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Blue and Green Music to the Fear: Centring (on) Periphery through Decolonial Translation

Música azul y verde contra el miedo: centrando (en) la periferia a través de la traducción descolonial

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Abstract: Disconcerting trends of decline in the use of the Galician language marked a record low ebb in 2024 and saw its degradation to a statistical minority in Galicia for the first time in its modern history. Nevertheless, this article asks not what we can do for Galician, but what Galician can and does do for other languages and for the wider, alternative ecosystem of peripheral epistemology. Specifically, it explores the translational interaction between Galician and Irish English as a source of sustainable, renewable energy for both. The analysis focuses on the poetry collection *Diario de Crosses Green* by Martín Veiga and its translation into English by the Irish poet and translator Keith Payne.
Keywords: decolonial translation; globalization; periphery; Martín Veiga; Keith Payne.
Summary: Introduction. Cosmopolitanism from the margins. Decolonial translation. Centring (on) periphery. Hits and misses. Learning to read and reading to learn. The power of naming. Blue and green music to the fear. Conclusions.

Resumen: El preocupante declive en el uso del gallego marcó un mínimo histórico en el año 2024 cuando por primera vez en su historia moderna el idioma se convirtió en una minoría estadística en Galicia. Sin embargo, este artículo no se pregunta qué podemos hacer por el gallego, sino qué puede hacer el gallego por otras lenguas y por un ecosistema alternativo más amplio basado en la epistemología periférica. Con este propósito, explora la interacción traductora entre el gallego y el inglés irlandés como fuente de energía sostenible y renovable para ambos. El análisis se centra en el poemario *Diario de Crosses Green* de Martín Veiga (2016) y su traducción al inglés del poeta y traductor irlandés Keith Payne (2018).
Palabras clave: traducción descolonial; globalización; periferia; Martín Veiga; Keith Payne.

Sumario: Introducción. Cosmopolitismo desde los márgenes. Traducción descolonial. Centrando (en) la periferia. Aciertos y oportunidades perdidas. Aprender a leer y leer para aprender. El poder de nombrar. Música azul y verde contra el miedo. Conclusión.

any center can be the center of the globe as long as we can see the real connections that bind us. (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 2016)

INTRODUCTION

Disconcerting trends of decline in the use of the Galician language marked a record low ebb in 2024 and saw its degradation to a statistical minority in Galicia for the first time in its modern history (IGE). Nevertheless, this article asks not what we can do for Galician, but what Galician can and does do for other languages and for the wider, alternative ecosystem of peripheral epistemology. Specifically, it explores the translational interaction between Galician and the English spoken at the transcolonial margins of Europe—Irish and Hiberno English[1]—as a source of sustainable, renewable energy for both.

A more obvious approach would be to assess the empowering effect of translation from Galician into more dominant languages, in terms of increasing international awareness of Galician and its appeal to members of other linguistic systems (Jones 7). However, the unequal power relations implicit in such a centre-periphery perspective undermine the putative benefits of increased visibility, instrumentalizing translation as a tool of modern imperialism (Van Elteren). Instead, the analysis investigates alternative perspectives such as "peripheral wisdom" (Fernández), "positive marginality" (Parker), "decolonial cosmopolitanism" (Mignolo, "Border Thinking"), and "globalectics" (Ngũgĩ, "Globalectics") to advocate for a dynamic of *cosmopolitanism from the periphery through translation* as a way of expanding the repertoire, robustness, and self-reputation of peripheral cultures and linguistic systems. The aim is both to reclaim the English of Ireland as the postcolonial resource it has been since its inception (Cambria), and to flip the narrative of regret and despair over the shortcomings and sustainability of Galician as a linguistic culture. This article thus tells a different story of

[1] On the difference between Irish English and Hiberno English, see Christiansen (63). This article uses the term "Irish English" to reflect translator Keith Payne's less marked, yet distinctly Irish idiom.

Galician and other minoritized languages, as driving forces for innovation and reconnection within the co-peripheral linguistic cultures with which they come into contact through translation.

Despite obvious historical, political, and linguistic differences, Ireland and Galicia shared comparable socio-economic and cultural conditions well into the later twentieth century, including predominantly rural economic structures, widespread poverty, and affective and intellectual oppression by a traditionalist Catholic church.[2] The colonial status of both has been questioned on the basis of their geographical embeddedness in Western Europe, historical lack of sympathy with Indigenous struggles further afield, and frequently enthusiastic contribution to the colonial enterprise (Cleary 20–21). However, as Joe Cleary explains, although countries like Ireland and Galicia "belonged to the same geo-cultural locale, the same orbit of capital, as the major European imperial powers, [they were] integrated into that orbit in a very different way to [their] European neighbours" (23). Both cultures may, therefore, be considered not just postcolonial but transcolonial, in terms of their shared experience of domination, disenfranchisement, and peripheralization.[3] In a speech to the Irish parliament in 1999, the then president Mary McAleese quoted historian Luke Gibbons's (3) famous dictum that "Today's Ireland is a first world country but with a third world memory, a memory to keep us humble, to remind us of the fragility of it all." As argued by Enrique Dussel, the historical exclusion of countries like Ireland and Galicia from the structures and processes of power grants them an "alterity" (42) of experience, perspective, and understanding that positions and capacitates them to move beyond "the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise" (Said xxvii) and resist the "new and worrying boundedness" of globalization (Fernández 137).[4] The historically rooted

