

READING MILLER'S *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* IN SPANISH:
A PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF TWO TRANSLATIONS

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Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* has universal appeal. The collapse of the idealistic Willy Loman, whose blind belief in the «American Dream» and the possibility of success is betrayed, reflects a concern with the individual's relationship with his society. The universality of these themes is attested to by the number of times that the play has been translated into other languages, including those as culturally disparate as Spanish or Chinese:

«Willy proved an international figure, as appealing and recognisable to a Chinese audience in 1983 as it had been to an American one in 1949. Like most plays it perhaps has its flaws but the human reality of Willy Loman is such that few works have provoked the shock of recognition which has greeted and continues to greet Willy's anguished debate with himself and with the world in which he has never felt at home» (Biggsby: 175).

However, *Death of a Salesman* is a very «American» play, reflecting through its actions and, above all, its language, a culture and system of beliefs and values that are rarely replicated in other countries. The purpose of the following discussion is to analyze some aspects of two Spanish translations of the play. The original work will be compared with a version by José López Rubio (1969) of the Royal Spanish Academy and a translation by Miguel de Hernani (1998), both entitled *La muerte de un viajante*, in the light of the problems posed by Miller's dramatic discourse and how they are resolved in both cases.

Although both these works have been called translations, the cover of the José López Rubio edition refers to it as a *versión*. In a version, the transfer

from one language to the other is not as accurate as in a translation (Merino Alvarez: 62).

In contrast, Miguel de Hernani's is referred to as a translation. Thus, it will be expected that this work will meet the basic criteria of a translation. As Nida (164) reminds us, there are four main requirements: making sense, conveying the spirit and manner of the original, having a natural and easy form of expression and producing a similar response.

Another term used to classify translated texts is «adaptation», in which some cultural elements of the original may be modified in order to facilitate comprehension by the target language audience. Similarly, elements may be modified to bridge the gap in the time between a work being written and its translation (which may affect things such as money). It is a procedure «appropriate to particular circumstances (e.g., translating for the stage), which aims to achieve a particular kind of equivalence [...] judgements need to be made in terms of the adequacy of given procedures for achieving particular ends» (Newmark: 18).

Even the most cursory glance at the translations offered by López Rubio and Hernani reveal a number of inaccuracies in rendering Miller's original text. A useful way of looking at these is to use Merino Álvarez's error classification system (42), which finds that the most frequent errors in translation arise from additions, omissions, modifications and errors. Whether or not these imprecisions can be justified in the light of Newmark's observations will be the focus of this study.

The first category, addition, describes the process of inserting elements into the original text. This may include words, phrases or even longer stretches of text. If the translator is trying to imitate the original text in the target language (TL) through what Newmark refers to as a «semantic translation» (10) in which translated texts are true to the source text (ST), adding elements to the target text (TT) is unwarranted unless it is absolutely necessary for understanding. In such cases, explanatory comments, often in footnote form, serve to clarify concepts unfamiliar to the TL audience. The additions seen below, however, do not fall into this category and seem to have been added arbitrarily by the translators. For example, there are cases of explanatory additions which seem to have no justification, as occur in the translation of Willy's words in Act One: «... I never in **my** life told him anything but decent things» (32). López Rubio renders this as: «Nunca en toda **su** vida, le he dicho nada que no sea **honorable**, y **recto**, y decente...» (32), and Hernani, as: «Nunca le he dicho nada que no sea decente...» (54).

A similar case is the translation of Linda's words in Act One: «... He's just a **big stupid** man to you, ...» (46), where López Rubio's version reads:

«... Ahora os parece un **pobre** hombre, inútil, **lamentable**...» (47), and Hernani's as: «... Para vosotros, no es más que un *viejo estúpido*...».

