



Cómo traducir una “lengua salvaje”: una nueva perspectiva sobre *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* de Gloria Anzaldúa

How to Translate a “Wild Tongue”: A New Perspective on Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza

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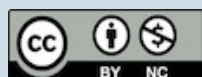
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RESUMEN

Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987), de Gloria Anzaldúa, es un texto paradigmático en la representación de las identidades “mestizas” expresadas mediante varias lenguas. El uso particular de la lengua en este libro constituye un desafío para su traducción. El presente artículo aborda la coexistencia de lenguas en tres traducciones para un público hispanohablante del segundo capítulo de *Borderlands*, titulado “Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan”. Me centro en un análisis textual comparativo de la traducción colectiva del capítulo por Maria Serrano Gimenez, Rocio Macho Ronco, Hugo Romero Fernández Sancho y Álvaro Salcedo Rufo (2004), y las traducciones de Norma Elia Cantú (2015) y de Carmen Valle (2016). Se exploran las diferencias en los modos de abordar la traducción del multilingüismo en estas versiones del texto de Anzaldúa con el fin de explorar estrategias que desafían las tendencias homogeneizantes y resisten la eliminación del multilingüismo, un rasgo central del texto de Anzaldúa.

Palabras clave: multilingüismo; traducción; estrategias de traducción; Gloria Anzaldúa.

ABSTRACT

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987) by Gloria Anzaldúa, is a paradigmatic text in its representation of “mestiza” identities expressed through several tongues. The particular use of language in this book poses an interesting challenge in terms of translation. This article addresses the coexistence of languages for Spanish readers in three translations of the second chapter of *Borderlands*, entitled “Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan”. I focus on a comparative textual analysis of a collective translation of the chapter by Maria Serrano Gimenez, Rocio Macho Ronco, Hugo Romero Fernández Sancho and Álvaro Salcedo Rufo (2004), and the translations by Norma Elia Cantú (2015) and Carmen Valle (2016). The different approaches to the translation of multilingualism in these versions of Anzaldúa’s text are examined with the aim of exploring strategies that challenge homogenizing tendencies and resist erasing multilingualism, a central feature of Anzaldúa’s text.

Keywords: multilingualism; translation; translation strategies; Gloria Anzaldúa.

The task of the *nepantlera*/translator¹

Nepantla is a term used by Anzaldúa to theorize liminality. This Náhuatl word may be translated as “tierra entre medio” (“(Un)natural bridges” 1). She refers to those who facilitate “passages between worlds” as “*nepantleras*” (1). The task of the *nepantlera* is closely related to the task of the translator. Translation requires complex negotiations, crossing cultural borders and changing perspectives in order to create a passage between worlds.

The task of translating a text becomes even more complex when the negotiation occurs between several languages. How can we approach translation when different languages are combined in the source text, in order to recreate the literary text for a new audience? This issue will be explored through the case study of the translation for a Spanish-reading audience of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) (henceforth referred to as *Borderlands*), by Gloria Anzaldúa. When translating into Spanish, the complexity of the task is further increased, since the target language is the language that is most prevalently embedded in the source text, and which has a great political, symbolic, and cultural significance for Anzaldúa, as is the case for many US Latinx writers. How, then, can Anzaldúa’s “wild tongue” be translated? How can we recreate the “language of the *Borderlands*”?

Studies on the translations into Spanish of *Borderlands* are scarce and they have received scant attention in reviews³. I am interested in exploring how multilingualism has been approached in different translations and how the “language of the *Borderlands*” has been recreated. My analysis of translations is descriptive, and it is based on a “prismatic approach” to translation. This perspective highlights that translation is conceived of as “fundamentally multiplicatory” (Reynolds 2) and

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² I use a capital letter for this word since, as Ana Louise Keating and Gloria González López explain, “When Anzaldúa writes this term with a lower-case ‘b’ it refers to the region on both sides of the Texas-Mexico border”, whereas “‘*Borderlands*’ with a capital ‘B’ represents a concept that draws from yet goes beyond the geopolitical Texas/Mexico borderlands to encompass psychic, sexual, and spiritual *Borderlands* as well” (241).