[2] Among the extensive literature in this area, see, for example: Earner-Byrne (2017) on the Catholic poor in Ireland; Lee (1989) on the prelude to and first sixty years of independence; Ferriter (2009) on conservative official morality in modern Ireland; Beiras (1972) on economic underdevelopment in Galicia; and Rodríguez-Lago (2004) on the Catholic church in Galicia during the Franco dictatorship.

[3] On the emergence of postcolonial studies in Ireland in the 1980s and the consideration of Ireland as a postcolonial entity, see also Gibbons (1996). On the institutionalized colonial dependence of Galicia within the Spanish state and its consequences, see Beiras (1972) and Carballal (2019).

[4] Ireland's resumption of the EU presidency in July 2026 (its eighth since 1975) might seem to contradict this notion of "exclusion" from the structures of power. However, it is important to bear in mind that while Ireland is structurally inside the EU, it is not part of

sense of vulnerability, solidarity, and non-sovereignty associated with the colonial experience seems not only timely but urgent as a corrective to the "radical forgetfulness" of corporatized transnationality, and the corporatist slide in Irish life and politics post-2008 in particular (Negra and McIntyre 60–61). This study explores how alterity in the production and translation of literature may be turned to empowering, regenerative effect as a form of counter-discourse and the basis for cross-peripheral collaboration.

While this study is informed by decolonial and postcolonial theory, it is also grounded in translation studies, particularly in work on poetry translation and the politics of representation. Following Lawrence Venuti's distinction between domestication and foreignization, translation is understood here not as a neutral transfer but as an ethically and aesthetically charged practice that negotiates cultural difference through degrees of visibility and resistance. Michael Cronin's notion of "ecotranslation" and his emphasis on linguistic diversity further frame translation as a site of cultural and ecological sustainability, especially in the context of minoritized languages. Building, finally, on Maria Tymoczko's postcolonial approach, the analysis reads translation in terms of asymmetrical cultural relations of repression and resistance.

Francis Jones argues that the "multi-layered content and complex language" (9) involved in poetry translation make it a particularly fruitful site of analysis of intercultural relations, agents, networks, and habitus. The ideological component of translation is thus especially acute in the case of poetry owing to its "greater cultural complexity and cultural involvement" (Tymoczko, *Translation* 30) and the "messy richness" (Jones 17) of "personal, interpersonal and poetic action within a complex real-life context" (24). If poetry translation processes depend on the "motives, life stories and personae of their main actors" (24), decolonial translation interrogates those motives, deepens and dilates the life stories involved, and draws attention to the shifting, permeable boundaries of self. Decolonial translation intention aligns closely with Douglas Robinson's analysis of translation as "embodied dialogue," "cross-cultural conversation," and "felt connections" that "can restore us to ourselves—to our full humanity" (258). This humanizing, experiential focus on somatic response and the translator's ability to "project [themselves] imaginatively

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the politically and epistemically constitutive centre, which has been linked to the "ideologies and assumptions that sustained the practice of colonialism" (Eklund 3; see also Hansen and Jonsson).

into the other's body" (17) reflects the situated, memoried hereness of decolonial translation against the abstractions and false universals of globalization.

The analysis in this article focuses on the poetry collection *Diario de Crosses Green* by Martín Veiga and its translation into English by the Irish poet and translator Keith Payne. Veiga's work represents a dialogue between the lived, sedimented Galician tradition of the poet and his perceptions and experiences of his adopted Irish city, Cork. For its part, Payne's translation allows the English reader to inhabit this (counter-)Anglophone world through the eyes and expression of a Galician other. My purpose is not to review Payne's translation or to comment on the quality of the work per se. Payne is an eclectic and grateful reader, a lively and sensitive writer, and an active observer and knower of people, and *Crosses Green* is, moreover, the result of a close collaboration with Veiga and approved by him. What I do propose is to interrogate the work from the point of view of decolonial translation, understood as a source of enrichment not only for the translated work but, more enduringly, for the target Irish English language itself.