López Rubio may have added the adjectives *honorable* and *recto* in the first example for the sake of emphasis only, but in doing so, he detracts from the «spirit and manner of the original» (Nida: 164). As Newmark points out, «Translators are usually reluctant to use a word so like an SL word, when in fact they should seize the opportunity since it is the one that is nearest to the 'truth' or to accuracy» (26) —and this is precisely what Hernani has done by choosing the word *decente*.

There is an additional inaccuracy in this example which has to do with the faulty rendering of the possessive pronoun *my* in the expression «I never in my life...», translated as *su* by López Rubio and omitted by Hernani. The English preference for the possessive pronoun where Spanish uses the definite article may explain Hernani's omission, although Willy's argument becomes much less emphatic as a result. The incomprehensible usage of the pronoun *su* by López Rubio has four possible translations in English: *his*, *her*, *its*, or *your*; this shift in the pronoun therefore brings about an unnecessary confusion of reference, which the usage of the pronoun *mi* would have avoided.

In the next example mentioned above, López Rubio rewords Miller's «big» and «stupid», arbitrarily replacing them with *pobre*, *inútil* and *lamentable*, and thereby attributing more negative characteristics to Willy than Miller had. Interestingly enough, Hernani does translate «stupid», but adds *viejo*, which does not appear in the original description. This may be an attempt to soften the word *estúpido* in Spanish, which is defined in the *Diccionario de uso del español* by María Moliner as *bobo o tonto. Se aplica con enfado o como insulto a una persona que molesta o disgusta por su falta de discreción u oportunidad* (1239). Therefore, although López Rubio adds words in his description of Willy, two of them, namely *pobre* and *lamentable* are closer in meaning to the original than Hernani's *viejo estúpido*, which make Willy seem more like an old nuisance than a person to be pitied.

The second category of this study analyzes the omissions from the translations. Omissions appear frequently throughout López Rubio's version, both in stage directions as well as in dialogs. Words, phrases, paragraphs, descriptions of characters and even some characters themselves disappear in his version. In the following examples, there are two separate mentions of old Dave's green velvet slippers, an item of comfort and luxury which is foregrounded in this part of the play and which therefore merits a precise translation. Here, Willy describes a fellow salesman he especially admired: «(...) And **old Dave**, he'd go up to his room, y'understand, put on his **green vel-**

vet slippers —I'll never forget...» (63); López Rubio paraphrases: «(...) No tenía ya más que quedarse en su habitación de hotel, ponerse sus zapatillas de terciopelo, no me olvidaré nunca, ...» (64) and Hernani writes «(...) El viejo Dave, ¿sabe?, subía a su habitación, se ponía las zapatillas y llamaba por teléfono...» (93).

López Rubio leaves out «old Dave» and the adjective «green» while Hernani omits both «green» and «velvet» for no apparent reason. This is an example of what Newmark calls «... a tendency to undertranslate, viz. to normalise by generalising, to understate, in all translation but particularly in literary translation [where] economy is more important and accuracy suffers» (104). If the two translators are aiming at economy, as Newmark suggests, it should be pointed out that there is a loss of textual coherence in the omission of the first mention of the green velvet slippers, which are then referred to for the first time later on, as is seen below.

On the same page, Willy continues to reminisce about old Dave: «Do you know? When he died —and by the way **he died the death of a salesman, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford, going into Boston**— when he died, hundreds of salesmen and buyers were at his funeral» (63). López Rubio reduces the description by leaving out the stops along the train route: «¿Sabe usted? Cuando se murió, y **murió con la muerte de un viajante, en camino**, cientos de compradores y de vendedores fueron a su entierro» (64). Hernani is more exact: «¿Sabe? Cuando murió —y, por cierto, **murió como un verdadero viajante, con sus zapatillas verdes de terciopelo puestas**, en el coche de fumadores de Nueva York-New Haven-Hartford, cuando iba a Boston—, acudieron a su entierro cientos de viajeros y clientes» (93).