³ One of the few works on this topic is María Laura Spoturno’s detailed analysis “On *Borderlands* and translation: The Spanish versions of Gloria Anzaldúa’s seminal work” (2020).

that “[a]ny given translation, in any form, is just one among many actual and possible versions” (1). If the dominant metaphor of translation is no longer a channel, but a prism between languages, “[i]t would be seen as opening up the plural signifying potential of the source text and spreading it into multiple versions” (3). The analysis of different translations of *Borderlands* sheds light on the signifying potential of Anzaldúa’s influential book. In this paper, I will briefly refer to Anzaldúa’s multilingualism in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Then, I will present some examples of comparative textual analysis of three translations into Spanish of the second chapter, titled “*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*”, with the aim of exploring strategies that challenge homogenizing tendencies and resist erasing multilingualism, a central feature of Anzaldúa’s text.

Borderlands is a paradigmatic text in terms of the representation of “mestiza” identities, which are expressed through the use of multiple languages. For Anzaldúa, who was born in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas in 1942 and died in Santa Cruz, California in 2004, the richness and plurality of her identity was central to her writing. In *Borderlands*, the multiplicity of Anzaldúa’s place of enunciation is clearly articulated: Texan, Chicana, American, woman, lesbian, academic, poor, white, feminist, writer, and activist. As stated by Judith Butler, in highlighting this plurality, Anzaldúa stresses that “the subject is ‘multiple’ rather than unitary” and that “the source of our capacity for social transformation is to be found precisely in our capacity to mediate between worlds” (228).

Borderlands is difficult to classify since it is a multicultural, multigeneric and multilingual work, which shifts between academic and non-academic writing⁴. As Walter Mignolo points out, Anzaldúa “has articulated a powerful alternative aesthetic and political hermeneutic by placing herself at the cross-road [sic] of three traditions (Spanish-American, Nahuatl, and Anglo-American) and by creating a locus of enunciation where different ways of knowing and individual and collective expressions mingle (5). This book has become a canonical text of Chicana and Latinx literature, and of American

⁴ In terms of genre, this book may be classified as “autohistoria-teoría”. As explained in the glossary of *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa’s Life and Work Transformed Our Own*, autohistoria-teoría is a “[t]heory developed by Anzaldúa to describe a relational form of autobiographical writing that includes both life-story and self-reflection on this storytelling process. Writers of autohistoria-teoría blend their cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth, and/or other forms of theorizing. By so doing they create interwoven individual and collective identities” (Keating and González-López 241).

literature⁵. It was first published in 1987 by Aunt Lute Books in the United States. The second edition was published in 1999, the third edition in 2007 and the fourth edition in 2012. The book has two sections: the first one, “*Atravesando Fronteras / Crossing Borders*”, includes prose and poems, and the second one, “*Un Agitado Viento/Ehécatl, the Wind*”, has only poems. The book’s acknowledgements end with the words: “THIS BOOK is dedicated *a todos mexicanos* on both sides of the border” (capitalization and italics in the original)⁶. It is noteworthy that several decades have elapsed since the publication of the book and its translations, primarily into Spanish, which would make the book accessible for many of its dedicatees who do not read English.

Some parts of the book were published in Spanish translation before the complete work appeared in Spanish. For example, the second chapter of *Borderlands*, “*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*”, was published in 2004 in the anthology *Otras inapropiables: Feminismos desde las fronteras*. It was translated collectively by Rocío Macho Ronco, Hugo Romero Fernández Sancho, Álvaro Salcedo Rufo and María Serrano Gimenez. Another translation into Spanish of a chapter of the book is Luisa Valenzuela’s translation of chapter 5, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”, in *Voces sin fronteras: Antología Vintage Español de literatura mexicana y chicana contemporánea* (2009). It was not until 2015 that the complete book was first published in Spanish by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Norma Elia Cantú translated the first part, in collaboration with Xanath Caraza⁷. In 2016, the Spanish

⁵ Most of the anthologies of Latinx literature published in the last decades include texts by Gloria Anzaldúa. Some examples are *The Latino Reader: An American Literary Tradition from 1542 to the Present* (1997), *The Prentice Hall Anthology of Latino Literature* (2002), *Herencia: The Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the United States* (2002), *U.S. Latino Literature Today* (2005), *Latino Boom: An Anthology of U.S. Latino Literature* (2006), and *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* (2010). In addition, most American literature anthologies published in the last decades include excerpts of *Borderlands* and it is one of the few books written by a Chicana author that appear in these volumes. For example, since its sixth edition published in 2002, all the editions of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* have included texts by Anzaldúa.