1. Cosmopolitanism from the Margins

The destructive reality of globalization is highlighted by George Ritzer in his critique of what he terms "the globalization of nothing:" the progressive removal of distinctive, substantive content from the elements that fill and define our existence "so that they can be marketed in a different time or place" (196). Arundhati Roy, meanwhile, has portrayed globalization as "a light which shines brighter and brighter on a few people and the rest are in darkness, wiped out. They simply can't be seen. Once you get used to not seeing something, then, slowly, it's no longer possible to see it" (123). As well as warning of the inequalities inherent in the phenomenon, her metaphor also draws attention to its progressive normalization of absence and indifference. While Bronislaw Szerszynski and John Urry (465) have written optimistically about the potential of global media and mobility to facilitate post-nationalist encounter and exchange through sport, art, travel, and entertainment, such utopianism seems overstated in the face of globalization's fundamentally Western, capitalist connotations (Mignolo, "Border Thinking" 102–04).

Cosmopolitanism has been defined as "an ethical, political, and moral philosophy . . . with rich implications for how people view the world, one

another, and themselves" (Warf iii). In its liberal form, it denotes a rootless universalism. Yet this "banal cosmopolitanism" is a strictly top-down model: "It is possible with enough money to 'eat the world'" (Beck 260). What is more,

> recent world history seems to dictate that surviving, let alone benefiting from, these new civilizational forces [global free trade and financialization, corporate deterritorialization and transnationalized production, globalized labour use, competition and class conflicts, supranationally coerced globalized policy consulting and formulation, internet communication and cyberspace, globally orchestrated bioscientific manipulation of life forms, global risks of all kinds, transnational demographic realignments, cosmopolitanized arts and entertainments, and globally financed and managed regional wars] requires every nation to actively internalize them and one another. (Beck 261)

The theoretically cosmopolitan worldview is thus rooted in the West, reflects the perspective of the rich, invisibilises local cultural influence and experience, and assumes a more systematically interconnected world than is the reality for the vast majority of people on the planet (Calhoun, quoted in Beck 268).

Against this fallacious cosmopolitanism of asymmetrical dialogue between power centre and periphery, numerous scholars have centred their focus on the margins in search of a more truly, non-coercive global perspective. Chris Rumford and Anthony Cooper (280) highlight the cosmopolitan potential of borderlands as a place where binary distinctions blur and the illusion of permanence is exposed. James W. Fernández contrasts the wilfully blinkered, self-serving vision of the centre with what he refers to as the "wisdom" of the periphery, a clear-sightedness born of the necessarily open, comparative, and self-questioning nature of life beyond (that is, excluded from) the structures, processes, and obsessions of power. The periphery's exteriority makes it a privileged site for observing and understanding "what is otherwise obscured" (Parker 10): the multiplicity of silenced subaltern histories, the reality and rich offerings of cultural plurality and exchange, and the centre's material dependence on and exploitation of the other (Baban 382, 384).

Another alternative to cosmopolitan projects which "have failed to escape the ideological frame imposed by global designs" (Mignolo, "Cosmo-polis" 724) is Walter Mignolo's theory of "decolonial

cosmopolitanism," or "critical cosmopolitanism from the exteriority of modernity (that is, coloniality)." This critical cosmopolitanism problematizes the logic of inclusion that "presupposes that the agency that establishes the inclusion is itself beyond inclusion" (736) and calls for silenced, marginalized voices to participate fully in the global conversation—not "be participated" (743). Similarly, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o ("Globalectics" 8) recommends a "globalectics" that "embraces wholeness, interconnectedness, equality of potentiality of parts, tension and motion . . . a way of thinking and relating to the world, particularly in the era of globalism and globalisation," and the fundamental need to move the centre "from its assumed location in the West to a multiplicity of spheres in all the cultures of the world" ("Moving" xiv). Critical, decolonial cosmopolitanism from the colonial margins, therefore, rejects the hierarchical distinction between cultures, languages, experiences, and perspectives, and centralized control and management of knowledge, proposing in their place a paradigm of dialogue, mutuality, and "diversality" (Mignolo, "Cosmo-polis" 743).

2. DECOLONIAL TRANSLATION

Traditionally, translation has been considered an instrument of colonization (Tymoczko, *Translation*). In a colonial context, negotiation between cultures is always driven by the interests of imperial control, and translation generally reflects the power relationship between source and target cultures. Translation is never innocent, therefore, but the result of deliberate decision-making processes (such as source text selection and translation strategies) that involve issues of power and ideology (Vidal Claramonte 82; 87). This colonial paradigm persists in the era of neo-imperial globalization, where the ideal of cosmopolitanism as a form of "global belonging" and encounter with diverse others (Szerszynski and Urry 465) is belied by the ideologically manipulated dominance of supposedly universal Western, capitalist models and values.[5] However, just as cosmopolitanism may be decolonially reimagined as a regenerative

[5] Notions of prestige, reputation, and "international readers" (Tymoczko "Post-colonial Writing" 29) are themselves conditioned by post-imperial, Western-globalized standards. The admission of peripheral literatures into this canon (e.g.: Irish Nobel and Booker prize winners) does not negate their emergence from and continued negotiation with conditions of historical marginality (see, for example, Holmes on "gatekeeper and tastemaker" literary prizes; and Huggan on "prizing otherness").

locus of interaction between dissenting communities at the margins (Mignolo, "Border Thinking"), so translation within that space may be reclaimed by peripheral cultures as a source of epistemic healing and justice (Yohannes).

