the two major antagonists in Quiroga’s stories were nature and man’s “own existential fate” (*The Columbia Encyclopedia*). The son in “El hijo” dies of an accidental misfire, a human weakness, and the misfire occurred because he tripped on barbed wire, which had been obscured by nature. The son was defeated by both of Quiroga’s antagonists, as if they worked together to snuff out the symbolic hope of the son.

Quiroga is known for his sparing use of adjectives, so when he does use them it is striking. With this information in mind, the first sentence of the story holds more weight than I once thought: “Es un poderoso día de verano” (Quiroga 294), “It was a powerful summer day” (“El hijo” English Translation). I originally saw the “powerful summer day” as an indication to the strength of the sun and how much the ideas of summer were embodied in that day, but now the word “powerful” or “poderoso” has a more ominous quality. Also since nature is one of Quiroga’s main antagonists, the powerfulness of nature is the first foreshadowing of danger we get in the story. The jungle is dangerous. It isn’t just a location, and it has power over its inhabitants. Also the adjective *poderoso* in Spanish can mean more than just the direct translation of “powerful;” it can also mean forcible, potent, mighty, eminent, and wealthy. In Spanish *poderoso* carries the weight of all of its meanings, and they should be considered when reading that one seemingly simple adjective. Nature takes on the quality of being dominant over man when connected with the Spanish connotations of the word *poderoso*. In English all of those connotations are not present, which decreases the influence of “powerful.” Even though it is the same adjective, “powerful” is tame in English compared to the connotations of the Spanish.

The day and the jungle are more than powerful; they have a forcible and potent hold on those living. My image of a beautiful summer day in a jungle filled with blooming flowers and other plants is gone when I read the story based on the culturally contextualized view. It is replaced with the menacing feel of the jungle as a harsh ruler. Yet, my original view of the jungle as a beautiful place adds to the cruelty of nature’s true danger. The jungle is beautiful, but that doesn’t make it safe; it hides its dangers underneath its outward beauty, just as bushes and plants obscure the barbed wire that son falls upon.

When reading “El hijo” with its cultural context and original language, I picked up on more foreshadowing and more hints about the dangers of nature as an antagonist, but not knowing nature is an enemy from that start adds more levels of dimension to the idea of betrayal that I identified in my original analysis of the story. Earlier, based on the language of the story, I believed that that father was placing some trust in nature to keep his son safe, and that trust is betrayed at the conclusion of the story. Yet, reading the original it is clear that the man did not trust nature from the start. The theme of betrayal is weakened since the man never trusted nature to begin with.

Looking at the translation differences, there is a key line that further augments the menacing nature of the jungle. The line “The wilderness fully open, feels satisfied with itself,” which I originally interpreted as nature being content, is quite different if you look at the original Spanish. In Spanish, “se siente satisfecha de si,” also means the jungle is self-satisfied, instead of the jungle feeling satisfied (Quiroga 294). This small difference changes the interpretation completely. The jungle portrayed as self-satisfied implies that it is confident in itself and aware of its power. Another error in direct translation is that in Spanish it is not the “wilderness,” but “naturaleza,” or nature. Nature is the term most commonly used when describing conflicts and literature, and is not specific to a certain environment. The jungle is where the father and son live, but nature is everywhere. The idea of nature has a more universal application than a type of environment, such as the wilderness or jungle. Nature as an antagonist is more prevalent if the word “nature” is used, so wilderness is a softer term, in that it represents only a small aspect of nature. This view signifies the jungle as an enemy from the start; it is a powerful force, which is very different from being contented and satisfied.

Since Quiroga's work has been linked to nature as a major antagonist it is easy to analyze his literature as such. Yet, my initial analysis of nature as beautiful isn't wrong. Despite technical translation errors, the jungle can still be considered beautiful in this story, even with the danger that it holds. Quiroga lived for some time in the jungle himself, so despite knowing its dangers firsthand, I doubt he would have lived there if it hadn't had some appeal. People can become blinded by what they expect to read, rather than reading something for what it is. If I had done this research initially, I might have always viewed nature as an ugly enemy instead of a beautiful environment, which, combined with the more menacing view of nature from the original, gives nature the awesome power of the sublime.

Continuing with the idea that adjectives always hold great weight in Quiroga's stories, it is important to return to the description of the son. The son's eyes are described, as "still fresh with childlike surprise," and the "childlike" quality of the eyes is important in identifying the son as a figure of innocence ("El hijo" English Translation). In Spanish the line is: "frescos aún de sorpresa infantil," and the adjective of childlike comes with more implications in Spanish (Quiroga 295). The word "infantil" is also a cognate, close to its other translation of infantile in English. Infantile implies the helplessness of a baby who needs to be watched over. Children at least can have some independence to play on their own, but infants are more dependent on their parents. This adjective indicates that the son is more vulnerable than we realize. Yet, the use of "child" in place of "infantil" places emphasis that even though the child is no longer a baby, he is still innocent. Experience comes with age, and the son had experience from his father's training. However, even that wasn't enough to protect him from accidents. No matter what, there is a risk in letting children mature and gain their own experience, but if they don't how, they will never



gain the experience they need to grow. Worrying about a child leaving home is a universal concern so using the word “child” in place of “infant” connects readers.