⁶ The dedication “I dedicate this book to Mexicans on both sides of the border” appears in handwriting in one of the drafts of the book (Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin; box 32, folder 12). In the draft dated 1986, October 19, a modified typed version appears: “I dedicate this book to Chicanos and Mexicanos on both sides of the border” (box 32, folder 13). In a subsequent manuscript book (box 35, folder 2), it was changed to the multilingual version which appears in the book as it was published.

⁷ Cantú explains in the introduction that “Xanath hizo los primeros borradores de los capítulos 1, 3, y 5; Claire [Joysmith] tradujo la sección completa de

publishing house Capitán Swing issued the second translation into Spanish, by Carmen Valle.

The translators had different intended audiences and participated in different editorial projects. *Otras inapropiables* is an anthology published in Madrid, Spain that collects feminist texts that “dan cuenta de los diferentes debates que en el interior del feminismo han surgido de la necesidad de atender a las complejas intersecciones constitutivas de las relaciones de subordinación a las que se enfrentan mujeres concretas” (10). In the description in the front matter of the book published by Traficantes de Sueños, they claim they are not “una casa editorial, ni siquiera una editorial independiente que contempla la publicación de una colección variable de textos críticos. Es, por el contrario, un proyecto, en el sentido estricto de ‘apuesta’, que se dirige a cartografiar las líneas constituyentes de otras formas de vida” (*Otras inapropiables* n.p.). Given the extensive footnoting and the long introductory texts, Cantú’s version, edited by the Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, appears to be aimed at a mainly academic audience. In contrast, in the edition issued by the independent publishing house Capitán Swing, Valle argues in the introduction to her translation that “[l]as personas lectoras a quien se ha tenido en mente a la hora de traducir no constituyen un público académico, pues el profesorado y alumnado universitario se maneja ya bastante bien en inglés, por lo cual el texto multilingüe de la versión no ofrecería ninguna dificultad” (31). Thus, she addresses a general audience.

These translations were published in the context of the rise of multilingual literature which began towards the end of the 20th century with the so-called “multilingual turn” (Meylaerts 1). Reine Meylaerts explains that, in the last decades, the modalities of multilingual literature have changed: thanks to recent technological and political developments, the objects of study in disciplines such as linguistics, literature and politics are more often conceptualized as multilingual. Literary and cultural studies, which increasingly conceive monolingual cultures as idealized constructions, have contributed to this shift, thanks to research on mobility, nomadism, hybridity and creolization (1-2). Since that paradigm change, there has been a greater interest in the translation of multilingual literature from different countries all over the world.

poesía y contribuyó en buena parte de la escritura de esta introducción al libro” (56).

Anzaldúa’s “Wild Tongue”

Multilingualism in *Borderlands* is paramount in the expression of identity. Anzaldúa asserts: “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity —I am my language” (*Borderlands* 59). In other words, language is considered an essential element of the self. Steven G. Kellman, who prefers to use the term “translingualism”, points out that for translingual authors “the creation of a new voice means the invention of a new self” (20). English is, for Anzaldúa, “the standard language”, or, to put it in Yasemin Yildiz’s terminology, “an imposed and enforced language, closely connected to colonization, conquest, and cultural imperialism” (180). Therefore, in this text, multilingualism is much more than a creative resource.

In her preface, Anzaldúa anticipates that

[t]he switching of ‘codes’ in this book from English to Castillian [sic] Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all of these, reflects my language, a new language —the language of the Borderlands. There, at the juncture of cultures, languages cross-pollinate and are revitalized (n.p.).

She also makes clear that, at that time, the “language of the Borderlands” was not considered legitimate: “Presently this infant language, this bastard language, Chicano Spanish, is not approved by any society” (n.p.). Using the “language of the Borderlands”, this “orphan language” (58) made up of a mixture of languages⁸, in a literary text is, undoubtedly, a political gesture which implies an ideological stance.

Anzaldúa seeks to legitimize her language, and, in doing so, she also seeks to legitimize her own identity. In the chapter “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”, she explains:

Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate (59).

⁸ Under the subtitle “*Oyé como ladra: el lenguaje de la frontera*” in the chapter entitled “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”, Anzaldúa explains that because Chicanos “are a complex, heterogeneous people”, they speak many languages. Some of those languages are: “Standard English”, “Working class and slang English,” “Standard Spanish,” “Standard Mexican Spanish,” “North Mexican Spanish dialect,” “Chicano Spanish,” “Tex-Mex,” and “*Pachuco* (called *caló*)” (55).