Translational interaction at the periphery is an opportunity to think, see, and create from a radical perspective and to speak with the shared counter-language of the margins. The permeable nature of the periphery, where borders fade and the narrow classifications of centralist modernity are diluted, makes them a "space of refusal, where one can say no to the coloniser, no to the downpressor" (bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin" 21). Decolonial translation at the periphery, and especially between peripheral cultures, thus becomes an act of linguistic affirmation and resistance.

In contrast to the dominant standard of assimilationist fluency observed in major European languages (Venuti, "Scandals" 12) and the "narcissism" of seeking to recognize one's own culture in the translated cultural other (Venuti, "Invisibility" 12), decolonial translation seeks to preserve and learn from the strangeness of the source text. In a short essay on "the virtues of not understanding," James Boyd White espouses the creative potential of incomplete comprehension as "a spur to investigation, learning, invention" (335) and even cautions against complete transparency as the end of the spectrum where "one finds no life at all, but a kind of death of mind and self" (336). In the same way, bell hooks ("Place of Struggle" 299) encouraged her students "to think of the moment of not understanding what someone says as a space to learn." Truly cosmopolitan translation does not attempt to obscure its cross-cultural dimension or domesticate cultural difference (Sun 92; 105). It implies a non-hierarchical openness to the other and a willingness to question and expand our notion of self through engagement with the unknown and the possibly unknowable (Bielsa 169–70).

3. Centring (on) the Periphery

The travel writer and documentary maker Manchán Magan (209) describes the Irish as "members of a unified cultural archipelago of coastal people who have more in common with each other than with the centralized powers that control them."[6] As bilingual bicultures (Wierzbicka 8) on the

[6] On the "matrix of overlapping identities and practices," "debatable" boundaries, and the problematization of margin/centre relations, see also Norquay and Smyth.

postcolonial margins of Europe, Galicia and Ireland understand innately the existence of other referential worlds.[7] In decolonial terms, Keith Payne may thus be said to be translating peripheral self into peripheral self, local reality into local reality, differently lived history into differently lived history, in a comparable way to how the Irish translating Irish into English in the twentieth century "translated themselves into themselves . . . moving through translation toward decolonization" (Tymoczko *Translation*, 293).

My aim in the rest of this analysis is to illustrate how contact and interaction through translation can enhance the creative energy of the receiving culture, both through the entry of new air from the other language, and through the reconnection with and penetration into self that it provokes. I argue that this process of revitalization and enrichment is freest and most fertile when the source and target linguistic cultures—here, Galician and Anglo-Irish—do not find themselves in "radically different positions in the grid of cultural power" (Tymoczko *Translation*, 26), but rather share a peripheral, postcolonial status and experience. In the context of a centralizing and homogenizing globalization in which local singularity is reduced, emptied, and standardized (Ritzer 195), I contend that Ireland has much to gain from the particularizing, peripheral wisdom of Martín Veiga: to remember and rediscover the verbal and experiential richness of its culture, and the reason for that distinctly Irish form of English that was conceived from the beginning as a counter-language "beyond the boundaries of conquest and domination" (bell hooks, "Place of Struggle" 297).

Derek Attridge writes of poetry as "a social art through and through:" "We may experience poems alone, but we do so as members of a community" ("The Event of a Poem" 196). Like him, I draw on my own reading of the poems when describing the reader's response (explicitly so in Section 5), yet equally assume that "a reader who is responding fully to a literary work lives through it and sometimes lives with it" ("Context, Idioculture, Invention" 696). Mindful of this reader, Jean Boase-Beier

[7] A full analysis of the current state of the Irish language lies beyond the scope of this article. However, it is pertinent to observe that Ireland might be more properly described as "post-bilingual," as used by Hébert in her analysis of minoritized languages in Canada. Though not generally used by sociolinguists, the term does reflect the socially inactive state of Irish in Ireland today, while acknowledging its continuing influence on Irish English as a substrate (Filppula). Nevertheless, a cautionary note against such pessimism is also advisable, in view of recent findings of growing interest in and regard for the use of Irish, especially among younger cohorts (Údarás na Gaeltachta).

underlines the physicality of language as a challenge for translation, quoting Richard Bradford's claim that "the material substance of the sign is never fully distinguished from its signifying properties" (*Style* 13), and emphasizes the embodied nature of meaning: poetic rhythm harnesses "the energies of the body" and imagination is "crucially dependent on the way human beings exist in the world" (*Critical Introduction* 98–99). The analysis that follows foregrounds these embodied affective and experiential dimensions of reading translated poetry, together with the disruptive potential of decolonial translation as a way of "glimpsing possibilities foreclosed by the frameworks that govern daily living" (Attridge, "Once More" 333).