With the inclusion of the stops along the train route, the reader can better imagine what it means to be a travelling salesman; López Rubio's excluding them by saying nothing more than *en camino* diminishes the importance of the sacrifice involved in having to be on the road. As Rodríguez-Celada notes:

«Posiblemente el símbolo más importante de la obra sea el *salesman*. El viajante encarna el mito de la sociedad consumista. Dentro de su conciencia asistimos a la danza mítica del poder adquisitivo del dinero. En una sociedad en la que todo es vendible, invadida por una publicidad inteligentemente orquestada... el viajante personaliza al instrumento callado de toda esa vorágame sin freno, el eslabón más humano de la gran cadena en proceso de deshumanización. Él representa la muestra simbólica de la manipulación de ese sistema, donde el *common man* es el elemento más vulnerable» (51).

Any inaccurate rendering of the details of life as a traveler impoverishes the portrayal of this central character.

In addition, López Rubio's version *murió con la muerte de un viajante* not only sounds awkward in Spanish but also seems unidiomatic, with the prepositions *de* and *por* being the normal combinations expressing reason after *morir*. The suggested translations in this dictionary for the grammatically similar phrase *to die a violent death* are: *tener una muerte violenta*, and *morir de manera violenta*. Since in this case, the verb «die» is followed by the noun «death» and not by an adjective, Hernani uses the verb phrase *morir como un verdadero viajante*. Neither translator opted for the use of the verb *tener*, which would have resulted in *tuvo la muerte de un verdadero viajante*, which is perhaps nearer Miller's intended meaning.

Another problem in translating the work involves the use of proper names to designate figures and places familiar to an American audience, but possibly meaningless to target audiences. Omitting any reference to these is the option chosen by López Rubio while Hernani chooses a literal translation. This can be seen when Willy tries to justify his son Biff's lack of direction in life, and asserts in Act One: «Sure. Certain men just don't get started till later in life. Like Thomas Edison, I think. Or **B.F. Goodrich**. One of them was deaf» (13). López Rubio leaves out any mention of B.F. Goodrich, the tire manufacturer, which then makes it unnecessary for him to translate the following comment about one of the men «being deaf»: «Dios quiera. Algunos hombres no han empezado hasta tarde, Edison, por ejemplo» (12). In contrast, Hernani does include a mention of both in his translation: «Desde luego. Algunos hombres se inician tarde en la vida. Como Thomas Edison, según creo. O Goodrich. Uno de ellos era sordo» (30). Newmark suggests that when translators are faced with a culture-bound term, «... they should make more use of their two most powerful weapons: the distancing square brackets in the middle of but marked off from the text —[.....-TR]—; and the introduction that puts the translated work into perspective rather than the ignored footnote» (74-75). Some kind of explanatory note may have been helpful in Hernani's translation as neither Goodrich nor Spalding (in the following example), are particularly well-known entrepreneurs outside the United States.

Another example of omission can be seen when Willy enthusiastically praises his son's knowledge of sporting goods in Act One: «You know sporting goods **better than Spalding, for God's sake!**» (49). As mentioned earlier, López Rubio avoids any mention of Spalding, and leaves the expression «for God's sake» untranslated, which makes his rendering much less emphatic and lessens the effect of the remark: «¡Nadie sabe de artículos de deporte como tül» (49) Hernani, on the other hand, does mention Spalding

in his translation: «Eres más entendido en artículos de deporte **que el propio Spalding, ¡por mil diablos!**» (75). However, the addition of this final exclamation adds an unfortunate tone of anger to the comment and ruins the positive and encouraging tone of the specimen text. Although the references to these important businessmen in the ST make perfect sense to the American audience and add an element of everyday life to the play, they have little or no meaning for the Spanish audience, and perhaps Hernani's rendering could have done with an explanatory note to clarify Goodrich's and Spalding's identities. As Hatim & Mason state, «Even in full translations, translators can and do take responsibility for omitting information which is deemed to be of insufficient relevance to TT readers» (96). Therefore, omitting them may be justified, but a better solution may be their inclusion along with an explanatory footnote.