Despite this categorical assertion, in many cases Anzaldúa offers translations, especially in the first section of the book, “*Atravesando Fronteras/Crossing Borders*”. I agree with Marlene Hansen Esplin, who points out that, mainly in this section, there is a tension between Anzaldúa’s multilingualism and the “pedagogical and ethnographic aspirations of her text”, since she adopts a “conciliatory approach to translating” (182). Spanish is often “othered” in the text by italics, parenthetical explanations, footnotes, contextual clues and other strategies which avoid alienating the monolingual, Anglo audience. In other words, Anzaldúa takes on the roles of a cultural mediator and translator. In the second part of the book, “*Un Agitado Viento/Ehécatl, the Wind*”, composed of multilingual poems, Anzaldúa’s translational strategies are less conciliatory as regards the monolingual reader. Hansen Esplin believes that “the generic difficulty and relative inaccessibility of this latter portion of the book for English readers are among the likely reasons why *Borderlands* has been approached almost exclusively as a theoretical and prose-based text” (183-184). In fact, Linda Garber explains that the first section of the book began as a ten-page introduction to the poems that appear in what is now the second section (216). Despite these differences in Anzaldúa’s multilingualism in the two sections of her book, the text invites “rebellious” translation strategies to recreate this “wild tongue” for new audiences.

The Language of the Borderlands in Translation

The “language of the Borderlands” presents a considerable challenge for its translation. It destabilizes traditional notions of translation, such as the conception of translation as the transposition of a single, monolithic and closed source linguistic code into a target linguistic code. As Reine Meylaerts puts it, when translating multilingual literature one of the main difficulties arises from the fact that “[i]mplicitly or explicitly, translation is still approached as the full transposition of one (monolingual) source code into another (monolingual) target code for the benefit of a monolingual target public” (5). The adoption of this approach to translation neglects at least two important considerations: discourses are never completely monolingual, and “the monolingualism of the authors, critics, audiences, etc. in the source and target cultures may be less absolute than conventionally expected” (5). Thus, conventional expectations about translation, discourses, authors, critics and audiences should be reshaped to approach multilingual texts. As Rainier Grutman states, “[t]ranslators of linguistic ‘hybrids’ who do want to convey a sense of the original text’s balancing act

between languages [...] go against the grain of institutionalized monolingualism. They are often facing an uphill battle” (23). Although they engage in different translation praxes, the collective translation by Maria Serrano Gimenez, Rocio Macho Ronco, Hugo Romero Fernández Sancho and Álvaro Salcedo Rufo, and the translations by Norma Elia Cantú and Carmen Valle of Anzaldúa’s “*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*” defy institutionalized monolingualism in their renditions of Anzaldúa’s text.

All three of the translations considered here explicitly refer to the importance of multilingualism in Anzaldúa’s text in their respective introductions. In the summary of the chapter by Anzaldúa that appears in the prologue to the anthology *Otras inapropiables*, written collectively by some of the women who participate in the project “Eskalera Karakola”, a self-managed feminist social centre in Madrid founded in 1996, multilingualism is highlighted as a key feature of this author’s writing

En la tensión y riqueza política de vivir a caballo entre varias culturas, empleando varios idiomas y en la distancia crítica que implica el no ser reconocida como adecuada en ninguno de los marcos disponibles, como mujer, lesbiana y chicana, la conciencia mestiza de Anzaldúa surge de las posibilidades de hacer habitable la propia posición de frontera (11-12).

Anzaldúa’s straddling between languages and cultures, and the resulting tension, is recognized as a defining feature of *Borderlands*. In her introductory text, Cantú, for her part, explains that one of her objectives was “rendir una fiel traducción del texto original con toda su complejidad lingüística” (46). She explains some of her strategies and the rationale that motivated them in the subsection entitled “Estrategias traductoriles” (50-52). Finally, in the edition of *Borderlands* published in Spain, Valle postulates the challenge of the translation of multilingualism in the very beginning of her introduction, “Traducir *Borderlands/La Frontera*”, by presenting a series of questions. She highlights the importance of the context of production and reception of her translation, which has historically preferred “smooth” translations:

¿Cómo se traduce un libro escrito sobre todo en inglés, con amplios fragmentos o palabras y frases intercaladas en español y con términos en náhuatl? En particular, ¿cómo se traduce en una cultura históricamente monolingüe y anclada en la tradición traductora europea que aprecia sobre todo las traducciones planchadas al vapor y falaces en el sentido de que no deben mostrar ni una arruga de su carácter de texto traducido? ¿Qué

hacer entonces con un texto lleno de bodoques, calados, cenefas, fruncidos y volantes? (29)

In these three “rebellious” translations, different strategies are employed to avoid “steam ironing” the text and to recreate the “language of the Borderlands”. To illustrate some of the differences, I will focus on four of these strategies: 1) non translation, 2) inverting languages, 3) the use of typography, 4) the use of non-standard Spanish.

Translation strategies

Non-translation, which involves maintaining the word(s) of the source text in the target text without any change, appears the most in the collective translation published in the anthology *Otras inapropiables*. For example, in the following excerpt several expressions in English are maintained in the translation exactly as they appear in the source text:

On it I walked away, taking with me the land, the Valley, Texas. *Gané mi camino y me largué. Muy andariega mi hija.* Because I left of my own accord *me dicen*, “*Cómo te gusta la mala vida?*” (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 16)

Sobre ella caminé al marcharme, *taking with me the land, the Valley, Texas. Gané mi camino y me largué. Muy andariega mi hija.* Because I left of my own accord *me dicen*, «¿Cómo te gusta la mala vida? » (Macho Ronco et al. 72)⁹

The monolingual audience of both the source text and the translation have few contextual clues to help them interpret these phrases. There are complete sentences in the non-predominant language with little or no assistance to help the monolingual reader decipher their meaning.

Non-translation is also used in other parts of the translation, in passages in which both the source text and the target text provide contextual and syntactic clues that facilitate comprehension. For example: “If a woman rebels she is a *mujer mala*. If a woman doesn't renounce herself in favour of the male, she is selfish. If a woman remains a *virgen* until she marries, she is a good woman” (*Borderlands* 17). The syntactic parallelism and the rest of the words in these sentences may help monolingual readers understand their meaning. Similarly, in the collective translation in *Otras inapropiables*, “*If a woman rebels she is a mujer mala. Si una mujer no renuncia a sí misma en favor del varón, es egoísta. Si una mujer se mantiene virgen hasta el matrimonio, she is a good woman*” (Macho Ronco et al. 73).

⁹ The use of italics in these translations is explained below.

In other cases, this strategy of keeping the same words in English of the source text in the translation allows to recreate multilingualism in the translation, but with a different function. In the following excerpt, Anzaldúa uses Spanish and then, between brackets, she offers a translation or explanation in English, which helps the monolingual English reader: “How many times have I heard mothers and mothers-in-law tell their sons to beat their wives for being *hociconas* (big mouths), for being *callajeras* (going to visit and gossip with neighbors)” (*Borderlands* 16). Anzaldúa uses a non-standard spelling of this word, instead of the standard spelling of the word, “callejeras”, for political reasons, as is explained below. Anzaldúa recreates the voices from the borderlands by using those words which were uttered by the mothers and mothers-in-law that she describes. In the translation in *Otras inapropiables*, the words in English between parenthesis recreate an instance of multilingualism in the same sentences as in the source text, but these phrases do not serve the same purpose of clarifying in order to facilitate the reading process for the monolingual reader: “¿Cuántas veces habré oído a madres y suegras aconsejar a sus hijos pegar a sus mujeres por no obedecerlos, por ser *hociconas* [*big mouths*], por ser *callejeras* [*going to visit and gossip with neighbors*]” (73). In addition, in this excerpt the non-standard spelling of the word “callajeras” which appears in the source text is standardized as “callejeras”.