4. HITS AND MISSES

In moving from Galician to English, especially in poetic language, the challenge is to recreate the images, textures, tonalities, and silences of the original in the target poem in a way that is meaningful to English-speaking readers but that maintains the different perspective that the language and linguistic context of Galician give to Veiga's writing (Jones 36).[8] English has a richer vocalic system than Galician, for example, but it is also characterized by a strong tendency towards vowel reduction and consonantal endings. Matching Veiga's free lyricism, Payne adapts the meter and line length to create a more natural reading and recital rhythm for his English version, and echoes, but does not copy, the alliterations, which are often found internally, and which provide unity and fluidity in the original.

Already in the first poem of the volume, "Anatomía das augas / The Anatomy of Water," the translation evinces Payne's ability to look and listen for what is not written, and in this way to represent Veiga's thought process and perception in a more complete way for the English reader. Always attentive to the image and experience behind the word and its sequence within the poem, Payne gives priority to the feeling and flavour of the poem, just as the reader receives it in Galician. The "*equilibrio incerto*" is thus not "uncertain" but "uneasy." The "*correntes nerviosas*" are not "nervous" but "running," like the untrammelled flow of the river. The wounds "*a gurgullaren . . . contra os muros da revolta*" become "*old*

[8] For a comprehensive list of the intrinsic-form and stylistic features found in poetry and translated at the translator's discretion, see Jones (30–31).

wounds," because the churn and stir of the river against its banks is the work of many lifetimes and generations of witnesses.

A atalaia do balcón semella un pasadoiro,
un pasal para cruzar ou a torre con carriza
desde a que gardo un equilibrio incerto
na mensura destas horas augacentas
que definen o meu tempo, cada intre
tan preciso do meu tempo: unha xeira
que tremece, un latexo que se vai
esvaecendo polas correntes nerviosas
a gurgullaren feridas contra os muros
da revolta, ese íntimo recanto
onde o río cobreguea, entre a antiga
fábrica e os casetos vellos, repintados,
onde constrúen botes, ao pé da gris
lameira do aparcadoiro.

This balcony, this lookout is a footbridge,
a moss-faced tower, a stepping-stone
where I hold tight to an uneasy balance
that's the measure of my time in these
soaked hours, every second
of my time: a trembling shift,
a heartbeat that drifts and is washed
away with the running current
as it purls the old wounds round the walls
of the riverbend, this snug reach
where the river writhes by the tired brewery
and the old, repainted boat sheds
that sage by the drab dust
of the car park. (6–7)

In "A luz dos días / The Light of Day," alliteration is used to reinforce or replace the effect created by a verb, noun or image that is more complete in the original than its English equivalent would be. In the case of images that are particularly textured or dynamic in Galician, for example, such as *friaxe*, *lousa*, *remuíño*, *esparexer* or *ronsel*, Payne, variously, adds an adjective to match the second noun ("stinging cold of the beehuts"); reinforces the modifying adjective by compounding alliteratively with the noun ("rain-bright roof slates"); expands the subject noun phrase to

complement the alliteration with a watery homograph ("a spray of flowers floats by on the water"); alliterates internally and externally to recreate the soft, spreading dispersal evoked by the slow sibilance of the original ("light of day dissolves"); and repurposes the alliteration in Veiga's Galician to reinforce the sense of liquid motion ("the wake of the boat weeps through the riverbend").

> Mentres o mundo se esfarela derredor
> arden lonxe as lumaradas do pasado,
> afúndense as lembranzas dos perdidos
> momentos que nunca volverán,
> da friaxe concentrada en alvarizas
> coma nun poema de Uxío Novoneyra.
> . . .
> Mentres en Crosses Green se esparexe a luz dos días,
> mentres o ronsel das barcas bagulla na revolta
> e na rampla respiran cercetas apencadas
> tremeloce o sol contra o metal das chemineas,
> aroman as estancias torradas pradarías, aroman
> o amor funéreos crisantemos, gris incensario de nardos.
>
> While the world around crumbles
> the lumber of the past burns in the distance,
> memories of lost moments are drowned
> and will never surface,
> as the stinging cold of the beehuts
> in Uxío Novoneyra's poems.
> . . .
> While in Crosses Green the light of day dissolves
> as the wake of the boats weeps through the riverbend,
> the mottled teal rests on the slipway
> and the sun shudders against the iron chimneys,
> rooms are perfumed from roasted prairies, love
> perfumed by funeral chrysanthemums, the grey incense of tuberose. (67–68)