### **Evaluation of Unbiased to Informed Reading:**

The race implications and the theme of isolation in Storni’s poem brought up by Fletcher, as well as the theme of betrayal and the idea of nature and the jungles of Misiones being sublime in Quiroga’s story, would have been weakened or lost if not for my initial “unbiased” reading of the translations. Cultural and historical context is important in understanding a work of literature, but it is dangerous to be biased by it. From what I knew of the Spanish language I was quick to disregard “pale,” and chose to analyze the poem with the vocabulary I knew to be the correct translation. But I’m glad I was able to stop myself and think about why the translator might have made that choice. When a work is translated its meaning transcends that of the original time and culture in which it was written. If we view literature as being specific to that time, we miss out on the multiple possible meanings that can be analyzed from the translation and from the differences between the translation and original. So by reading the translation as a separate piece of writing I was able to pick up the universal themes that bridge between cultures that I might have missed if I had only read the original.

I grew up reading fairy tales and Greek mythology so those are the references I automatically fall back on in my analysis. My college education in literature and the Spanish language has also contributed to how I analyzed these works. Another person with a different educational history might have interpreted these works differently. Like the translator’s different interpretations, each person who reads that translation will also get something different out of the

literature. It is amazing to see how a piece of literature written in a specific cultural and time has increased in meaning because of translations and individual interpretations.

What was difficult about reading the translation this way was my view of the poem and story became somewhat fragmented. I had my unbiased interpretation and my informed one, and it was difficult to think of them as one in the same. By comparing the translation to the original, I ended up focusing a lot on what was different, which is both good and bad. In reality, many times the translations did indeed make mistakes, but through those mistakes the meaning of the story changed and opened the texts up to more universal themes and social relevancy.

### **Combination Translation & Informed Reading of Federico García Lorca's Play:**

It may be risky to let your child go and experience the world, but locking them away from the world is the social equivalent to a physical death. In Federico Garcia Lorca's play *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, a mother, set in the ways of rural Spanish countryside patriarchal society, oppresses her five daughters. There are hardly any men present in the story, so not surprisingly the main oppressor is a woman, Bernarda. No longer under her recently late husband's control, Bernarda turns to tradition as the new ruler of her life, and tradition becomes the enemy of progress. By oppressing her daughters she gives them all a social death and the one daughter who rebels is driven to suicide.

García Lorca finished *La casa de Bernarda Alba* two months before he died in the Spanish Civil War. Before the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship, Spain was experiencing a liberal period; for example, women could vote. For many this was a time of freedom, but the rural countryside was still caught up on in its conservative past, which is what Lorca portrays for us in his play. Lorca, although a man, knew firsthand the hardships of discrimination since he

himself was homosexual; this is one of the reasons that he was murdered by firing squad at the start of the Civil War. The idea of oppression is a prominent one in this play, and Lorca used his writing and his life to make sure the world knew about its consequences.

One could interpret the play as Lorca's own struggles of being forbidden to marry or find love. During the liberal time in Spain before the civil war, gay rights were slowly making progress on being accepted, but the harsh dictatorship of Franco both halted and reversed that progress. This play was written during the onset of the Civil War so Lorca could be indentifying himself through these women. Bernarda can be viewed as a dictator who takes away freedom, and the daughters as the people or as Lorca himself. Adela, as the youngest member of the family, is against the dictatorship of Bernarda and would rather die than live in her world, while the older sisters are slowly losing their fight and are allowing themselves to be oppressed. The uniqueness of the grandmother, Maria Josefa of being the one character who remains rebellious despite everything can be construed as the representation of the continued resistance of people towards Franco despite harsh outcomes. Maria Josefa sounds insane, and many people thought it was insane to resist Franco. But Lorca is making it clear that the real madness is the person who is in control, whether it is Bernarda or Franco. Although those who resist might appear crazy, they are the ones everyone should listen to.

The characters in *La casa de Bernarda Alba* are shaped by color imagery, echoing the surrealist movement of the 1920s and 1930s that influenced García Lorca. In the description of the house the walls are described as bright white and thick, which makes me think of an insane asylum. The color white in Alfonsina Storni's poem was used to represent innocence and purity, but the bright white of Bernarda's house has a more menacing feel to it. Bernarda's daughters are being forced to stay inside those white walls for eight years to mourn for their father. The walls

are thick, like the walls of a prison or an asylum. The daughters are not there by choice, since their mother is oppressing them.

In the description of the house there are unrealistic paintings of nymphs and kings, and these paintings seem out of place in the conservative household. Bernarda does not welcome fantasies, especially in the minds of her daughters. Bernarda does not want her daughters to marry but rather instead for them to grow old in that house together, and there are no adventures in their futures so it seems odd have such images displayed on the walls. Those paintings symbolize what is not meant to be. The unrealistic expectations of a bright future will never be realized, since they are as false as the nymphs depicted in the scenes. Nymphs are free spirited beings, and free sexual beings, but they are also a source of desire for kings and rulers that wish to dominate their freedom. The kings in the nymph scene could represent the patriarchal society of the time. Bernarda is the king oppressing the freedom of her daughters, the nymphs. They also could symbolize the unrealistic fantasies that are bound to stem from confinement in an asylum like the house of Bernarda Alba.