In the translation published in Mexico, this strategy of keeping the same words in English as the source text is used to a lesser extent. Cantú explains that “así como en el texto de origen en inglés brotan vocablos en español, lo inverso es cierto de la versión en español, por lo que no se traducen, quedan en inglés, a fin de crear un registro en espejo del texto origen en inglés” (51). To this respect, an interesting term that Cantú keeps in English is “alien”: “Humans fear the supernatural, both the undivine (the animal impulses such as sexuality, the unconscious, the unknown, the alien) and the divine (the superhuman, the god in us)” (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 17). This sentence, entirely in English in the source text, is translated by Cantú as: “los impulsos animales, tales como la sexualidad, lo inconsciente, lo desconocido, *the alien*) (75). In this case, the multilingualism of the source text is compensated in a different place in the target text. The term “alien” has a strong connotative value for the Chicana community, since it is associated to the discrimination against immigrants. The first time this term appears in the book, the translator offers an explanation in a footnote: “Alien: puede ser ‘ajeno’ o ‘extraño’ pero la palabra connota un extraterrestre, así como alguien que está en los Estados Unidos con papeles (*resident alien*) o sin ellos (*illegal alien*). (N. de la T.)” (61, italics in the original). Maintaining this term contributes to highlight the

cultural specificity of the word. This mirrors many instances of Anzaldúa's use of Spanish and Náhuatl for the same reason in the source text. The cultural baggage of the word "alien" is absent from the translations published in Spain: it is rendered as "lo ajeno" (Anzaldúa, *Otras inapropiables* 73) or "lo extraño" (Anzaldúa [Valle], *Borderlands* 58).

Cantú also resorts to non-translation to help explain a pun. In a passage in the section "Fear of Going Home: Homophobia", Anzaldúa relates an anecdote:

In a New England college where I taught, the presence of a few lesbians threw the more conservative heterosexual students and faculty into a panic. The two lesbian students and we two lesbian instructors met with them to discuss their fears. One of the students said, "I thought homophobia meant fear of going home after a residency" (*Borderlands* 19).

In Cantú's translation, the student's words are rendered as: "Pensé que la homofobia significaba miedo de volver al hogar (*home*) después de una ausencia académica prolongada" (77). In Valle's version there is no attempt to explain this pun, whereas in the translation in *Otras inapropiables*, the editors make use of a footnote ("Juego de palabras en inglés entre *homophobia* y *home*, «hogar». [N. de e.]" (76) in which they explain Anzaldúa's wordplay. Keeping the word in English is a useful strategy to transpose the pun from the source text in Cantú's translation, which is less overt than using a note, as in the translation of Macho Ronco et al. Both options, however, seem more appropriate than simply omitting any reference to this powerful pun.

Another translation strategy that is used in these versions consists in inverting languages. In the following excerpt, as seen in one of the excerpts of the source text quoted above, Anzaldúa uses a term in Spanish and, right after, she translates the term in English between parentheses: "In the past, acting humble with members outside the family ensured that you would make no one *envidioso* (envious); therefore, he or she would not use witchcraft against you. [...] With ambition (condemned in the Mexican culture and valued in the Anglo) comes envy" (*Borderlands* 40, italics in the original). In Valle's translation of this passage, the languages are inverted. In other words, where English appears in the source text, there is a Spanish translation in the target text, and where a Spanish word appears in the source text, there is an English translation in the target text: "En el pasado, mostrarse humilde con personas de fuera del círculo familiar garantizaba que no se provocara la *envidia* (*envy*) de nadie, con lo que esa persona no usaría brujerías contra nosotros. [...] Con la ambición (condenada en la cultura Mexicana y valorada en la *Anglo-*

Saxon) llega la envidia” (59)¹⁰. In this case, the function of multilingualism is different from its function in the same part of the source text, since the parenthetical insertion “(*envy*)” is not a translation which helps the monolingual reader’s comprehension of the text. In addition, Valle’s replacement of “Anglo” with “Anglo-Saxon” may attempt to compensate for the loss of multilingualism in other parts of the text. However, it changes to a certain extent the meaning of this term, since “Anglo” is understood as counterpoint to Latino or Chicano.

The inversion of languages observed in the translation of “*envidioso* (envious)” as “*envidia* (*envy*)” exemplifies the strategy that Valle calls “contra-traducción” (counter-translation). As she points out in the introduction of her version, she leaves words in English on the condition that they be “palabras cuya forma evoca la que tienen en español y cuyo significado es también deducible” (31). In other words, she keeps “lo que se denominan ‘amigos verdaderos’” (31) or cognates in her translation. For example, in the passage quoted above, the word “*envy*”, similar to the Spanish word “*envidia*,” appears in Valle’s translation.