On a few rare occasions, however, Payne appears to under-exploit opportunities for enrichment that might be achieved through a more explicitly decolonial intention and ambition. Ease of recognition may produce a more immediate effect but, as Boase-Beier warns, familiarization in translation risks losing the deeper, more lasting effects of the source text since "[its] meaning does not have to be worked out"

(*Critical Introduction* 103). A more decolonial translation in Payne's case would dare to make the reader uncomfortable with an English they may not realize they understand, and therefore push them, in the words of Boyd White, to "investigate, learn, and invent" (335). Payne himself has highlighted the importance of "maintaining the ambiguity of the original," though only up to a point; the translation should not "make it seem like the translator hasn't understood the text or . . . make it even more confusing for the person who's going to read it" (Palacios and Payne 262). Nevertheless, it seems a more defamiliarizing approach that intentionally highlights the uniqueness of the Galician experience and voice would force and also reward the reader to see more, feel more, think more by keeping alive their awareness of difference (Boase-Beier, *Style* 69).

One example of this occurs in relation to Veiga's use of the words "*cantiga*" and "*retrouso*" in the poem "Anatomía das augas / The Anatomy of Water." Though these may seem like minor details, both concepts are so rooted and resonant in Galician culture and memory that the denudation of the verses in English via the decontextualized forms of "run-through" and "chorus" seem like an amputation.[9] The words' very Galician particularity complicates their translation, of course, but cross-linguistic complications are no obstacle for Payne. In this instance, he simply chooses not to delve into the language or particularity of Irish culture in search of an equivalent experiential weight that would highlight its non-generic nature, or to conserve the word in its original form and thus invite the reader to expand their conceptual repertoire through open-minded encounter with a co-peripheral other of culturally equal standing. The loss is not so much in the words that have not been sought, but in the union that they represent between the unique life of a people and its environment. You don't have to understand exactly what a *cantiga* is or how the *retrouso* is sung, you just have to feel it—or have the chance to learn how to.

Other rare examples include the under-translation of Veiga's "*mar dos vellos celtas*" in the poem "Río arriba / Upriver" (144–45) as the more geographically situated "old Celtic Sea," a decision which blanches the original of the "old Celts" of Europe's Atlantic fringes—Amergin, Mil, Breogán—and the hoary seafarers and fishermen that followed and follow them still (the "Atlantic kin" elegized elsewhere in the volume; 56–57). In "Premio de consolación / Consolation Prize" (130–31), Payne appears to

[9] See Wierzbicka on the importance of "key words" as "focal points around which entire cultural domains are organized" (16).

misinterpret the verb tense used in the original ("*estrela que do alto caeu atrás dos muros . . . máis que as fitas que a fortuna nos deixou*"), translating it as a Spanish simple past tense instead of the more likely present perfect: "a star that fell behind the walls . . . more than the ribbons that fortune left us." Galician does not contain compound tenses (except by influence from Spanish and Portuguese; Squartini and Bertinetto 410) but the perfect aspect may be inferred from the context. Here, almost exceptionally, Payne's translation interrupts the boundless immediacy of the scene by opting for the simple past. This mildly Americanised touch is also perceived in the repeated use of "kids" for Galician "*nenos*," "*cativos*," and "*crianzas*," and in the slightly jarring "back yards" (for "*xardíns traseiros*") in "Milagre de luz / The Miracle of Light" (34–35).

Overwhelmingly, however, the effect of Payne's translation is the opposite: richly local, situated, and situating. In "Dunmore Head" (140–43), Payne even goes so far as to incorporate in his English translation the Galician word "castro," in reference to the pre-Roman fortified settlement typical in Northern Spain and associated with the region's Celtic past, where Veiga himself writes of "*os confíns circulares*." In the same poem, Payne's translation is rich in precise terms for features of the Dunmore Head landscape: whirlpools, drumlins, blowholes, bottlenose dolphins, and the "ria," quintessential landmark of the Galician mindscape yet often overlooked by the more peninsularly focused Irish perspective. Notes of Irish and Hiberno English complete his careful rendering of Veiga's living portrait of the land he has adopted as his own. In "Herba na estrada / Grass on the Road" (126–29), Payne sends the reader along "abandoned boreens" ("*polas pistas máis deixadas*"), and the Irish voice is similarly strong is phrases such as "sure what of it" (43), "right enough" (91), and even "the poor dead American monkey" (91), loaded with the historically ambivalent attitude towards the United States of affection and amused distance.[10]

[10] See, for example, depictions of Americans and America in the plays of Brian Friel and Tom Murphy, or novels by Roddy Doyle, Maeve Binchy, and Paul Howard.