Since the household is in mourning, Bernarda insists on black being worn by all and any other color a taboo. When Bernarda asks one of her daughters to lend her a fan, she is repulsed by the red and green flowered fan that Amelia hands her; “(*Throwing the fan on the ground*) Is this the fan to hand to a widow? Give me a black one, and learn to respect your father’s memory”(Kline). Not only does she reject the colored fan, she throws it with disdain. It is as if she can’t allow the color to touch her. The tradition of mourning, the time span of eight years, and colors, is burned into Bernarda so she can’t even fan herself with something that isn’t black. These colors greatly offend Bernarda as well; red is color that represents fertility, passion and love, and green represents new growth and youth. And on top of the symbolism of the colors, the

fan is decorated with flowers, which are also a symbol of life. Bernarda has completely devoted herself to the idea of death so the mention of life is an insult.

Green returns as an important color when Adela tries on her green summer dress in order to impress Pepe el Romano. As the youngest daughter, Adela embraces the color green and all it stands for. Adela is just blooming as a woman and unlike her sisters who are almost all past the ideal marrying age, the idea of being shut away for eight years just as she is entering her prime is a death sentence to her. Her sisters have become accustomed to their confinement. Although they do not enjoy it, they have become more resigned to their fates. When the sisters try to comfort Adela in saying that she will gradually come to accept it as well, Adela cries: “[*Bursting into angry tears*] No, no I won’t get used to it! I don’t want to be shut in. I don’t want my skin to become like yours. I don’t want to lose my bloom in these rooms! Tomorrow I’ll put on my green dress and I’ll go for a walk in the street! I want to go out!”(Kline). Adela compares herself to a flower; she will lose her bloom and wilt if she stays locked away from the sunshine. She has watched her sisters fade and will do anything to prevent her own wilting. Adela is the antithesis to Bernarda. She is young, and she is a threat to tradition. As much as Bernarda rejects colors, Adela rejects black. She is a new green stem of life wanting to grow in the world and not cloistered away from it.

Bernarda’s unwillingness to let her daughters marry eliminates any future they might have. Without marriage they cannot leave her house. The asylum feel of the house underscores the idea that unmarried women cannot function in society and must be contained by thick white walls in their position within a home. For the long period of mourning Bernarda expects them to stay in the house; they have nothing to do but sew and embroider, but to what purpose? They clearly aren’t making clothes or anything for a dowry, and who is to use what they make? It is

just a task to keep them busy before they fade away. When Magdalena, the second oldest daughter, declares that she'd rather do anything but stay in the dark house day, after day her mother coarsely replies: "That's what it means to be a woman" (Kline). Bernarda has let tradition define her gender role and has aligned herself with the ideals of patriarchal society without considering alternate possibilities for herself and her daughters. Despite the male figure of the father being out of the picture, Bernarda in his stead becomes an oppressor of the household. Bernarda is defining the role of women to be constantly in the shadow of men even after they have died. Following rules and traditions is all Bernarda knows, but what about the other aspects of womanhood? Being a mother is a part of being a woman; she has five daughters, but that is not what she views to be her first responsibility. The happiness and future of her daughters is a distant second to the tradition of mourning her husband. To be a woman in her household is to be a slave to tradition.

The big question of this play is why, as a woman herself, Bernarda oppresses her daughters to such an extreme degree. Bernarda's mother is not nearly as conservative and after she is let out from her room, she is wearing her finest jewelry and talking about getting married herself. At the end of Act One she declares to her family: "You don't need anything of mine, not my rings, and not my black moiré dress, because none of you will ever be married. Not one!" (Kline). Maria Josefa, the grandmother, is keenly aware of her granddaughters' fates and wants to escape more than they do. Maria Josefa continues her revolt against Bernarda and exclaims: "No, I won't be quiet. I don't want to see these single women, foaming at the mouth for marriage, their hearts turning to dust, and I want to go back to my village. Bernarda, I want a man to marry and be happy with!" (Kline). Maria Josefa knows that there are no prospects, or

men, for her granddaughters in their small town, and she misses her own village from where she was probably taken when she got married to Bernarda's father.

Considering class and appearance are so important to Bernarda, she must have grown up in a wealthy family, implying her mother "married up," since Maria Josefa is talking about wanting to return to her hometown, a simple village. Regressing in status means nothing to her if she can find happiness. She also keeps repeating that she wants to go "by the seashore." The sea represents freedom for the grandmother and for Adela who, later in the play, sets the sea as her meeting spot to run away with Pepe. Open water, that stretches as far as the eye can see, is the opposite to the thick white walls of the house. The sea can't be fenced off by man-made boundaries. Maria Josefa has spent so much time confined within four walls by her daughter that it is only natural that her happiness is symbolized by a place with no walls at all.

The confining asylum-like house of Bernarda has a maddening effect on its inhabitants. The five unmarried sisters are all fussing over the one eligible man in town, Pepe el Romano. Although he is engaged to the eldest, Angustias, who is almost forty, others including Adela and Martirio have directed their feelings toward him. Adela, as the youngest, seems the most devoted in her feelings, despite his betrothal to her eldest sister, and the other women are becoming suspicious. Angustias in Act II comments on Adela: "I can see it in her eyes. She's beginning to look like a madwoman"(Kline). Angustias is worried at the jealousy eating away at her sister, driving her to insanity. In her response to Angustias, Martirio says: "Don't talk about madness. This is the one place where such words should not be spoken"(Kline). A house that shares so many qualities with a madhouse might be the perfect place to speak of such things, but Martirio is insistent that this is the one place that it should not be spoken about. Madness is catching; if one of them loses herself to the oppression of Bernarda's house, then they might all fall prey to

the same fate. The sisters are already sentenced to a life of confinement, so they can't possibly think about being burdened by another affliction. They no longer control their futures, but they are in control of their minds, and are not weakened by any mental illnesses.