A third strategy, that of using typography to signal multilingualism, is used in the three translations; however, the use of the strategy within the different translations varies. In the editions of *Borderlands* published by Aunt Lute, non-English terms are italicized. As can be seen in the examples quoted above, in both translations published in Spain, italics signal words in English as well as words in Spanish which appear in the source text and are maintained in the target text. In the translation by Macho Ronco et al., there is a footnote in the first page which explains that “Las cursivas aparecen en castellano en el original. [N. de e.]” (71). However, as explained previously, the italics in this version not only indicate words that appear in Spanish in the source text, but also words in English which are kept verbatim in this edition.

In contrast, the version published in Mexico includes three different fonts: firstly, one for the source text in English which was translated into Spanish (i.e. most of the text); secondly, italics, which is used mainly to distinguish the terms in English that were preserved without translation in the target text (such as the word “*alien*” mentioned above); finally, a third font for words that are in Spanish both in the source text and the target text. Cantú justifies her decision by explaining that she has imitated Claire Joysmith’s use of typography in her poetry anthology *Cantar de espejos* (2012) and has indicated words in Spanish which appear in the source text with

¹⁰ In her translation, Valle capitalizes demonyms, which is standard in English, but not in Spanish.

un estilo tipográfico alterno, como indicador de aquellos casos en los que el español se posiciona como marcador lingüístico-cultural, a menudo politizado, en el texto original escrito mayormente en inglés. La finalidad principal de esta estrategia es conservar el marcador presente en el original con el fin de que no esté sujeto a la borradura durante el proceso de traducción (50).

Joysmith considers that the use of a different font “deja huella en la lectura, sin por ello forzar su presencia diferencial” and contributes to “evitar el borramiento del marcador identitario lingüístico-cultural” (49).

This decision is in stark contrast with other editors of Anzaldúa’s writing. In the introduction to *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, Keating, who worked with Anzaldúa for several years, states that she tried to respect the author’s wishes and follow her intentions. Therefore, “in keeping with Gloria’s strongly expressed preference” (10), Keating chose “not to italicize Spanish, Náhuatl, or other non-English words. As Gloria often explained, such italics have a denormalizing, stigmatizing function and make the italicized words seem like deviations from the (English/ ‘white’) norm” (10). This was a political statement which avoided “othering” non-English languages. It is an attempt to legitimize multilingualism and to oppose academic conventions which seek to visually distinguish languages, instead of acknowledging their inherent plurality. Paradoxically, although it is explicitly stated that highlighting different languages through typography is a strategy that seeks to make linguistic diversity visible in the translation of *Borderlands* published in Mexico, it seems that Anzaldúa was in favour of the practice of not “othering” languages with different fonts, due to its ideological implications.

A fourth strategy included in these translations is the use of non-standard Spanish. The non-standard spelling that Anzaldúa uses sometimes is a way of differentiating the “language of the Borderlands” from standard languages. This is seen in the excerpt quoted above which included the term “callajeras”, instead of the standard spelling of the word, “callejeras”. It is also observed towards the end of the chapter with the inclusion of the non-standard term “oyemos (instead of the standard spelling, “oímos”): “*La india en mí es la sombra: La Chingada, Tlazolteotl, Coatlicue. Son ellas que oyemos lamentando a sus hijas perdidas*” (Anzaldúa, *Borderlands* 22). In addition, this sentence exemplifies one of the instances in which the monolingual English speaker is not provided with assistance to aid comprehension.

In Cantú’s translation, the non-standard spelling was maintained: “Son ellas que oyemos, lamentando a sus hijas

perdidas” (80). In a footnote, the translator explains the importance of preserving this feature. She asserts that

[e]n esta traducción se enfatiza la importancia de mantener en lo posible, los aspectos de oralidad que desafía tantas normas ortográficas en inglés y en español; la finalidad de recalcar el valor de la epistemología nacida del pueblo, de la vivencia cotidiana y de la experiencia misma de Anzaldúa (80)¹¹.

In contrast, in the translations published in Spain, Anzaldúa’s idiosyncratic use of Spanish was standardized: “*Son ellas que oímos lamentando a sus hijas perdidas*” (Macho Ronco et al. 80, Valle 64; italics in the originals). Thus, a characteristic of Anzaldúa’s language use, aimed at highlighting the difference of the “language of the Borderlands”, which the author herself comments on and problematizes in her text, is absent from these versions.