One final case of the omission of descriptive phrases can be seen when Willy gives an account of one of the many cities he has stopped in during his life in Act One: «Waterbury is a fine city. **Big clock city, the famous Waterbury clock**» (23). López Rubio reduces this description to: «Waterbury es un sitio muy agradable...» (22), while Hernani mirrors the ST closely with: «Es otra linda ciudad. Con un gran reloj, el famoso reloj de Waterbury» (43). Here is yet another case of the impoverishment of the salesman's experience through the omission of details which are key to understanding Willy's concept of self. As Parker (1969) observes:

«The ideal of self-dependence has become the vicious competition of the modern business community, of which Willy, as a salesman, is the lowest common denominator. Miller has explained Willy's surname as standing for 'low man on the totem pole,' the bottom of the heap; and interestingly, Willy's ideal, the old salesman in green slippers, is called 'Dave *Singman*.' The two names contrast Willy's actual exploitation and the dignified independence to which he aspired» (102).

The following category of examples is tense shifting, in which the verb tenses used in the translations do not match with the original. It may be argued that some of these shifts are necessary due to the differences between the usage of verb tenses in English and in Spanish; but this is not the case in the examples below. This occurs in Willy's narration of his elder brother Ben's experience in the «jungle» of Alaska as a young man in Act One: «The man **knew** what he **wanted** and **went out** and **got** it! **Walked** into the jungle, and **comes** out, the age of 21, and **he's** rich!» (32). Miller uses the past tense to describe what the character Ben did at an early age and puts the actions into perspective by changing to the present tense for the more recent events. As Quirk reminds us, «... past time can be expressed with present tense forms. The 'historic present' is fairly common in vivid narrative» (43). López

Rubio, however, does not transfer the corresponding verb tense forms found in the original text: «Un hombre que **sabe** muy bien lo que **quiere** y **va** y lo **consigue**. **Se interna** en la selva y **sale**, a los 21 años, convertido en millonario» (32). And in the case of Hernani's translation, it is entirely in the past or imperfect tenses and again, the verb tense change of the ST is ignored: «El hombre sabía lo que quería y fue a buscarlo. Eso es todo. Penetró en la selva y **salió** de ella, a los 21 años, ya **era** rico» (54). Why such discrepancies in the verb tenses when the equivalent forms are so readily available in Spanish?

The next example not only shows a tense shift but also a questionable change in the verb used which alters the meaning of the passage. This is a text taken from the Requiem, with Linda saying good-bye to Willy at the cemetery: «I made the last payment on the house today. Today, dear. And there'll be nobody home. We're free and clear. We're free. **We're free... We're free**» (112). Here Linda appears to be appealing to a Willy who in her own mind, is still present, promising a future free of worries. However, this personal perspective is lost in the translations with a backshift in the verbs, and may even bring about some confusion as to what she is actually referring to. About Linda's character, Bigsby observes:

«After thirty-five years of marriage, Linda is apparently completely unable to comprehend her husband: her speech at the graveside (I don't understand; the house is paid for) is not only pathetic, it is also an explanation of the loneliness of Willy Loman which threw him into other women's arms» (Parker: 108).

Hence her realization that «there'll be nobody home», awkwardly rendered by López Rubio, «Hoy he hecho el último pago de la casa. El último, amor mío. Y nadie va a vivir en nuestra casa. No debíamos nada. **Éramos** libres. **Éramos** libres» (107), and by Hernani, «Hoy hice el último pago de la casa. Hoy, Willy. Y no habrá nadie en ella. **Estábamos** libres, sin obligaciones. **Éramos** libres. **Éramos** libres..., libres...» (153).