5. Learning to Read and Reading to Learn

The poem "A luz dos días / The Light of Day" is an example of how translation can transform the reader's understanding and reaction.[11] As a bilingual reader, I initially experienced a stronger affective response to Payne's translation than to the Galician original. I accounted for this by reasoning that, as English is my native language, Payne's words reached me in a stronger and deeper way because the imaginative and emotional path to their object was more direct. After repeated readings of both together, however, I discovered that Veiga's words now entered and connected with me in the same way. What is of particular interest in this poem, therefore, is the way in which Payne's translation allows non-Galician speakers to connect with the delicate clarity of Veiga's portrayal of an Irish community in mourning, while also enabling access to bilingual readers to an augmented experience of the original in all of its signifying energy. The strength of the portrait lies in Veiga's eye, ear, skin, and soul for detail, yet also in his status as an other who comes to a community from outside and is filled with the sensations and feelings of a people he has met and understood. Payne's translation is the channel that enables readers who are not Galician and may not understand Galician to know themselves through Veiga's other's eyes.

As well as learning to read, inter-periphery translation can also be considered a decolonial act of reading to learn. The parallels with the literacy methodology of that name, "Reading to Learn" (R2L), developed by David Rose and J. R. Martin at the Sydney School at the start of the twentieth century, explain well the decolonial potential of translation between peripheral language cultures. Like translation, R2L is a "scaffolded" (Rose) process involving different stages of reading, comprehension, and reformulation. Detailed reading of the model text (source text, in the case of translation) is designed to increase metalinguistic awareness of features such as genre, tenor, mode, and lexicogrammatical choices, and track how meaning is made in the model text and the linguistic resources used to do so. The crucial final step in Rose and Martin's pedagogy is the rewriting stage. It is here that "appropriation" and integration of resources from the model (or "mentor")

[11] Here I draw on my own experience of the poem as a situated interpretive response to reflect on how translators mediate reader affect through their "*lectécritures*" of the original poem's "interpretive potentials" (Jones 35).

text takes place (Barbeiro 184), including "foreign discursive registers" and "unfamiliar communicative strategies," yet also "opportunities for original creation" (Costa et al. 112). For the translator, as for the pupil, appropriations may include unusual word order, strategic use of punctuation, alliteration, enumeration, and repetition (Costa et al. 157–73).

When translating with decolonial intention, the question of what to do with those appropriations becomes essential. Should the translator always seek "TL-appropriate" patterns and metaphors that allow the reader to recognize themselves more readily in the translation? Or should translation be an opportunity not only to access the conceptual world of the translated other but to expand and enrich that of the target by challenging its linguistic, ontological, and epistemological expectations? The act of translation and reading translation becomes a learning experience when it stretches the reader's worldview with new situated metaphors, alerts them to the pragmatics and personality of idiom, formula, and rhythm, and brings home to them the socio-political dimensions of standard language, dialect, rupture, and reclamation.

6. The Power of Naming

Another very salutary and highly decolonizing behaviour that Veiga's poetry encourages is the act of calling things by their names. Veiga does not reduce, empty, standardize, or universalize the world around him. On the contrary, he continually fills it with specific plants, animals, movements, and sensations that bind and embody us.

Pamela Petro speaks of the "weightlessness" of the English speaker, who travels the world without obstacles but also without knowing how to distinguish between origin and destination; all places become one (166). Mark Abley describes global English as a supermarket: "convenient, huge, hard to avoid, superficially friendly, and devouring all rivals in its eagerness to expand" (56). Michael Cronin, moreover, warns that when a language loses the words to describe specific aspects of its landscape, its speakers risk losing the ability to see the world around them (141). In this sense, Robert Macfarlane denounces that

> The nuances observed by specialized vocabularies are evaporating from common usage, burnt off by capital, apathy and urbanization. The terrain beyond the city fringe has become progressively more understood in terms

> of large generic units ("field," "hill," "valley," "wood"). It has become a blandscape. (23)

Magan describes the words of a people as "wedges that prise back the surface layer of thought and feeling, revealing a deeper truth" (185). Without those words, there comes a time when we can no longer access such truths or the memory of our interrelation with the environment on which they were founded. We lose the "habitat of time," that vision of reality as something lasting, interactive, and divergent, with varying interests and abilities (Bacon). In the neoliberal Ireland of the twenty-first century, the country's language is in danger of becoming increasingly global and less Hiberno, and thereby less capable and even incapable of perceiving the diversity of the world and the diverse ways of living in it (Hickey 172–73). Decolonial translation from co-peripheries like Galicia is a way to halt and reverse that process by forcing readers to engage in the linguistic work of critical, creative reconnection with the real density of their experience.