La Poncia, the head servant, called Bernarda's house another name: "convent." Although not as ominous as the asylum view of the house, it is still a place of confinement. The girls are all unmarried, and they must devote themselves to paying their respects to an absent male figure, much like a nun in her service to God. Yet, these girls did not choose this life of chastity and confinement, Bernarda did. The question that still remains is why? Why keep five girls locked away from the world to live as nuns? Martirio had the opportunity to marry, but Bernarda declined; "I'd do it a thousand times over! My blood will not mix with that of the Humanes family as long as I live! His father was a farmhand"(Kline). Living not only in an isolated house, but also in an isolated part of the Spanish countryside, the girls' options of eligible bachelors who can meet their mother's standards are few. And Humanes' name is a cognate to "human" in English and Spanish, implying that he was a human being and should not be bound by his lineage but treated as his own person. Being human also implies being flawed, and flaws are something Bernarda can't accept, even if she is human herself. Even though Enrique Humanes was a respectable young man, Bernarda could not accept his lineage.

There is little information on what type of person Bernarda's late husband was, except that he had an affair, implying that he was human and therefore flawed from acting on his sexual desires. Although Bernarda still has her house and social status, it seems as if they are running out of money. Despite this lack of funds, Bernarda does not follow the social pattern of marrying off her daughters; that is one tradition she has no problem ignoring. Angustias is the only one with her own money, since she is the only child of Bernarda's first marriage and with the death



of her stepfather she now has access to her paternal father's inheritance. Pepe el Romano's interest in marrying Angustias over her sisters is because of her inheritance; the other girls are worth nothing monetarily.

The pride Bernarda has for her social status is incredibly prominent in how she lives her life. Not wanting to taint her bloodline with that of a farmer could be one reason she denied Martirio the opportunity to marry, but another might be that she wouldn't have been able to give Martirio a dowry that reflected their social status.

Bernarda insists that she and her daughters mourn for eight years, but this sense of duty is not a reflection of her love for her husband, but for tradition and her own desire to have power over those within her household. When her first husband died she did exactly the same thing. As soon as the first mourning period was over, she re-married. Angustias and Magdalena are nine years apart in age, implying that as soon as the promise of tradition of mourning for eight years was kept Bernarda immediately got married and conceived another child. Even having children seems to be out of duty rather than love. She only speaks to her daughters with a harsh tongue, and there is never a moment in the play that she speaks kindly to them or about them. It could be that her harsh behavior and insistence on keeping them away from the world is her way to respect tradition, but it could also be that she doesn't want to continue the cycle of her suffering. For the readers or viewers of this play there is little information on the nature of Bernarda's marriages. Bernarda's second husband's affair implies that there was no longer any love in their relationship, but because of tradition she stayed with him.

From a psychological standpoint Bernarda's oppression of her own daughters could be representative of Bandura's social learning theory, or in layman's terms: monkey see, monkey do. Her husband oppressed her, so now she is repeating the behavior towards her daughters. Or

she could be jealous that her daughters have the chance to escape the oppression she was forced under and doesn't want them to experience freedom. And then there is control; being a woman in this time period meant you had little control over what happened to you, so Bernarda's husband's death granted her a sense of power. She now determined what the family did, and if her daughters were all married off, there would be no one left for her to control, except her own mother, who is the only woman she can't control.

Bernarda's disdain for going against tradition reaches its peak at the end of Act II when a ruined woman is being dragged through town. A young unmarried girl has had a child out of wedlock and killed it to hide her shame, which is what you would have to do in the strict rural countryside. As the procession of violence is proceeding through the street, Bernarda calls out to have the woman killed: "*(In the archway)* Finish her off before the police come! A burning coal in the place of her sin!" (Kline). In the first Act of the play Bernarda was distant towards the townsfolk and wanted them out of her house as soon as the funeral was over, but now she is joining in their violent acts towards the young woman. Although she does not physically leave the house, she passionately calls out for the girl's destruction. This woman has violated tradition by having a child outside of marriage, and killing the child to cover it up, and Bernarda has no mercy for such a woman.

Bernarda has not even a shred of sympathy for the woman outside and has put herself on such a pedestal that she has disassociated herself from her own sex. She can't put herself in the woman's place or wonder about the situation regarding the woman's pregnancy. As a modern woman my first thoughts were on why she killed her child. Maybe the woman was raped and couldn't see the child as her own, or maybe she had a lover who abandoned her and she didn't want the child to live an awful life as a bastard. Either way, none of these thoughts come to

Bernarda. She lives her life seeing what is tradition and what is not; there is no grey area. By becoming a slave to tradition she has forsaken her connections to her own sex. She takes on the role of oppressing the women in her household including herself after her husband's death. Bernarda has no trace inside her of the compassion and sensitivity that is most commonly associated with her sex.