In the translations, the choice of the verb *ser* by both translators for «we're free» is interesting, as it could be argued that here, *estar* would be better to express the idea of being clear of financial debt. Why, then, the switch to the verb *ser* and the usage of the imperfect instead of the present tense in Hernani's «estábamos libres...»? Lonsdale notes that «The most common mistakes of verb tense made by students are those in which English makes a distinction between the present perfect and the past simple or requires a continuous tense» (248). It is evident that this is not the case in the above example. At the same time, López Rubio's translation of «we're free and clear» is closer to the ST than Hernani's because this expression in English refers

exclusively to financial freedom, and this idea is lost in Hernani's rendering. Miller's use of the present tense seems to indicate Linda's refusal to accept Willy's death and come to terms with reality, and this idea is unnecessarily lost in both translations.

The final section of errors includes several cases of mistranslations which have no justifiable explanation. These include variations in numerical amounts, changes of meaning and inaccuracies in general. The variation in numerical amounts is interesting to examine, especially because the translators' usage seems to be completely arbitrary. It may be argued that the quantities listed below have been adjusted to current prices and salaries, and this brings up the issue of how to translate such items. In their discussion of the difficulties of translating numerical amounts, Hatim and Mason (17-18) show that simple token for token translation, (in the case of currency, for example, rendering \$1 as 180 pesetas), or use of the precise denomination (maintaining the dollar), may fail to communicate effectively. A more effective solution may be to offer a reader-centred translation in which an understandable equivalent is offered. Given these three possibilities, it is surprising that both López Rubio and Hernani choose none of them.

In the following example from Act One, Linda is calculating the payment for the repair of the washing machine from Willy's total paycheck: «Well, there's **nine-sixty** for the washing machine...» (27): López Rubio gives us a completely different number: «**Uno setenta** de la máquina de lavar» (26), as does Hernani: «Bien, hay **noventa y seis** de la lavadora» (48).

In this example, the *nine-sixty* refers to dollars; the amounts used in the Spanish renderings have absolutely no correspondence whatsoever in pesetas with the original amount. And in the following example, there is a complete change of meaning in the numerical amounts in both translations when Willy is bragging about the top condition of his car in Act One: «(...) The dealer refused to believe there was **eighty thousand miles** on it» (13). López Rubio decides to keep the same number but changes from miles to kilometers when a simple mathematical calculation would have given him the 128,000 kilometers which correspond to 80,000 miles: «(...) El vendedor no quería creer que llevara corridos **ochenta mil kilómetros**...» (12). Hernani gives a closer approximation of the number in a way, but probably meant to say «ciento treinta **mil**» instead of «ciento treinta». On the other hand, he mistranslates what Miller meant to be the mileage done by the car up to that point: «(...) El vendedor no quería creer que **hacía ciento treinta kilómetros**» (31). Hernani's version makes reference to the top speed of the car rather than the accumulated mileage. This type of error may fall under Santoyo's category of *errores por desconocimiento de lo que se traduce* (19).

This final category includes changes in the translations which are not only inaccurate but which also bear very little resemblance to the original text. Both López Rubio and Hernani mistranslate many of Miller's lines without any apparent justification. These may be what J.C. Santoyo refers to as *errores por ignorancia del idioma que se traduce*. He goes on to define:

Ignorancia, en general, del auténtico alcance de la palabra o de la expresión en el otro idioma y de su adecuada equivalencia en el nuestro, que acaban por lo mismo siendo traducidos de modo casi siempre literal, y siempre desacertado. Un tipo de errores nada infrecuente, por cierto, que protagonizan buena parte de las críticas que recaen sobre las malas traducciones (18).

In the following example, Miller's stage directions as well as Willy's toast are both inaccurately translated: Willy: (**slapping her bottom**) «Right. Well, **bottoms up!**» (30). In his translation, López Rubio shows us once again that he has problems with the interpretation of the reflexive pronoun, making it unclear who is being slapped: Willy: (**dándose una palmada**) «¡Eso es!» (30). And while Hernani comes closer to the stage directions given in the original text, he is faulty in his translation of the toast: Willy: (**dándole unas palmadas en las nalgas**) «Magnífico. ¡Arriba las posaderas!» (52).