In some other points in the text, both the versions published in Spain and the one published in Mexico keep Anzaldúa’s alternate spelling of Spanish words, which imitate orality. This is observed in the translations of the sentence “They called her half and half, *mita’ y mita’*” (*Borderlands* 19). Nevertheless, there is a significant difference: in the versions published in Spain the editors or translators seem to consider there is a need for translation of this “other” Spanish: “La llamaban mitad y mitad, *mita’ y mita’*” (Macho Ronco et al. 75) and “La llamaban mitad y mitad, *mitá’ y mitá’*” (Valle 60). The version published in Mexico simply keeps the expression that imitates orality “La llamaban *mita’ y mita’*” (Cantú 76), since translation of this expression in Spanish is considered redundant. The absence of a translation also seems to legitimize this linguistic variety of the Borderlands. Cantú even translates the title of this section, “Half and half”, using Anzaldúa’s alternate spelling: “*Mita’ y mita’*” (76). It may be argued that the geographical proximity to the Borderlands of Anzaldúa’s text makes it easier for the target readers of the translation published in Mexico to understand this variety of language. However, the expression used in this case emulates orality and is rather simple, so there seems to be no need for translation for any Spanish reader.

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the use of footnotes in Cantú’s translation, see “La conquista del espacio enunciativo. Un estudio de las notas en la traducción al español de *Borderlands/La Frontera*” by María Laura Spoturno.

Nepantleras/ Translators: Bridging as an Act of Love

The three translations of the chapter “*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*” exhibit different ways in which the challenge of translating multilingualism may be tackled. In an echo of the title of the chapter, they are “rebellious” translations, which seek to stay true to the complexity of the culture of the Borderlands that Anzaldúa portrays in her work. Instead of lamenting the untranslatability of a multilingual text as *Borderlands*, the translation process is conceived of as an artistic endeavour: translation is “an occasion to open up the language for it to become enriched by reinvention” (Bradford xiv). By acknowledging the prismatic nature of the translation process, it is possible to understand how these versions illuminate different nuances of meaning of Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* and invite us to revisit this seminal text and appreciate the richness of its signifying potential.

As seen in the three versions that were analysed above, the bridging involved in translation is analogous to the bridging of *nepantleras*. As Anzaldúa states, “[f]or nepantleras, to bridge is an act of will, an act of love, an attempt toward compassion and reconciliation, and a promise to be present with the pain of others without losing themselves to it” (“(Un)natural bridges” 1). Translation in general, and especially the translation of multilingual literature, has complex ethical, political and affective implications. *Nepantleras*

live within and among multiple worlds and, often through painful negotiations, develop what Anzaldúa describes as a ‘perspective from the cracks’; they use these transformed perspectives to invent holistic, relational theories and tactics, enabling them to reconceive or in other ways transform the various worlds in which they exist (Keating and González-López 244).

Similarly, the translators of *Borderlands* conduct complex negotiations. Since traditional conceptions of translation are destabilized when faced with this kind of text, innovative translational tactics and “a perspective from the cracks” must be “developed”.

In these versions, diverse strategies are employed to recreate Anzaldúa’s “wild tongue”, the “language of the Borderlands”. There is a certain degree of neutralization of the linguistic diversity of the source text, especially in Valle’s translation, since she mainly uses cognates. In the case of the collective translation of the anthology *Otras inapropiables*, even though in several places the effect of linguistic diversity is compensated for, the reasons and functions of multilingualism often do not match those of the author in the source text.

Regarding the tendency to standardize Spanish, there is a greater degree of standardization in the translations published in Spain. In the version published in Mexico, the translator explicitly acknowledges the importance of maintaining the non-standard Spanish of the source text.

In Cantú’s translation, three typographical variants visually highlight linguistic diversity. However, to a certain extent this procedure emphasizes the differences between the tongues, instead of conceiving them as strands that compose the “language of the Borderlands”. The speakers of this language generally do not draw attention to these divergences; they constantly shift between the different elements of this tongue, as Anzaldúa does in *Borderlands*.

The publication of versions that expand the repertoire of translations of multilingual literature, in which mestiza voices subvert the monolingual paradigm, as happens in *Borderlands*, is essential in that these works will contribute to offer creative solutions in the translation of this kind of texts. This, in turn, makes us rethink the fluidity between languages, the diversity of “Englishes” and “Spanishes”, and traditional notions of translation. In addition, translating multilingual literature will help build and consolidate different transcultural imaginaries and modalities of multilingualism.

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