Adela has the opposite reaction. After Bernarda calls for the woman's death, Adela while clutching her own stomach cries "No! No!"(Kline). When Adela clutches her own stomach the reader can infer that she too is pregnant, and the father is Pepe el Romano. Adela sympathizes with the girl, and it is not just because she is in a similar situation. She is very sensitive and young and has not yet submitted to her mother's oppression. She fights against tradition, she wears a green dress when she is supposed to wear black, and she has sexual relations with a man that she is forbidden to desire. Martirio, although only four years older than Adela, is satisfied with the young girl's demise and joins with her mother's hateful sentiments, indicating that she has been successfully oppressed by Bernarda.

The word "alba" returns again as an important symbol. In Storni's poem it was used with the word "white," and although its true definition "dawn" means new beginnings, the speaker of the poem uses it as a symbol of oppression, to stay new and untouched like a never-ending dawn that won't develop into day. Bernarda Alba's name has such a beautiful connotation, but her actions warp the idea of dawn into that of oppression like in Storni's poem. Also it is interesting that the play is titled *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, or *The House of Bernarda Alba*, because even though a woman is in control of the house, there is still oppression. The idea of dawn, of new beginnings, would make the title at first glance seem a hopeful one: the house of a woman, whose name has the promise of dawn. Instead, we the readers are confronted with the irony of a

woman who rejects the ideas of new beginnings, favoring the tradition of patriarchy over the progression into the new day. The dawn of time, the beginning, where tradition began, is where Bernarda has set her ways. From learning about what was lost in the Storni poem, the significance of *alba*, I was able to apply that knowledge to broaden the theme of dawn in this play.

Lorca uses the symbolism of colors and objects to represent the metaphor of the house as the presence of restriction. In the first act the description of the house, which I analyzed before, is white, symbolizing the virginity and innocence of its inhabitants. Later there is a description of bars on the windows of the house as well, and this image combined with that of the white walls represents how that innocence is trapped inside that house and the world is blocked from entering it.

Windows are meant to be open to let in fresh air, but Bernarda wants everything shut keeping the air stagnant and unchanging. Windows are also a symbol of opportunity and according to the play a traditional place to greet suitors, which were the only opportunities open to women in this time period. Both Angustias and Adela greet Pepe at their windows, and La Poncia said she met her own husband in the same way. By placing bars on the windows Bernarda is denying her daughters the opportunity of marriage and drawing a line between men and women. Women are to be in the house, and men are to remain outside. Although Bernarda means this literally, the sentiment reflects traditional gender roles of women being connected with the house and men working outside it. Bernarda takes it a step further in order to completely segregate the genders.

The image of Bernarda's house as a convent has a stronger connotation in the cultural history of the text since Spain's main religion at the time was Catholicism. Unlike nuns the

sisters had no choice in their confinement, and this confinement and unspoken vow of celibacy implies that Lorca was hinting at the problems of organized religion, and the idea of sexual oppression of women and of himself as a gay man. And the idea of organized religion can also be equated to the threat of Franco's impending dictatorship rule. Nuns are allowed very little freedom, and many of the stories regarding nuns from English eighteenth century literature shows the desire they have of escaping, and the dreadful consequences they face when they do. In the end Adela is the only one who is able to escape her sentence to mourn and rot away in that house, but she only achieves that freedom through death.

Windows also represent openness to the outside world. An important scene in the play is in the first act when a group of migrant harvesters can be heard from the windows. They sing: "Abrir puertas y ventanas / las que vivas en el pueblo / el segador pide / rosas / para adornar su sombrero"(Lorca 593), or in English "open your doors and windows; / the reaper wants your roses / to brighten his sombrero" (Kline). Obviously the reaper represents death, but that doesn't necessarily mean death as in the end of life. It could represent the death of a life style, such as ending being single to enter into marriage, or from not having a child into the progression of motherhood. In this sense death doesn't have to be a bad thing. By chanting that the girls open up the windows and doors to death, it doesn't mean their end of their lives, just a part it, taking the opportunities that offer themselves just outside their windows. Bernarda would take the song literally, that death will take all of you; she cannot grasp the idea that it is okay to let parts of your life die, and when they do you must move on. But accepting this kind of little death indicates accepting that things change, and that one period of your life is over for good. Since Bernarda is the enemy of change, she can't see the value in these symbolic deaths. As a

consequence of her denial of these little deaths of her own daughters she causes Adela's physical death.

The roses with which the reaper will adorn his hat with also represent the taking of virginity. Storni chose lilies to represent virginity, but other poets such as Robert Herrick, mentioned earlier, use roses. The color red, and the layered pattern represent the unbroken virginity of a woman. Yet, this reaper is not there to take the virginity for himself but to liberate it. If all of the girls stay in the house as their mother commanded, they will die, rosebuds wasted; if they marry, they will lose their virginity to their husbands. Either way death will take their rosebuds. If they live life like nuns, their virginity is given to God, and if they marry they will experience "la petite mort," as the French refer to the "little death" of each act of sex taking part of your life force.