In these examples, neither translator seems to have understood the meaning of «bottoms up!», an expression used as a toast, similar to «cheers!» López Rubio omits it entirely and gives an inaccurate translation of *slapping her bottom* as well; however, the translation may have been given to avoid problems with censorship. While Hernani is more accurate in his translation of this phrase, he completely misses the meaning of *bottoms up* and uses an expression which roughly means *everybody up!* The mistranslation of this expression could have been avoided by simply checking a bilingual dictionary, where the expression «bottoms up» is given as *¡salud y pesetas!* (Collins: 77). Unfortunately, the Spanish versions are not only imprecise, but also sound meaningless and comical. As Newmark has warned: «Any literal translation that makes you giggle (in spite of many readings) because of its sound or its sense, has to be avoided» (103).

The following change of meaning is self-explanatory, but it is difficult to understand how such a seemingly uncomplicated proposition could have such inaccurate translations. Referring to Santoyo once again, he would classify this as *errores por distracción* or *puro despiste traductor* (10). Willy makes the following comment in Act Two in the company of The Woman: «I'm so **lonely**» (92). It is important to note here that he feels lonely in spite of the fact that he is together with The Woman at the time, and there is every reason to render Willy's contradictory emotional state in the translation. However, López Rubio inaccurately transforms the sentence into «**No estoy triste**» (87),

expressing the opposite of what Miller had, while Hernani converts the original into «Estoy **deprimido**» (128). Errors such as these are incomprehensible, when *me siento tan solo* expresses the idea perfectly.

The Spanish renderings listed below all center around the family car which, according to Rodríguez Celada, is: «... otro símbolo importante en la obra. La relación entre el viajante y su coche es muy íntima, muy personal. El coche simboliza a la vez felicidad y tristeza, actividad frenética y agotamiento físico, libertad y esclavitud, vida y muerte» (52), thereby underscoring the particular importance of striving for «dynamic equivalence» (Nida: 164) in any references to the car.

In Act One, Linda is surprised by Willy's earlier-than-usual return home for the day and asks him: «You didn't **smash the car**, did you?» to which Willy actually shows «casual irritation» (8), the implication being that he may have been responsible for a car accident. This meaning is lost in both translations, however, as López Rubio converts the ST into «No **se habrá estropeado** el coche, ¿verdad?» (6) while Hernani offers «¿**Se ha estropeado** el coche, Willy?» In the specimen text, «you» is the agent but it is absent from both versions in Spanish. As Quirk explains: «... an 'agentive' role cannot be expressed by an object or complement, but only by the subject, or by the agent of a passive clause. From this, one sees the importance of the passive voice as a means of reversing the normal order of 'agentive' and 'affected' elements, and thus of adjusting clause structure to end-focus and end-weight» (411). By removing the agent «you» and giving end-focus to the affected element, «the car», through the usage of the passive voice in Spanish, the translators diminish Linda's accusation and transform it into a simple question with no particular intended meaning behind it.

In both renderings, therefore, Willy's possible responsibility for the car breaking down is completely lost as both transpose the ST's active voice into the passive voice. García Yebra (1982) comments on the passive voice and its translation into Spanish, saying that «... la voz pasiva se usa cuando interesa más poner de relieve la meta del proceso verbal que su origen; es decir, cuando se estima más conveniente destacar quién o qué cosa recibe la acción expresada por el verbo que manifestar quién o qué cosa ejecuta dicha acción» (212). In addition, both translators have chosen the verb *estropearse*, which reflects more a condition which comes about through age rather than through any fault of the driver. Finally, the Spanish versions do not reflect Linda's lack of confidence in Willy's driving ability and her concern for him.