7. Blue and Green Music to the Fear

The final example in this analysis is the poem "Música azul contra o medo / Blue Music to the Fear," but I wish to focus only on Payne's translation of the title: "Blue Music to the Fear." The question is obvious: why not "Blue Music *against* the Fear"? The direct translation of the preposition would have been easier and still logical yet instead he opts for this peculiar "Blue Music *to* the Fear." Why? Because Payne does not settle for the part, knowing he can reach the whole. Because he attempts to gather within himself the full splay and spectrum of ideas and intentions of Veiga's language, the "wealth of potential meaning in the source text, its signifying energy" (Reynolds 135). And because he knows and feels, like Veiga, that Ireland is not just a tourist idyll or the European Union's best-behaved pupil. Ireland is also, and has been since Joyce's time and before, that sow that eats her own brood: a cannibal of its own citizens that bows to the banks and multinational corporations, and allows its language and art to languish (Kilroy). In this context, the heroes are the great small men and women who have no other weapon than their word or brush—or, to use a phrase by the Galician writer Manuel Rivas, "the most extraordinary technology ever invented: that slight and simple inclination to listen to people." The listeners cited in "Blue Music"—Seán Ó Riada, TP Flanagan,

Pearse Hutchinson—are the misfits of society who fight against the sterile fear deliberately fostered in today's capitalist society.

The phrase that Payne uses for his translation (in my interpretation at least) may be read in the sporting sense of "to take the game/fight *to*" (the other team/the other boxer). It refers to a situation in which the opponent is stronger and a defensive retaining wall will not serve, because no matter how hard and well you defend, after sixty minutes or four rounds, the other side will break through and destroy you with four tries or a flurry of hooks and uppercuts. The only real defence possible, the only chance to parry defeat and prevail, is to attack: to set the pace and the terms of the confrontation yourself. Payne does not translate the preposition: he translates the poem's message of hope and non-violent strength; he translates Veiga's faith in the power of art, beauty, and truth.

In this way, the poem "Blue Music to the Fear" subverts the power dynamic warned of by bell hooks ("Choosing the Margin" 16) when she observed how "[o]ften when the radical voice speaks about domination we are speaking to those who dominate. *Their presence changes the nature and direction of our words*" (my emphasis). Veiga places his peripheral counter-discourse at the centre and says "let *they* be the ones to respond, let *ours* be the presence to change *their* words." He says "no to the coloniser, no to the downpressor" (bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin" 21), and Payne rallies his resistance into English.

CONCLUSIONS

Martín Veiga is a walker of the world in the Ingoldian sense: a wayfarer, for whom earth, sky, and light are regions of our human body (Ingold, S122). When he invokes his environment, it is never "merely for the purposes of allowing the body to have something material to interact with" (S123). Veiga walks, knowing as he goes and growing knowledge along his path (S133–34). His focus on the experiential details of human engagement with the world draws attention to the tendency of globalized modernity to flatten and hollow out meaningful local realms of experience, and guide them towards putatively universal interests and values (Hornborg 256).

Cultural resilience and creativity require habits of mutualism, cooperation, dialogue, and adaptability, and translation between peripheries is an ideal means of fostering them. Translation at the minoritized margins of global culture challenges the colonial narrative of

a single legitimate centre and thwarts the homogenizing pretensions of neo-imperial capitalism. It reconnects with the particularizing perspective of marginal embodied experience and perception across linguistic boundaries, and, in doing so, resists that universality that attempts to turn its surroundings to itself (Bourdin 65). Against the standardizing, exclusionary ambitions of global neoliberal capitalism, cosmopolitanism from the margins exposes the inadequacy of any one worldview, representing instead an ecosystem of sustainable, transcultural development and exchange across mental and physical borders.

Language is the voice of a people who have lived history in a different way. Magan cautioned of Irish that "when we cull descriptive terms for the world around us we narrow our ability to perceive its diversity" (331). Nearly three decades earlier, Xosé Graña Núñez, likewise, warned of the loss of locally generated lexicon in the Galician language and of the risk of Galician dictionaries becoming "ghost treatises" (58). Veiga's language is defiantly rich and living. Inscribed with the Galician story of marginalization and minoritisation, it contains an enduring and evolving sense of his surroundings, wherever he may be. By helping to share that with other peripheral and postcolonial cultures, translation feeds and inspires the target language, never more so than in the moments of incomplete understanding when the target is pushed more deeply into itself and more expansively beyond itself in search of words that will mean.

Decolonial translation challenges assumptions of cultural legitimacy and dependency, and spurs us to question our rhetorical formations and our positioning in relation to "others" (Graham 42). In learning to read and reading to learn decolonially, we learn to ask "how to write (produce) without being inscribed (reproduced) in the dominant white structure and how to write without reinscribing and reproducing what we rebel against" (Anzaldúa 7–8). Galician to Irish and Hiberno English may be an aim-small-miss-small step, but it is a surefooted one towards greater epistemic reimagination and justice.

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