It is interesting because Adela says: "Me gustaria segar para ir y venir. Asi se olivida lo que nos muerde" (Lorca 593), or "I'd like to be a reaper so I could come and go at will. Then I'd be able to forget what's gnawing at us"(Kline). After hearing the reapers song, Adela longs for the freedom it promises, and questions her gender role. The reapers are male and males have the freedom to come and leave their homes as they please, and Adela desires this liberty. Everything that is denied to her, her freedom, her love for Pepe, and her youth, all that she can't have, bites at her like hungry mosquitoes. Those worries drain her, and tragically she only finds her relief in death. Although Adela is the only character to physically die, the fate of her sisters stuck forever in the house of Bernarda is also a death sentence. Bernarda is determined that the only one getting her daughter's roses is the reaper, death. In the last line of the play she even insists that Adela died a virgin, and that is how she must be remembered. The last word of the play is "Silencio," or "Silence!" Bernarda is now even denying sound. Her barred doors and windows

kept people out and her daughters in, but the music made its way through, and the idea of freedom was able to penetrate the walls. In desperation Bernarda calls for silence, her last attempt at trying to stop change, but Adela has already escaped.

### **Evaluation of Combination of Translation and Informed Reading:**

Literature reflects time, place, and culture and in order to understand other cultures it is important to read literature from that country. In learning the Spanish language I have gained the most valuable information through reading Hispanic literature. A common problem for me was simply the language barrier. However, by combining a translation with the original, it was easier to feel as if I was reading the work as it was originally intended. I knew the history and the culture and where the story fit into that frame. I also was able to appreciate what Lorca's play meant in the controversial time of the Spanish Civil War.

My analysis of Lorca's play was more fluid to write than the fragmented one of the poem and short story. I wasn't thinking about what was different, just what I observed and learned. I was able to analyze the play as if I were analyzing it in an English class, and the worry about language was lifted because I was confident in my cultural and historical knowledge.

Although I really enjoyed learning the history while I was reading the play, it was harder to keep an open mind in terms of analysis. In my unbiased versus informed reading of translations I was able to have an unbiased interpretation of the translation and literature, without trying to connect it to history in my head. My unbiased interpretation when reading the poem and short story allowed more freedom of analysis and opened up the possibility of more universal thematic analysis than reading the play set inside its history.

**Conclusion:**

These two strategies in approaching translations both come with advantages and disadvantages, but from learning what their difficulties are I can figure out the best way to combine them. Reading a translation unbiased and then informed becomes too fragmented because of the constant comparison back and forth between the texts, but not having the unbiased reading at all causes a loss of an unbiased interpretation. The best way to combine the two methods would initially read the translation unbiased and then use the second method of researching the cultural and historical context and reading the translation again as a guide side by side with the original. In this combination of the two methods it is important to view the translation as its own text when reading it unbiased and then using it as a reference to comment on changes.

It is important to recognize the translation as its own work of literature since it is the translator's interpretation and not the original author's work, and having the unbiased reading of the translation opens the text to more universal interpretations. Yet, literature plays an important role in reflecting the time place and experience of a culture. In order to cross the bridge created by the universal themes and social implications of the translation, we have to invest time in learning about the culture and history of the country of origin to increase our global perspective and knowledge.

The purpose of this thesis is to re-evaluate how to read translations, but it also brings up the question of how true translated texts are. It makes you wonder why someone would change a certain word or phrase, and how the mistranslation, made purposeful or accidentally, can change the entire meaning of a text. If the word "pale" in place of "white" brings a whole new perspective of race and class into Storni's poem, how much do influential texts like the Bible,



which has been translated several times, reflect the original? What was added over time and why? As important as the writers are, the translators have the power to shape how non-native speakers read a text. Analyzing the translations with the originals and cultural and historical contexts teaches us to understand how and why those translators altered a text, or how and why they keep it close to the original.

Borges did studies on several translations of Homer, and instead of studying the work as a text in itself, he studied how the translations differed. How different translators interpreted Homer can be seen in their translations, what themes they emphasize, what they add and what they leave out. A translation can never be the original, but that doesn't mean it is worth less as a text. According to Borges, if a translation has mistakes on the level of language they should not be considered mistakes, but rather the interpreter's own version of the story. Borges emphasized when a work is translated it becomes the work of the both the author and translator. So when analyzing a translation, it is important to be careful in identifying how the translator interpreted the text and the analysis of the story itself.

It would be interesting to return to this project to re-visit multiple translations of these texts to see how each translator interpreted the original. The original text has the power to influence people differently, and from those translations interpretations are formed. Reading those other translations together and comparing their differences and similarities will add even more dimensions to the original text.

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**Appendix:**

Original Spanish of Storni's Poem:

“Tú me quieres blanca”

Tú me quieres alba,  
Me quieres de espumas,  
Me quieres de nácar.  
Que sea azucena  
Sobre todas, casta.

De perfume tenue.  
Corola cerrada  
Ni un rayo de luna  
Filtrado me haya.  
Ni una margarita  
Se diga mi hermana.

Tú me quieres nívea,  
Tú me quieres blanca,  
Tú me quieres alba.  
Tú que hubiste todas  
Las copas a mano,  
De frutos y mieles  
Los labios morados.  
Tú que en el banquete  
Cubierto de pámpanos  
Dejaste las carnes  
Festejando a Baco.  
Tú que en los jardines  
Negros del Engaño

Vestido de rojo  
Corriste al Estrago.