The following example takes place in Act One, when Willy makes a comment to his sons about the way they clean the car: «I been wondering why you **polish** the car so careful» (21). López Rubio transforms both verbs in

the sentence to give us: «Estoy encantado de cómo **barnizas** el coche» (20), while Hernani changes the tense of the second verb: «Me había estado preguntando por qué **limpiaban** el coche con tanto cuidado» (41). López Rubio's choice of «barnizar» is faulty, as it translates as «varnish» and is usually associated with wood, not metal. The word «polish» is applied to objects such as pans, metal and silver, is rendered as *pulir* in Spanish; however, when applied to cars, this verb sounds unidiomatic in Spanish. Another verb for this case could be *encerar* or *sacar brillo a*. In addition, his transformation of «I been wondering» is completely inexplicable, especially with the equivalent expression *me he estado preguntando* or *me preguntaba* so readily available in Spanish. Finally, Hernani's verb tense change in the verb *limpiar* may have occurred as a result of a misunderstanding on the part of the translator, as Willy's meaning is that the boys *always* polish the car with care; perhaps *me he estado preguntando por qué limpiaís/limpian el coche con tanto cuidado* would have been closer to the ST.

In this final example related to the car, Willy has announced to his sons that he has brought them a surprise; when Happy asks his father where it is, Willy says:

«**In the back seat of the car**» (22). López Rubio gives a completely inaccurate version of the sentence: «**Detrás del asiento del coche**» (21), implying that the car only has front seats, while Hernani's translation is much more faithful to the ST: «En el asiento de atrás del coche» (42). If López Rubio were to follow Newmark's advice when he says: «In any type of translation, the back translation test is conclusive, one cannot appeal against it, provided no collocations are implicated...» (26), he would most certainly see that his version would be «behind the car seat», which is not what Miller wrote.

In the following example, one translation is too general while the other one attributes too much credit to Jenny's capabilities as a secretary when she says: «**I've got a lot of typing to do**, and your father's waiting to sign it» (71). López overgeneralizes once again and rewords by saying: «**Tengo mucho trabajo** y su padre está esperando la firma» (71). And in Hernani's translation, the verb is mistranslated altogether: «Tengo que **escribir muchas cartas** y su padre está esperando para firmarlas» (102). In the second rendering, it sounds as if Jenny were the one writing the letters, while in reality she only types them. The expression *pasar muchas cartas a máquina* would have been closer to the original.

In the example below, The Woman finds something in the bathtub and exclaims to Willy: «**There's something in the bathtub**, Willy, and it's moving!» (94). López Rubio changes the meaning of the sentence by generalizing and using a great deal of his own imagination: «**Ocurre una cosa muy graciosa**

con los grifos, Willy...» (89). Finally, Hernani adds his own interpretation by including *es un bicho*, which is not present in the ST: «¡Hay algo en la bañera, Willy! **Es un bicho**. Se está moviendo» (131). If not for this addition, (which is incomprehensible and unnecessary), it would have been identical to the ST.

In the next three examples, there is an interesting series of errors and changes of meaning with the word «spite». According to Webster's Dictionary, «spite» is defined as «a desire to do someone a petty injury; to vent one's spite upon by hurting, frustrating, etc.» (577). Willy asks Biff «Are you **spiting** me?» (89) in Act Two, and López Rubio changes the meaning with his «¿Te estás **burlando** de mí?» (85). The verb *mortificar* used by Hernani is acceptable, but perhaps not identical in meaning to the ST: «¿Me estás **mortificando**?» (125).

Within the same scene, Willy later says to Biff «You rotten little louse! Are you **spiting** me?» (89). López Rubio converts this question into: «¡Miserable! ¡Me estás **escupiendo**!» (86). This is clearly the result of a misreading of «spiting» for «spitting» on the part of the translator, or evidence of the fact that he does not seem to know the rule of when to double consonants. What is interesting to note is that the expressions in these two examples both take place in the same context, which makes the errors even more incomprehensible. It shows a lack of coherence in López Rubio's work. Hernani, with his rendering of this text as «¡Asqueroso gusano! ¿Me estás mortificando?» (125) is at least consistent in his usage of the verb *mortificar*.