Tú que el esqueleto  
Conservas intacto  
No sé todavía  
Por cuáles milagros,  
Me pretendes blanca  
(Dios te lo perdone),  
Me pretendes casta  
(Dios te lo perdone),  
¡Me pretendes alba!

Huye hacia los bosques,  
Vete a la montaña;  
Límpiate la boca;  
Vive en las cabañas;  
Toca con las manos  
La tierra mojada;  
Alimenta el cuerpo  
Con raíz amarga;  
Bebe de las rocas;  
Duerme sobre escarcha;  
Renueva tejidos  
Con salitre y agua;  
Habla con los pájaros  
Y lévate al alba.  
Y cuando las carnes  
Te sean tornadas,  
Y cuando hayas puesto  
En ellas el alma

Que por las alcobas  
Se quedó enredada,  
Entonces, buen hombre,  
Preténdeme blanca,  
Preténdeme nívea,  
Preténdeme casta.

Translation of Storni's Poem:

“You Want Me Pale”

You want me pale,  
Made of sea foam,  
A mother of pearl.  
Made of white lily,  
Untouched among the others.  
Made of thinning perfume.  
Petals sealed.

Not touched by moonbeams,  
Not called 'sister' by the daisies.  
You want me like snow,  
You want me white,  
You want me pale.

You have had all  
The cups in your hands,  
Flowing fruit and honey,  
Staining your lips dark.  
You have been in the banquet  
Laced with grapevines,

Relinquishing your meat,  
Reveling in Bacchus.  
You have been in the gardens,  
Black with deception,  
Wearing red and  
Running into ruin.

You have kept your  
Skeleton intact, and by  
Miracles I do not know,  
Still expect me to be white  
(God forgive you for it),  
Still expect me to be spotless  
(God forgive you for it),  
Still expect me to be pale.

So flee into the woods,  
Run into the mountains;  
Clean your mouth;  
Live in a cottage;  
Touch the damp earth  
With your hands;  
Nourish your body with  
The bitter root;  
Drink, like Moses,  
From the rocks;  
Sleep upon the frost;  
Rejuvenate your flesh  
With saltpetre and water;  
Speak with the birds,  
Rise with the sun.

And when your body  
Has returned to you,  
When it's become entangled  
In the bedroom of your soul,  
Only then, good man,  
Can you expect me to be pale,  
Expect me to be snow,  
    Expect me to be untouched.

Translation of Quiroga's Short Story:

"El hijo"  
Horacio Quiroga

It is a powerful summer day in Misiones with all the sun, heat, and calm the season can offer.

The wilderness, fully open, feels satisfied with itself.

Like the sun, the heat, and the calm of the environment, the father also opens his heart to the wilderness.

"Be careful, *chiquito*," he says to his son, abbreviating in this sentence all his observations, which his son understands perfectly.

"Yes, father," the child responds, while reaching for his shotgun and slipping his cartridges into the pocket of his shirt, which he closes carefully.

"Return at lunchtime," says the father, still observing.

"Yes, father," repeats the boy.

He balances the shotgun on his hand, smiles at his father, kisses him on the head and leaves.

His father follows him with his eyes for a while and then returns to his task of the day, happy with the happiness of his little one.

He knows that his son, educated from his tender infancy in the habit and precaution of danger, can manage a rifle and hunt anything; it doesn't matter what it is. Even though he is very tall for his age, he is only thirteen years old. And it would seem like he is younger, judging by the purity of his blue eyes, still fresh with childlike surprise.

It isn't necessary for the father to raise his eyes from his work to follow the path of his son with his mind: he has crossed the red trail and walks directly to the jungle across the clearing in the forest.

To hunt in the jungle - to hunt furred game - requires more patience than what the son has. After crossing the jungle's island, his son will go around the cactus boundary and to the valley in search of doves, toucans, or perhaps a pair of herons, like the ones his friend Juan had discovered some days ago.

Alone now, the father smiles at the memory of the hunting passion of the two children. They



sometimes hunt a raven, a quetzal, even, and return triumphant, Juan to his ranch with the nine millimeter rifle that he had given him, and his son to the plateau with the great Saint-Etienne shotgun, of caliber 16, quadruple lock and white gunpowder.

He was the same. At thirteen years he would have given his life to possess a shotgun. His son, at that age, possesses one now; - and the father smiles.

It isn't easy, however, for a widowed father, without other faith nor hope invested in the life of his son, to educate him like he has done, free in will, sure of the small feet and hands he has had since four years of age, conscious of the immensity of certain dangers and the weakness of his own strengths.

This father had to fight strongly against what he considered his egoism. It is so easy for a small child to miscalculate, set a foot into the emptiness, and result in the loss of a son!

Danger is always present for a man no matter his age; but the threat diminishes if, from early on, he is accustomed to his own strengths.

In this way, the father has educated his son. And to succeed, he had to resist not only his heart, but also his mental torments; because this father, of weak stomach and weak eyes, suffers, starting from some time ago, hallucinations.

He has seen, concrete in his sickness' illusions, memories of a happiness that should not spring

anymore from the nothingness in which it has isolated itself. The image of his own son has not escaped this torment. He has seen him one time, rolling, covered in blood, when his son was struck by a bullet in the workshop because he smoothed the buckle of his hunting belt.

Horrible things... But today, with the shining and vivid summer day, the father, whose love for his son knows no bounds, feels happy, tranquil, and sure of the future.

At that instant, not very far away, sounds a gunshot.

"The Saint-Etienne . . ." muses the father at recognizing the detonation. "At least two doves in the jungle..."

Without paying more attention to this insignificant event, the man abstracts himself anew into his chore.

The sun, already very high, continues ascending. Wherever it wants to look - the rocks, the earth, the trees, - the air, pulsing as if in an oven, vibrates with heat. A profound buzz that fills the entire being and infuses the environment as far as the eye can see concentrates all tropical life on this hour.

The father takes a quick look at his wrist: 12 o'clock. And he lifts his eyes to the jungle.

His son should already be back. In the mutual trust that they have with each other - the father of

gray hair and the child of thirteen years, - they never trick one another. When his son responds: "Yes, father," he will do as he says. He said that he would return before twelve o'clock, and his father smiled at seeing him leave.

And he hasn't returned.

The man turns to his work, exerting great effort in concentrating on his chore. It is so easy, so easy to lose your notion of time in the jungle, and to sit for awhile on the ground while you rest immobile...

Suddenly, the midday light, the tropical buzz, and the father's heart stop at what his mind had just touched upon: his son resting immobile...

Time has passed; it is 12:30. The father leaves his workshop, and supporting his hand on the mechanic bench, the memory of the crash of the bullet surfaces from his inner recollections, and instantly, for the first time in three consecutive hours, he realizes that after the boom of the Saint-Etienne, he has heard nothing more. His son has not returned, and the wilderness is waiting at the border of the forest, waiting for him...

Oh! A temperate character and a blind confidence in his son's education aren't enough to escape the specter of fatality that his father, of ailing vision, sees rising from the line of the jungle.

Distraction, forgetfulness, fortuitous delay: none of these insignificant motives that could slow the arrival of his son succeed in entering the father's thoughts.

One shot, only one shot has sounded, and a good while ago. After it the father has not heard a sound, hasn't seen a bird, and one sole person has not crossed the clearing to announce that upon crossing a wire, a great calamity...

Head bare and without an axe, the father goes. He rushes to the clearing in the forest, enters the jungle, skirts the line of cacti without seeing a single sign of his son.

But the wilderness continues endlessly. And after the father has traveled to the well-known hunting trails and has explored the valley in vain, he perceives the dreaded assurance that, with each step he puts forward, he brings, fatal and inexorable, the cadaver of his son.

There is no reproach, lamentably. Only the cold reality, terrible and consuming: His son has died upon crossing a...

But where, and in which part! There are so many wires there, and the jungle is so, so unclean! ...Oh, so dirty! ...It is such a small act, that he is not careful when crossing the threads with a shotgun in his hand...

The father suffocates a shout. He has seen rising into the air...Oh, it is not his son, no!... And he turns to the other side, and to the other and to the other...

Nothing can compare with the color of the complexion and anguish in his eyes. The man still has

not called to his son. Even though his heart clamors for him to shout, his mouth continues to be mute. He knows well that the sole act of pronouncing the name, of calling to his son in a loud voice, will be the confession of a death...

"*Chiquito!*" suddenly escapes from him. And if the voice of a man of character is capable of crying, then mercifully cover your ears against the piercing anguish that resonates in that voice.

No one and nothing has responded. By the red light of the sun, grown older by ten years, the father goes looking for his son, who has just died.

"Son of mine!... *Chiquito mío!*..." he calls in a small voice that echoes from his core.

Already before, in plenty of happiness and peace, this father has suffered the hallucination of his son, rolling, with his forehead split open by a chromium-nickel bullet. Now, in each dark corner of the forest he sees the brilliant reflections of wire; and at the foot of a post, with a discharged shotgun at his side, he sees his...

"*Chiquito!*... My son!..."

The strength that can enter a poor hallucinating father at the worst nightmare also has a limit.

And we feel that his hallucinations escape when he suddenly sees them flowing into a side path towards his son.

For a boy thirteen years old, it is enough to see, from fifty meters away, the expression of his father without an axe inside the jungle, quickening his pace with wet eyes.

"*Chiquito...*" murmurs the man. And, exhausted, he lets himself fall seated in the white sand and gathers his son's legs into his arms.

The child, embraced as such, remains standing, and upon understanding the pain in his father, he caresses the bowed head slowly:

"Poor papa..."

In the end, time has passed. It is already three o'clock. Together, now, the father and the son begin their return to the house.

"Why didn't you look at the sun to figure out the time?..." murmurs the first.

"I did, father... But when I started to return home I saw Juan's herons and I followed them..."

"What you put me through, *chiquito!*..."

"*Papi...*" the boy also murmurs.

After a long silence:

"And the herons, did you kill them?" asks the father.

"No..."

An unimportant detail, after everything. Under the sky and the hot air, the soft light in the clearing of the forest, the man returns to the house with his son, whose shoulders, almost as tall as his, carry the happy arm of his father. He returns drenched in sweat, and even though his body and his soul cry out in sorrow, he smiles of happiness...

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He smiles of a hallucinatory happiness... Well the father goes alone. He found no one, and his arm is supported by emptiness. Because behind him, at the foot of the post and with legs up high, tangled in barbed wire, his beloved son lies before the sun, dead since ten in the morning.