In the final example of this set, Willy cries out in anger when he and Biff have an argument: «Then hang yourself! For **spite**, hang yourself!» (104). López Rubio chooses the word *odio* this time: «Entonces, ahórcate. ¡Por **odio**, ahórcate!» (100), while Hernani gives us «¡Entonces, ahórcate! ¡Anda, ahórcate, por **rencor**!» (144). The word *odio* generally corresponds to «hate» in English, and while *rencor* seems much more precise than *odio*, the word *despecho* would also have been another possibility, perhaps closer to Miller's intended meaning.

Finally, José López Rubio gives an entirely personalized version of the spelling or punctuation (it is difficult to determine which) of some of the American states mentioned in the play. A similar case of inconsistencies to these examples above arises with his rendering of «New». If indeed he was trying to make the pronunciation or reading of the words easier for the Spanish audience, why are there three different «spellings» for the word «new» in his translation? The state of Massachusetts also loses at least one syllable in and Rhode Island has a completely unrecognizable spelling. It may have been better to follow Hernani's practice of simply listing as many states as

possible in Spanish (*Nueva York*), and keeping the rest in English. In these examples, Nida's first basic requirement of a translation (making sense) and his third one (having a natural and easy form of expression) (164) are both compromised. In Act Two, Willy fantasizes about his funeral: «They'll come from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire! All the old-timers with the strange licence plates —that boy will be thunderstruck, **Ben**, because he never realized— I am known! Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey —I am known, **Ben**, and he'll see it with his eyes once and for all» (100).

López Rubio converts this text into one that is nearly impossible to understand, and arbitrarily changes the name of «Ben» (Willy's brother) to «Fred» (a non-existent character in the play): «El entierro será memorable. ¡Vendrán de **Mein**, de **Masachet**, de **Vérmont**, de **Niw Hanpsai**...! Los clientes más antiguos... El muchacho se quedará de una pieza, porque nunca ha creído... que soy conocido en todas partes... En **Roud Ailand**, en **Niu York**, en **Nieu Yersy**... ¡Soy bien conocido, **Fred**, y él lo va ver con sus propios ojos, de una vez para siempre...» (95). Hernani's translation, on the other hand, is much more similar to the ST: «En ese entierro, habrá una multitud, Ben. ¡Vendrán de Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Nueva Hampshire! ¡Todos los de antes, con aquellas curiosas placas de la licencia! Ese chico quedará impresionado, Ben, porque nunca ha comprendido. ¡soy muy conocido! En Rhode Island, en Nueva York, en Nueva Jersey... ¡Soy muy conocido, Ben, y él lo verá con sus propios ojos, de una vez para siempre!» (139).

Even a brief look at only some of the faulty renderings of the original text in the two translations considered reveal that neither satisfies the basic criteria of satisfactory transmission of a source text to a target audience. López Rubio's aim is to produce a version, and therefore might be allowed greater license in terms of the additions and omissions he makes. However, as the preceding analysis has shown, it is difficult to justify the changes he makes to the ST, particularly in view of his lack of consistency in adapting his material. Apart from simply misreading many elements, there is no internal coherence evident in the adaptations he makes as has been seen earlier.

Hernani, in contrast, strives to produce a semantic translation, closer to the original text, and very often he succeeds in rendering the wording and spirit of the original play. Nevertheless, he too, very often fails to understand or to capture the meaning of Miller's text, and as a result produces a translation in Spanish which has little or nothing to do with the ST.

Failure to understand the ST completely seems to be behind most of the erroneous translations offered, and failure to use even the most elementary of aids to translation, such as a reliable bilingual dictionary, provide evidence

of carelessness that does discredit to the translation profession. Neither work, as has been seen, can be considered either «communicatively» or «semantically» effective examples of literary translation.

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